

HOPE HERALD



December 2018 – February 2019

HOPE LUTHERAN CHURCH

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PASTOR'S CORNER

Does Your Dog Snore?

I've had some occasions in which I woke during the middle of the night and for whatever reason, took a long time to fall back asleep. Have you ever just laid quietly and listened to the sounds? In the serenity of those hours one begins to determine a pulse – a sort of rhythm to house. Mild creaks from the attic above let me know that the outside temperature has dropped. Small gusts of wind cause high-pitched scrapes across the outside wall caused by shrubberies. The furnace kicks in and blows for a while, then turns off. The sump pump interrupts the next lull. When both have stopped, one can even detect the barely perceptible hum of the refrigerator all the way from the kitchen.

The steadiest tempo in the darkness belongs to the unvarying cadence of our aging hound, Molly, as she lies on the floor next to my wife, evenly drawing and expiring deep-toned breaths that seem to coarsely rumble across some gravelly surface in her snout before getting through. She snores. Our hyper-vigilant watchdog is out like a light. On the whole, that is a good thing. It is reassuring. Nothing is wrong or out of place, or she would hear it.

Of course, that is a false sense of security. She slept right through last year when an ejector pump failed and flooded part of the basement. She slept right through last winter when mice got into the garage and made a mess chewing into a bag of bird seed. Some doom may be impending to which the tranquil sounds of the night, even Molly, utterly fail to alert us in time.



Shepherds on a hilltop in Judea certainly knew something about the night sounds. One can imagine the gentle breeze blowing over their heads and the collective sound of the flock, quieted for the most part until the darkness breaks. They would be attuned to the anxious and elevated bleating which might signal the presence of a predator or an intruder. After all, that is why they were there: But how much did they know of the greater dangers? (The shepherds were likely small boys after all.) Did they recognize the geo-political tensions of their world? Their eyes would have been looking down and out as they watched sheep, but how often did they look up at Herodium, the evil King Herod's fortress on a hill near Bethlehem? Did they look up even above the hilltops to recognize their greatest danger in the

eternal scheme of things – that they, like all humanity, stood condemned for disobedience and sins committed against an unrelenting holy God whose very nature demanded perfect compliance?

As I get to know the family members of Hope Lutheran Church better and better, I am becoming more aware of the “rhythms” if you will, to some of your lives. Some of you are slow and steady. Some of you run frenetically at dizzying pace. Some of you have relatively stable lives and others of you cannot stop to look behind for even a moment because it feels as though the devil is gaining on you. My guess however, is that all of you are like me in this regard – that we do not have a clear enough sense of the gravity of our situation before righteous God. Whatever our tempos, the night sounds still tend to drown out the most important thing that we need to hear. We live in a sinful world and by comparison to them, all of you are saints; except that God does not compare us to them. He compares us to His perfect standard of holiness.

Whether the shepherds looked up before that first Christmas, I do not know, although I suspect on the whole, that they did not and that they were absorbed in shepherding duties, just as we become absorbed with our own lives and rhythms. Yet something happened which caused them to look up. It was not the voice of judgment or the arrival of the well-deserved punishment, but rather the messengers sent from heaven to announce to them that God had made peace with them; that he had good will toward them; that a Savior had been born. Christmas and the season can tend to just add to all the sounds and become part of the regular drumbeat of our lives. Do not let it! Look up. Listen to the proclamation of the good news. The angels told the shepherds that “**TO YOU** is born this night...” This message in the night has come likewise – **TO YOU!**

Pastor Tim Oswald



A CAN OF SOUP

Hope's new wooden donation box in our narthex is often empty and "crying" for donations. I know you are asked many times over the holidays to help those in need. The Twin Lakes Food Pantry is often in dire need **after the holidays**. If each of our members were to bring one can of soup, a can of vegetables, a jar of peanut butter or jelly or a package of dry noodles or a dry box of a dinner we could easily fill it to the top and Sue Robinson could take all the donations to the food pantry at the beginning of January 2019. How about it?

Kay Cooke, Evangelism/Stewardship Chair

ADOPT-A-STUDENT

Hope Lutheran Church has again made a decision to participate in the Concordia Seminary ADOPT-A-STUDENT program. We have committed to support Kevin Dykstra financially and during his vicarage in Michigan. His address is:

Mr. Kevin Dykstra
University Lutheran Chapel
1511 Washtenaw Avenue
Ann Arbor, Michigan 48104-3122

Supporting Kevin with a letter describing activities at Hope, Thanksgiving card or Christmas card will be appreciated. Most of all

keep Kevin in your prayers as he prepares to be ordained and become a pastor.

