

# Visions of Hope

June 24, 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

Communion  
1st, 3rd and 5th Sundays

## Emergency numbers:

Rev. Scott Miller  
715-214-5567  
pastorhopechurch@gmail.com  
715-352-2555 (church)

## Secretary:

hopelcsec@gmail.com

## Duties List

June 24

July 1

## Ushers

Gary Bauman  
Scott Bauman  
Andy Yoder  
Ron Kunkel

## Greeters

Brian Remus  
Jodene Leffel

## Readers

Jen Kunkel  
Michelle Bauman

## Acolyte

Kylie Mueller  
Lily Yoder

*"That is why you fail."*

(Yoda to Luke Skywalker)

We know for a fact that America is less and less involved in organized religion. Mark Chaves, a Duke University sociologist, gives us a unique view of the religious climate in America in his upcoming book *American Religion: Contemporary Trends*. While we remain remarkably religious when compared to other countries, the trends are going the way of Europe. Roughly one-fourth of our country now says they never attend religious services. Less than one-half of those interviewed, born after 1970, say they grew up in a household with a religious father. Even more telling is that the confidence of the people in the pews to those in leadership has dropped to an all-time low of just 25%! What we have in the institutional church, in spite of all our focus on "leadership development" in seminaries, is a leadership problem.

Simon Sinek, a gifted author and brilliant mind, takes the complex concept of leadership and makes it discernible to all in what he calls *Start with Why*. When we start with "Why" we move to "How" and then to "What." Most of us do it the other way around. Case in point:

A congregation struggles with the fact that there are no young people attending worship. The leadership goes about a strategic planning session (I have a lot to say about the wasted time and effort of this process but that will have to wait until later) and comes up with the need for a contemporary service to attract more young people. "We need to update our music so more young people will come!" a leader of the church states emphatically! This conclusion of needing to "update our music" is arrived at without any conversation with young people, without any data to back up the claim, it is just stated as fact. This is the **What**: a contemporary worship service.

"So how (we move to the **How**) do we do this?" another leader asks.

"Put an ad in the newsletter inviting all people interested in forming a contemporary worship band to meet on the first Sunday next month and we'll go from there!" (This is such a bad idea for a whole host of reasons.)

This is probably not the time to interject that young people, like middle-aged people, and older people have a wide variety of musical tastes, or comment that there is no such thing as "contemporary worship," as all worship is contemporary, but I digress. The group forms, learns some catchy little "contemporary songs," like, "Shine, Jesus, Shine..." and off we go.

What no one is asking is: **Why?** Why do we want more young people in church? Is it because we believe we have a message that can change their lives? Is it because we need a different perspective of the world that we believe younger people will bring to us? Is there a group of people in our community not currently being reached with the gospel of Jesus Christ, and we feel it's our mission to reach out to this group?

Not really. We want more people in the pews so we'll have more offerings to help us pay our bills, and without a steady influx of new blood we know our days are numbered. That may sound crass, but while the "Truth will set you free," it will, in all probability, make you angry initially. The problem isn't with the need to attract more people, the problem is that there is no compelling "**Why.**" That is always the problem, and the reason, most congregations (and denominations) fail. What is the compelling "**Why**" that would motivate someone to join your church? To help pay the bills? To serve on one of the myriad of committees? I have news for you: no one is walking by your church wondering if it could use their time and money.

We never start with the "**Why.**" What is the one compelling reason God has put you in this place at this time? When I ask churches "Tell me why you exist?" I get blank stares or the obligatory, "We've been here for 125 years, and that's why." No, it isn't.

Rather than spend all our time in "planning sessions" and go through the motions of putting up big sheets of paper and filling them with our strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats, put away the paper, pencils, and magic markers, and simply ask: "Why do we exist?"

I had the privilege of working with one of the most dynamic pastors, with exceptional leadership gifts (she graduated from the US Air Force Academy), and she drove the leadership nuts by continually asking the "**Why?**" question. It's a question we don't want to answer because we don't have an answer. Perhaps, like the story told of a man swimming the English Channel with a bowling ball on his hand, when asked why he was making the journey so difficult, responded, "Because I'm not going to be the one to drop the ball!"

It's time to drop the ball. It's time to let some things die (very biblical by the way). Here is a suggestion that will transform your congregational life: look at everything that clogs your congregation's arteries (yes, folks, we have clogged arteries in the church), every program, meeting, ancillary project, and ask the question: "Why are we doing this?"

