

Visions of Hope

December 31, 2017



F4356 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

Sunday Worship
9:30 am

Sunday School
8:45-9:30 am

Communion
1st, 3rd and 5th Sundays

Pastor:

Mark Reiff

pastorreiff.hopechurch@gmail.com

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

Secretary:

hopelcsec@gmail.com

Duties List

January 7
January 14

Ushers

Gary Bauman
Larry Peterson
Andy Yoder
Ron Kunkel

Greeters

Tammy Kirsch
Gary & Dianne Bauman

Readers

Beth Mueller
Jen Kunkel

Acolyte

Anna Peterson
Jaicee Kunkel



New Year's Eve and New Year's Day are seen by almost everyone as a very secular observance in the midst of the 12 days of Christmas. However, the origins of our January 1 celebrations are anything but secular. The origins are, in fact, deeply religious and rooted in the calendar changes made by the Catholic Church under Pope Gregory in 1582. It is this Gregorian calendar that introduced the idea of a leap year to keep the calendar from drifting away from fixed dates for the summer and winter solstice.

Although, at first, only Catholic countries adopted the Gregorian calendar, its wisdom gradually won over all of Europe - one nation at a time. England and her colonies finally adopted the Gregorian calendar in 1752. Moreover, many of the European nations celebrated the New Year in late winter or early spring. Until the adoption of the new calendar, England, and her American colonies, observed March 25 as the New Year. Incredible as it may sound, public records from 1752 in Britain and Colonial America have a huge dislocation in their documents due to the fact that nearly two weeks of time literally disappeared overnight with the adoption of the Gregorian calendar.

All of this calendar correction also points us to the religious significance of January 1 as the new New Year. In the Gregorian Calendar, that all of the western world has now followed slightly more than 250 years, the birth of Jesus is always observed on December 25. This birth date it is, of course, followed (in accordance with the Jewish law) by the circumcision of Jesus on January 1, eight days after his birth. This eight-day separation between birth and circumcision was mandated by Jewish law because the early days of life for any child are so uncertain. A Jewish boy doesn't even have a name until, in compliance Abrahamic tradition, he is circumcised and then *given* his name. This eight-day separation, as I have pointed out before, also represents in Judaism a *new beginning or even a new era*.

The Gregorian Calendar recognizes this naming of Jesus as the reason for changing the New Year to January 1 because the era of Jesus now claims every New Year as his own. This is precisely why we have listed the years as A.D. - Anno Domini; Latin for "Year of our Lord." And we have had also the corresponding B. C. - "Before Christ."

Clearly the western Gregorian Calendar points to the birth of Jesus as an enormous and consequential change for the world and for all of humanity. Jesus birth is at the heart and center of all time and now the years are claimed for Jesus Christ and by his kingdom. This is something we Christians should never lose sight of especially as the secular world endeavors to undermine our calendar and seeks to change its meaning.

Perhaps you have noticed the new naming of the years by the "secularists" and by our "academics." It is now considered politically incorrect to use B.C. or A.D. No, in the mind of these naysayers, that naming of "The Name" is offensive. We are now told that we have to use BCE or CE meaning "before the common era" and the "common era." It is an effort to de-Christianize our calendar, to make it secular, politically acceptable, and in-offensive to all.

Well I, for one, am offended. Yes, I am taking offense (it seems a popular pastime these days) because this politically correct action denies the very reality of the Western/Christian calendar. The calendar, as we know it, has its origins in the body of Christ and his Church. The Church, in fact, changed the New Year from previous multiple New Year datings observed by a variety of western nations to one central date with the specific understanding that years now belong to *the word made flesh*, Jesus Christ.

I refuse to go along to get along and I won't/don't cooperate with the "BCE and CE" nonsense. This is why, for instance, I always sign my checks not only with my name but with "A.D." after the day and year on the top line of my check. It is Christ's year, not my year, not some academics odd notion of a year, not even our government's year.

Neither the universities nor the government give me the time in which I live. Time is a gift from God. Hopefully, I will live in gratitude and praise of *the One*, this God, this Jesus, who gives me *this time* to respond to his calling, sing his praises, and work to the glory of his holy name.

