

Letter of Hope December 2017



House of Hope Lutheran Church

New Hope, MN

Living out God's grace we seek to be neighbors to all.

ADVENT & CHRISTMAS WORSHIP SCHEDULE

ADVENT—

Wednesdays (Dec. 6, 13, 20)

Advent Supper at 5:30pm

Advent Worship at 6:30pm—*Traditions Old & New: Celebrating the Coming Christ*

Sundays at 9:00am

Dec. 10 Children's Christmas Service

Dec. 17 Service of Lessons and Carols

Dec. 24 Service of the Word

CHRISTMAS—

Christmas Eve (Sunday, Dec. 24)

4:00pm Family Worship with Communion

10:00pm Candlelight Worship with Communion

Christmas Day (Monday, Dec. 25)

9:00am Worship with Communion

Merry Christmas

+ **Pastor's Letter** +

Dear Friends of House of Hope,

It's not hard for our family to tap into the season of Advent. As many of you know, our daughter, Rachael, lives in Indonesia with her family. Although we do have the opportunity to talk with them throughout the year, we still long for the time when we will be together face to face. Once again, Rachael and her daughters, Soraya and Nevianna, are coming for a visit for the month of December and we can hardly wait. Our entire year is filled with hope, anticipation, longing, and yearning.

Those are also the themes of Advent - a time of waiting and preparation. In one sense, the whole of our Christian life is a perpetual Advent. We are forever waiting, hoping, praying, and longing for that day when Christ will return and all things will be made right and whole. But the observation of the Church year and the season of Christmas offer us a foretaste of the feast to come. Our gatherings at church and in our homes at Christmas are some of the highlights of the year. That is the reason Rachael leaves her tropical paradise and returns to cold and wintry Minnesota - because that celebration is pregnant with such meaning and joy and wonder.

You are invited to enter into this time of waiting together. Besides our usual Sunday morning worship we will gather on the Wednesdays in Advent for supper and a brief worship. It might seem paradoxical that in the busiest time of the year we add additional events to our weekly schedule, but you will find that having someone else prepare supper and the brief time of worship can refresh and strengthen you in the midst all you are doing. Revisiting the meaning and purpose of what we are preparing for can help to strengthen and lift your spirits for all that you do to get ready. Perhaps the biggest gift of midweek gatherings is the wonder and strength of faith shared together in community. That's what the Church is about, after all.

So join us this Advent as we celebrate the traditions of the season. For the first three Wednesdays in December we will consider the long tradition of St. Nicholas Day and Sankta Lucia Day as well as a newer tradition known as Women's Christmas. You'll be glad you did, and so will we will all!

Pastor Mark



Advent 2017

Traditions Old and New: Celebrating the Coming of Christ

We will begin our Advent Wednesdays celebrating two ancient traditions:

St. Nicholas Day, Dec. 6 and

Sankta Lucia (or St. Lucy's) Day, Dec. 13.

On Dec. 20 we will learn about a newer tradition known as Women's Christmas, which typically is celebrated in January.

Our worship will be a short half hour service beginning at 6:30 pm.



A Prayer for Christmas

*Lord, may we be
like the Wise Men
who were guided to
you by a star.*

*Give us the wisdom to seek you,
light to guide us to you,
courage to search until we find you,
graciousness to worship you
and generosity to lay our gifts before you,
who are our King and our God
for ever and ever.
Amen.*



Advent is indeed a season of anticipation, but also of revolution. The readings in Advent prepare us to receive not only a new baby, but a new world where God's justice and mercy reign. So in Advent we not only prepare for the coming of the Christ but we take the time to reflect on what this means for us and the world. We all know how the story turns out but during Advent let us turn away from all the talk of Christmas and the commercialization of it going on around us and give ourselves a chance to reflect and prepare. Over these four Sundays, the arc of the story is clear: the darkness is giving way to the light, the world is being reborn, and God is on the way.

