

# Visions of Hope

July 9, 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

**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**

**July 16**

July 23

**Ushers**

**Gary Bauman**

**Russ Bauman**

*Andy Yoder*

*Keith Bauman*

**Greeters**

**Elaine Mielke**

*Daryl & Beth Mueller*

**Readers**

**Chad Bender**

*Beth Mueller*

**Acolyte**

**Anna Fehlhaber**

*Korbyn Bauman*



We are never really prepared for the curve balls that life throws at us. I know I wasn't. Two weeks ago on June 28 I thought I most likely had a small bout of food poisoning but I went ahead with the Genesis Bible Study just the same. As the class progressed my abdominal pain increased and by 11:30 when the class ended I was in severe pain and realized that the issue was not food poisoning but some perhaps worse.

Although Barb Giese offered to drive me to the hospital in Wausau, my cousin Mike was visiting and I called him to take me to Aspirus Hospital. The Emergency Room was awesome. Within two minutes of walking through the door the medical team was working on me. Many tests were done including a CT Scan which revealed the bowel obstruction. When they told me the results, I was stunned but also relieved and knew that a serious surgery was ahead of me.

Later that night, after surgery, the doctor told me that, mysteriously, somehow my small intestine had wrapped itself around itself and was chocking it off along with the blood supply. He had removed about two and a half feet of my small intestine. As a two-fer, or a bogo as they say, the surgeon also removed my appendix. In the recovery-room I was also told that I would be in the hospital at least four days but, alas, it turned out to be five days.

Such a procedure, and its medical aftermath, is really an occasion to pause and reflect not just on the wonder and miracle of much of modern medicine but also on the gracious presence of God in our lives. It is altogether likely that 100 years ago this incident would have taken my life as bowl obstructions took the lives of countless people over the centuries. Such a death would have been excruciatingly painful.

Luckily for me (Praise God) I live in a time and place where trained and talented people could minister to me through their unique medical skills and training. But, of course, there is more and this is where God's grace comes into sharp focus.

Everything in life has a purpose. It was no accident that this happened when someone was at my home who could bring me into the hospital, and stay with my dogs and cats to keep them safe. It is no accident that others came to help including my brother Tom and a good friend from Minnetonka, Minnesota who just retired from teaching. The retired teacher brought a remarkable skillset and understanding to me and my post-operation needs not only because he leads the Stephen Ministry Team at his church but also because he had similar (but far more extensive) surgery roughly 10 years ago.

Then there were all of the cards, prayers, flowers, and good wishes that you, the people of Hope Lutheran Church, sent my way. It was deeply appreciated then and I am grateful for the grace-filled power of your support.

I have found that God has always led me to where I needed to be and has brought into my life the people who needed to be there. They have helped me with life's struggles and to learn life's best lessons. And the best of those lessons is this: God, who is at the heart of it all, is constantly calling us to draw closer to Him; to learn about him and to experience his love and compassion, his grace and reconciling power, his healing and bounty. And then to discover the joy and beauty of sharing all of this with others out of gratitude for his most gracious gift of all, Jesus Christ, God made manifest and dwelling among us.

Pax Christi,  
Mark Reiff+

Some of this devotional is written from what I learned from the sermon. The rest of the devotional comes from research I did off the internet. (You know Google knows everything). But, none-the-less many of the points Pastor Chavez brought out in his sermon are repeated in this devotion.

In John 6:38, Jesus said, "For I have come down from heaven not to do my will but to do the will of him who sent me". Six times John stressed that Jesus came down from heaven, underscoring not only his divine origin, but also that his purpose is to do God's will. This is interesting: the Greek word translated as "heaven" is *Ouranos* and in context refers to the dwelling place of God. In Christian theology, it is also where the redeemed will dwell.

There is a common perception that as long as we lead a generally good life, we will get into heaven. But the question, "Don't all good people go to heaven?" well, no not on their own merits. Usually there is the assumption that God exists and that He is all loving. Second, there is an assumption that although some "bad" people may need punishment, most people are generally "good" and, are entitled to heaven. Third, there is the

view that entrance into heaven is on the basis of merit (our works) rather than God's grace, meaning that there are not enough "good works" existing that can earn you a spot in heaven. Fourth, related to the question about heaven is the implicit suggestion that hell, "the wages of sin is death to all those who involved themselves in evil acts.

That fact that God exists is the obvious foundation of the Christian faith. He not only exists, but is also creator, designer and sustainer of the universe and everything in it. Not only is He ever present, all knowing, and all powerful, God is also all loving. He is a personal being active in His creation, but distinct from it. Those who argue that all good people go to heaven then make the case that a loving God would not turn away good and sincere individuals. Instead, they reason, it's obvious that He would allow them into heaven.

We need to examine the broad spectrum of the nature of God, the power of His grace and the moral nature of Jesus Christ... While we may understand general grace and mercy from Him, and for what He has made (Romans 1:20) and for our very existence, God indeed has a special revelation. It is in God's word that we learn that God is indeed merciful (Deuteronomy 4:31; Daniel 9:9), but also just (Job 34:12; Psalm 45:6; Isaiah 30:18). He is also completely holy. These aspects of His nature, particularly his justice and holiness, mean that anything even remotely sinful cannot dwell in God's presence.

