

Opening New Doors

Hope's Happenings

Sunday's in December

December 7: Today we light the second candle on our Advent wreath. Pastor Janelle Harrison will be with us to share the good news. Don't forget to come to the Advent Concert today at 5:00pm.

December 14: The Children will present their Christmas Program today. It's the third Sunday in Advent and Pastor Melinda Halom will preside over communion with us today.

December 21: The fourth Sunday in Advent. Pastor Dave Whelan will be our guest preacher today. Stop at the Christmas Bake sale following worship!

December 28: Our service this morning will include a lovely service of lessons and carols. We'll sing many cherished Christmas songs and hear Bible reading and reflections centering on the message of our Lord's birth.



Christmas at Hope

December 14: 9:00am. Children's Christmas Program during worship

December 24: 4:00pm. Christmas Eve Worship

December 28: 9:00am. Lessons and Carols

The Church office will be closed:

December 24, 25 and 26 and December 31, January 1 and 2



End of 2025 Giving

All giving for the 2025 year must be to the church office by Tuesday, December 30th by noon to be recorded in the 2025 giving year.

You can expect your 2025 statements in January.

Thank you for your faithful giving through the year at Hope.

The last day for 2025 giving will be Tuesday, December 31st by noon!

HOPE FRIENDSHIP GROUP POTLUCK (Over 55)

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 11TH AT
10:30am (note time change)

This will be a potluck in Olson Hall at Hope and we will have a gift exchange of no more than \$10 (if you wish to join) A short program will start at 11:00am with lunch to follow at 11:30am. Music and gift exchange will follow lunch.

A signup sheet for the potluck is posted in the Gathering Area.

HOPE TO SEE YOU THERE!!!!



Snow Policy

If the Eau Claire schools close due to snowy/bad weather, activities scheduled that day at Hope Lutheran will also be cancelled.

This is the policy for Hope activities and does not include Rachel's Place.



Advent Concert

**Sunday, December 7,
5:00pm**

Join the bells, choir, special music, string connection and readings as we kick off the Advent season.

Fellowship and treats will be served following the concert.



Noisy Offering Update:

Hope has collected \$200.00 recently in our Noisy Offering. We

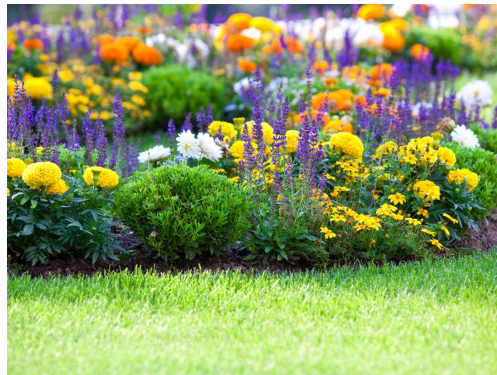
have sent a \$200.00 donation to cover the lunch debt at Sam Davey Schools. The money collected through the end of the year will also go to the Eau Claire Schools to cover more lunch debt for our kids. Hope is an amazing place that does such great things for our community! THANK YOU, for your continued generosity to this project.



Collecting Plastic Film

Our Confirmation youth will continue collecting flimsy plastic. This is a service project to help our environment. After 1000 pounds of plastic film have been collected, the plastic will be converted into a neat park bench which the congregation will receive.

Continue to bring your plastic materials and deposit them in the recycling containers in the welcome area. Thanks for your help on this project and for helping us make the world a little cleaner place. The plan is to place the bench in the area of one of our pollinator gardens.



Bench in Memory Of Peter Alan Christenson

When the weather turns warm and the flowers bloom, you'll have a bench to sit on while enjoying the beautiful pollinator gardens. The bench, located between the two gardens was given in memory of Peter Christenson by his sister, Mary (Christenson) Crosby. Their parents, Helen and Gordy were active in many aspects of our church community including teaching Sunday School and singing in the choir. Peter was born in 1961 and passed in 2024 at the age of 63. He was confirmed in 1975, attended North High then joined Laborer's Local Union No. 268. Many thanks to Mary for sharing Peter's memory with Hope where his faith foundation was built.

