

January 9, 2026



News in the Pews!



Digital Edition

Upcoming Events

Deadline for Ministry Team Reports
January 9

Women of Hope Breakfast Meeting
January 15 at 9:00am at Hope Central Campus

Reception for Vicar Kjell Bakken
January 18 at 2:00pm at Hope Central Campus

Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
January 19 - Church office closed

Week of Prayer for Christian Unity Prayer Service
January 19 at 4:30pm at Hope Central Campus

New Member Orientation
January 24 at 9:00am at Hope Central Campus

Join Us for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity!



Monday, January 19, 2026
4:30pm to 6:00pm
Hope Central Campus

Hope is excited to once again host a special service to observe the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity!

This worldwide ecumenical event is a time for Christians to gather in prayer and thanksgiving. The 2026 theme "One Body, One Spirit" comes through the combined efforts of the Pontifical Dicastery for Promoting Christian Unity and the World Council of Churches.

No registration is needed. Light dessert refreshments will be offered. All are invited to attend. Everyone is encouraged to invite a friend or neighbor, especially someone from a different denomination.

Celebration Reception & Sending for Vicar Kjell Bakken



Our Vicar Kjell Bakken has accepted a position as Pastor of Salem Lutheran Church and will soon begin the next chapter of his ministry!

In celebration of his journey, we will be hosting a special reception on **Sunday, January 18 at 2:00pm to 4:30pm** at Hope Central Campus.

Light refreshments will be served. There is no need to register.

Feel free to bring a card or small token of your affection for Vicar Kjell. All are encouraged to attend. Help us send Vicar Kjell on with love!

Important Change to Social Supper Registration



Beginning in February, we will be adding an additional step to our online Social Supper registrations.

In addition to your name and email, we will now be asking you to include your phone number. This will help us contact you in a timely manner in the event a Social Supper or event needs to be cancelled last minute.

Please note that your information is never shared and will only be used to contact you during an emergency cancellation.

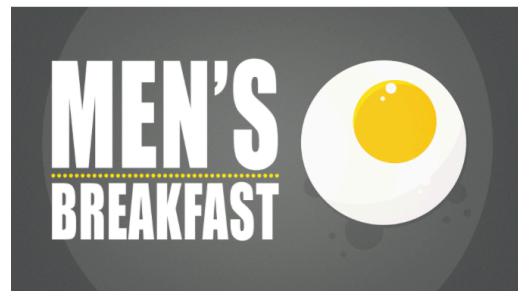
Hope Office Closed on January 19



The Hope Lutheran Church office will be closed on Monday, January 19 as we observe Martin Luther King, Jr. Day.

We will reopen as usual on Tuesday, January 20.

No Men of Hope Breakfast in January



There will be no Men of Hope breakfast in the month of January.

Breakfast will resume on Thursday, February 12. More information and a registration link will be shared soon.

Hope For All: Faith, Food, Friends!

February 6 from 4:30pm to 6:30pm - Hope Lake Weir Campus

Come one, come all to a special free event at Hope Lake Weir Campus!

Hope For All is a free outdoor concert and picnic meal featuring a live acoustic performance, ice cream truck, and tons of fun for everyone.

Members of the S.O.S. Band will perform contemporary hits under the pavilion on the scenic shores of Lake Weir.

You can also expect a brief message and lots of great fellowship time. There's no cost and no registration - come as you are, and bring your friends!



Hope Southern Neighbors Social Night



Join your friends down south for a fun night of games and fellowship on the second Tuesday of each month from 6:00pm to 9:00pm.

The next gathering will be Tuesday, January 13, 2025 at Everglades Rec Center.

You are invited to bring a beverage though water will be available. You are encouraged to bring a simple finger snack to share. If you have a favorite game, you are welcome to bring it as well. Please remember your Village's ID.

For info, contact Sandy Dorman at sandyjdorman@gmail.com or (330) 718-1572.

