

In Touch with

Hope

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF HOPE CHURCH

MAY 2026

James Runcorn, D. Min.

Lead Pastor

What Is God Calling You to Today?

(part 4 of 5)

Last month's installment reminded (or taught) that God calls His people to a lifestyle of prayer. As we continue on with this discussion, a sobering reality emerges. Today, we reflect on the most challenging part of our calling.

God demands death to self. This kind of death is a willingness to lay down one's preferences, opinions, addictions, habits and go-to methods of approaching life. Jesus said, "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me" (Matthew 16:24).

Let's break that statement down. Jesus begins by saying, "Whoever." The Greek uses 2 words, "Ei tis." Those directly translate as: If anyone. Multiple translations convey that direct thought but even the NIV, as quoted above, captures the heart of Jesus' statement. The door is an open invitation to any person. Should you want to follow Jesus, there is a cost.

The first cost is denial of self. One of the first words young children learn, without even being taught, is MINE! From a young age, we tend to believe everything in this world is about me. Jesus calls us to turn from that selfish mentality in order to see His purposes.

The second cost is even greater after the step of self-denial. He instructs would-be followers to pick up and to carry a gruesome, painful tool of execution. The Roman cross was designed to inflict shame and intense pain in a prolonged and agonizing death. Jesus spoke these words before He had been arrested, falsely tried and crucified. He knew what He would soon endure. He also calls us to a lifestyle He models by His own loving actions.

After self-denial and taking up one's own tool of execution, He invites steps of faith – to follow Him. This is the pathway of discipleship. Paul expresses it clearly, "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).

Death to self. Full and abundant life in Christ. This process gives us clarity. When we are set free from the law of sin and death (Romans 8:2), we have an abundant life through Christ Jesus (John 10:10). Through that, we now have the ability to choose contentment (1 Timothy 6:6) and to see others as more important than ourselves (Philippians 2:3).

The cost of reconciliation – the price of your redemption – has been paid in full. Salvation is free but the cost of following the One who gave it all for you is monumental AND more worthwhile than I could ever express with mere words.

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



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Congratulations to all high school graduates! The following high school seniors submitted answers to the these questions: What have you been involved in at Hope Church? How has Hope Church helped you grow as a person? What are your future plans after graduation?



Gretchen Haak

Hi! My name is Gretchen Haak. I am the daughter of John and Shelby Haak.

I have been going to Hope Church for my whole life and am very involved. Throughout my membership, I have had the opportunity to go on many church trips, help in the nursery and with children's church, volunteer for VBS every summer, and I have even had the opportunity to serve and help out on the praise team! Hope Church has helped me grow in my faith in many different ways including through many different learning opportunities and even through the people of Hope Church. After I graduate from Spencer High School I plan to attend South Dakota State University in the fall where I will be majoring in nursing. After I obtain my nursing degree, I plan to go even further with my education and study anesthesiology to get my license as a CRNA.



Avery McEntee

I am the daughter of John and Janelle McEntee.

Throughout my middle and high school years I have been involved at Hope in many ways. I attended youth group all throughout middle school participating in events like Trunk-or-Treat, at the end of middle school I went on Power Connection 2021. Throughout high school I have volunteered in Children's Church. During high school I have been on the Rocky and Tennessee trips. Being at Hope has allowed me to be a part of something bigger than myself. I have been able to connect with those around me and build some of the best relationships with my peers and youth leaders. As I have gotten older, I have had the opportunity to be a peer leader in the youth group helping the younger kids strengthen their relationships with others and with the Lord. After high school I plan to attend Northwestern College to play soccer and major in Nursing.



Averie Nelson

My name is Averie Nelson, daughter of Kent and Marcy Nelson.

I have been attending Hope Church since I was a baby. I have been involved in Youth Group and have gone on retreats and service projects since middle school. I have also volunteered for Vacation Bible School and Children's Church. Hope Church has helped me realize how important it is to have a strong faith and to have people alongside you to uphold and support you. In the fall, I will be attending Iowa State University where I will be majoring in Business.





Brayden Schuster

My name is Brayden Schuster and my parents are Jim and Christie Schuster.

During my time at Hope Church, I've been involved in youth group and youth trips, which have been a big part of my high school years. Hope Church has helped me grow in my faith by surrounding me with friends who share my beliefs and values, giving me a strong sense of community and support. After graduation, I plan to attend Iowa Central Community College to study welding technology and continue building a future in that field. I'm thankful for the impact Hope Church has had on my life.



Colby Sherrod

My name is Colby Sherrod, my parents are Sean and Pam Sherrod.

During my time at Hope Church, I have been involved in youth group, missions trips and occasionally playing with the worship band. Being part of Hope has helped me grow in my faith by strengthening my relationship with God and surrounding me with a very supportive community. I've definitely gained understanding of my faith and how it applies to my life. After graduation, I plan to attend the University of Iowa to study business.



Tate Zinn

My name is Tate Zinn. I am the son of Aaron and Kylee Zinn.

I have been attending Hope Church since 2017. I am a part of the youth group at Hope Church. I also run the sound board and lights at church. I also play bass in the worship team.

Hope church helped me grow my faith by helping me find what my talents are and how to use them. Without Hope Church, I don't know where I would be because this church helped me find purpose.

I plan on attending Mitchell Technical College to study electrical maintenance and construction to help me become an electrician.