Grace's Greetings:

Hello Hope Family,

Welcome to December! I cannot believe it is the last month of the year. We find ourselves in the season of Advent, waiting for the coming of Jesus. As we move through this season of preparation I pray that you are finding many moments of joy, peace, hope, and love.

To support you in your Advent season, there are Advent calendars for children and Advent devotionals for youth and adults available in the gathering area. You are invited and encouraged to use these resources to walk through this season with intention, and with your heart pointed toward Christ.

On December 3rd, all are invited to join Soup & Song. This month we'll explore the gift of peace that God gave us through Jesus at Christmas! Join us for our workshop worship and meal. Thank you to all our cooks and clean up volunteers. Sign up to help out in the gathering area.

This month our children and youth are preparing our Christmas Program "God's Christmas Gifts" - you are all invited to join us in worship on December 14th to see the program they have to share!

Our last day of Confirmation and JAM for the year will be on December 17th. We'll be having a Christmas party, and highschoolers are invited to join us and compete in our fun and games!

On December 21st, we have our annual holiday bake sale! All proceeds will support our Summer 2026 programming for children and youth. We are calling all bakers to lend their special goodies to the sale! Sign up in the gathering area.

In youth group this month we'll be doing the Nativity Scene Contest, so be sure to vote for your favorite in the gathering area. We'll also be cooking the Wednesday evening meal and Christmas cookie decorating.

Finally, be sure to join us at Hope this Christmas! Bishop Halom will be with us to lead worship and preach. We will be hosting one service this year on Christmas Eve at 4:00pm. Hope to see you there.

May Peace, Hope, Joy, and Love be with you in the season ahead!

• Grace



Neighbor to Neighbor

Love your Neighbor is the Capital Campaign for the Neighbor to Neighbor Ministry

The NWSWI synod council and assembly approved a 3 year, \$175,000 capital campaign.

Deacon Lidixie Montoya has been instrumental in creating bridges between the English speaking congregations and Hispanic neighbors.

Future goals:

1. To increase support for the Casa de Recursors, N2N Resource Center to include mental health resources in Spanish'
2. Increase the number of health fairs
3. Expand the reach of Hispanic student scholarship program
4. Increase the impact of the Spanish Language Worship Service by Livestreaming

Please consider this vital ministry as you look at your end of year giving.

There will be fund raising for this cause throughout the next 3 years.



Youth & Family Ministry December 2025 Schedule:

December 3rd- Afterschool Hours 3:00pm, Youth Group 4:30pm, Soup & Song 5:15pm

- Confirmation 6:00pm, JAM 6:00pm, HS Bible Study 7:00pm

December 7th - Worship 9:00am, JAM/Christmas Program Dress Rehearsal 10:00am

December 10th - Afterschool Hours 3:00pm , Youth Group 4:30pm, Dinner 5:30pm

- Confirmation 6:00pm, JAM 6:00pm, HS Bible Study 7:00pm

December 14th - Worship 9:00am, *Christmas Program*

December 17th - Afterschool Hours 3:00pm , Youth Group 4:30pm, Dinner 5:30pm

- Confirmation 6:00pm, JAM 6:00pm, HS Bible Study 7:00pm

December 18th - HS Lunch Bunch @ North

December 21st - Worship 9:00am, Holiday Bake Sale 10:00am

December 24th - Christmas Eve Worship 4:00pm

December 28th - Worship 9:00am

Christmas Bake Sale

Stop at the Christmas Bake Sale on Sunday, December 21st following worship. The youth are working to raise funds that subsidize their summer programs for 2026.

If you are interested in providing baked goods to sell or helping at the event, please reach out to Grace at grace@hopechurchec.com or sign up in the Gathering Area.



Serve Our Congregation

The Executive Team is looking to fill the Vice-President role.

The Executive Team provides direction and support for leadership and staff of the congregation in their activities to fill the mission of Hope Lutheran. They work closely with and report to the Congregation Council.