Important Pledge Information



If you have submitted an intent card with a 2026 pledge, we will be entering them in the new Subsplash donation system.

Please note that when we enter the information for your pledge, you should automatically receive an email from Hope Lutheran Church that informs you of "Pledge Created." Also, if you pledge to both Current and Benevolence and Mortgage/Debt Reduction, it is likely you will receive two emails.

Please note these would be legitimate emails and not a scam. We want to be sure you are aware ahead of time since there are so many scam emails going around.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact the church office at (352) 750-2321.

Annual Congregational Meeting - Sunday, February 1, 2026

The **Annual Congregational Meeting** of Hope Lutheran Church will take place on **Sunday, February 1** at 12:15pm at Hope Lake Weir Campus!

If you've never visited the beautiful Hope Lake Weir Campus, now is the time!



Our Lead Pastors will each speak, Council President Kristina Giffin will provide a year-end update, and the three Council candidates will each make brief remarks. Because the candidates are all running for re-election unopposed, there will be no need for a vote or vote counting, so we expect the meeting to move along quickly!

Light food will be provided ahead of the meeting so arrive early and enjoy the beautiful campus, the prayer labyrinth, the lake and this beautiful jewel of a church. A quorum is required, and the meeting will not be streamed to other campuses.

Hope Lake Weir Campus is located at 10495 SE Sunset Harbor Rd. Summerfield, FL 34491. A map is attached below for your convenience.

[Click Here for a Map to Hope Lake Weir Campus](#)

Nominees for Open Council Positions

We have three open positions on the Hope Lutheran Church Council: President, Vice-President, and Member-at-Large.

Each position has received one nominee, and each nominee is an incumbent.

Nominee for Council President

Kristina Giffin (seeking second term)



I am seeking re-election for a two-year term as President of Hope Lutheran Church, prayerfully offering myself for continued service during this important season in the life of our church.

When I first ran three years ago, I shared my professional background as a Human Resource executive, my prior church council experience in Aiken, South Carolina, and my faith journey. As I discerned whether to run again in 2026, my decision was guided less by résumé and more by calling—a strong sense that I am meant to see to completion the work God has placed before us.

Central to that calling is completing the Hope South Campus Worship Center project. Having been involved throughout its development, I understand the project, value the partnerships that have been formed,

and deeply appreciate Hope's dedicated building team. As one of our pastors observed, when a ministry is this close to becoming reality, it feels impossible to step away. I believe faithfulness calls us to finish well.

There is also important ministry work to continue strengthening: faithful stewardship and fund-raising, refining processes through the Finance Committee, open communication with congregants through Council Corner, church-wide events that unite all three campuses, and partnering with Hope's Lead Pastors and Council to establish a strategic plan for Hope Lutheran Church.

With gratitude for the trust placed in me, I am willing to continue serving with prayerful discernment, steady leadership, and a heart for Hope Lutheran Church's mission and future.

Nominee for Council Vice-President

Pamela Bixler (seeking second term)



I have been retired since June 2007. During my career years, I held various positions in a Savings & Loan in Ohio, assisted school psychologists in the public school system in Ohio, and served as operations manager for the marketing division of Dana Corporation, Toledo, Ohio.

The last two years on Council have given me a lot of insight into how the Council works. Working with the President and other Council members has shown me how we move together to benefit the entire church body. Working with the Co-Lead Pastors and other church leaders has taught me a lot about how we all

work together to the Glory of God! During the last two and a half years as a church member, I have been involved in many ministries and have met a lot of people. This has given me insight into how members feel/think about different areas of the church. I bring that to the Council table at each meeting.

I am a good listener and bring ideas, questions, and comments from members of the church to the Council table. I am well organized and attend to details. Most importantly, I love Jesus!!

Nominee for Council Member-at-Large

Patrick Sawler (seeking second term)

I earned my BA from Rutgers University in NJ. In my career, I was the Director of an IT Help Desk, a Financial Associate with Thrivent Financial, and a Realtor in NJ and FL. I am now retired.