It is my sincerest hope that you, and all of us, will gratefully and wisely consign our years not to the emptiness of a "common era" (whatever that is supposed to mean) but to the One who has saved, redeemed, and sanctified us and all of our time. He is the One, this Jesus, who has wondrously and graciously given us all a New Year, an Anno Domini, as another year of our Lord.

Pax Christi,
Mark Reiff +

Happy New Year, so what? That phrase is not going to make anything better. Have you taken a moment lately to look at life as it is and consider some possibilities of how it could be, instead of the same hum drum life that it was in 2017? It's easy to put this off and wait until later, you know, that commitment to make life better in the new year. But sometimes it seems that much of our life is spent waiting, expecting something spectacular to happen, you know, that wonderful life that's going to just fall out of the sky!! We procrastinate until it's too late and then we wonder how we got sucked into the same routine as last year.

Waiting is a fact of life on earth. In a small sense we wait in line for a vanilla latte, we wait for our car to fill up with gas, we wait for the cable guy to show up (between 8 and 12...ha! usually it's 2:10). In a bigger sense we wait to meet the man or women of our dreams, we wait nine months for our baby to be born, we wait for a job promotion or a pay increase. But the thing is we don't do anything but wait! We don't pray about things when we need to, but we sure like to complain when God's doesn't answer our prayers on our time table or with the answers we want.

But are you looking at your own life and evaluating how much time you've spent waiting? Have you waited (maybe too long?) to make a change, chart a new course or accept an unchangeable situation. I waited a long time to make a serious commitment to writing and speaking. What held me back? As with each of us, my answers aren't simple. I was raising children, working at having a good marriage and working out of the home to help make the ends meet. Those are valid reasons; but in complete honesty I held back because of fear and lack of self confidence. When I finally broke through the fear and dove in, God was there to meet me and encourage my progress. Am I still a little afraid? Of course, but God strengthens and encourages me. My devotions don't just fall out of the sky either, but the Holy Spirit works to bring out the words of encouragement that I write.

"But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles," says Isaiah 40:31

Wait upon the Lord? Yes, but sometimes the opposite is true as well. Sometimes we jump in and take action without spending much time or thought on the process or likely results. Have you ever tried to "fix" a situation instead of allowing God or others to take care of it? Acting too quickly can lead to comedic and sometimes tragic results. But not acting at all can be even more tragic than that. Make a choice, choose Christ and the salvation that comes with your faith in him. Choose family and home life, choose your church family over outside influences. Choose kindness, honesty and integrity. And with those choices, your life can be turned around into something you have been seeking each and every New Year.

In either case there is an antidote and a way to prevent a repeat. Check in with the Lord. A LOT! Talk to Him, read His word and get confirming wisdom from a spiritually mature friend. It would sound something like this:

"Father, I really hate my job but am grateful to have it. Thank you for provision. Please bring me clarity about when/if I should take any action to change my circumstance."

Then consider why God may have you in that job and the possibilities of making a change.

Find another believer and ask for his/her prayers, insight and encouragement.

Read in your Bible about people who've waited on the Lord and others who've taken obedient action. Like Job and Abraham. (Jesus has done both.)

Psalm 138:8 says, "The Lord will fulfill His purpose for me; your love O Lord, endures forever."

God's timeline is frequently much different than ours. When we wait on God's timing, then take deliberate action, the outcome is likely to be refreshment and contentment. I hope your life is filled with intentional and purposeful waiting while God strengthens you, then fruit-bearing action when the time is right for you to soar like an eagle. "With God all things are possible", not easy, but possible.

In any case, let the Lord strengthen you for a happy, healthy and prosperous New Year!!