With a new year soon to start we will have several people whose terms of service on our church boards and our council will conclude. Please consider sharing your leadership skills with our congregation! Please contact the church office if you can volunteer on any of these boards.

Executive Committee – Comprised of the officers of the congregation and the pastor. Meet once per month to set the agenda for the council meeting. Provide support to the council and the church staff towards fulfilling the church's mission.

Board of Education – Work together to develop and evaluate educational materials and programs, implement special fun activities, and provide resources and organization for children and youth programming.

Board of Outreach – Consider and review donation allocations for distribution and recommend benevolence allocations to the Church Council. Be a liaison between community, the Church Council, congregation, the ELCA, and the wider church. Communicate activities and mission opportunities to the congregation. These include involvement in the ABD Meal Program, serve meals at The Community Table, host a blood drive, provide meals and overnight hosts to The Beacon House, service mission to El Salvador, among other things.

Board of Rachel's Place – Provide support to the Rachel's Place staff and programs so that the quality of child care provided matches the mission of the Center and Hope Lutheran Church. Work to monitor budgets, staffing, and programs to support a safe and loving environment. In addition, this board plans special events to celebrate the happenings at the Center and strengthen the relationship with our congregation.

Board of Trustees – Have charge of the general management of situations relating to legal matters and finances. Supervise the maintenance of the properties of the congregation and act as advisory board for the Building & Grounds Committee. Function as liaison between the Congregation Council and those standing committees overseen by the board. Responsible for counting and depositing weekly offerings. Prepare a proposed budget for each church year and present it to the congregation for approval and recommendation at the annual meeting of the congregation.

Board of Outreach Opportunities to Give Back



Hats & Mittens Needed!

Hope is collecting hats and mittens for the kids at Sam Davey Elementary and adults at Community Table!

We have started the

collection now so they are prepared for the upcoming winter months. Many kids and adults will need these items as the weather changes. For the kiddos: waterproof gloves/mittens are appreciated for playing in the snow. If you happen to see hats and mittens/gloves on sale, would you please be so kind as to donate a pair or two? Please place them in the box labeled "Hats & Mittens" in the Gathering Area. Thank you!

Remembrance Tree

The Board of Outreach will again be "Lighting Up" the Gathering Area by selling blue and white lights for your special remembrance.

Blue ones are in memory of loved ones and white ones are in honor of special people in our lives. The bulbs will go on sale for \$5 in the Gathering Area, November 30th and continue until December 14th. Funds raised through this endeavor support Hope's commitment to the Community Table and other Outreach projects.



Beacon House/Family Promise of the Chippewa Valley

Hope members are providing the evening meals for the guests staying at Beacon House starting on Thursday, December 11th through Saturday, December 13th. We are looking for volunteers to provide a main dish, side dish, or dessert each evening as well as volunteers to provide a few grocery items for the week. Please consider serving this important ministry as a family or with friends. Sign-up sheets will be in the Gathering Area. Food can be dropped off between 5:30--5:45 pm as dinner is served at 6 pm. I will notify you before the date with the number of adults and children planned for the meal. If you have any questions - please reach out to Bridgit Mazuk (715) 225-4496. or bmazuk@gmail.com.





Streaming Sunday Worship

We continue to stream our Sunday worship services over Facebook or through our website for those that can't make it in-person with us. It is amazing how many people we can reach with our streaming worship services. Hope's worship is streamed live on Sunday's via our Facebook page or through our website, hopechurchec.com.

Days for Girls

The Eau Claire Days For Girls Team will be hosting coffee connections on Sunday, December 14.



Your donations will go for the wages, \$8 a day, for the women in Los Heroes that work making the Days for Girls kits in the Lutheran Church of Los Heroes. They're wages are funded only by donations.

Note the new logo for the El Salvador Days for Girls team in memory of Pastor Sonia that led the team for many years.

Ways to Give

Our congregation offers a variety of means by which you may make a offering. Besides bringing your offering in person or mailing it, Hope has several ways you can give electronically:

Through our Website- Hope's website address is www.hopechurchec.com. Once there, click on the "Give" tab. Then click on the icon "Fast and Easy Giving." That will take you to our Subsplash site.

