

Visions of Hope

August 20, 2017



4356 State Hwy 97
Edgar, WI 54426

Mission Statement:

Hope's Mission is to teach the Bible and follow Christ's example by giving back to the community and those in need

Website:

hope4centralwi.com

Email:

hope4centralwi@yahoo.com

Sunday Worship
9:30 am

Communion
1st, 3rd and 5th Sundays

Interim Pastor:

Mark Reiff
920-634-1246 (cell)
715-352-2555 (church)

Secretary:

hopelcsec@gmail.com

Duties List

August 27

September 3

Ushers

Larry Peterson
Leroy Syring
Chad Erickson
Ron Kunkel

Greeters

Rick & Sandy Bradley
Tammy Kirsch

Readers

Rose Schilling
Ron Kunkel

Acolyte

Korbyn Bauman
Jaicee Kunkel



We live in a world that is often frightening and that offers Christians a new set of challenges most every day. Sometimes we are tempted to hopelessness, or simply to surrender and give up to a world that appears to have gone mad. As in the time of St. Augustine, our culture appears to be in decline and may even collapse. And yet, in many ways, it has always been so. We in America have lived beneath the shelter of the faith of our fathers and the blessing that faith brought to this new land. But that shelter and that blessing may be disappearing before our eyes. As we look for models to seek guidance as we proceed into the future maybe we need to look back to the future. We could look back and see the future in the early Church; how it lived, how its saw itself, and how it responded to Christ's calling amid the trials and tribulations of their time, their culture, and their world. It was as ugly as ours is becoming. It was destined for destruction. Perhaps ours is as well. In the second century of the Christian era the following was contained in the Letter to Diognetus. Some believe the letter's intended recipient was the Emperor Hadrian and that the author was from the Christian community founded by St. John the Beloved. Read it and be blessed by its wisdom, courage, and faith.

*Pax Christi,
Mark Reiff*

The Church in the World

For Christians cannot be distinguished from the rest of the human race by country or language or customs. They do not live in cities of their own; they do not use a peculiar form of speech; they do not follow an eccentric manner of life. This doctrine of theirs has not been discovered by ingenuity or deep thought of inquisitive men, nor do they put forward a merely human teaching, as some people do. Yet, although they live in Greek and barbarian cities alike, as each man's lot has been cast, and follow the customs of the country in clothing and food and other matters of daily living, at the same time they give proof of the remarkable and admittedly extraordinary constitution of their commonwealth. They live in their own countries, but only as aliens. They have a share in everything as citizens, and endure everything as foreigners. Every foreign land is their fatherland, and yet for them every fatherland is a foreign land. They marry, like everyone else, and they beget children, but they do not cast of their offspring. They share their board with each other but not their marriage bed. It is true that they are "in the flesh," but they do not live "according to the flesh." They busy themselves on earth, but their citizenship is in heaven. They obey the established laws, but in their own lives they go beyond what the laws require. They love all men, and by all men are persecuted. They are unknown, and still they are condemned; they are put to death, and yet they are brought to life. They are poor, and yet they make many rich; they are completely destitute, and yet they enjoy complete abundance. They are dishonored, and in their very dishonor are glorified; they are defamed, and are vindicated. They are reviled, and yet they bless; when they are affronted, they still pay due respect. When they do good, they are punished as evildoers; undergoing punishment, they rejoice because they are brought to life. They are treated by the Jews as foreigners and enemies, and are hunted down by the Greeks; and all the time those who hate them find it impossible to justify their enmity.

To put it simply: What the soul is in the body, *that* Christians are in the world. The soul is dispersed through all the members of the body, and Christians are scattered through all the cities of the world. The soul dwells in the body, but does not belong to the body, and the Christians dwell in the world, but do not belong to the world. The soul, which is invisible, is kept under guard in the visible body; in the same way, Christians are recognized when they are in the world, but their religion remains unseen. The flesh hates the soul and treats it as an enemy, even though it has suffered no wrong, because it is prevented from enjoying its pleasures; so too the world hates Christians, even though it suffers no wrong at their hands, because they range themselves against its pleasures. The soul loves the flesh that hates it, and its members; in the same way Christians love those who hate them. The soul is shut up in the body, and yet itself holds the body together; while Christians are restrained in the world as in a prison, and yet hold the world together. The soul which is immortal, is housed in a mortal dwelling; while Christians are settled among corruptible things, to wait for the incorruptibility that will be theirs in heaven. The soul, when faring badly as to food and drink, grows better; as too Christians, when punished, day by day increase more and more. It is to no less a post than this that God has ordered them, and they must not try to evade it.

