

Visions of Hope

May 7, 2017



4356 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 School
8:45-9:30 am

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

May 14

May 21

Ushers

Russ Bauman
Andy Yoder
Scott Bauman
Gary Bauman

Greeters

Pam Ludwig
Tom & Tammy Kirsch

Readers

Gary Ludwig
Beth Mueller

Acolyte

Anna Peterson
Riley Bauman



Yes, indeed, this coming Sunday is the second Sunday of May and it is the day when, in our nation, we celebrate the gift of Motherhood. In our worship this Sunday we will recognize this awesome gift through word and song and prayer.

When we reflect on our mothers and their impact on our lives perhaps we should also reflect on the fact that mothers are often called upon to make considerable sacrifices for their children, their husbands, and their home. Mothers may forego something, give up something, or sacrifice something for the sake of their home and those in it. We may not always be aware of it but it happens. It may even entail an almost Christ like suffering on behalf of others. This is something for which we should be deeply grateful.

As we reflect on motherly sacrifice and, indeed, suffering for the sake of others we should take to heart some words from the second reading for this Fifth Sunday of Easter. Peter writes in his first epistle chapter 3 verse 17: "For it is better to suffer for doing good, if suffering should be God's will, than to suffer for doing evil."

Let's reflect on these words of Peter for a moment: At one point or other suffering is the lot of every human being. Most mother's, yes, even, most fathers already know this. But Peter, in this part of his epistle, tells us that our own sacrifice and suffering can be something that is an instrument for profound transformation and for the good. How? when we learn to surrender and place our sacrifice and suffering into the open and wounded hands of Jesus. What a difference it makes in outlook and perspective when we see in our own suffering and sacrifice the image and icon of Jesus.

Pope John XXIII when he was dying of cancer understood this. Each day in his own prayers, as he was suffering, he lifted up to Jesus petitions not for his own suffering but for the suffering of others. During his death watch the Vatican daily issued a bulletin for those suffering peoples he was lifting up to Jesus in prayer. He made a point of inextricably linking human suffering, including his own, with the suffering of God in Jesus Christ. God suffers with us. And he surrendered that suffering to Jesus.

It makes all the difference in the world when we see in our own sacrifice and suffering the sacrifice and suffering of others and then learn to give it all up to the incarnate God who suffered and sacrificed for us. This is what makes our Christian God, Jesus Christ, so personal and unique; He is no stranger to the human condition, to our sacrifice and suffering. He embraces us and heals us, sacrifice and suffering, warts and all.

Pax Christ,
Mark Reiff+

As believers, many of us understand, intellectually what it means to be forgiven. We know that Christ's death pays the price for our sins. By placing our faith in Him, we are saved into an eternal relationship with our Lord that never changes. Even though we may still sin after becoming a Christian, we know that when we turn to the Lord with a repentant heart, confessing our sin to Him, He washes our sin away. First John tells us that when we confess our sin, God "is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9). We continue to carry the burden of our guilt along with us each day, weighed down by a feeling of permanent distance in our relationship with God. Perhaps the waters of guilt have washed over you, and you feel like you are sinking in sorrow and regret. What could be preventing us from moving beyond our past and *feeling* forgiven?

#1: "What I have done is too bad. I know that God is forgiving, but I cannot be forgiven for this." This thought process ensnares many sincere believers because it gives such a strong appearance of sadness over sin. It *feels* like a righteous response; and we don't want to downplay the gravity of our sin. But the bible tells us; we can't out-sin God's grace and forgiveness.

But if we take an honest look at the above statement it shows that it is not really very humble, plus it's not true. That statement implies that Christ's death was not enough to pay for all sin. It is as though we are saying, "Maybe His atonement covers the sins of the rest of the world. But Jesus's death cannot cover *this*." We have made our particular sin out to be uniquely bad and Christ's payment to be inadequate. What a far cry this is from the truth! If our sin is an exception to God's forgiveness, then Scripture lies because it declares, "Everyone who calls upon the name of the LORD will be saved" (Acts 2:21). No exceptions!

The truth is that our sin is no worse (and no better) than the rest of humanity's. All sin is evil in the Lord's sight. Yet Christ's death is sufficient. It is more than enough—many, many times over—to cover all the wrong we've ever done and will ever do. No sin is beyond God's forgiveness.

#2" "I must punish myself for my sins in order to be forgiven." It's true that our sins deserve terrible punishment—which Christ endured for us. It is not true that we must add our own punishment to Christ's.

Personal pain adds no atoning value to Christ's sacrifice. Our forgiveness came at a very high cost to our Lord, and this cost is quite sufficient to pay for what we have done. While we need to ask for forgiveness when we have wronged another person, we must not continually torture ourselves when the Lord has already forgiven us. Jesus has paid our penalty. We cannot add to Christ's sacrifice for our sins.

