

Visions of Hope

January 21, 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

January 28

February 4

Ushers

Rick Bradley

Lowell Borchart

Chad Erickson

Scott Bauman

Greeters

Scott Bauman

Elaine Mielke

Readers

Gary Ludwig

Michelle Bauman

Acolyte

Madison Borchart

Riley Bauman



As the church continues to live in the Epiphany Season, I think, we can all gradually come to discover the three truths about God that Moses came to know and to grow in, after his own set of Epiphanies on Mount Sinai. Through the burning bush, through gift of stone tablets, and through the exodus Moses came to know YHWH God as 1.) a God who speaks, 2.) a God who saves, and, 3.) a God who sends.

Our own vision of God is made manifest in these Sundays of January and February (before Lent begins) we are set on a course parallel to that of Moses. All of the appointed Sunday morning readings speak to us of our God: who speaks, who saves, and who sends.

- 1. God speaks to us.** Yes, indeed, God speaks to us and he tells us, at the River Jordan, that Jesus is his Son and that he takes delight in him. Jesus, God incarnate, spoke to the people of Capernaum in their synagogue and those who heard him reacted by saying, "He taught with authority."

Jesus taught with authority! This is a remarkable claim because in ancient Judaism neither rabbis nor priests had authority. They can only speak about authority or point toward authority and that authority was Moses. No one in Judaism can change or alter the authority of Moses because his authority is from God. Only Moses had authority!

But when Jesus appeared on the scene, he spoke as one with authority. This authority astonished everyone because authority is reserved to God alone and to the one (Moses) to whom he gave it. No wonder Jesus could say, "A new commandment I give unto you that you love one another as I have loved. As I have loved you so shall you love one another." Jesus had authority. This shocks, stuns, and surprises. Is this Jesus God?

No human being had the right or the authority to add to, detract from, or change the law. But Jesus did and in doing so he speaks to us. And so, he said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life, no one comes to the Father except through me." God speaks to us!

- 2. God saves us.** This claim about God saving us may sound trite but it is true. Jesus's life and ministry, as outlined in the four Gospels, closely parallels the Mosaic experience of salvation for the people of Israel. Jesus, too, has a wilderness wandering. Jesus, too, lived in Egypt in exile. Jesus, too, worked many miracles that pointed to the power of God. Jesus, too, will go to a mountain top and be transfigured. And, this Jesus will be the One who is the fulfillment of the Mosaic Law.

Moreover, we, as Christians, too, celebrate a Passover feast with a sacrificial lamb. Jesus Christ is the lamb of God, the Agnus Dei, sacrificed on a cross to deliver his people from slavery to sin. In Baptism his blood is sprinkled on us, like blood sprinkled on the house lintels of Israelite exiles in Egypt. And, for us too, the angel of death passes over us. In both Pharaoh's Egypt and Calvary's cross it is the Lamb's blood that sets God's people free.

We see and celebrate this God who saves in our sacramental life. But especially in Holy Communion we remember God's most holy sacrifice of himself that leads us into union with Him and the Body of Christ. And we proclaim: "Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us. Therefore, let us keep the feast." In Jesus Christ we are promised eternal union with God in his new creation. God saves us and all who sincerely turn to him!

- 3. God sends us.** As Jesus walked along the Sea of Galilee, we are told, he saw four men (Andrew, Peter, James, and John). They were fishing and he called to them saying, "Come follow me." They answered that call, and dropping everything, followed him. But his calling was for a purpose. He intended to send them out to give witness to who he was and to what he was doing for the life of the world.

These four men knew Jesus and knew his power and, more importantly, knew his love. These "disciples" experienced not only Jesus's death, but also his resurrection, and received the explosive gift of his Spirit. Knowing what they knew, and living in the gifts that they were given, they went out into their world and proclaimed the healing, renewing, and reconciling power of God's love as revealed in Jesus Christ. Their message conquered the ancient world.

In the same way, only you and I, his disciples, can proclaim the message of God's mercy, grace, and love to our own broken and wounded world. Only we can reflect his light onto the demoralizing darkness of our times. We are being called. We are being sent. And may we too, by the power of God, overcome the benighted world in which we live.