I have held several key church leadership roles. At Zion Lutheran in Rahway NJ, I was a Sunday School teacher for 7th grade, a Youth Advisor, and served as Council President, Vice President and Property Manager. I also worked with the homeless.

At Hope Lutheran Church, I have served as a council Member-at-Large since February 2022. I am a member of the Everglades A/V set-up team, a volunteer at the Hope Lake



Weir Campus Food Pantry, and a member of the Evangelism team.

I am a team player and a good listener. I have a passion of helping others in Jesus' name and am very driven to get tasks done in a timely manner.

Minutes & Important Information for the Annual Meeting

As we prepare for our Annual Congregational Meeting on February 1, it is important we review the minutes and ballot from this year's important meetings.

Below you will find the November 9 ballot, as well as Special Congregational Meeting minutes and the 2025 Annual Meeting minutes.

[Review the
November 9 Voting
Ballot](#)

[Review the Special
Congregational
Meeting Minutes](#)

[Review the 2025
Annual Meeting
Minutes](#)

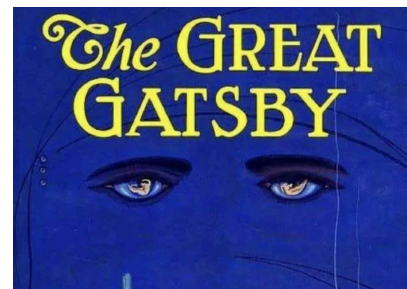
Become a Member of Hope Lutheran Church



We invite you to participate in the next step of the membership process by attending Hope's New Member Orientation. Orientation will be held on **Saturday, January 24** from 9:00am to 12:00pm at Hope Central Campus. Continental breakfast will be served.

New members will be received on the weekend of January 24 and 25 at their preferred service.

Everybody Reads! Book Club Celebration



Monday, January 26, 2026
5:00pm - Hope Central Campus

Our Hope Book Groups will be hosting "Everyone Reads," a special church-wide book event on Monday, January 26 at 5:00pm at Hope Central Campus.

We will enjoy fellowship time and book discussion before a light dinner. Registration is required and the cost is \$10 per person. Registration deadline is January 23.

We have three levels of membership - voting, associate, and seasonal. For more information on membership options, please visit our website by [clicking here](#).

Questions? Contact Mary Beth at marybeth@hope4all.church or by phone at (352) 750-2321.

Deadline to submit paperwork is Friday, January 16.

This year's highlighted book is *The Great Gatsby* by F. Scott Fitzgerald. Any unabridged edition will be fine. All attendees are asked to read the book prior to January 26 and come ready to discuss.

This event is open to anyone who loves to read. Bring a friend or your spouse. We encourage you to dress in 1920's style (think flapper dresses and pinstripes) to complement our theme!

[Click Here to Register for the Event](#)

Women of Hope Breakfast Meeting January 15, 2026, 9:00am at Hope Central Campus

What does it really look like when a church reaches beyond its walls and changes lives — across oceans and across town? Join the Women of Hope for a special breakfast gathering during Hope's annual Global Mission Week and find out.

Church member Marlene "Laney" Waller will take us behind the scenes of the powerful, often unseen work of Hope's Mission Outreach Team.

Through heartfelt stories and real-life examples, Laney — along with the inspiring Women of Hope, Karen O'Brien and LaVera Wiberg — will highlight the impact of our Crafters and Quilters, school kit projects, and other hands-on ministries that quietly but profoundly serve God's people every day.

Never volunteered before? Perfect. You'll discover simple, meaningful ways to get involved — no special skills required. You just need a willing heart and a desire to make a difference.

Laney serves as Hope's Mission Outreach Team liaison to the Florida-Bahamas Synod Global Mission Table, which nurtures companion relationships with churches in Cuba, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, and Surinam. Last January, she brought these partnerships to life by sharing her unforgettable experience as the sole lay participant on the Synod's mission trip to Cuba. Her reflections offered a rare, personal glimpse into global faith connections that continue to shape Hope's mission today.