During these seasons of Advent and Christmas our music groups will be offering a wide variety of music to help us prepare and then rejoice. On Sunday, December 3, the Hope Chorale will sing *As the Dark Awaits the Dawn*. On December 10, the Sunday School Children's program will give us a perspective of the season through children's eyes. Sunday, December 17, is our Service of Lessons and Carols: Hope Bells will be ringing *Come, Now, O Prince of Peace* arranged by George Brooke and *Hark! The Herald Angels Sing* by Anna Laura Page. Hope Chorale will be singing *Who But the Lord?* by Craig Courtney, *For Unto Us a Child Is Born* by John Carter, *Song of Mary* by Faye Lopez, *Messiah's Lullaby* by David Schwoebel, and *The Peace of God* by Richard Horn. For our Christmas Eve service Hope Bells will ring *Still, Still, Still* by Anna Laura Page and Hope Chorale will sing *There Is Faint Music* by Dan Forrest, and *Messiah's Lullaby* by David Schwoebel.

Join us for a time of preparation followed by a celebration of joy!

George



And Mary said: "My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for he has looked with favor on the lowliness of his servant. Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed; for the Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is his name." Luke 1:46-49

Mary was full of joy when the angel Gabriel told her that she had been chosen by God to be the mother of Jesus, the Messiah. She expressed that joy in a song called the *Magnificat* set forth in Luke 1:46-55.

Mary would need to remember that joy when, after fleeing to Egypt, she heard of Herod's slaughter of babies in Bethlehem and during the anxiety-filled three days searching for 12-year-old Jesus who was found in the temple pursuing his Father's business. It was a joy she must have desperately clung to as her precious son died on the cross.

Mary's was a heavy stewardship, but a glorious one, for she knew Jesus would grow and live and die with the grace of God upon him. (Luke 2:40 - *The child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom; and the favor of God was upon him.*) It was a stewardship she joyfully shouldered with a sure vision of God's ultimate redemption of the world God had made.



Join us at 9:00am on
Saturday, December 2 to decorate
the church for the
Advent/Christmas seasons.



Help Fill Our Christmas Gift Tables!

Again this year we are collecting Christmas gifts for NEAR, PRISM and PCYC. Tables are set up in the narthex to receive your NEW, unwrapped gifts for the holiday gift distributions at each of these agencies. Gifts for all ages are needed. There always seems to be a shortage of gifts for teens. You have been so very generous in past years in helping to make the holidays happier for families in need. We thank you and ask for your continued support.

Food Donations Needed!

The holiday season is in full swing and PRISM and NEAR are in need of holiday groceries to fill the holiday baskets for their client families.



Help us fill the baskets with non-perishable food that will help these families enjoy a delicious, nutritious meal.

Don't forget the Byerly's Baking Sale will be the 1st week of December—watch the paper for the exact dates of the sale. Many items including flour, sugar, brown sugar, powdered sugar, cake mixes, butter and other baking items will be on sale for \$1.00 each, limit of two. Buy one for you and one for the food shelf.

It's a great way to share.

NEAR NEWS . . .

The NEAR toy distribution will be December 16th at the Crystal Community Center with set up the day before. We always need help so if you are willing and able, please contact Judy Lucchesi or Marlene Truax.

NEAR urgently needs your paper and plastic bags, especially this time of year. We also are in need of Christmas decorations (new or used). Artificial Christmas trees are also welcome and if you have one to donate, please take it to the food shelf at 5209 West Broadway. Other items needed are yarn for knitting and costume jewelry. We DO NOT need any caps, scarves or mittens this year. Your donations to NEAR are always greatly appreciated.



*Prepare the royal highway;
the King of kings is near!
Let ev'ry hill and valley
a level road appear!
Then greet the King of glory,
foretold in sacred story:
Hosanna to the Lord,
for he fulfills God's word!*

Text: Frans Mikael Franzein, 1772-1847;
tr. Lutheran Book of Worship
Music: Swedish folk tune, 17th cent.
Text © 1978 Lutheran Book of Worship,,



The Cooper High School marching band and the University of Minnesota marching band are giving a concert on Sunday, December 3rd at 7:00pm in the Cooper High School auditorium. The concert will raise funds for the Bonfire KidPack programs at Meadow Lake, Lakeview, and Forest Elementary Schools. Cost is \$10 and elementary-aged children are free. Tickets are available at the church office or at the door on December 3rd.