Kay Cooke Evangelism / Stewardship Chair

COFFEE FELLOWSHIP



I'd like to thank all the ladies who sign up to help serve treats for our Coffee Fellowship time. Your work is very much appreciated! I'd like to encourage anyone else who might feel like baking, or see a sale on coffee cakes or other baked goods, to feel free to bring them to us to be placed in our freezer downstairs where they'll be used at a later date. Our members and guests really enjoy our treats served each week. If you do sign up to serve, know that you can be flexible and creative—feel free to bring some bagels and cream cheese, crackers, fruit, sausage bites, jello squares, nuts, trail mix, etc. I encourage everyone to fill a plate with treats and then head downstairs for our Sunday Bible study class!

Please see me if you have any questions.

Dawn Oswald

WOMEN OF HOPE



The Fall brought another wonderful and busy time for Women of Hope!

Thanks to everyone who helped serve at our worship service on October 7 for LWML Sunday - **Jan, Madisyn, Alma, Kim Zembal and Dawn** - and thanks to **Nadine** for setting up our display and to **Kay** for helping to promote the LWML at our service. If you missed getting a mite box, more are available. Funds from the mite boxes are used for projects in our District, as well as for funding grants at the national/global level – all for the purpose of reaching out to others and spreading the Word of God.

Thanks to **Terri Stade**, our Women of Hope page and events on the Hope website have been enhanced, so definitely take a look! If you take pictures at any of our events, please send them to Terri so they can be posted. Thanks to **Cheryl Grey**, we also have a presence on our Facebook page!

Operation Christmas Child was a success again this year! Twenty five boxes were collected to share with children in various parts of the world to help them know the true meaning of Christmas and let them know Jesus loves them. Thanks to **Nadine** for coordinating everything for us.

Our shut-in visits resumed in October, and **Arlene, Sharon, Dawn, Doris and Gail** visited folks from the congregation who cannot join us for worship and fellowship on Sundays. We will do more in the Spring. Thanks to **Doris** for coordinating this for us!

In November, some much needed purchases were made – a cash box with a lock for our bake sale funds, sign inserts for the sign by the road for Advent and Lent, and a new roaster oven. We are also planning to fund the re-design of our banner closet, which will help keep our banners beautiful for years to come. **Kay** also arranged for Clean as a Whistle to thoroughly clean the lower level and washrooms so everything was in tip top shape for Thanksgiving!

We used our November meeting time to put together Christmas bags for our shut-in's and the residents at Burr Oaks Manor in Genoa City. Bags will be delivered to Burr Oaks on 12/9 during our monthly trip there, and everyone is welcome to join us for our little service and singing Christmas songs.



GOOD NEWS. GREAT JOY.

In December, **Tami & Peter Voigt, Doris and Gail** will be visiting the children of incarcerated Dads as part of the Angel Tree prison ministry. We will bring them gifts on behalf of their fathers, along with a “message from Dad”, and will share the word of the Lord in hopes of bringing some Christmas joy to these families during trying times. Thanks to **Donna Schaefer, Lee, Tami and Dawn** for helping to purchase the gifts!



We are also sponsoring the annual **Countdown to Christmas /Reverse Advent Calendar**, and encourage our congregation members to help with this. This is a special project that you and your family can participate in that will greatly help people in our community. Here's how it works – each day in Advent, instead of opening a window on the Advent calendar and **GETTING a gift, you will GIVE a gift!** Simply put a food item, toiletry item, school supply, mittens, etc. in a box or basket until Christmas. The boxes and baskets will be delivered to the Twin Lakes Food Pantry in January, as the need is greatest after the holidays are over. More information can be found in the bulletins. Questions? Please see **Gail**.

And last but not least - Women of Hope have been guaranteed a free booth once again at the **2018 Trees on Parade** event at **St. John the Evangelist parish hall** (across from Richter's). We have become quite well-known in the community for our delicious cookies in the beautiful tins and they welcome our participation! Dog treats and small craft items will also be available at our booth. We have labels for our tins this year with service times for Advent and Christmas, and **Ed Holmstrom** is working on getting us a banner for the front of our table, so hope we will have some guests for our special services!

Have a very blessed Christmas and may the love of the Christ Child remain in your hearts all year long!

Gail Feick
President, Women of Hope

CHOIR NOTES



Our Fall choral season has drawn to a close, and hopefully you have enjoyed what we have done so far! We feel blessed to have our regular alto section, **Doris, Sharon and Dawn**, with us on many of our pieces! And, joining us for the first time at Thanksgiving, we welcomed new member **Rev. Maurice Lind!**

As we look toward Advent and Christmas, we will be working on some new harmony and selections you may have heard before, but with perhaps different arrangements.

There is still time to join us to sing during Advent and the Christmas services, so if you are interested, please let me know. Frequent visitors to Hope are also very welcome to join us. During Advent, we will move our normal 7:30pm rehearsal time to immediately follow the mid-week Advent services. We will still sing every other Sunday, as well as Christmas Eve and Christmas Day, so we have a lot of work to do before we take a break!

