

In Touch with

Hope

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF HOPE CHURCH

DECEMBER 2025

James Runcorn, D. Min.

Lead Pastor

More Than a Resolution

I've proclaimed my fair share of New Year's resolutions in my lifetime. I'm also proud to say that I have, with 100% accuracy, kept zero of those. I'm not proud of failing, but it is something that I've done completely and fully (with 100% accuracy). Many times in life, I've been more of a hit or miss kind of guy.

That kind of track record doesn't fly in the Christian lifestyle. Meaning, the life Christ has called us to is one that is all or nothing. You might hear a popular, watered-down, feel-good presentation of Christianity, if you listen to the whispers and musings of popular culture. But again, you won't find support for that in Scripture.

What are some of the basics? Number one, it involves repentance. Repentance is a dynamic shift in direction. Without Christ, I move forward with one goal in mind: I will please and serve myself above all else. With Christ, I move forward in the opposite direction: I will please and serve Christ Jesus above all else.

Jesus said, "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me" (Matthew 16:24 NIV). The journey begins with death to self and the former ways of doing things. Jesus becomes the LORD and ruler of your life, rather than yourself. When we die to our old self and our old ways, we find new life in Jesus.

Paul says to the church in Rome, "We are those who have died to sin; how can we live in it any longer?" (Romans 6:2). The life we now live in Christ is distinctly different. Not only does it demonstrate the transformative power of His blood and Spirit, but it also sets us apart from those who are perishing.

The time for a change isn't in the tradition of a New Year's resolution. The time for change is here and now.

I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. (Galatians 2:20)

**Our Mission is to
Gather, Equip, and
Grow in Christ.**

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Youth Auction 2025

Jay Van Gelder

Youth Pastor

A Big Thank You to all of you that supported our Annual Youth Auction this year!

It is so awesome and humbling to see the support Hope church has for our Youth Ministry Program here at Hope Church.

Last youth auction in 2023 we took in over \$34,000 dollars for the event which was amazing and something I never thought would have happened. But this year the youth worked hard in getting donations, congregation members came up with some unique and different auction items, and the bidders were happy to wave their numbers. The grand total of money raised was \$38,000 dollars. After we finished counting, I could not believe the number. I almost thought we had added wrong until the Deacons counted the next day and deposited in the bank I could still not believe it. I just stopped and prayed to God thanking Him for providing us with this huge blessing.

I asked God to continue to show me how to use this money to grow His Kingdom and share His story in our youth ministry program. I prayed that we would use this money to Glorify God as we use the money to help students go on the Sr. high trip to Colorado Springs and Rocky Mountain High, as well as 6,7,8th Youth to go to our week at "Immerse" in Lincoln, Nebraska and all the other things we will use it for throughout this upcoming year.

It seems like every year I wonder how we are going to pay for things as stuff continues to cost more. Rocky Mtn High went up \$100 per person for lodging and food, Van costs and mileage continue to increase. And I ask the question how we can continue to keep the cost low for families to be able to have their son or daughter attend. Then GOD shows up. God provides, God blesses, and God shows up in big ways.

I continue to be in amazement the support this church gives in supporting our young people. It was such a great night watching people bid on the items and the laughter and smiles people had during the evening. Our young people served well, worked as a team, laughed with people and engaged with our adults in our congregation. Clint Jones is always awesome and fun to work with and did a great job helping us auction off the items that so many of you brought. Thanks again for your contribution to this wonderful event.

Thanks, too, for your continued support of our youth ministry program here at Hope Church.



CHILDREN

Julia Andela

Director of Children & Family Ministries



BRICK is an 8-week course for 4th and 5th grade students and their parents/caregivers.

We work through the scope and sequence of The Bible, equipping students and families to study God's Word. You may be wondering...why is this Bible course called BRICK??

The mission and purpose of this course is to **B**uild **R**elationship **I**n **C**hrist's **K**ingdom.

The word relationship meaning:

- relationship with God through His Word
- relationship with like-minded peers
- relationship with trusted adults who are leading students to know and love The Lord!

Additionally, the picture of Jesus Christ as our cornerstone creates an incredible image of the firm foundation we are building our faith upon.

