

# Visions of Hope

February 18, 2018



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**

**February 25**

*March 4*

**Ushers**

**Daryl Mueller**

**Gary Bauman**

*Russ Bauman*

*Andy Yoder*

**Greeters**

**Daryl & Beth Mueller**

*Pam Ludwig*

**Readers**

**Elaine Mueller**

*Rachel Ludwig*

**Acolyte**

**Jaicee Kunkel**

*Madison Borchardt*



Once again, our nation has suffered a mass shooting. This time at Parkland High School just north of Miami in Florida. And once again, our nation's politicians are putting their hypocrisy on full display in the remedies that they put forward. The false mantra of these hypocrites is always "gun control."

Let me be clear before I go any further: I have never purchased a gun and have shot one only once in my life. That one instance was under the oversight of my uncle when I was age 12. He was showing his two youngest sons and his two nephews (my brother Tom and me) how to shoot a gun. It was a rifle. It was autumn. Our shot (we each had one) was over an empty and open expanse of a lake north of Tomahawk, Wisconsin. I remember vividly the day and the recoil of the weapon against my shoulder. I didn't like it.

Now that I have established my lack of knowledge about guns I want to reiterate that the mantra of the hypocrites is rubbish. Guns don't kill people, people do. The elephant in the room, that everyone is ignoring, is the precipitous moral decline in country that respects neither life nor God.

When former president Barack Obama commented on the Parkland shooting he revealed himself as the Commander in Chief of hypocrisy. Isn't this the same man who has supported unfettered abortion in every phase of his political life? Isn't this the same man who offered up a bill in Illinois to legalize the horror of partial birth abortion? And he has the temerity to speak about the value of life!

The problem that most of our nation's political and social hypocrites are ignoring is the very intentional public degradation of our nation's Judeo-Christian traditions of law and morality. These traditions have been the underpinning reality of American public behavior for fully two hundred years of our nation's history. Yet, wasn't it some of these same political hypocrites who recently, in our nation's Senate, rejected a bill to restrict abortion to the first 20 weeks of gestation. Now many of these same hectoring politicians have the temerity, the chutzpah, to talk about the sanctity of life! What a clueless disgrace they are!

Our nation's moral underpinning has been under assault for decades and is being destroyed piece by piece by our nation's elites and by our courts. It began with a mid-20<sup>th</sup> century ruling of our "Supreme" Court declaring the separation of church and state. You simply cannot find any support for that ruling in our nation's Constitution. In fact, that ruling was an abrogation of the Constitution. What the Constitution states is that the Congress shall establish no state religion. But that same Constitution specifically did not prohibit states from establishing a State religion. And, in fact, many states indeed established a State religion. These states with a State religion existed in our nation well into the mid-19<sup>th</sup> Century and past the Civil War. The Supreme Court's ruling, then, was a blatant and unconstitutional act of arrogance and ignorance. It was an assault on federalism and on state's rights. Regrettably, it went unchallenged.

Undoubtedly, the pivotal moment in the undermining of our Judeo-Christian tradition of law and the dignity of life occurred with Justice Blackman's majority decision in Roe v. Wade granting legalized national abortion on demand. Think about that for a moment, ponder it, roll it over in your mind. Does anyone seriously think that the consequences of Roe v. Wade haven't undermined, almost irrevocably, the dignity of life?

Individuals who have been born in our nation since the Roe v. Wade decision fully realize, even if subconsciously, that they could have been aborted, killed in the womb, might never to have had life, might never have seen the light of day, might never have experienced the majesty of God's creation. Think on that soul haunting nightmare.

I have said something several times to several different people but have never written it for public consumption. Yet, now I will. What makes you think that you should be safe walking on a public street when a child isn't even safe in its mother's womb?

We as a nation, and through our institutions, have totally degraded human life. We have demolished its sanctity and have thought nothing of it. Nor have we thought about its long-term consequences on the human psyche.

So, the easy way out, the coward's way out, the hypocrite's way out, is to blame guns, an inanimate object that is used by sinful human beings. The secular gods of our time forbid that we should take personal responsibility much less blame ourselves.

Moreover, as in our current culture, if human beings aren't going to be formed by any morality, brought up in any faith, and are taught only by our elites and by our state-controlled schools to snigger at the Judeo-Christian God, then be prepared to witness the cascading devolution of our society into chaos and violence.

As Barak Obama's UCC Pastor, Jeremiah Wright, once famously said, but now is especially true, "Our chickens are coming home to roost!" Yes, they are, and it "ain't purdy."