A huge thank you to the members of the Hope choir – **Doris, Kay, Dawn, Sharon, Marie, Amanda, Lori, Madisyn, Cheryl, Jim, Peter, Ron and Maurice** – and **Pastor Tim** who joins us on occasion! A big thank you also to **George** for accompanying us so beautifully, and to **Nadine** for keeping track of our sheet music and schedules for the bulletin.

If you enjoy music and singing, please consider spending some time with us for fellowship, fun and making a joyful noise to praise the Lord! If you have a special song or hymn you would like us to consider singing, please let us know!

Blessings for a joyous Christmas!

Gail Feick
Director

THANK YOU FROM TRINITY MILWAUKEE

“In the wake of all fire-related matters, a pause becomes necessary to thank you for your kind and generous donation to Trinity Ev. Lutheran Church. Your gift of \$858.00 will be used for the “after-fire” restoration of our church home following the tragic fire on May 15, 2018. Again, thank you and God bless you.”

In Christ alone,
Betty Strelow, Congregation Treasurer

MESSAGE FROM A FRIEND

Dear Members of Hope,

Over two years ago we were rocked with a devastating tragedy. One that affected you all deeply and one that turned my world completely upside down. The unexpected and shocking nature of this tragedy still affects me deeply when I think too much about it. But, because of the healing power of our Awesome God, the help of a gifted counselor and the love of my family and friends, I can say today that I've made immense progress on my healing journey and am living and loving life once again.

When the tragedy struck I went into survival mode and learned all too well the effect that trauma can have on people. At the time, I was not able to teach, I was not able to return to my home in Trevor and I was not able to return to Hope because the pain was so great. I apologize if my abrupt exit from Hope and lack of contact was hurtful. That was never my intention. The first year still feels like a blur that was punctuated by additional pain as the divorce unfolded.

But let's talk more about our Awesome God, our Great Physician, the One that binds up our wounds and dries our tears. Here are some important things I've learned throughout the process of picking up the pieces of my life and beginning to live and love again. Do you know what? All of those promises He makes us in His word are true. The ones where He says, "Never will I leave you, never will I forsake you, I am close to the broken hearted." There were so many times when I felt God's presence in ways I never had before. I've also learned that God is still good, even when you're hurting and struggling.

I've also learned how to take the good from my first marriage. And believe me, a boatload of good from that marriage came from Hope. It came from you, the congregation that gave me the most beautiful

example of wonderful Christian fellowship. I'm taking my three years with you and cherishing them for the rest of my life.

After that very hard first year of recovery I decided to brave trying to date again. Sooner, rather than later, God brought a very good man into my life. I was surprised that I was able to trust and fall in love as quickly as I did and I feel God is in our relationship, and I wanted you people at Hope to know that I found my way back to happiness. I am convinced that what Satan might have used for evil God has used for good in my life. God did this by teaching me to trust Him in my worst moments, and He strengthened my faith by teaching me that He can make all things new again.

I want to thank you for the fact that so many of you prayed for me throughout the crisis and have continued to befriend me. I feel so fondly connected to your congregation.

Your sister in Christ,
Marra Dietsche

CRANDALL'S FELLOWSHIP PRAYER

Almighty God,

We've come today from worship where we held our sacred meeting;
And now our second most favorite thing, we're gathered to do some eating.

For as the body of Christ we may be different parts anatomically,
We all unite most readily over matters over matters gastronomically.
What a great joy on Sunday mornings, to pray and sing hymns and chants;

But it's also a joy after sharing a meal to lean back and loosen our pants.

So gracious Lord as Creator and Father, this is our attitude,
That we always pause before we eat to thank you for this food.
And being Lutheran helps, for though we stand on faith alone,
In culinary issues, "more good works" has been our tone.
Spaghetti dinners, pot lucks, picnics – we Lutherans are off the rails,
Bratwurst fries and Advent suppers, and don't forget bake sales.
Octoberfest, and Lenten soups, and the bottomless pot of caffeine:
If only Luther's catechism had explained "what does this mean?"
But I think it means we like each other and when we take a trip,
We prefer to sail together on the good ship "FELLOWSHIP".
So now we'll eat some chicken and it's time for us to start;
Wings or breasts or thighs or legs, we'll take our favorite part:
But this we know as across the buffet table, we start our search,
That it taste much better when we get to eat it with our fam'ly from
Hope Lutheran Church.

Pastor Tim Oswald



Is this your favorite chicken part?

Over 30 members of Hope Lutheran Church gathered at Crandall's after church a few months ago for their excellent buffet. Delicious with many selections of salads, entrees, and desserts is an understatement. We enjoyed the fellowship with many of Hope's members and ate until some of us probably needed to loosen that belt or were glad they wore stretch waist clothing. The selections were vast. Be sure to join us next time we go to Crandall's and invite your neighbors and friends.

Kay Cooke, Evangelism / Stewardship Chair