Every Sunday we conclude our worship with these words: "Our worship is ended. Let our service begin. Go in peace to love and serve the Lord." And we respond, "Thanks be to God!" because God sends us!

Pax Christi,
Mark Reiff+

1 Cor. 1:12-13, NIV: "If anyone builds on this foundation using gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay or straw, their work will be shown for what it is, because the Day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test the quality of each person's work."

Pastor Mann had a great sermon on Sunday. I hope you were there. One of his major points was "What is the best vitamin for Christians?" B1

We all know that just saying we are Christian doesn't always make it so. He mentioned that we all need to get behind and support our newly installed Pastor. Another point he made was that God gave us all gifts. Our gift to God should be to use all that God gave us. We could spend hours each day in God's Word, but if we do not put our faith into action (not words alone) we are not in the B1 group. I often wish I was in the group that knowing the right thing to do just came naturally.

"What have you to say for yourself?" That is a question I have heard mothers ask children when they have done something, shall we say, not so good. When I consider a day we will stand before our Heavenly Father, I imagine a similar question. I imagine Him asking something like, "What have you to show for yourself?" "What have you done with all the gifts and talents I gave you?"

"What have you done with what you've been given?" For most of us, that is a hard and uncomfortable question to consider. We each have been given 24 hours each day in which to use our resources to accomplish something with ...or to waste. But the thing is that wasted time can't be reclaimed. What we choose to do with what God has given us, gives an indication of what we consider most important to us. Will we choose to look at our lives and all that God gives as tools; as instruments in God's hands to be used in the building of His church upon the foundation of Christ? Or will we look at all we have as though it is ours alone to do with as we wish? And ours to squander if we wish.

This is a good time as any to reflect upon the various activities of our normal day; to consider what we build from what we've been given; and, to ask ourselves this very day, "What have I to show for myself?" "Did I use the gifts and talents God gave me today?" What have I done for God today?

While it is true that all people must use the gifts and talents that God gave us, not all of the gifts and talents need to be shown outwardly, we all need prayers everyday and there are those out there that can pray even if they can't do a lot of physical deeds in God's name. As Pastor Mann pointed out we all need to be praying at least twice per day. One truth is for certain, God wants us to do His will and he gave us the tools to accomplish this.

As James has written, faith without works is dead. We have each been given two hands. So, we must choose what we will hold and of what we will let go. Let go of conceit, pride and arrogance, and learn humility and service to others. Are you hiding your gifts and talents under a bushel? Are you afraid to let your light shine because you are unsure of what to do? Maybe some of us are afraid of ridicule or rejection. We can call on God's strength to help us out. *"I can do all things, through Christ who strengthens me" Philippians 4:13*

We come into the world empty handed except for the gifts God gave us. We definitely should use up all the talents God gave us. And the truth is we just might squander some of God's gifts. Many things will pass through our hands as we learn and grow. And as we grow, we are bound to find some things that pass through our hands that we don't wish to let go of. Nevertheless, we need to let go of some things, we especially should let go of sin, and repent. God's patiently waiting for us to do just that.

This week, let your light shine and praise the Lord, by doing His will and following His directions for us. And let's all strive to take the best vitamin for Christians, B1.

Your servant in Christ
Rosie Schilling



Hope's Happenings

Sunday:	January 21	Attendance 100
Offering:	Regular	\$1722.00
	Building	190.00
	Sunday School	\$8.00
	Loose	\$4.00
	Well	\$100.00
	Sign	\$35.00
	Mission	\$20.00
	Total	\$2079.00



Music and Worship Committee meeting

had been rescheduled for
Tuesday, January 30, 2:00 pm

PRAYER CONCERNS: Please remember the following people in your prayers



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
 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
 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 28, annual meeting following worship service
- Tuesday, January 30, 10:00 am Bible Study
- Wednesday, January 31, 2:00 pm Bible Study
 - 5:15 pm Confirmation
- **Mark your Calendar:**
 - February 4—Confirmation
 - March 18—First Communion



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). 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.