

Visions of Hope

January 28, 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 4

February 11

Ushers

Chad Erickson

Scott Bauman

Gary Ludwig

Jay Borchardt

Greeters

Elaine Mielke

Gwen Bauman

Readers

Michelle Bauman

Rose Schilling

Acolyte

Riley Bauman

Anna Peterson



My goodness are we already at Ground Hog's Day! Yes, this Friday, February 2, is proclaimed, according to popular American folklore, as Ground Hog's Day. It is the day when we will learn if the end of winter is near or if there will be six more weeks of that blasted darn cold and snow. It's a good thing I am not Donald Trump or I would have used a very different expletive to describe our upper mid-west Winter.

But, as a Christian pastor, this is where I have to act like a UPS driver that is backing up his truck because he has missed a stop...beep, beep, beep. Yes, popular folklore proclaims February 2 as Ground Hog's Day but the Christian world proclaims the day as something quite different. As Lutheran Christians, in accord with Christians of other traditions, we see the day as the Feast of the Presentation of Our Lord.

Forty days after his birth, and in accordance with Jewish Law, Jesus was brought to the Temple in Jerusalem by his parents, Mary and Joseph, to be presented and redeemed. At the same time Mary also offered sacrifices for her own purification. This practice of purification was also demanded under the Jewish purity laws.

This feast day is also referred to as Candlemas because on this day (before electricity) candles that would be used in the home throughout the year were blessed in the church. This practice came about because of the Song of Simeon, who sang a most beautiful song when he saw Joseph, Mary and the infant Jesus entering the Temple. Seeing Jesus, Simeon took the infant into his arms and sang:

*Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace,
according to thy word, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation,
which thou hast prepared before the face of all people.
A light to lighten the gentiles and the glory of thy people Israel.*

Simeon had been promised by God, in a vision, that he would not die until he saw, with his own eyes, the long-promised messiah. In the Temple on our February 2 this heavenly promise to Simeon was fulfilled. Simeon's song spoke of the "light to lighten the gentiles" and this gave rise to the church's blessing of the lights, candles, as a visible action underscoring Jesus as the light of the world.

Strangely enough, February 2 is what is also known as a cross-quarter day. There are four such cross-quarter days on our calendar. A cross-quarter day is a day that is at the mid-way point between a solstice and an equinox. Also, and importantly, a major Christian feast coincides with each of these four cross-quarter days.

But what I have found to be so amazing about February 2 as Candlemass, is that there is a very visible change in the natural lighting of the world around us. The earlier rising and later setting of the sun in the daily sky becomes suddenly, and more rapidly, visible. The dark hold of winter's death is being broken.

Candlemass, the Feast of the Presentation, proclaims that same message: The dark hold of evil and its death is being broken in Jesus Christ the Son of God and the light of the world.

Yes, for the secular world an ancient feast day has become for them Ground Hog's Day, but for the Christian we know the truth of the day is found in Jesus Christ presented in the temple as the Savior of the world and the Savior of all who turn to him in faith.

Just as he was presented in the Temple, this Sunday as we will also present three young people (Corbin, Bauman, Riley Bauman, and Jaycee Kunkel) for the Right of Confirmation as they affirm their Baptism. May they, through this day, find the light of Christ confirmed in their lives, may their footsteps always follow the path of Jesus Christ, and "may their light so shine before others, that they may see their good works and give glory to your Father in heaven."

Pax Christi,
Mark Reiff+

Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others (Philippians 2:3-4).

I am not an expert on forgiveness, I still struggle with forgetting and forgiving those who have hurt me in my childhood. But if I ever intend to be a Christian in works as well as words, I should clean my own house first. This is a continuous concern of mine, and I just can't seem to give up my troubles to God and His wisdom. Please pray that I come to terms with this, sooner than later. The truth is we don't know how much time we really have to follow God's example of forgiveness.

