

Visions of Hope

November 26, 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:

hopelcsec@gmail.com

Sunday Worship
9:30 am

Sunday School
8:45-9:30 am

Communion
1st, 3rd and 5th Sundays

Pastor:

Mark Reiff
920-634-1246 (cell)
715-352-2555 (church)

Secretary:

hopelcsec@gmail.com

Duties List

December 3

December 10

Ushers

Brian Remus
Lowell Borchart
Jay Borchart
Chad Erickson

Greeters

Brian Remus
Debbie Bauman

Readers

Jerry Anderson
Lily, Kylie, Reagan

Acolyte

Haylee Schreiber
Jaicee Kunkel



Advent is such a precious and beautiful season and, yet, it saddens me, as a pastor, that so many people in our world, and even in the Church, neither understand nor observe it. Like Macy's, Target, and Walmart we are all, it seems, in one great rush to get to Christmas without any substantial understanding of what it is all about.

First of all, I have to say that the Church isn't Macy's, Target, or Walmart; they don't even know about Advent and only pretend to understand Christmas in order to take advantage of it. They assume that you can buy happiness in their stores. You can't. True happiness is not a commodity to be purchased.

The commercial calendar of our materialistic, consumer culture is not the calendar of the Church. We have a season of Advent. They obviously don't.

Advent is precious and beautiful and its main symbol is the wreath with four candles that are lit over a period of four weeks. That wreath and an obscure man dressed in skins of camel hair, who baptized people in the Jordan River and proclaimed a coming King, tell us all we need to know about the first 24 days of December.

Think about the origin of the Advent wreath for a moment. What is the origin of this long standing Lutheran tradition that has, in recent years, spread to other Christian traditions?

Advent wreaths were first made in northern Germany and Scandinavia. As the snow fell and countryside froze, wagons with wheels could no longer be used. As the wagons were retired for the winter the wheels were removed and placed in the rafters of the home.

As Christmas approached and with the beginning of Advent, people decided to decorate the hung and stored wheels with greens and, anticipating the light of Christ in the darkest time of the year, placed four candles in them. These candles pointed to the four Sundays that lead the way to the greatest light of all Jesus Christ.

But the point was...they couldn't madly rush around anywhere. There were no wheels. And so, it became a time of quiet reflection and preparation for the great feast of Christ's birth celebrated in the Christ Mass. Then there would be 12 days of celebration, family and feasting, dancing and delight all in honor of our Lord's birth. But the days of Advent focused on penance and preparation that would make the joy of Christmas all the greater, all the better, all the brighter.

Our current western world, with all its busyness and noisy rushing to and fro, seems to have no real purpose other than buying more stuff we don't really need. But we could learn from the wisdom of the Advent wreath. Take - the - wheels - off! Slow down. Savor the moment. Enjoy the peace and the quiet. Don't stress out. Prepare and repent in order to receive the greatest gift of all - the light of Christ. Let Advent be Advent because it isn't Christmas.

Secondly, from the man in the camel hair loin cloth, reflect on the year that is soon passing away. Examine yourself and your life. How have you been blessed? Where have you gone awry? Who have you hurt or offended or wounded? Where and to whom do you need to make amends?

John is calling on all of us to remember our baptism and to prepare for annual coming of Jesus Christ. He is calling us to repent of our sin, of our evil, and of our internal darkness. When we are able to understand this and do this, we will be set free to receive and to know the true light of the Season of Jesus Christ.

Advent is certainly a beautiful and precious season let it work its way into your heart. Let it work its magic. Let Advent be Advent. Through this wise and gentle understanding you will be led, through preparation and penance, to the most beautiful grace and precious light of the coming Christmastide.

Pax Christi,
Mark Reiff+

"Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.'

"Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?'" "The King will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.'

On the last day, Jesus will say to those on His right hand, "Come, enter the Kingdom. For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was sick and you visited me." Then Jesus will turn to those on His left hand and say, "Depart from me because I was hungry and you did not feed me, I was thirsty and you did not give me to drink, I was sick and you did not visit me." These will ask Him, "When did we see You hungry, or thirsty or sick and did not come to Your help?" And Jesus will answer them, "Whatever you neglected to do unto one of these least of these, you neglected to do unto Me!"

God loved the world so much that He gave His one and only son. God gave His son to the Virgin Mary, and as soon as Jesus came into Mary's life, she immediately hurried to share the good news. And as she came into the house of her cousin, Elizabeth, Scripture tells us that the unborn child - the child in the womb of Elizabeth - leapt with joy. While still in the womb of Mary - Jesus brought peace to John the Baptist who leapt for joy in the womb of Elizabeth. The unborn was the first one to proclaim the coming of Christ. Amazing, praise the Lord!

For our sake, God the Son became one of us to bring peace and joy while still in the womb of Mary, Jesus also died on the Cross to show that greater love. Jesus was born in the flesh to save the sinners, the downtrodden, and those who are not perfect. He died for you and for me, and for the leper and for that man dying of hunger and that naked person lying in the street, not only of Calcutta, but of Africa, and of those needing help in Edgar, Stratford, Athens and everywhere in our community.

Missionaries serve the less fortunate and poor people in 105 countries throughout the world. Jesus insisted that we love one another as He loves each one of us. Jesus gave His life to love us and He tells us that we also have to give whatever it takes to do good to one another. And in the Gospel Jesus says very clearly: "Love as I have loved you."

Jesus died on the Cross because that is what it took for Him to do good to us - to save us from our selfishness in sin. He gave up everything to do the Father's will - to show us that we too must be willing to give up everything to do God's will - to love one another as He loves each of us. If we are not willing to give whatever it takes to do good to one another, sin is still in us. That is why we too must give to each other until it hurts. The trouble with this is that we selfish humans never think we have enough, let alone enough to share. This "me first" attitude is not what Jesus Christ is looking for within us. First we need to be thankful and then share our good fortune with others.

