
HOPE LUTHERAN

ELCA

Hope Journeys Forward

HOPE is called by God to look beyond ourselves.

We walk together in faith, treasuring all people and sharing with them the love, hope and acceptance that is in Christ.

December 21, 2010



**Presiding minister,
Reverend Bill Montgomery**



2010 Christmas Message from Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson

"How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of the messenger who announces peace, who brings good news, who announces salvation!"
— Isaiah 52:7

When Jesus was born, angelic messengers broke the still calm of a Judean night to sing joyously and proclaim, "This very day in David's city a Savior is born for you — God's Promised One, your Lord." Glad tidings of great joy! Common shepherds were the first and heartiest heralds of the promised Savior's arrival then, and today the joy in Jesus' birth fills every corner of this season.

Admittedly sometimes in modern America the commercial clatter and cultural clutter of the season seem to overtake the angels' song and the shepherds' joyous news. But such a majestic message of God's salvation cannot be silenced. Some loudly lament that the world will not listen to the Gospel message, but in this season so many beckon, "Christians, sing with us. Bring your songs of Christmas, of Jesus." A few may shush you, just as there were those who would later attempt to silence Jesus and his message of God's remarkable, revolutionary mercy, even to the point of crucifixion.

If so, then that is all the more reason to enter into the commotion and clutter, to let go of your inhibitions, to join the angels in singing and the shepherds in exulting with unashamed joy: Jesus, the Savior is born!

"Listen! Your sentinels lift up their voices, together they sing for joy." "See, your salvation comes." — Isaiah 52:8; 62:11

The Rev. Mark S. Hanson

Presiding Bishop

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

A Christmas Message from Bishop Pederson

“This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger.” [Luke 2:12]

How many times have you heard the Christmas story? The biblical account is so familiar. Mary’s unexpected pregnancy. Joseph’s confusion. Caesar’s enrollment. The trip to Bethlehem. Born in a stable. Startled shepherds. Singing angels.

You’ve got the story down pat. You know it so well that there’s nothing new to be discovered. You’ve rubbed up against this holy truth so often that you know it by heart. But then, that’s the danger of the most familiar of stories. You may have rubbed up against it so many times that a callus forms, such that the power and wonder of the story cannot penetrate deeply into your life.

It’s easy to become callous, not just because of familiarity, but because:

- The story isn’t very pretty, in spite of our attempts at making manger scenes out of pastel ceramics. It takes place in the cold, in the darkness of night, amid the smell of manure.
- It’s not very spectacular. Nearly everyone who went to bed that night missed the whole thing. They didn’t see the shining star or hear the angels sing—most snored through it all!
- It’s not very impressive. It’s just a baby after all, just a baby.

And so, because of our familiarity with the Christmas story and because there is little about the story that brings awe in our digitized, razzle-dazzle world, we might miss out on the simple power God reveals at Bethlehem. The fact is that the story *is* very ordinary.

A pastor I know tells about his little boy who was beginning to understand Christmas. The parents went through the Christmas story carefully, telling of the shepherds and angels, of the manger and the baby, of the wise men who came bearing amazing gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. After listening to every detail about the birth of Jesus, the only thing the boy said was, “Why did the wise men bring *those* gifts? Jesus needed toys.”

That little boy is right. The hard thing to grasp is that God has come to us as a baby who needed toys. We understand the gifts fit for a king—the Christ, the Savior, the Lord of all Creation. But to pin all our hopes and dreams on a baby who needs toys? That’s a lot harder to do!

This Christmas, we rely on the Holy Spirit to blow through us so that the story doesn’t lose its power just because it is familiar or just because God comes as a baby. For the wonder of Christmas isn’t in the ooohs-and-aaahs of a cooing newborn. It’s that the eternal Word of God became flesh like you and me.

This is God’s decisive moment! The moment when God entered human history through ordinary means, coming into the world in an ordinary way to do extraordinary things. For Jesus was born to save us, to die for us, to rise for us. Jesus was born for one thing and one thing alone—to be Savior of all. The baby who needed toys is the Lord and Savior of all humankind!

That’s why the angels sing! That’s why the shepherds come to gaze upon a baby! That’s why wise men from afar start their journey by following a star!

Babies, cute as they are, are a dime a dozen, and one more was born that night in Bethlehem. Another ordinary baby. But *this* child is God become flesh. This child is the Savior of all—ordinary and familiar, but holy and sent from God.

Christmas blessings,



Bishop Duane Pederson

Greetings to the Saints of God at Hope Lutheran!