And the week's inspiration continues: as part of Hope's Global Mission Week celebration, Rev. Carlos Ham, Assistant to Bishop Suarez, will be our visiting pastor and deliver all four sermons at Hope Central Campus on January 17–18, 2026.



One of our companion churches in Guyana, which is a major Hope Lutheran Church focus for its Lay Leadership Program

We'd love to see you there! Both men and women are invited to come and enjoy a delicious breakfast, fellowship and a fascinating presentation. Cost is \$7.00. Reserve your spot by noon on Monday, January 12. If you have questions, contact June Cook at (352) 430-5025.

[Click Here to Register for Breakfast](#)

Gatherings of Hope

Pastor Rani is leading Gatherings of Hope on the 2nd and 4th Tuesdays in Room 204 at Hope Central Campus from 9:30am to 10:30am.

Experience a community of support that cares for you no matter what you are going through. You are welcome to bring your lunch. Water, coffee/tea is provided. All are welcome, including non-Hope members, so please invite your friends to join us.

Faith & Fellowship

Faith & Fellowship is now meeting at all Hope campuses!

You can find a list of locations and meeting times [by clicking here](#).

All are welcome, including non-Hope members.

Join a G.I.F.T. Group

Hope Lutheran Church has officially launched our G.I.F.T. Groups (Growing In Faith Together) ministry!

Join a small group of 6–10 people who will meet in homes, at church, online, or wherever God provides space.

[Click Here to Get Involved](#)

Worship Attendance for January 3-4, 2026

Hope Central Campus:

4:00pm - 207
6:00pm - 64
8:00am - 134
10:00am - 311

Online:

4:00pm - 120
10:00am - 238
10:00am (HLWC) - 27

Hope Lake Weir Campus:

10:00am - 132

Hope at the Everglades Rec Center:

8:00am - 127
10:00am - 189



Flowers on the Altar Given By...

- Noele Loranger, in memory of Tommy Loranger
- Barb Wistrill, in memory of Roger Wistrill

In Memoriam



Richard (Dick) Wilson passed away on Friday, January 2, 2026. Dick was born on January 20, 1941. He and Arlene were married on June 18, 1966. They joined Hope Lutheran Church on August 27, 2006.

A memorial service will be held on Tuesday, January 20 at 10:30am at Hope Central Campus.

Please keep Arlene and their family in your hearts and prayers during this time.



Leroy (Bill) Myers passed away on Saturday, January 3, 2026. Bill was born on August 2, 1939. He joined Hope Lutheran Church on June 1, 2023. Bill was widowed.

Arrangements are pending at this time.

Please keep Bill's family and friends in your hearts and prayers during this time.

**Scripture Reading for
January 11
Baptism of the Lord**

Acts 10:34-43; Matthew 3:13-17

**Scripture Reading for
January 18
Second Sunday After Epiphany**

1 Corinthians 1:1-9; John 1:29-42

This Weekend's Worship Bulletin

Click the button to view this weekend's worship bulletin for traditional services.

[View the Worship Bulletin](#)

Inform the Church of Visitation Needs

Do you know of someone who needs a visit from a Hope pastor? Please call the church office at (352) 750-2321 and let us know. Our Pastoral Care Team would love to visit

with you or your loved one.

Submit a Prayer Request

Need Prayer? Submit a prayer request via our hope4all.church website.

[Click Here to Submit a Prayer Request](#)

Hope Lutheran Church Office Hours

Monday to Thursday - 8:00am to 4:00pm Friday - 8:00am to 1:00pm

Have news to share? Please fill out the [Newsletter Article Request Form](#) for inclusion in a future edition!

Hope Lutheran Church | hope4all.church

[Visit our Website](#)

Hope Lutheran Church | 250 Avenida Los Angeles Corner of Morse Blvd & Hwy 466 | The Villages, FL 32162 US

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