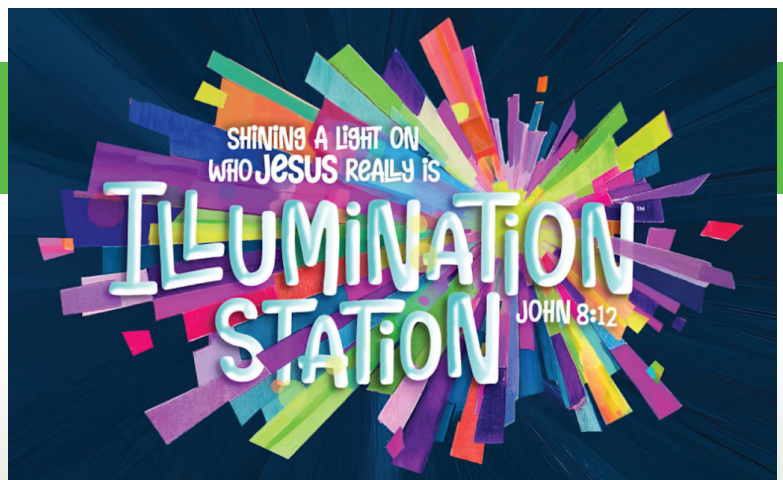
God has entrusted parents/caregivers with the gift of raising kids to know and love The Lord. We are thankful to provide a wonderful resource to families in that mission!

To register please follow the link: <https://hopechurchspencer.breezechms.com/form/BRICK2026>

The course begins Wednesday, January 14 from 6:00 - 7:30PM and runs each Wednesday through March 4.

SAVE THE DATE!

VBS 2026
JUNE 8-12



MISSIONS

Bob and Barb Van Wyk Update



This summer we trained 32 people for our primary school ministry (GEMS) in Francistown, which is the second largest city in Botswana. Some work has already begun here but we are trusting that the impact will now be much larger as these people mobilize and enter the schools. Our main prayer point is they will launch and begin going into the schools. (This continues to be the main sticking point.) They desire for children to hear the truth of God's word, come and enjoy the training, but the thought of standing in front of hundreds of children, let alone teachers, intimidates them enough not to step out in faith and follow through to sharing with the children.

We are trying to implement different methods to encourage them to begin so pray for effective strategies to accomplish this.

We traveled to the country of Lesotho and met with at least 50 Sunday School teachers, hoping they will also begin GEMS training in their schools there. Then we traveled to Mozambique to work with them on casting vision for reaching the children in their country through GEMS as well. We pray that the Lord will anoint all these times and that each country would catch the vision of reaching the children in their respective countries.

We greatly appreciate Hope Church's partnership with us as we work at going international.

A poster for an Eswatini mission trip. It features a map of Eswatini in green, overlaid on a scenic landscape of rolling hills and mountains. The text "ADVENTURES IN MISSIONS" is at the top, followed by "ESWATINI" in large white letters. Below that is the tagline "Helping the next generation thrive". The bottom half of the poster is dark green with white and gold text.

ADVENTURES IN MISSIONS

ESWATINI

Helping the next generation thrive

Join us

FUNDRAISER BRUNCH

Sunday, December 14

9:45 am - Harbor

Free will offering brunch to help raise funds for Hope Church families going on next year's mission trip to Eswatini.

IMPORTANT DECEMBER DATES



WOMEN OF HOPE

Christmas Tea

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 6

10 AM - 12 NOON

Speaker: Erin Stevens

TO ATTEND, please use click the link

<https://hopechurchspencer.breezechms.com/form/ChristmasTea2025>

Annual Congregational Meeting

**Sunday, December 7
4 pm in the Harbor**

Bring a dessert to share

All confessing members are encouraged to attend

We will celebrate what God has done in 2025, look ahead at 2026 and participate in the selection of new Elders and Deacons by drawing of lots.

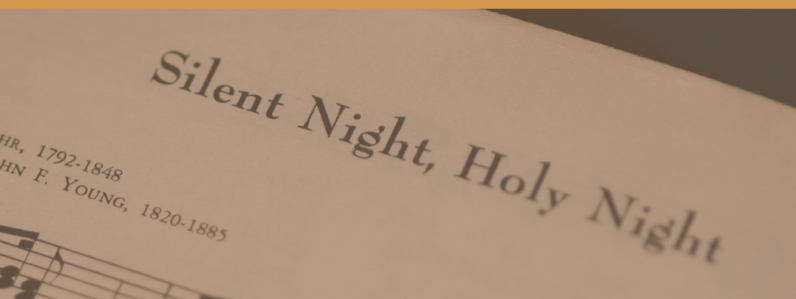


Elder Nominees

Barry Anderson
Arvin Druvenga
Greg Meeter
Cedric Winterboer

Deacon Nominees

Mike Bryan
Luke Lovin
Eric Van Der Heide
Aaron Zinn



Christmas CAROLING

DECEMBER 15TH

MEET AT HOPE CHURCH AT 4:45PM

CAROLING AT NURSING HOMES WITH A
PIZZA DINNER TO FOLLOW!