KidPack Volunteers . . . Volunteers are needed to distribute food bags weekly on Fridays at Meadow Lake (9:45am), Lakeview (9:30am), or Forest (2:30pm) Elementary Schools. You will work in teams (minimum of two people). Allow 30 minutes to 1 hour for the bag distribution. Please contact Rose Wangen at 763-614-7570 or Rose_wangen@hotmail.com to volunteer for a time slot.

Bonfire Grief Support . . . A new session of the Bonfire Grief Support will begin meeting in January. The group meets at St. James Lutheran Church in Crystal each Sunday at 3:45pm beginning on January 7th and finishing up on March 18th. Watch for more information in the January *Letter of Hope*.



The Tradition Continues!

There will be a meal offered each Wednesday during Advent from 5:30-6:30pm. Groups have already stepped forward to serve the meals on two of the Wednesdays. Plans are developing for the other Wednesday, so come enjoy a meal together with friends and celebrate this season of anticipation together.

DECEMBER FORUMS/FELLOWSHIP

- Dec. 3 - ISAIAH Forum—*Claiming Our Voices*. This forum will be training to prepare members for political engagement in 2018.
- Dec. 10 - Cookie Reception for Sunday School Program
- Dec. 17 - Advent Fair . . . Crafts and other traditions for Advent and Christmas
- Dec. 24 - Open Sharing of Traditions in the Home . . . We will take turns sharing the traditions we use in our homes to prepare for Christmas and celebrate the season. Feel free to bring items for a classic "show and tell".
- Dec. 31 - A Retirement Celebration for Barb Suckerman



**CELEBRATING
THIS MONTH**

BIRTHDAYS

- 12/1 - Madeline Halupnick
Matt Wittmer
Mike Wittmer
12/7— Jane Griffith
Bill Morrill
12/9 - Marty Gorsky
Tom Haney
12/10 - Mandy Scott
12/11 - Ken Gorsky
Harris Haney
Arlen Johnson
12/13 - Christine Beck
Ian Wold
12/14 - Andy Fretag
12/19 - Mark Vinge
12/20 - Carol Darg
12/21 - Steve Nightengale
12/23 - Pat Carlson
Theresa Henderson
12/24 - Colleen Nightengale
12/28 - Eleanor Hunsberger
Lynette Neus
12/31 - Ben Sundeen

If you have a birthday or anniversary in December and are not on the lists please contact the church office (763-533-3341).

PARISH NURSE HOURS

Thursdays—11am-1pm
3rd Sunday—9:00am-12 noon
Debbie's direct phone number
is 612-408-2049
or call her at the church
763-533-3341 and leave a
voice mail.

Our Church Family . . .

Confirmed . . .

Kristi Thompson on October 29th.

Baptism . . .

Sawyer Ray Althoff, son of Adam & Katherine Althoff.

**★ Thank You! ★
★ THANK YOU! ★**

Thank you, House of Hope, for your gift of \$5,000 to Lutheran Disaster Response. With this gift you are providing emotional and spiritual care, supplying emergency relief, and addressing long-term recovery. Thank you for this gift and all your faithful generous gifts. Thank you for encouraging others to learn, act, pray and give with you. Thank you for living into God's words of justice and mercy and for joining with the whole church to love and serve one another. You are bringing hope to so many!

The Rev. Daniel Rift, Director
ELCA World Hunger and Disaster Appeal

Thank you so much for your generous gift of \$5,000 to PRISM in support of our "A Better Tomorrow" Campaign. Your gift will help support our new facility and more services, creating a better tomorrow for each person who walks through our door . . . and for the entire community. We are so grateful for your strong and immediate support.