I am Pastor Carol Peterson, and will be with you for worship on Sundays for the next weeks. After graduating from Luther Seminary in 1995, I served the Bethlehem Eidsvold Parish near Ellsworth. I have also served as interim pastor at Our Savior's Lutheran in Menomonie and Christ Lutheran in Somerset. Before seminary, I taught kindergarten and preschool, worked at Hennepin County Medical Center and was a stay at home Mom.

I'm married to Tom Peterson and we have two grown sons, Andy and Ben. We're looking forward to Ben's wedding next summer and adding his fiancée, Britt, to our family. We have recently brought my mother, Dorothy, from Michigan to live closer to us. She is contentedly settled in at Comforts of Home Assisted Living here in River Falls and we're thankful to have found such a wonderful home for her.

In addition to ministry and family, my other passion is writing. In 2009 I completed and published my first novel, *Eddie's Wake*. I have plans to begin another writing project very soon.

I look forward to being with you and sharing the Gospel of Jesus Christ through Word and Sacrament over the next weeks. May God bless you all with a joyous celebration of the Savior's birth and the promise of the future in the New Year!



Help Needed for Tuesday Banquet December 28th

Hope Lutheran is in charge of clean-up for the December 28th Tuesday Banquet.

Four people are needed from 5 p.m. to about 6:15 p.m.

Please e-mail Dick Jackson if you can help: rjacksn@comcast.net or call: 715-426-9531.

Thanks to all the Hope members that have helped cook and serve these Tuesday banquets this year. Hundreds of people that have been served appreciate your help!!

Carols and Candles





"Tis the Season to be kind to your friends"

Do your friends on the Stewardship Team a favor--return your pledge so they don't have to use their precious time this holiday season to call you and remind you. It'll be good for you, good for Hope and a favor to your friends.

Offering Envelopes will be sent in January 2011. You will receive them every other month. We hope that you will enjoy the convenience of having these at your finger tips!

Sunday, December 19, 2010

Offering:	Attendance: 71
General Fund - \$3,591.50	
Hope Express Fund - \$655.00	
Building Fund - \$634.00	
Our Neighbor's Place - \$380.50	
Jamaica Trip Deposit - \$1,600.00	
Jamaica Mittens - \$160.00	
College Christmas Boxes - \$85.00	
Donut Fund - \$21.00	
Food Shelf - \$20.00	

Hope Express Contributions as of 12/21/10 - \$7,310.00

Reminder!!

Your 2010 gifts need to be postmarked by December 31 in order for them to be tax deductible this year.

SUNDAY SCHOOL NEWS

Dec 26 and Jan 2 NO Sunday School

Jan 5 Confirmation at 6: 30 pm

Jan 9. Sunday school and program rehearsal at the usual times

Jan 15 Sat. 10:00 am rehearsal

Jan 16 Children's program during worship

Teacher News

A special thank you to Linda Jacobson for teaching confirmation while the Warrens were out of town. Thanks too, to Kathy Scott for teaching 3rd-5th graders first semester.

Welcome to Laura Anderson who will partner with Trish Graves second semester for that class.

Leading Us in Worship – December 26th

Presiding Minister: Pastor Bill Montgomery	Assisting Minister: Carl Warren
Pianist: Lois Michaelson	Reader & Prayers: Bill Berndt
Ushers: Joe McIntosh & John Hamilton	Acolyte: Kaye Anderson
Communion Preparation: Anne Anderson	Communion Assistant: Karen Hamilton & Anne Anderson
Coffee: Karen Hamilton	Special Music: Carl Warren

Leading Us in Worship – Christmas Eve

Presiding Minister: Pastor Bill Montgomery		
Brass: Mike Stang		
	(5:00)	(10:00)
Pianist:	Phil Klacan	Betty Lou Oppegard
Acolyte:	Alex Sather	Milo Oppegard
Reader & Prayers:	Margaret Anderson	Milo Oppegard
Ushers:	Jerry Brandt	Milo Oppegard
Flute:		Lindsay Getschel



Leading Us in Worship – January 2nd

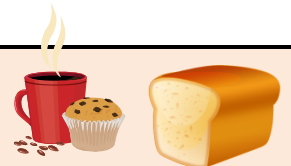
Presiding Minister: Pastor Carol Peterson	Assisting Minister: Roger Tweiten
Pianist: Phil Klacan	Reader & Prayers: Margaret Anderson
Ushers: Ed & Gwen Paulson	Acolyte: (Need a volunteer)
Communion Preparation: Anne Anderson	Communion Assistant: Verna & Anne Anderson
Coffee: Karen Brohaugh	Special Music: Camryn Shea