#3: "I know that God has forgiven me, but that doesn't matter. I cannot forgive myself." Again, this seems like a very righteous response. It seems flippant to simply accept God's forgiveness and "dismiss" our sin. Intellectually, we may know that Christ's death is enough to pay for our sins, but that doesn't matter. *We* know how wrong we were—too wrong to be let off the hook so easily.

But when we look closely at this statement, we realize this response is *not* righteous. Just the opposite. By saying that we can't forgive ourselves, we elevate our judgment above the Lord's. We think that we know better than He does; *He* might be quick to forgive, but *we* are not so simple. Let me ask; what right do we have to hang onto something that God released? Do we think He doesn't know every sordid detail of every sin? Are we wiser than He? If He has forgotten it, why would we think that it is more honorable to hold on to it?

Scripture never tells us to forgive ourselves. It actually tells us to forgive others, and that God will forgive you. When we try to "forgive" ourselves, we are attempting the impossible. Forgiveness assumes an innocent party has been wronged, and it is the job of the person who has been wronged to forgive. The offending party is the one that *receives* forgiveness. We are the offender; God is the one who has been wronged, since our sin is rebellion against Him. By focusing on forgiving ourselves, we have taken the spotlight off of God and pointed it at us—making it doubly difficult to let go of our sin! He *has* forgiven us. We must simply receive that forgiveness and rest in it. That means releasing those sins we want to hold on to, refusing to revisit them in our minds, and allowing the truth of our forgiveness to cover us with His peace. Absolution from the Lord is far more powerful than absolution from oneself.

#4: "Because I am still suffering the effects from my sin, God must not have forgiven me yet." It is easy to confuse natural consequences with God's punishment. If you jump from a lofty ledge, you may sprain your ankle. God did not cause your ankle to twist to punish you. Gravity drew you back to the earth's surface (and quickly!). Your pain was simply a consequence of your action.

In some ways, sins for which we have been forgiven long ago may still have consequences in our lives because we are just hard headed enough not to accept that free gift from Christ. An ex-spouse may be difficult to get along with. We may grieve on the due date of the baby that was aborted. We have feeling of inferiority because of our promiscuous behavior as young adults. We may suffer injuries from the accident that occurred while we were drinking. Yet none of these troubles represents God's punishment. Our punishment has been paid in Christ. As believers, we are forgiven for our actions and precious to the Lord, even when consequences from those actions remain in our lives.

According to [Romans 5:9-10](#), God saves us from His wrath: *Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him! For if, when we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life!*

#5: "God has allowed too much suffering into my life; I cannot forgive God for what He has done." The person struggling with this last statement usually has suffered greatly. The pain from life's losses can feel overwhelming, and the instinctive response may be to lash out at the Sovereign One for not stopping it.

But the thing is, when we are angry with the Lord, we cut ourselves off from the One who can truly heal our wounds. The psalmist has said, "But our God is in the heavens; / He does whatever He pleases" ([Psalm 115:3](#)). The Lord has the right to allow difficult things into our lives. In His wisdom He has chosen to wait before blotting out all pain from the earth. As a result we still suffer from the consequences of living in a fallen world, from the sins of others, and from our own sin. Ultimately we know that God's justice will prevail. In the meantime, we may experience suffering.

Repentance is turning away from sin and turning back to God. True guilt gets us up on our feet and motivates us to do the right thing. We are not to be like broken records, skipping back to an old sin over and over again, but we are to move forward with the Lord. Imagine if Paul had continually relived his terrible past—because he pursued and imprisoned Christians! If he had hung on to his sins, he certainly wouldn't have been the powerful minister we find in Scripture.

With trusting and repentance, there is rest. In our struggle through the hurts and pains of life, we must cling with all our heart to Scripture's teachings on forgiveness. Real forgiveness is available to all people—a forgiveness that satisfies our deepest longing to be cleansed inside and out. Through Christ, *all* of our sins have been paid for. God's plan is that our sorrow—or guilt—over our sin would return our heart to Him. He desires that we turn from that sin, ask forgiveness—both from Him and from those we hurt—make reparation when possible, and then *walk on with Him*. We must let go of that sin, leaving no regret behind as we continue on with our Lord.

Some of this newsletter was taken from the Franklin Graham Ministries website. This subject has been bothering me for some time so I looked for answers. I hope this helps all of us struggling with deep guilt. May you find the strength and the peace of the Lord today through both the reality of *and* the experience of His forgiveness.