A Simple CHRISTMAS

DECEMBER 24

5 PM 7 PM 11 PM

NURSERY PROVIDED



DATES TO REMEMBER

WEEKLY

MEN'S MORNING BIBLE STUDY

Mondays 8:00 am

PRAYER & PRAISE

Tuesdays 6:30 pm

SENIOR HIGH YOUTH GROUP

Sundays 7:00 pm

MIDDLE SCHOOL YOUTH GROUP

Wednesdays

6th Grade 5:30 pm

7th Grade 6:30 pm

8th Grade 7:30 pm

MONDAY, DECEMBER 1

Men of Hope Bible Study 7:00 pm

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 2

Mom Connect 9:00 am

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 3

Kid's Christmas Practice 5:30 pm

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 4

Blood Drive 1:00 pm

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 6

Women's Christmas Tea 10:00 am

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 7

Communion - both services
Congregational Meeting 4:00 pm

MONDAY, DECEMBER 8

Men of Hope Bible Study 7:00 pm

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 10

Kid's Christmas Practice 5:30 pm

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 11

Consistory Meeting 7:00 pm

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 13

Kid's Christmas Practice 9:00 am

MONDAY, DECEMBER 15

Christmas Caroling 4:45 pm

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 24

Christmas Eve Services
5:00 pm ~ 7:00 pm ~ 11:00 pm
(Nursery provided at 5:00 and 7:00)

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 25

Church Closed

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 30

Year End Giving Deadline 2:00 pm

CONCERNS FOR

Please continue to lift up the following people and families in prayer:

The following as they navigate their cancer journeys

- Keith Fliss - recovery from whipple surgery
- Hannah Dibble - Todd & Barb Brockshus daughter with her CAR-T cell treatment
- David Stephens - Brian & Greta Rouse brother in law
- Chery Haden - Melissa Stell's mom

- Bill Hughes - as he navigates his health issues
- Emma Lair - Missy's daughter in law - as she heals from her surgery
- Dean Mechler - healing from corrective hip surgery
- Nadeen Hill - recovery from surgery
- Brent McAnally - Gordon Schmidt's son - recovery from open heart surgery

CELEBRATING WITH

Mike Prange - numbers were undetectable

CONDOLENCES TO

Teri Van Wettering, Hope and Darin Bumgarner and families on the passing of Teri's husband and Hope's dad, Bill Van Wettering, who passed from time to eternity on November 6.

Carol Hartig and family on the passing of her husband, Bill Hartig, who passed from time to eternity on November 12.

Joyce Klein and family on the passing of her daughter, Gaye Smith, who passed from time to eternity on November 18.

YEAR END GIVING

*Needs to be received by
2 pm on December 30*

CONSISTORY MINUTES

Present: James Runcorn, Jay Van Gelder **Elders:** Bob Campbell, Kevin Vander Stoep, Mark Lockey, Gary Zeutenhorst.
Deacons: Ryan Murray, Kevin Goeken, Alex Johnson, Kelly Geerdes, Jason Warren
October 9, 2025 • 7:00 pm

Opening prayer: James Runcorn

James Runcorn led a discussion on the biblical role of deacons. (1 Timothy 3:8-13, Philippians 1:1: Acts 6:1-7.)

REGULAR BUSINESS

Approved September 18, 2025 minutes with changes - MMSC-(Bob/Alex)

Approved September 18, 2025 financials - MMSC (Bob/Kelly)

September giving and attendance analysis by Alex.

Around the room check-in with each consistory members and pastors. Kevin closed in prayer.

TEAM REPORTS

Purposeful Learning Dean/Knut, Jay reported that he will be taking 4 Sr. high youth to a leadership retreat. Working with freshman youth around spiritual disciplines and challenging them on being a positive influence in their interactions with others. Julia has been busy working with Trunk or Treat. There will be lock in on November 1st and the 22nd. Jay is working on the youth auction (11/9).