Simplify. If congregations would take just one compelling “Why” and focus solely on that, understanding that the “Why” must be something that impacts the community and world, we’d find new energy and life. Instead, we continue doing a hundred things with little energy (because, after all, the church down the street is doing it!), and little enthusiasm. We drag the bowling balls of by-gone eras, finding it more and more difficult to survive. That is why we fail.

A compelling “Why” is like nectar to bees. They’ll find you!

Pastor Scott

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The everyday grind of life can sometimes leave us wondering “is there a God, and where is God?” Most of us are surrounded by man-made things all day long. We are surrounded with computers designed by people, cell phones invented by people (perhaps not the best invention of all time) furniture built by people, books written by people, in a building constructed by people. We own four cars, I wonder if we need four cars. Surrounded by man-made things, it would be easy to see man as the center of the universe. Did we misplace God in this scenario?

I have been to Debbie Bauman’s Nursery several times, and each time I marvel at God’s creation. So many different flowers, shrubs and so many different colors. One great place to connect with God is in nature. Get away from all the man-made stuff for a little while and experience a natural environment. Look at the flowers, stop and smell the roses, so-to-speak. Put your feet in the ocean. Who made the water? How did it get cold? How did waves start? Look at the stars. There are more than we can count. Who put them there? Who created clouds? Who made rain? Who created planets? Who decided that the earth should rotate, or that the sun would shine in the day and the moon at night?

Once we start to look at God’s creations, many questions come to mind from experiencing nature, we will quickly realize that no human being could have created all of these things. A human being can build a house, but he can’t make a star. A human being can write a book, but he can’t make a tall mountain. A human being can create a fan but can’t make wind gust over an entire city. Once we place God at the center of creation, as its Creator, then we can find our proper place in creation, which is that we are not the center. He is. And if He is the center, then it should be Him that we serve. We should revolve around Him. Many times, we design our lives so that God fits into them, rather than us fitting around Him. Maybe we can pencil in a little God time this week.

One of the best ways to have an experience of God is to get away from all the man-made, man-focused stuff and get around God’s stuff. Spend some time in nature. Look at the intricacies of the plants and flowers, of trees and bushes. Look at mountains, gaze at the stars. Our cities often don’t afford us a good look at the stars. So, make it a point at least once a year to go someplace far from a city and enjoy nature in as pure of a form as you can. We need to find time in our busy life to appreciate nature. This can be as simple as smelling the fragrance of flowers. Hold some soil in your hand, enjoy the sun when it shines on your face and appreciate the coolness of water.

Psalm 104, the Psalm from which today’s verse comes, is sometimes called “The Psalm of Creation.” It is read at Vespers each night, as one day ends and a new one begins. It reminds us that our beginning came from God our Creator. When I have to a chance to be in nature, I often find myself saying today’s verse over and over again, “*How great are Your works O Lord! In wisdom You have made them all!*” Make it a point to get out into nature as often as possible. For in nature we not only see beauty, but we see God. In nature we get away from our “we are the center of the universe” mentality and again rediscover that God is the Creator of the Universe.

*May the glory of the Lord endure forever, may the Lord rejoice in His works, who looks on the earth and it trembles, who touches the mountains and they smoke! I will sing to the Lord as long as I live; I will sing praise to my God while I have being. May my meditation be pleasing to Him, for I rejoice in the Lord. Let sinners be consumed from the earth and let the wicked be no more! Bless the Lord, O my soul! Praise the Lord! Amen. (Psalm 104: 31-35)*

Have you ever had a similar experience of God speaking to you through nature? Perhaps you stood next to a mountain range and felt awe at God’s grandeur or sat by a pond basking in God’s peace and felt it enter your spirit.

For many people, nature is actually the primary way they deeply connect with God. Raised in Sunday School, we learned a simplified formula for growing closer to God. It went like this:

*“Read your Bible, pray every day, and you’ll grow, grow, grow.”*

That little song held a lot of truth, but there’s more to the story. As unique persons, we connect with God in unique ways. These unique ways of connecting make up our spiritual temperament or “God language.”

I remember feeling confusion and even guilt back in high school when I didn’t connect with God through worship like other people experienced. I thought there must be something wrong with me or with my relationship with God. Now I suspect it was simply that formal worship wasn’t the language God and I were speaking at that time. God communicates deeply to my heart through beauty, quiet, grandeur, and the awesomeness of the natural world. I feel that I have a “natural soul”, I respect the Creator. And now, we also realize we need to commune with other Christians during worship service.