It is not enough for us to say: "I love God," but I also have to love my neighbor. St. John says that you are a liar if you say you love God and you don't love your neighbor. How can you love God whom you do not see, if you do not love your neighbor whom you see, whom you touch, with whom you live? And so it is very important for us to realize that love, might have to hurt. We must be willing to give whatever it takes not to harm other people and, in fact, to do good to them. This requires that we be willing to give until it hurts. Otherwise, there is not true love in us, that is the love Jesus showed us by His example and we need to bring justice, forgiveness and peace, to those around us.

It hurt Jesus to love us. Ok, that is a bit of an understatement. We have been created in His image for greater things, to love and to be loved. We must "put on Christ" as Scripture tells us. Also, God created us to love as He loves us. Jesus makes Himself the hungry one, the naked one, the homeless one, the unwanted one, and He says, "You did it to Me." On the last day He will say to those on His right, "whatever you did to the least of these, you did to Me, and He will also say to those on His left, whatever you neglected to do for the least of these, you neglected to do it for Me."

When He was dying on the Cross, Jesus said, "I thirst." Jesus is thirsting for our love, and this is the thirst of everyone, poor and rich alike. We all thirst for the love of others, so that they go out of their way to avoid harming us and to do good to us. This is the meaning of true love, to give until it hurts.

Maybe in your own family you have somebody who is feeling lonely, who is feeling sick, who is feeling worried. Are we there for them? Are we willing to give until it hurts in order to be with our families, or do we put our own interests first? Here are the questions we must ask ourselves, especially as we begin this New Year: can we make it a better year, and can we do more? We must remember that love begins at home and we must also remember that "the future of humanity passes through the family". Can we show our love for Jesus Christ by praying for others, giving to food pantries or just spending time with those who are lonely? Let's make the most of our life on earth because it really is such a short amount of time compared to eternity with Christ Jesus (or an eternity with the other guy)!

Hope, Peace and Love be yours in Christ Jesus
Rosie Schilling

Hope's Happenings

Thanksgiving Eve: November 22 Attendance 49

Offering:	Regular	\$327.00
	Loose	\$10.00
	Total	\$337.00

Sunday: November 26 Attendance 111

Offering:	Regular	\$1690.00
	Building	\$10.00
	Sunday School	\$8.00
	Loose	\$18.00
	Well	\$100.00
	Texas Church	\$50.00
	Sign	\$160.00
	Total	\$2036.00

PRAYER CONCERNS: Please remember the following people in your prayers



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
 Bob Nowak—home recovering from surgery
 Grace Schraufnagel—cancer—friend of the Streckert's
 John Hamann—home recovering from surgery
 Shyra Martyn—breast cancer—Randy and Sara's daughter-in-law
 Don Hanson—health issues
 Leroy Syring—recovering from a stroke
 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

- **Youth Group** will meet Wednesdays at 5:15 pm
- **There will be a SPECIAL MEETING** for Ushers, Greeters, Altar Guild and Readers after worship on Sunday, December 3.
- **Adult Choir** will practice for Christmas music immediately following Sunday worship service
- **There is a gift catalog** available by the mailboxes for impoverished countries.
- **Thank you EVERYONE** for making our Italian Dinner a HUGE success. We made \$2150!!!

SUNDAY SCHOOL CHRISTMAS PROGRAM



Our Sunday School Christmas Program will be on Sunday, December 17th during the worship service.

- We will be practicing the Christmas Program songs on Sunday mornings at 8:30 before Sunday School every Sunday starting on November 26th. **ALL** children participating in the Christmas program should attend
- We will also have 2 full run-through practices on Sunday, December 10th following the worship service and at 6:30pm on Saturday, December 16th. Please let Jen or Michelle know if you have any questions.

Hope's Happenings



Church Ladies—we are looking for help in donating items for fellowship time. We prefer cookies, mini muffins, mini donuts, coffee cakes, donut holes. Please NO cakes or bars. There will also be a donation jar available.
Thank you Dianne and Gayle

Cookie Walk

Christmas is getting close and it is time to think about cookies and/or candy. We will be having our annual cookie walk on December 17th, after the children's Christmas Program this year. EVERYONE can participate by buying treats that are available by the pound. If you can, we ask you to help out by bringing a large batch or 2 of your favorites before church that day. Then after the program, everyone may go through

the kitchen area where we will have all the varieties laid out. This is the only fundraiser that the Women's Group has for the year so please participate either by bringing cookies and/or buying them.



Your generosity is appreciated! Thank you for the bingo prizes and lap robes as Christmas gifts. Our residents thank you for your thoughtfulness! A very Merry Christmas!
Colonial Center Residents and Activity Department

Thank you so much for the beautiful Thanksgiving card and Kwik Trip gift card. This is so appreciated in our travels home for the holidays.
Mason and Andrea (Krause) Reinhardt



Reminder:

Your gifts for the Pediatric Angel tree are due back to church
no later than
Sunday, December 3

Upcoming COMMUNITY EVENTS

- * **The Colby Lions Club** is having a Holiday Bake Sale on Friday, December 1, starting at 8:30 until 12:30 at Nicolet National Bank in Colby.
- * Please join us for **Women's Christmas Tea**, Friday, December 8 at 6:30 pm at Abbotsford Free Church, 4868 Cemetery Ave, Abbotsford. There will be a light meal and Christmas Treats as we prepare our hearts for Christmas. There is no charge but a free will offering will be accepted. If you are interested in going, please let Rosie Bauman (715-573-0524) know or you may call the church (715-223-4445 or 715-965-2903) with questions.