Hope Phone App - Hope has a free phone app which will give you access to Subsplash where you can access information. From here you can click on the "Give" tab.

Text Your Gift - Text the message "give2hope" to the phone number 206-859-9409. Follow the steps to set up an account and you're on your way.

Simple Giving - You can set up an automatic pre-authorized withdrawal from your bank account. Forms are available in the church office and also on the church website. If you're looking on the App Store for our phone app, the icon looks like this:





BISHOP HALOM'S CHRISTMAS MESSAGE: WHEN GOD SHOWS UP

As we approach the season of Christmas that so many of us adore, I'd like to address a few churchy words that theologians like to use and sound impressive when using them. The first word is *incarnation* and the second is *Emmanuel*.

If your church uses the Revised Common Lectionary (RCL), you will again hear the passage from the first chapter of John on Christmas Day. The passage famously concludes in verse 14 with the words, "And the Word became flesh and lived among us..." This verse speaks directly to the concept of incarnation. In other words, it speaks to a God who literally takes on human flesh and enters this world in the form of baby Jesus. It's in stark contrast to what some believe and experience - a God who exists far away, only to look down on us from God's heavenly throne. Instead, the incarnate God speaks to a God who is willing to take on the human experience with all the joys and sorrows that come with it. One can readily see that Jesus did indeed make his way through the human experience. He felt joy. He felt pain. His eyes teared up. And even if I can't recall a story when he laughed, I gotta believe that he really did!

Another passage found in the Christmas season comes from the gospel of Matthew, which references Isaiah 7:14: "Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel, which means, 'God is with us.'" One of the most important lessons I ever learned in seminary was in a pastoral care class. I had hoped to learn what to say, especially to someone hurting or grieving. What I learned was much more important. Instead of learning what to say, I was taught to show up - to be present. As time passes, few will remember what I say, but will remember that I was there. That's precisely why the name *Emmanuel* means so much to me. It's a constant reminder that God is always with us. Consider the final words in the gospel of Matthew: "And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age." (Matthew 28:20b) Presence matters because God embodies it and teaches it.

Christmas is known for its gift giving nature. We share gifts with one another to reveal our love for them. This year, I hope that regardless of the quantity or quality of the wrapped presents that lay under the tree, you will recognize the gift of presence. Not only the presence of your loved ones, but particularly the presence of God. So many of you will grieve as you experience the lack of presence from a loved one due to death or distance. My heart grieves with you. My hope lies in a God who provides and will gift you all with someone who will be present with you in some way at some time. If nothing else, remember God's presence as you receive the body and blood of Christ in the worship services that you attend, for that's yet another way in which God shows up.

Fellow disciples, Merry Christmas to you all and may the presence of God incarnate, Emmanuel, embrace you in such a way that brings warmth to your heart!



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| Phone 715.832.1414 | Ann Miloszewicz | Parish Administer | 2101 | ann@hopechurchcec.com |
| Website www.hopechurchcec.com | Lauren Kainz | Office Assistant | 2101 | lauren@hopechurchcec.com |
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| Address 2226 Eddy Lane Eau Claire, WI 54703 | Jody Christian | Web Design | 2102 | jody@hopechurchcec.com |
| Office Hours Mon—Thur: 8:30 am–3:00pm Fri: 8:30 am–12:00 pm | Jim Newman | Director of Music | 2104 | jim@hopechurchcec.com |
| | Leanne O'Bryan | Dir. of Rachel's Place | 2200 | rachelsplacelc@gmail.com |
| | Korena and Stephen Covill | Custodians | | |
| | Brian Petersen | Buildings and Grounds | | |
| | Carol Mohr | Church President | | |



Hope Lutheran is a handicapped accessible congregation providing barrier-free and elevator access, marked parking spaces, large-print materials and accessible restrooms.



Download the Hope Church App on the
Apple "App Store" or Android "Google Play" platforms!