Holy Living Gary/Ryan, Ryan reported that the Men's ministry had planned a pumpkin painting scheduled for the 19th from 4-6 pm for their family outing. The library committee has started inputting the new books into the computer system. Women's ministry met 10/8 and planned to have a Christmas tea on December 6th. They will be sending out a survey to the women of Hope to get feedback regarding activities in the future. James stated that he and Terry have been discussing and identifying clear steps/expectations for individuals as they get connected in the church and to assist them as they grow in their faith.

Wholehearted Service Mark/Kevin, Mark stated that Jill indicated that the new phones will be installed on the 15th of October. He stated that Abby reported 56 Samaritan's Purse Christmas boxes were picked up last Sunday 10/05. They will be praying over the boxes on November 16th before they send them out. The 75th church anniversary will be on Jan 17th. Eric will be videotaping people's testimonies and they will have a dessert potluck.

Loving Outreach Bob/Alex, Bob reported that the Care Team did meet and assignments were made to get grief books out. Bob reported that Rebecca Goeken will be joining the Missions team. The Mission team is recommending giving \$500 to individuals that are interested in going on a mission trip to Eswatini. MMSC to give \$500 per person to those who would be going to the Eswatini mission trip. Bob reminded the consistory about The Bridge of Storm Lake's Annual Fall Banquet on 10/18 from 6:00 to 8:00 pm, and that Hope Church has a table with 8 reserved seats if anyone would like to attend.

Passionate Worship Kevin/Jason, Kevin reported that he had received a text from Ryan stating that he was thankful for all the help he received to tear down after Church in the Backyard at the Runcorn's on the 28th.

Meaningful Fellowship Doug/Kelly, Kelly stated that they are still talking about the possibility of combining the positions of Coordinator of Greeters and Ushers into one position.

PASTORS REPORT

Staff took part in all church Horizon meetings on Tuesday September 30th in Sioux Center. It was an opportunity to share with other church staff with similar positions to get feedback and ideas. Kevin and Bob will attend the Horizon Network annual meeting October 26th at New Life Church in Sioux Center IA from 4:00-5:30 pm

OTHER BUSINESS

Discussed some ideas about Jay doing some consulting/training in the area for youth directors and programs.

James stated they need judges for Trunk or Treat judging Trunks...Kelly Kevin and James volunteered.

Closing prayer: Jay Van Gelder

ELDER MEETING

Opening prayer: James Runcorn

Discussed congregational care issues.

Closing prayer: Bob Campbell

DEACON MEETING

Opening Prayer: Kevin Goeken

Design Team presented Phase 2 of Building Hope Campaign - focus on stage painting, stage extension and carpet.

CD Coming due MMSC (Goeken/Murray) to move to a Liquid CD

Discussion about the upcoming annual budget meeting for November.

MMSC (Geerdes/Goeken) for approval of a \$5500 sign from Roling Signs for East side. Removal of old sign by volunteers.

MMSC (Johnson/Geerdes) for approval of \$2870 sign quote from Roling Signs for the front entrance.

Review of Emergency Action Plan. Specifically around the need for a new AED device.

Closing prayer: Alex Johnson



LIBRARY NEWS

Christmas is a great time to read books to your children

We have so many with the Christmas theme you can borrow. If you are really ambitious wrap one a night until Christmas. Let them choose the package. After the kids are in bed snuggle up with "A Victorian Christmas." Go back in time with the Victorian ladies finding Christian love. Stories with all aged women. It was very sweet.

Interested in a Small Group?

We will have another Rooted small group session in early 2026.

Use the link below to receive more information!

<https://hopechurchspencer.breezechms.com/form/Rooted2026>



ROOTED

WORSHIP

Hope Church is looking for a gifted Worship Director to join our team

If you or someone you know is interested, please click the link below for more information.

<https://spencerhope.com/employment>



919 Grand Avenue
Spencer, IA 51301
(712)262-3016
hrc@spencerhope.org

Worship Services

SUNDAYS: 8:30 am and 10:45 am

Live-streamed online:
www.youtube.com/hopechurchspencer

Sunday School

SUNDAYS: 9:45 am

Hope Church Staff

James Runcorn, Lead Pastor
Jay Van Gelder, Youth Pastor
Julia Andela, Director of Children & Family Ministries
Terry Stevens, Director of Adult Discipleship
Ryan Hoskins, Worship Director
Eric Meeter, Tech Director
Michael Fujimoto, Facilities Director
Jill Lowe, Office Administrator
Abbey Fujimoto, Media Specialist
Tim Yeager, Maintenance
Levi Morris, Treasurer
Missy Lair, Nursery Coordinator