We live in an age of many people making a big fuss over nothing; many people say their "rights" are being trampled upon. But my question is "why do so few, adversely influence so many"? We easily make decisions that affect others while only considering the way it affects us individually, if it works for me, "to heck with anyone else". Therefore, one third of one percent say they are offended by what the majority are doing, at any one time. The whiners and complainers don't take into consideration how their actions can hurt so many others. We have plenty of excuses to absolve ourselves of responsibility for our actions. Especially if at times those actions are most beneficial to our own personal wants and desires. Some get tunnel vision when it comes to getting what they want, when they want it. They push through no matter whom they trample upon. And I often wonder why their "rights" are more important than mine.

In Romans 12, Paul tells us that we should "be devoted to one another in brotherly love." That we should, "Honor one another above yourselves." In verse 13 he encourages us to, "Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn," and to "live in harmony with one another."

Do we exemplify what it means to be a Christian? While we might not always make popular decisions, we can't turn away and simply say, "I haven't done anything wrong," or "I did my best." Sometimes we hurt people, or offend others. Especially when we don't show Christian love and forgiveness. Although sometimes our intentions are to "help" we do more harm than good. There is a need for healing, forgiveness and reconciliation. Letting bygones be bygones is not a real solution if forgiveness doesn't accompany the apology.

Sweeping broken relationships and fractured feelings under the rug does not repair a problem--it only causes the rug to be lumpy. Even when the fragments under the rug have been trampled by the footsteps of time, there will always be something of it remaining--regardless how invisible it is to the eye. By withholding an apology and/or the forgiveness, those lumpy rugs can get hard to walk on while negotiating our faith walk. The truth is God tells us "to forgive others, as God in Christ forgives you, but we panic when confronted with owning up to our mistakes. We tend to gloss over our errors or place the blame on someone else.

Few of us handle confrontation well. It is human nature that instills within us a desire to turn tail and run completely away. But confrontation is the doorway to forgiveness, and a doorway that must be walked through if true forgiveness, and peace, is ever to be found. We all make mistakes and we have all caused strife within our relationships, whether inadvertently or not. We know none of us is perfect no matter how big our ego is. But we don't have to let circumstances stay "as is", saying, "what's done is done". We want to absolve ourselves of all personal responsibility. Take the coward's way out so to speak.

Ephesians 4:32 Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.

Instead, we can go to our Christian brother or sister and seek their forgiveness. There comes a time when it doesn't matter who was right or wrong to begin with. If both parties withhold apologies and forgiveness there will be no peace. Resentment and bitterness can eat at us like an acid; it can affect our personal relationships, our health and our relationship with God. Don't we put enough barriers between us and God as it is?

Your sister in Christ
Rosie Schilling



...thank you for your recent donation to The Hannah Center. Your support and generosity is deeply appreciated. Thanks to your generosity, we will meet our mission to assist women in life crisis through compassion and guidance in a nurturing environment. *The Hannah Center*

...thanks again to the congregation of Hope Church for your generous donation of food to our 'Circle of Joy'. It is so very much appreciated. We are so happy you always think of us. God bless all of you! *Athens Circle of Joy*

...thank you for the beautiful Christmas card! Thank you for the kind words of encouragement as well! Also, thank you for the generous Kwik Trip gift card. School is going well, as in track. I look forward to coming back home and worshipping. *Xavier Lechleitner*

Hope's Happenings

Sunday: January 28 Attendance 87

Offering:	Regular	\$2165.00
	Building	\$20.00
	Sunday School	11.00
	Loose	\$15.00
	Well	\$35.00
	Sign	\$40.00
	Total	\$2286.00

The Bulletin Board

- **Sunday, February 4—Confirmation**
- Tuesday, February 6, 10:00 am Bible Study
- Wednesday, February 7, 2:00 pm Bible Study
 - 5:15 pm Confirmation
- Sunday, February 11, Veteran's dinner at Hope sponsored by Wien Wildcats

PRAYER CONCERNS: Please remember the following people in your prayers



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
 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



**Wednesday, February 14
 7:00 pm Worship service**

Please note: There will be Confirmation during Lent—5:30-6:45 pm



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

Hope will be having their annual Chili Dinner / Baked Potato Bar on Sunday, February 18, 11:00-1:30. There is a sign up on the table in the narthex for needed supplies, help, etc. Also, we will need help on Saturday, February 17, 9:00 am –11:30 am to help wrap potatoes and wash dishes.