When I lived in the San Francisco Bay area I had an Episcopal priest friend who worked in Child Protective Service while he also did interim work in pastorally vacant Episcopal Churches in the diocese. He once remarked to me that we needed to establish a state religion. He did not care what the particular religion would be but that we desperately needed one because, he said, our young people are not growing up with any moral foundation. His exact quote was that "the young people he worked with weren't immoral, they were totally amoral!"

Imagine that: "Totally amoral!" An immoral person at least knows when they are doing wrong or even breaking God's law. But an amoral person doesn't know anything. It's all good. Killing is just as easy as living. Yes, it's all so easy in the parlance of our current degraded society... humanity and life, easy and disposable, and easy death. In such a rudderless society as ours is becoming the only thing that matters is summed by the words; "If it feels good do it."

All of the ugliness in our society; the sexual abuse scandals that have rocked Hollywood and the media; the many instances of mass murder especially in our inner cities where bodies pile unnoticed week after week; on our university campuses where actual diversity of thought is prohibited, people of faith are ridiculed, and where physical violence against those who won't conform to a wide variety of "politically correct" practices of indoctrination and intimidation is tacitly affirmed by feckless administrators: All of this ugliness in our so called post-Christian society is cut from the same cloth. It is all of a piece. We have turned our back on God. We are in the dark embrace of a godless secular society on a path to a dystopian hell.

Our nation and our culture will continue its downward spiral into the ash heap of history if it doesn't right itself and right itself soon. That righting must begin now, here with us, in this Lenten season. We must reassert and reclaim our Judeo-Christian faith as the beating heart at the center of our nation and at the center of our lives.

Donald Trump, in addressing our nation in the wake of the Parkland shooting, spoke of the "dignity of life" and of "replacing hate with love." But implementing his good words won't be possible in a nation that doesn't understand either the deeper meaning of those concepts or the spiritual foundation upon which they rest. It won't be possible in a nation that neither respects nor understands its own motto "In God we trust."

But we can do something powerful in response to the smug dark ugliness of our society and its "leaders." It is up to us, as people given over to and claimed by Jesus Christ, to once again do the hard work; to give witness to the truth of the gospel; to re-claim our institutions and our schools; to rebuild the moral foundation, fabric, and faith of a wayward people and a wayward nation.

Make this task your Lenten discipline: the reclamation of a people and a nation through prayer, the reclamation of a people and a nation through fasting, and the reclamation of a people and a nation through the sacrificial giving of our lives to purposes of God. Make this your purpose and your path to the glory of God. In this purpose and path may our nation and its people find, as Jesus did, the joy of resurrection.

Pax Christi,  
Mark Reiff+



...so much for helping to fund the three different school FCA scholarships. We really appreciate your generous support of this campus outreach to bless school graduates. For HIS Glory, *Jeff Tarras, FCA Area Director*

...for your gift of money to the Wausau Warming Center. Your donation will help Catholic Charities to continue providing shelter and other necessary services for homeless individuals in our community. God bless you and your loved ones!  
*Rochelle Nicks, Development Director*

Depression is an insidious monster that worms its way into your mind and makes you doubt your faith and makes you doubt that God is on your side. Depression wears you down, makes you feel like no one loves you and actually makes you feel as if everyone is against you. The overwhelming feeling of despair makes depression feel like a big black hole that you just can't climb out of. Most often you cannot put your finger on just why you are so sad. Those of us who battle depression, are bound by so many chains. Some chains are the invisible ties that bind you, and happiness can elude you for great lengths of time. And then you discover that happiness was right in your hand all the time. Some chains are known to us, yet we have not discovered how to get free of them. Perhaps some chains have held you so long that you have grown accustomed to them. Such chains as; memories of the past, things you feel you have left undone or regrets of things done long ago and decided that they are just something you have to live with. But if you seek His truth, His truth will set you free....right? Can you agree?

Perhaps you have tried to be free from something, like depression, guilt or despair and you do feel you are seeing Christ's truth regarding your situation. Then why is it that you feel chained? Perhaps the chains that hold you are the chains of misunderstanding of God's purpose within those periods of severe depression. Maybe you have not surrendered to Him by saying, "Lord, I don't understand. But I know you have my best interests at heart. Thy will be done." God's will never chains you but sets you free. Sometimes it frees you from expecting Him to answer according to your will. There is no question His truth sets you free. But the freedom He brings does not promise freedom from troubles, but freedom in the midst of them.

I have enough trouble some days just keeping my own head above water. And my biggest trouble is my ability to let go of the things I cannot change anyway. God's will and His desire for us to follow and carry out His will is falling on deaf ears. The seeds of righteousness seem to have fallen on dry and worthless soil. All seems for nothing and the seeds seem to lie and rot. The work that God's puts into his plan for us all seems to be fruitless as we turn away from God, and look elsewhere for our happiness.