*(cont. on next page)*

# Hope's Happenings

Sunday:	June 24	Attendance	81
Offering:	Regular		\$1135.00
	Building		\$10.00
	Sunday School		\$1.00
	Loose		\$35.00
	New Worship Center		\$255.00
	Total		\$1436.00



Newly revised July calendar is attached. Please throw away the other one.

Thank you and sorry for any inconvenience

The Bible is full of stories of people meeting with God powerfully in natural surroundings. I think of Moses and his burning bush in the wilderness, Elijah enduring earthquake and fire on a mountain top and finally hearing God in a gentle whisper of wind, and Jesus going up on a mountain to pray. Yes, even Jesus went to meet with God in the natural world.

Have you recognized that you are an important part of the One who created you? If you've been living your spiritual life unaware, or not prioritizing nature, you may be robbing yourself of the connection and encouragement God has for you. Larry Peterson told me once that he felt closest to God in the saw mill. We all should have that special place to honor the world God created. A place just to be still and listen.

Nature doesn't need to be your top connecter with God to be effective. Anyone *can* receive God through meditation, prayer, reading scripture, and just being quiet enough to hear God. But there are gifts in the space, silence, beauty, and symbolism of the natural order that *can* draw all of us deeper.

So, the next time you feel a tug towards nature, how will you respond? Will you open yourself up to the possibility that this call is actually God's special invitation to meet with you? Will you open your heart to hear what he has to say?

This summer — today even — get outside and soak in the beauty of God's creation. Spend a day away from your normal surroundings and sit by a pond, or a creek, inhale the smell of fresh hay or walk in a cornfield nearby. Maybe it's enough to put some fresh flowers on the table or nurture a new houseplant. Either way, you're invited to discover and experience God in a new way. He is the Creator, let us rejoice and be glad.

Your sister in Christ  
Rosie Schilling

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



- Leroy Syring—heart attack—two stints put in— doing better
- Arden Viegut—heart problems
- John Hamann—home recovering
- Jim Imhoff—health issues—Ken's Dad
- LuAnn Mohr—home recovering—Barb Mohr-Borchardt's mom
- Tammy Blake—cancer—Bonnie's stepdaughter
- Don Hanson—heart attack—doing ok
- Dorothy—rehab in Rhinelander—Bonnie's mom
- Brian—cancer—friend of Leroy and Beth Syring
- Brian Asplund—cancer
- Marge Manecke—health issues
- Corinne Kane—friend of Cassi Bauman
- Linda Krahn—breast cancer—sister in law to the Kamenick's
- Mildred Imhoff—health issues—Ken's mother
- Grace Schraufnagel—cancer—friend of the Streckert's
- Shyra Martyn—brain cancer—Randy and Sara's daughter-in-law
- 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

Thank you for all the kind words, emails and cards that were sent after my surprise surgery a couple weeks ago. They were greatly appreciated. God bless. *Ron Kunkel*

# Hope's Happenings

## The Bulletin Board

- In case of an emergency you can contact
  - Pastor Scott Miller—715-214-5567
- **Wednesday June 27**
  - 2:00 pm & 7:00 pm Bible Study
- **Friday, June 29**
  - 6:30 pm Youth Group fun night at Lechleitner farm



There will be a fire for the Youth Group at the Lechleitner Farm on **Friday, June 29th at 6:30 pm.** Youth are encouraged to bring a friend and a treat to pass as we spend the evening playing yard games and hanging out by the campfire!  
Address - R313 County Road U, Edgar  
Cedric's Cell - 715-573-3915



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. Here 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 to be in by Sunday August 19. 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

We are starting a new outreach ministry at Hope. We are going to be having a meal on the last Sunday evening of the month starting with July 29th. We will run it from 6-8pm and it will be free to the public. We are gearing this towards any individuals or families who have a hard time purchasing groceries toward the end of the month but it will be open to all. We will be looking for volunteers to help with serving this meal as well as Thrivent members who may be interested in applying for one of their Action Team cards to help with the purchase of food and/or supplies for this. Also, if you have any contact with businesses that may be willing to help sponsor this, let us know. Please contact Rosie Bauman (715-573-0524) or Rose Schilling (715-551-1266) if your heart is moved to help with this in any way. This is one more opportunity to show Christ-like love to our surrounding community. High school students who need a service project to add to their senior folder/resume, this would definitely qualify!