Your sister in Christ
Rosie Schilling

Hope's Happenings

Ladies Night Out

Sunday:	May 7	Attendance 108
Offering:	Regular	\$2295.00
	Building	\$180.00
	Sunday School	\$6.00
	Missions	\$5.00
	Loose	\$15.00
	Sign	\$290.00
	Jake Brinkman	\$635.00
	Driveway	\$500.00
	Total	\$3926.00

Please join us on
 Tuesday, May 16th
 with desserts at 6:00 pm and
 speaker at 7:00 pm.
 Speaker is Cynthia Ruchti,
 formerly on The Heartbeat of the Home
 on 88.5 The Family.

PRAYER CONCERNS: Please remember the following people in your prayers



Larry Syring (Bimbo) - heart surgery—Leroy's brother
 Don Hanson—heart surgery (see note below)
 Dorothy Wright—fluid on lungs and congestive heart failure—Bonnie Blake's mom
 Ron Bjorklund—Health issues—friend of the Peterson's
 Joyce LeVoy—UW Madison
 Sara Koss—bone marrow transplant—niece of the Kamenick's
 Jim Brant—failing health—friend of Leroy Syring
 Patty Rueter—cancer—Beth Leffel's niece
 John Hamann—home recuperating from hip surgery
 Leroy Syring—recovering from a stroke
 Scott Campbell—stage two leukemia—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

Update on Don Hanson—doing well after his cancer treatments unfortunately he suffered a major heart attack.
 Don had surgery and is now doing good. Please continue to pray for Don and his family.

The Bulletin Board

- There is a sign up sheet available for mowing the Church lawn this summer. If you have any questions please see Larry or Brian
- **Confirmation Classes** are done for the spring. They will resume briefly in October before Reformation Sunday.
- Vacation Bible School will be held July 24-28 from 5:30-8:00 pm. for children age 3 through entering 6th grade. There will be a light supper held from 5:00-5:30 pm. If you have not handed in your registration forms yet please do so as soon as possible. Thank you



Our mission project for April was the Ronald McDonald House in Marshfield.

Thank you to all those who donated. There is power behind the many!! Good job all!

We donated 98 items, they were very excited to get the hamburger. If anyone has extra hamburger they would take more. Just call ahead so someone will be there to accept the donations.

Hope's Happenings



Our May Mission project is Baby Care Kits

Baby Care Kits are distributed as part of emergency relief efforts but they are also given to encourage expectant women to seek prenatal care. Help welcome the littlest ones into a caring international community and swaddle them with love!

Each kit contains 2 t-shirts, 2 gown or sleepers, 2 receiving blankets, 4 cloth diapers (flat fold), 1 jacket or hooded sweatshirt, 2 pair of socks, 1 hand towel, 2 bars of gentle soap, 2 diaper pins. Onesies can be used and made in to t-shirts, adult XL t-shirts can be made in to diapers. All items should be new or gently used and sizes 6 to 24 months.

Rummage sales are great places to pick up baby items as they are often outgrown before they are worn out. A tote will be put in the narthex to place items in and shopping lists are on the counter. If you have any questions, contact Rosie Bauman at 715-573-0524 or rustyroosedairy@gmail.com

THANK YOU!

...thank you so very much for the very nice love seat and chair! It is being put to good use and is very appreciated.
Staff at Family Shelter

...thank you for your generous donation to Ronald McDonald House. Donations and community support are critical to our organization and allow us to continue our mission of keeping families close to their sick child. This donation will directly benefit our families and their most basic needs. Thank you for supporting our mission of keeping families close.
Iilee Pederson, Executive Director

...thank you for your gift to "The Building of Hope" (Shirley's House of Hope) capital campaign. Your gift will go directly to the campaign so the facility can be renovated and debt free. Because of your support the building debt will soon be reduced and urgent projects can be completed. Your compassion for women and children hurting from domestic violence is rebuilding, renewing and restoring lives. Please spread the word to others who might want to be a partner of hope in this vital project for our community.
Julie Cravillion, Executive Director

....I would like to sincerely thank you for everything over this past year as I started my next chapter of life in college. I am appreciative for all of the cards and gift cards I have received over the semesters. I also would like to thank you all for the prayers and thoughts as I went through surgery to have my appendix removed. I am recovering slowly, but with summer right around the corner, I hope to be back to normal! I would also like to announce my declared major as Mass Communication with an emphasis in Photojournalism and a minor in Communication Studies. Thank you to everyone for all of the support, encouragement, and kind words over the year. I am looking forward to continuing my education throughout the next two years at St. Cloud State University.
Chelsea Bauman

...thank you so much for your most generous gift of ground beef, butter and assorted groceries. Your support is truly appreciated in helping us provide a home away from home to those families with ill children.
Cindy, Evening Manager at Ronald McDonald House