CALENDAR

Dec. 22, Wednesday		No Confirmation Class
Dec. 24, Friday	5:00 p.m.	Christmas Eve Service (Pastor Bill Montgomery)
	10:00 p.m.	Christmas Eve Service (Pastor Bill Montgomery)
Dec. 26, Sunday	9:30 a.m.	Worship (Pastor Bill Montgomery)
	10:30 a.m.	Coffee Hour – No Sunday School Classes
Dec. 28, Tuesday	5:00 p.m.	Tuesday Banquet Clean-up (Volunteers needed!!)
Dec. 29, Wednesday		No Confirmation Class
Jan. 2, Sunday	9:30 a.m.	Worship (Pastor Carol Peterson)
	10:30 a.m.	Coffee Hour - No Sunday School Classes
Jan. 5, Wednesday	6:30 p.m.	Confirmation at Warren's House



January 2nd Fellowship



Anyone wanting to get rid of a few leftover Christmas cookies, bars or breads is welcome to bring them to church and we will serve them during coffee hour.

Prayers are requested for:
 Zora Anderson (Hope member), Frances Benedict, Patty Borchardt (friend of Lisa Rydland), Amanda Brown, Jody Fink, Avery Gallagher, Katy & Ken Giske (friends of Jerry & Naomi Brandt), Jodi Hauk (Hope member), Kayla Hefner (friend of Gordon Hedahl), June Hirsch, Cindy Hogan, Mike Jacobson (Linda Jacobson's brother), Sandy Kurth (friend of Lisa Rydland), Melissa Loven (Doc and Carol Berggren's granddaughter), Pat Lubich (Jeff Rodewald's aunt), Richard Phelps (Bill Warner's dad), Patrice Rasmussen (friend of Anne Anderson), Dorothy Schulz, SFC Gerardo Viera (adopted soldier of the Carlson family).

We pray for our sister parish, the Mwanza Mission Area in Malawi that they may grow in Spirit and grace. We also pray for our sister synod Sinodo Centro Campanha Sul in Brazil. And for the children, staff, directors and their families of Robin's Nest Children's Home, the orphanage Hope's team will be serving.

**Prayer requests can be sent at anytime.
 Please notify HopeNotes when you would like a prayer request removed.**

Happy Birthday to the following Hope members & friends
 who celebrate their birthday in December!



Kaija Warner	12/1	Lucas Hartleben	12/14
Zoe Tokheim	12/2	Ryan Hartleben	12/14
Amy Kolpin	12/3	Ty Tokheim	12/15
Derick Graves	12/3	Delores Sylte	12/17
Mark Bondhus	12/5	Grete Oppegard	12/17
Deb Goree	12/10	Karen Hamilton	12/17
Judy Karshbaum	12/11	JESUS	12/25
Nancy Christensen	12/11	Rachael Engesether	12/27
Wendy Tokheim	12/11		

**Burning of the Greens
 Sunday, January 9th at 4:00
 Jeff and Karen Rodewalds, 245 Hwy 65**

Hope's annual Burning of the Greens will be held at 4:00 pm, Sunday, January 9 at Jeff and Karen Rodewalds, 245 Hwy 65. This will be a free and family friendly event and children will have fun playing in the snow, exploring a snow cave, watching the blazing of our Christmas trees and greens, feeding the alpacas and sipping hot cocoa to keep warm. Bring your trees and greens and come even if you don't have a real tree. There will be a sign up at church if you'd like to bring something to share at our soup supper. **What is Burning of the Greens?** It is an event celebrated by many Christian churches to commemorate Epiphany. We celebrate the Light of Christ coming into the world on one of the darkest nights of the year. Please plan to join us and bring your friends. Sponsored by Congregational Life.



Daytime Book Group

The daytime group will meet on Monday, January 24 for noontime lunch and book discussion at the home of Karen Brohaugh, N8026 975th St. Note the change in meeting location for the January meeting. We will be discussing *Eddie's Wake* by Pastor Carol Peterson. This will be a unique opportunity for us because the author is going to join us for our discussion. Pr. Carol will be leading us in worship for the month of January so we are taking advantage of her while we have her at Hope. She will bring copies of the book to worship on January 2 and probably on following Sundays. The cost is \$20.00. *Eddie's Wake* is also available at the public library, book stores or online. Everyone is invited to join the group even if you don't usually attend our discussions, male as well as female. Please RSVP to Karen at brohaugh@att.net or 715-425-2971 by Friday, January 21.