Regardless of my despair for a fallen world, and my self-condemnation without compassion, I find I must concede to what is true, and that is that the greater sin is mine when I have lost, no-forsaken, hope. For we have been instructed by the Word of God that we should never give up. But that we should *"not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not"* (Galatians 6:9). And God has said, *"So shall my word be that goes forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me unheard, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing where I sent it"* (Isaiah 55:11).

Is our faith in God and His mercies the cure-all for depression? Not-at-all, but Jesus is the light when we are in the tunnel and at the end of the tunnel. And hope is the feeling that we can use to put the brakes on so we don't fall into the abyss. The power of God's hope for us is unbreakable, although the devil works overtime to worm his way into our consciousness and makes us doubt. We turn away from God and abandon our faith. We give up on God's promises because things don't happen within our time frame. Here is the truth, God loves us, and He will never give up on us. He gave us His Son to die for our sins so we might have everlasting life. And here is another truth, we have done nothing to deserve His mercy and grace. We need to keep our eyes focused on God at all times, His will is for us to find happiness, His love is ours for the taking. And sometimes we discover that peace and contentment are waiting right in the palm of His hand.

Your servant in Christ  
Rosie Schilling



**PRAYER CONCERNS:** Please remember the following people in your prayers

Duane Kamenick—Aspirus Hospital  
Finnley Schmidtke—knee troubles—great grandson of Larry & DeEtta  
Brian—cancer—friend of Leroy and Beth Syring  
Jim Krause—open heart surgery—Jodi's father in law  
Brian Asplund—cancer  
Bob Kudingo—stem cell replacement—Rose Schilling's foster brother  
Dennis Woik—cancer—friend of Chad Bender  
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  
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

# Hope's Happenings

Sunday: February 14 Attendance 61  
 Offering: Regular \$461.00  
 Total \$462.00

Sunday: February 18 Attendance 95  
 Offering: Regular \$1275.00  
 Building \$10.00  
 Sunday School 8.00  
 Mission \$10.00  
 Loose \$24.00  
 Sign \$10.00  
 New Worship Center \$80.00  
 Total \$1417.00

## The Bulletin Board

- **Sunday, February 25, 1:00-5:00 pm—Youth going to Camp Forest Springs** for Community Days
  - January/February mission project ends
- **Tuesday, February 27, 10:00 am Bible Study**
- **Wednesday, February 28, 2:00 pm Bible Study**
  - 5:30-6:45 pm Confirmation—this is for ALL youth (newly confirmed members as well). A light supper will be provided and will continue throughout Lent.
  - 7:00 pm Lenten Services



Adult choir will practice Easter music immediately after Sunday service on March 11 and March 18

Young people who play instruments will practice for Easter music on Saturday morning, March 17 at 10:00.

Katelyn Krause is hoping to go on a Mission Trip to North Myrtle Beach, South Carolina this summer from May 23<sup>rd</sup> through August 4<sup>th</sup>. This mission trip is run through Campus Crusade for Christ and has a price tag on it of about \$3,350. This mission trip is to strengthen leadership skills so students can become more comfortable with sharing the gospel with people they interact with, even strangers. They are trained by experienced staff and they will go to the beach at least three times per week to share the gospel with others. The goal is to spread God's word and bring people who may not know God personally to develop a relationship with Him. There is more information about the goal of the mission and how you can support the trip at the <https://give.cru.org/0973550> support page. Also, if you are able to support and would rather send a check or cash to the following address.... 1000 Edgewood College Dr. Madison, WI 53711, every little bit helps. This is a great opportunity for the congregation to be a part of God's plan for this summer. If they help send Katelyn this summer, and she brings someone closer to Christ, then you can be a part of that as well. Katelyn is also planning on coming back after the trip to share with us her experiences on the trip. Please consider supporting Katelyn and her trip.



to everyone who helped in any way to make our chili feed/baked potato bar a success. We cleared over \$1500! It is wonderful watching all the different generations work together.

**Peace Lutheran Church**  
 will be having a **Chili Dinner** on  
**Sunday, March 4, 10:30-1:00.**  
 Free will offering  
 Carry outs available



Kaitlyn Belanger is doing a short internship in March at the Rosebud Sioux Reservation Hospital in South Dakota. She is collecting items that are needed to take along. The following items have been requested: Feminine Hygiene Products; toothpaste, toothbrush, deodorant (men and women's), dental floss, wash cloths, bar soap, hand sanitizer, shampoo; Baby items (diapers, wipes, clothes, etc.) and School Items (notebooks, pencils, crayons, etc.) Please bring items to church by March 4th and give to Rosie Bauman or Darrell (Her father). Thank you in advance for encouraging a young person who already has a heart for helping the needy.