The next assumption is that although some "bad" people may need punishment, most are generally "good" and **entitled** to heaven. What!!!! Back up a little. Are people generally good and entitled to heaven? Or are all people sinful and in need of God's mercy? We can make the error of viewing human nature as basically good. Biblical evidence as well as real-life evidence show this view to be false. As the Bible explains, "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?" (Jeremiah 17:9, KJV). Psalm 51:5 comes across even stronger: "Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me." So according to our bibles, people are generally not so good and only strive for goodness through faith in Christ Jesus.

Biblically speaking, most people are not "good." In fact, when compared to God's standards of holiness, no one is "good." To one degree or another, we all "fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). This does not mean that we are always actively engaged in doing evil or participating in depraved acts all the time. But it does mean that in our very nature we are "fallen," in rebellion against God and incapable of saving ourselves.

Then there is the view that entrance into heaven is based on merit (our works) rather than God's grace. But, there is a flaw in a system based on "good works" as the road to salvation. That whole idea is that God's tells us again and again, that belief and our faith in Christ is the only way to heaven. Whether or not we enter heaven is not dependent on a cycle of good and evil, where we hope our good acts outweigh our bad ones (I definitely have a way to go). While this view of salvation may be common, it is biblically incorrect. As Ephesians 2:8-9 reads, "For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith — and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God — not by works, so that no one can boast". Grace is God's unmerited favor, demonstrated most fully in the sacrifice of Jessi. In short, the only way to heaven is through Jesus, "the way and the truth and the life" (John 14:6).

Those who argue that all good people go to heaven often suggest that if hell exists, it is reserved for a minority of unforgiveable evil people. But since most people are not so evil, to some, it makes sense to claim that all good people will get to heaven regardless of any minor lapses in moral behavior. Does this reasoning hold up? NO, it fails to take into account the nature of God, the nature of sin, our weak and sinful human flesh and what the Bible has to say on the subject of sin and salvation. As the bible points out, God is holy, but He is also just. God's justice requires the reality of hell for the unredeemed. The nature of sin extends, biblically speaking, to everyone. Salvation is not by works, but by God's grace through Christ. Redemption is based on repentance, and total blind faith.

Just an FYI, doing dishes after a church dinner will not get you to heaven, nor teaching Sunday school or even showing up at church each and every week.

What about sincere and good people who are not Christian? Won't God welcome them into heaven? This assumes that sincerity is enough to insure truth, when in reality it is not. As Proverbs 16:25 reads, "There is a way that seems right to a man, but in the end, it leads to death." Sincerity will only get someone so far, then it must face reality. No matter how sincere someone may be about being able to fly by frantically flapping their arms, but that will not keep them in the air. In God's eyes, sincerity is not enough. We have to believe what God tells us is true, according to His holy word.

Like the man who approached Jesus and used the word "good," perhaps without giving it much thought, we too need to be careful how we use and define our terms. As Jesus answered, "No one is good — except God alone" (Mark 10:18; Luke 18:19). Do all "good" people go to heaven? Since no one is good as defined by God, the answer is, "No." Ok, let's take a breath, that sentence alone may worry many of us. Those who enter heaven do so not on the basis of merit, but on the basis of God's grace as bestowed by Jesus Christ. We can't work our way to heaven or claim to be without sin, (how's that line working for you?) (1 John 1:8). Instead, we must humbly submit to God, turn from our wrong behavior, and turn to Christ for salvation. We are saved by Grace through Faith alone.

Your servant in Christ,  
Rose Schilling

# Hope's Happenings

|           |               |               |
|-----------|---------------|---------------|
| Sunday:   | July 9        | Attendance 83 |
| Offering: | Regular       | \$1222.00     |
|           | Building      | \$20.00       |
|           | Sunday School | \$6.00        |
|           | Sign          | \$350.00      |
|           | Mission       | \$70.00       |
|           | El Salvador   | \$20.00       |
|           | Total         | \$1688.00     |

**COMING SOON**

## Vacation Bible School

will be held the week of July 24-28  
from 5:30-8:00pm.

There will be a light supper  
served from 5:00-5:30pm.

Children age 3 through  
children entering 6th grade  
are welcome.

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

John Hamann—fell and broke knee cap—had surgery—Marshfield Hospital  
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  
Joyce LeVoy—home recovering  
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—waiting for stem cell transplant—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



## The Bulletin Board

- Mission Money: Anna Zarins (Ken Schilling's great niece) has cerebral palsy; Navigators; David Lund; LCMC; Gideons; and school backpacks
- Jake Brinkman will share with us on Sunday his up and coming trip to Costa Rica

## BACK TO SCHOOL SUPPLY DRIVE



Now through August 20

Women of Hope Lutheran projects for July and August will be "Fill A Backpack!" and "School Kits" for LWR. These items are given locally to our schoolchildren, and school kits given to children overseas through Lutheran World Relief. It is much appreciated. Below is a list of the items needed: 8 ct. washable markers, black, blue and red pens, large pink erasers, index cards, (3x5) sharpie pens, glue sticks, folders, #2 pencils, highlighters, crayons 16 or 24 ct, baby wipes, Ziploc bags (sandwich and gallon), colored

pencils, rulers (with centimeter) pencil cases, pencil sharpeners, hand sanitizer (.8-12 oz), blunt scissors, medium-size Kleenex, wide-lined notebooks, and backpacks. All items need t be in by Sunday August 20. Items may be put into containers near coffee hour cupboard. Shopping lists available on coffee bar. Contact Audrey Kamenick (715-352-2714 or email her at [kamenick@frontier.com](mailto:kamenick@frontier.com) or Gayle Werner (715-352-2971) or email [jwpabst@frontier.com](mailto:jwpabst@frontier.com). Thank you