From the Early Church Fathers: Letter to Diognetus 130 A.D.

The grief process is like sailing across a stormy sea. When we first experience a great loss, we are launched into a tempest of emotions. We feel surrounded by darkness and heavy waves of anguish. Comforting words are drowned out by howling winds of sorrow. Most of the time we don't even remember what people say. We feel lonely and out of control as we are swept toward a new destination in life.

This journey through grief has four phases:

- Shock – In the days and weeks immediately following a devastating loss, common feelings include numbness and unreality, like being trapped in a bad dream. “this can't be happening to me”.
- Reality – As the fact of the loss takes hold, deep sorrow sets in, accompanied by weeping and other forms of emotional release. Loneliness and depression may also occur. That sense of being all alone can overwhelm us.
- Reaction – Anger, brought on by feelings of abandonment and helplessness, may be directed toward family, friends, doctors, the one who died or deserted us, and especially God. Other typical feelings include listlessness, apathy, and guilt over perceived failures or unresolved personal issues.
- Recovery – Finally, there is a gradual, almost imperceptible return to normalcy. This is a time of adjustment to the new circumstances in life. This is time when we fall back on our faith and God's promise to be with us always.

These phases vary in duration for each person, so we shouldn't impose a timetable on anyone, your grief timetable is going to be completely different from anyone else. Some people need a year or two, while others may take less time. Holidays, anniversaries and birthdays can trigger intense grief, especially the first year. Healing a broken heart is similar to healing a broken leg. Rushing the process can actually hinder our long-term recovery, like removing a cast before the bone is strong enough to bear weight. Grief that is left unresolved may trigger depression, alcoholism, drug abuse, or other serious problems.

Ecclesiastes 3:1,4 says “To everything there is a season, a time for every purpose under heaven: a time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance.” Many Bible stories demonstrate how God comforts His people in times of sorrow and loss. Job clung desperately to God, despite catastrophic loss and unhelpful friends. David, a man after God's own heart, openly grieved the death of his son.

Jesus is our best role model for combining faith and grief, as revealed in John 11:1-45. When He saw Mary and Martha in anguish over the death of their brother Lazarus, He wept and groaned. Although Jesus knew He was about to raise Lazarus from the dead, He still allowed Himself to feel – and express – the depths of human sorrow. We can take comfort in knowing that Jesus has experienced all of our pain, including loss, rejection, betrayal, and dying. As our Savior and Redeemer, He took all our sins to the cross and forgives us when we ask. As our Good Shepherd, He leads us safely through “*the valley of the shadow of death*” (*Psalms 23:4b*). Remember, a shadow indicates that there is a light on the other side! The silver lining here is God's promises to us, and He never forgets His promises.

Deep faith in Christ does not prevent grief when a believer dies, but it infuses grief with hope! For Christians, death is a passageway to eternal life (see John 5:24). Paul said, “*To live is Christ, and to die is gain*” (*Philippians 1:21b*). He also said, “*I want you to know what will happen to the Christians who have died so you will not be full of sorrow like people who have no hope. For since we believe that Jesus died and was raised to life again, we also believe that when Jesus comes, God will bring back with Jesus all the Christians who have died*” (*1 Thessalonians 4:13b-14, NLT*).

If we don't know whether our loved one believed in Jesus, we must simply trust God. The Bible says, “*The Lord ... is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.*” (*2 Peter 3:9*). The thief on the cross turned to Christ in the last hours of life (see Luke 23:39-43). We do not know what happens in a person's final moments between life and death, but God does – and He decides who enters His heaven.

The Holy Spirit – also called the Comforter (John 14:26) – can give us God's peace, even in the midst of suffering. *Philippians 4:6-7* tells us, “*Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.*” *The peace of God does not come from our circumstances, but from drawing close to Him. Jesus promised, “Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted” (Matthew 5:4).* God beckons us into His loving arms so He can heal our wounded hearts.

Here are three steps to recovery

- Grieve – Though grief is bitter, we must let sorrow run its natural course. *Isaiah 53:3b* describes Jesus as “*a Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.*” Denying or repressing pain can lead to emotional problems. Let the pain out, share the good memories.
- Believe – We need to put our faith in God's promises, trusting that our Heavenly Father knows best and that His understanding is perfect. *Isaiah 55:9* says, “*For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts.*”

Hope's Happenings

(cont.)

- Receive – God desires to give us comfort, but we must reach out and accept it. Through prayer and meditation on His Word, we can find a place in God's presence where He will wrap His arms around us as a loving father would console a hurting child. Receive the help of others in your family, church and community.