Michelle Ness, Executive Director
PRISM

Thank you for your generosity! Your gift of \$120 will provide 545 nutritious meals to children who are hungry and in great need around the world. Thank you for your dedication to change lives, one meal and one child at a time.

Mark Crea, Executive Director
Feed My Starving Children

Thank you for your generous gift of \$250 to Luther Seminary scholarship fund. As we look forward to a new year, we are grateful for your prayers and generosity. Thank you for making a difference for students who are pursuing their call as leaders in ministry.

Dan Sassenberg
Luther Seminary

SERVICE TEAM NEWS . . . Team #1 will be responsible for January 2018. They will meet at church in the narthex on Sunday, December 10, 2017, at 10:00am, right after the worship service, to volunteer for the month's tasks. Support your teammates by attending the meeting and signing up for as many tasks as you can. The members of Team #1 are:

Adam & Katherine Althoff
 Kevin & Lisa Anderson
 Ron & Glorian Anderson
 Gary & Chris Bearl
 Chris Brewster
 Dorothy Carpenter
 Barb Drenth & Anna & Darrel
 Roberta Etherington
 Gary Freese
 Ken & Marty Gorsky
 Stanley & Ruth Haapala
 Thomas & Shirley Hahn
 Marlin & Holly Haney & Thomas
 Paul & Annette Hansen
 Carol Hedican
 Ray Henderson
 Zach & Samantha Hetrick
 Barbara Ibister
 Darla Mann & Riley
 Gary Minks
 Ryan & Christina Montgomery
 Rod & Molly Olson & Brady
 Jason & Abby Rombalski
 Kariann Sanny
 Dave & Ione Stedje
 Britta Walstrom
 Nancy Wesley
 Brian & Naomi Witzke
 Dean & Carolyn Wuollet

SERVICE TEAMS CALENDAR— Please mark your calendars with the date for your next opportunity to sign up for your service team month. We encourage you to support your team by signing up for as many tasks as you can. We appreciate all your help.

Service Team #1 - December 10, 2017
 Service Team #3 - January 14, 2018
 Service Team #5 - February 11, 2018
 Service Team #6 - March 11, 2018
 Service Team #7 - April 8, 2018
 Your Service Team Task Force



House of Hope Staff

Pastor Mark Vinge
mvinge@hohlc.org
 Pastor Gretchen Rode
grode@hohlc.org
 Deacon George Brooke
gbrooke@hohlc.org
 Barb Suckerman
office@hohlc.org
 Debbie Haney, Bonfire Parish Nurse
 612-408-2049

Sunday Schedule

FREE Breakfast—8:00am
 Worship—9:00am
 Sunday School—10:00am
 Adult Forum/Coffee—10:00am
 Christ's Kingdom Assemblies
 Ministries—11:00am

Weekly Bible Studies—

Wednesday:
 Men's Bible Study—6:30am
 at Country Kitchen
 Bible Study—10:30am
 at church
 CKAM Bible Study—7:00pm
 at church
 Thursday:
 Women's Bible Study—9:30am

Mission Statement

*Living out God's grace we seek
 to be neighbors to all.*

**The deadline for the January issue
 of the *Letter of Hope* is
 December 20th.**



House of Hope Lutheran Church
4800 Boone Avenue North
New Hope, MN 55428

HOUSE OF HOPE LUTHERAN CHURCH

A Reconciling Congregation

4800 Boone Avenue North New Hope, MN 55428
Phone: (763) 533-3341 FAX: (763) 531-9006
www.hohlc.org
www.facebook.com/houseofhopemn

House of Hope Lutheran Church is a *Reconciling in Christ* community. All are welcome to worship, to hear the Good News, to receive the sacraments, and to participate fully in fellowship and service. God loves us unconditionally and we endeavor to be a place where that same hospitality is extended to everyone. Following Christ we seek justice and reconciliation among all peoples. We welcome everyone, without exception and regardless of sex, race, national origin, sexual orientation, gender identity, physical and mental ability, age, or station in life, faith or creed. Each person is a unique creation of God and, through Grace, is a child of God. We invite you to come and worship with us.