Here are a few words from Pastor Carol about her book... *I wrote Eddie's Wake in response to the sorrows and grief of loss we all experience as our life journeys intersect with one another. When his father dies, Karl asks the big questions: "Is God still with me?" "Does God really hear my prayers?" "Does God even care?" I would love to visit your book group and talk about Eddie's Wake, share in your discussion and hear about your insights.*
Pastor Carol

Community Announcements

Interfaith Volunteers

Interfaith Volunteers are needed to help a woman in River Falls with light housekeeping due to her health issues and companionship for a man in his apartment.

For information contact Nancy at 715-381-4360 or email nancya@co.saint-croix.wi.us

***Christmas Village Collectibles Exhibit:** The River Falls Public Library is inviting residents to display their village collectibles (not just Christmas!) to the whole community from **December 19 through January 16** in the lower level gallery. Collectors are asked to bring their items to the library on December 15th and 16th, and to create their display themselves. The library has tables, or you may supply your own. This is a wonderful way to share your collection with more than just your own family and friends. Please call Carol @ 715.425.0905 x123 if you have questions!

Our Neighbors' Place needs your help!

We have just until the end of the year to raise enough money for a building for our homeless shelter. We are currently renting 4 apartments at \$2,600 a month. We realize renting is not cost effective or a good use of precious funds but it has allowed ONP to slowly work it's way up towards the end goal of purchasing possibly a 4-plex. Our apartments are full and we have a waiting list. We are getting close, but not close enough. Please consider making a generous donation so that we can provide room at the inn for families in our community who are in desperate need.

Please send your donations to: Our Neighbors' Place P.O. Box 274, River Falls, WI 54022 Thank you!!!

The Assistance & Resource Center Inc (ARC) is in need of board members as several will be rotating off in the spring. It is a good time to step forward as you will be able to partner with a board member or be on a committee for publicity, fundraising or grant writing. Please give it prayerful thought as the Ministers and community do depend on this program. ARC distributes funds donated by the Churches, individuals, organizations and grants to persons financially stressed. **WE NEED YOU!** If interested call JoAnne 715-425-2294.

go 4 it

Take the GO! Challenge

1. Take the health assessment. (Call your doctor's office get your numbers or to make an appointment for a physical.) You can complete the assessment without this information, but it's more accurate/complete if you have it.
2. Read about the [GO! Challenge](#). Print the [tracking sheets](#) (or use the ones you received in the mail). Set a goal and begin the four week plan to improve your health and well being.
3. Let me know how you're doing. Share your story, pictures, comments, etc. with me at msoyck-doring@nswi.org.
4. Encourage your colleagues (and family members) to follow your example and get involved. Maybe you'll decide to make it a team effort or a competition--whatever works for you!
5. Reap the benefits. Earn points for completing the assessment and more points for the GO! Challenge. The points convert to dollars that help offset your out-of-pocket medical expenses. Plus, congregations and other organizations throughout our synod will receive a 2% reduction in health insurance premiums if we reach the 65% completion goal. That's not all! You will learn more about your health and hopefully improve your health by participating in wellness activities.
6. Get started January 1. Let's **Go 4 It!**



The Northwest Synod of Wisconsin has quite a reputation at the Board of Pensions office. We have been the **FIRST** synod to meet the health assessment completion goal for the last three years. Let's make sure that this year is no different. Let's **go 4 it!** Let's make this the fourth consecutive year that at least 65% of our eligible health plan participants complete the online health assessment.

This year's program has a couple of changes. First, although we have until the end of April to meet the completion goal, let's not wait that long. Do it in January and begin to reap the rewards (both in both health and financial well being).

Second, let's step up our efforts by accepting the GO! Challenge. What's that? It's a simple health improvement program offered by the Board of Pensions.

Learn more about the [GO! Challenge](#).

Announcement Deadlines

- Send **Website** announcements to secretary@hopelutheran-riverfalls.org by 9:00 a.m. on Tuesdays.
Send **Hope Notes** announcements to hopenotes@hopelutheran-riverfalls.org by 9:00 a.m. on Thursdays.
Send **Bulletin** announcements to secretary@hopelutheran-riverfalls.org by 9:00 a.m. on Fridays.

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Office: 715-425-9750

Hope's website: <http://www.hopelutheran-riverfalls.org>
Teresa's email: secretary@hopelutheran-riverfalls.org

Office address: 117 E. Maple St., Suite C
(Entrance behind Travel Leaders/Suntime Travel.)

Facebook: [hopelutheranchurchriverfallswi](https://www.facebook.com/hopelutheranchurchriverfallswi)