Here are some Scriptures that can bring hope, strength and peace:

Psalms 16, 23, 34, 91

John 14:1-27

2 Corinthians 5:1-9

Philippians 4:6-13

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

Revelation 21:1-22:5

The Bible says, "*Blessed be the God ... of all comfort, who comforts us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God*" (2 Corinthians 1:3-4). A silver lining in sorrow's dark cloud is that God can use our experiences to reach out to others with compassion and comfort.

Everyone grieves differently – depending on personality, religious beliefs, maturity, emotional stability, and cultural traditions. Here are some general counseling guidelines:

- Ask God for guidance about when to speak and what to say. Encourage the bereaved person to share his or her feelings, then be a good listener and don't judge what is said. Romans 12:15b says, "Weep with those who weep."
- Avoid platitudes. Let the person feel sorrow without implying that he or she should "cheer up" or "be joyful in the Lord," as this could give the impression you are questioning the person's spirituality. For heaven's sake don't say things like, "you'll get over it in time".
- Don't push or preach, but if the person indicates an openness, pray and share meaningful Scriptures.
- Do simple things without being asked, such as bringing a meal or mowing the lawn.

Pray, pray and pray some more.

Grief will visit our lives many times because we love others, but the Lord promises to be with us forever, even in the midst of our darkest hours and God will bless you. The loss of a loved one is life's most stressful event and can cause a major emotional crisis. After the death of someone you love, you experience *bereavement*, which literally means "to be deprived by death." When the funeral is a memory and your relatives and friends have returned to their busy lives, you may wonder how you are going to cope. If grief threatens to overwhelm you, try saying with the psalmist, "*My soul is weary with sorrow; strengthen me according to your word*" (Psalm 119:28). Cling to God's promises as you work through your grief. "He gives power to the weak, and to those who have no might He increases strength" (Isaiah 40:29). The Lord God is our rock and refuge and always will be, that is something we can count on.

Lord God, bless us all in this time of sorrow. Amen

Rose Schilling

THANK
YOU

....so very much for your generous donation. We are working on making our home more handicapped accessible for our daughter. We will use the money for those projects.
The Zarins family

Hope's Happenings

Ladies

Sunday: August 20 Attendance 96

Offering:	Regular	\$1715.00
	Building	\$85.00
	Sign	\$510.00
	El Salvador	\$100.00
	Loose	\$22.00
	Mission	\$65.00
	Total	\$2497.00

We have two opportunities coming up in September that will be a chance to increase our faith and knowledge of the Word as well as have a great time with your girlfriends.

- * September 14, Forest Springs is having a Ladies Day with speaker and author Ann Sullivan. There is a pamphlet by the bulletin board about this.
- * September 16, Faith Fellowship in Marshfield is doing a simulcast of Beth Moore titled Captivated, The Wonder of Christ on the Winding Road.

If you are interested in going to either or both events, please let Rosie Bauman know asap

PRAYER CONCERNS: Please remember the following people in your prayers

Anita Bauman—stroke—Marshfield Hospital
Ken Bauman—shoulder surgery
Tom Streckert—shoulder surgery—home recovering
Duane Kamenick—knee replacement—home recovering
Grace Schraufnagel—cancer—friend of the Streckert's
*John Hamann—Atrium
Shyra Martyn—breast cancer—Randy and Sara's daughter-in-law
George Wright—fell broke hip and spiral break in upper femur—Bonnie's dad
Mildred Imhoff—fell and broke her femur—Ken's mother
Don Hanson—health issues
Dorothy Wright—fluid on lungs and congestive heart failure—Bonnie Blake's mom
Leroy Syring—recovering from a stroke
Scott Campbell—Mayo—treatment for myeloma—relation to the Streckert's
Paulette Kroll—Myleloid Leukemia—receiving chemo treatments
Bill Brayton—DeEtta Peterson's brother
Amy—cancer—friend of Barb Mohr-Borchardt
Dylan & Logan Weichelt—sons of Bryan & Stacey
Sawyer Mueller—microcephaly—Daryl & Beth's son
Jennifer Bohman—prayers of healing

PRAYERS OF SUPPORT:
for the family of Joyce LeVoy who passed away on Friday



*Want to thank you all for the cards and the prayers for John. The prayers do wonders. John came home on Tuesday, August 22. It will sure be nice to have him home. Thanks again. *Karen*

The Bulletin Board

- September 4, Office will be closed due to Labor Day
- September 10, 8:45-9:30 am Sunday School starts
 - Blessing of Backpacks
 - Grandparents Day
- September 11, 6:00 pm Worship and Music Committee meeting