Your servant in Christ;
Rosie Schilling

Hope's Happenings

Sunday:	December 24	Attendance 135
Offering:	Regular	\$2515.00
	Building	\$35.00
	Sunday School	\$1.00
	Loose	\$51.00
	Well	\$100.00
	Sign	\$40.00
	Total	\$2742.00

Sunday:	December 25	Attendance 85
Offering:	Regular	\$1037.00
	Loose	\$100.00
	Total	\$1137.00

Sunday:	December 31	Attendance 82
Offering:	Regular	\$1305.00
	Building	\$10.00
	Sunday School	\$1.00
	Loose	\$31.00
	Sign	\$120.00
	Mission	\$85.00
	Total	\$1552.00

PRAYER CONCERNS: Please remember the following people in your prayers



Anna—health issues—Ken Schilling’s niece
 Bob Kudingo—colon cancer—Rose Schilling’s foster brother
 Dennis Woik—cancer—friend of Chad Bender
 Stan Blaszkowski—internal injuries sustained in fall—Michelle Bauman’s dad
 Marge Manecke—health issues
 Corinne Kane—friend of Cassi Bauman
 Linda Krahn—breast cancer—sister in law to the Kamenick’s
 Mildred Imhoff—chemo treatment—Ken’s mother
 Grace Schraufnagel—cancer—friend of the Streckert’s
 John Hamann—home recovering
 Shyra Martyn—breast cancer—Randy and Sara’s daughter-in-law
 Don Hanson—health issues
 Leroy Syring—recovering from a stroke
 Paulette Kroll—Myleloid Leukemia—receiving chemo treatments
 Bill Brayton—DeEtta Peterson’s brother
 Dylan & Logan Weichelt—sons of Bryan & Stacey
 Sawyer Mueller—microcephaly—Daryl & Beth’s son
 Jennifer Bohman—prayers of healing

The Bulletin Board

- **Sunday, January 7, 8:45-9:30 am Sunday School**
- **NO Tuesday Bible Study on January 9**
- **Wednesday, January 10**
 - **2:00 pm Bible Study**
 - **5:15 pm Confirmation**
- **NOTE DATE CHANGE**—Installation of 2018 Council members will be held Sunday, January 14

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

Our January and February mission projects will be collecting items for the Wausau Warming Center and the Salvation Army Transitional Center Wausau. We will be collecting items both months. If you would like to donate, there is a tub along by the coffee bar. Shopping lists are available on the coffee bar and bulletin board with pictures. Contact Audrey Kamenick @ frontier.com (715-352-2714). In February, we will be tying blankets for the center, contact Rosie Bauman if questions (715-352-3177). Items needed: Instant Oatmeal Packets, Soft Breakfast Bars, Fruit and Applesauce cups, Peanut butter and jelly, Creamer and Sugar, Hand and Foot Warmers. Winter Socks —NEW (Men, Women, Children), Laundry Soap, Cleaning Supplies, Long Underwear (NEW), Hats, Gloves and cereal.

Hope's Happenings



"Thank you so much for the gift card, it helped me get home for the Christmas program!! I enjoyed seeing everyone again. I would also like to thank you all for funding my mission trip to Frakes, Kentucky this year. I will let you know how it goes!! God bless." *Kia Lechleitner*

The Stratford Food Pantry is very thankful for your generous donation of food items. Many people and families in need are very happy and thankful to wonderful people like you. Peace and Joy to you!
The Stratford Food Pantry

The Kings Pantry would like to thank everyone who donated food. And thanks Duane and Audrey for delivering it.
Marlene Churney

Thank you to all you good-hearted people for your contribution to the needs of others. We wish to thank you for all your support for those finding themselves in need. Again, thank you for your generosity and for the love and concern for other people.
Ivadeane Abegglen, Volunteers of CUP Food Pantry

A Heart Felt Thank You!

I want thank the family of Hope Lutheran Church for their many expressions of love and kindness given and shown to me during the Christmas Holiday. Your generosity to me is really quite humbling. My office on Christmas morning was filled with many gifts and kind words...gifts of love from so many. I am deeply grateful for all of these expressions of your love and support for my me and my ministry among you. Pax Christ in 2018 A.D. *Mark Reiff +*

A huge thank you goes out to all of you who made the Christmas eve program possible. The choir members, Biblical characters, Beth for narrating, Brian for sound and lights, and many others who made the cantata possible, thank you so much! Two individuals that deserve special recognition are Gayle and Dianne. For getting characters outfitted and dressed, setting up lunch and cookies, and making sure everything ran as planned, you were both appreciated. Thank you all for serving our Lord!
Bonnie

Thank you so much for the Christmas gift card. I appreciate this church body and enjoy being a part of you all. *Bonnie*

Thank you for your generous gift card that I received for Christmas. Happy 2018! *Barb*