Dates/Events Reminders

Last day of Sunday School - May 10

VBS Work Nights prepping displays - Wednesdays in May (6, 13, 20, 27): 6:00 - 7:30 pm

Final VBS Prep Week - June 1-5: Time to be announced

VBS: June 8-12 8:30 am - 11:45 am

Back to School Sunday/Fall Kick-off - August 23



CHILDREN'S CHURCH will continue to meet throughout the summer at both services.

Thank You to Sunday School Teachers

I am so thankful to God for the opportunity to share The Gospel each week in Sunday School, and for the incredible people that live out their faith by serving in Hope Kids Sunday School alongside me. It is an important and weighty calling to help children learn about our loving Savior; the seeds these volunteers have planted have an eternal impact! At least 118 unique Students attended Elementary Sunday School and at least 42 unique students attended Preschool Sunday School throughout the 2025-2026 school year. Praise God!!

A special thank you to Missy Lair and the nursery team for opening the nursery during Sunday School for parents who teach and to the following preschool and elementary teammates who have committed to loving on our Hope Kids each week:

Preschool Team

Marlee Christoffel
Kristy Connor
Robin Edwards
Jill Lowe
Greta Rouse
Jessika Walker

Elementary Team

Luke Lovin
Molly Lovin
Sam Madison
Jordon Rasmussen
Kyle Rehnstrom
Mallory Rehnstrom
Ashley Reinholdt
Rob Reinholdt
Erin Stevens
Rachel Van Der Heide
Sandra Warren
Briana Wetrich

Attendance

Dawn Grimmus
Katie Morris
Levi Morris

Substitute Team

Phil Bieber
Jessica Bieber
Knut Brown
Molly Brown
Missy Burns
Alyssa Clark
Jen Coates
Kenzie Connor
Katie Morris
Levi Morris
Angie Murray
Ryan Murray
Luanne Todd



SUMMER BIBLE READING CHALLENGE

Students are encouraged to
keep digging into God's Word
this summer through our
Summer Bible Reading Challenge!

Instruction Packets can
be picked up at the Info Desk
in the Lobby starting May 10.

Return the completed challenge to
Julia by August 23rd for a prize!

LIBRARY NEWS



Reviewer: Pat Olson

Book: The Girl In The Green Sweater

Author: Krystyna Chiger/Daniel Paisner

Can you even imagine living in a storm sewer underneath the streets of Lvov, Poland? The author, Krystyna, her family and several other Jewish people survived this ordeal for one and one half years. They endured deplorable conditions to escape extermination by the Nazis in 1943-1944. Krystyna was eight years old. They were assisted with supplies by several outsiders who risked their lives to help. The green sweater became Krystyna's security blanket.

A motion picture, *In Darkness*, was released in 2011. It was based on this true story. I recommend reading this book. It is a true testament of what people have done to survive and preserve their faith.

MISSIONS

Dear Hope Reformed Church,

We are grateful for your continued partnership in the gospel and wanted to share a few updates on what God has been doing in this season at Redeemer City Church.

Over the past months, we have been implementing a new discipleship pathway, and we've been encouraged by the level of engagement. Currently, around 95% of our membership is participating in a Community Group, Discipleship Group, or Equipping Class. We are thankful for this and trust that the Lord is using these rhythms to produce deeper spiritual growth in the lives of our people.

We have also seen encouraging growth more broadly. On Easter, we had our largest gathering ever with 220 people in attendance. What stood out even more were the number of individuals who do not yet identify as Christians who joined us. In one conversation after the service, someone shared, "This is the first time I have willingly gone to a church in my life." We are praying that seeds planted that day would continue to bear fruit.

As we head into the summer, we're looking forward to continuing our outreach efforts in the apartment complex just north of us. We partner with a local Hispanic church to host a large neighborhood gathering, and it has been a meaningful way to build relationships. Last year, several families from the complex began attending that church, and it has been encouraging to see a strong foundation continue to grow there. Please pray for the planning which will begin shortly!

Additionally, we recently identified a new global partner in North Africa after our previous partners returned to the States. We are excited to continue participating in what God is doing globally and to support this new work in a much needed place.

We trust and pray that the Lord continues to bless Hope Reformed as you seek to faithfully proclaim and live out the gospel!

Peace,
Nathan Hobert
Redeemer City Church
Madison, Wisconsin



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 in May
VBS Prep Nights 6:00 pm

SUNDAY, MAY 3

Membership Class 9:45 am
Evangelism 101 9:45 am
Women's Bible Study 9:45 am

MONDAY, MAY 4

Men's Ministry Bible Study 7:00 pm

TUESDAY, MAY 5

Mom Connect 9:00 am

WEDNESDAY, MAY 6

Young Women's Bible Study 9:30 am
Chick-Fil-A Food Truck 11:00 am
VBS Prep Night 6:00 pm
Women's Bible Study 6:30 pm

THURSDAY, MAY 7

National Day of Prayer 7:00 am

SUNDAY, MAY 10

Youth Sunday
Evangelism 101 9:45 am
Women's Bible Study 9:45 am

MONDAY, MAY 11

Men's Ministry Bible Study 7:00 pm

TUESDAY, MAY 12

Prayers & Squares 1:00 pm

WEDNESDAY, MAY 13

Young Women's Bible Study 9:30 am
VBS Prep Night 6:00 pm
Women's Bible Study 6:30 pm

THURSDAY, MAY 14

Consistory Meeting 7:00 pm

SUNDAY, MAY 17

New Members Recognition
Evangelism 101 9:45 am

MONDAY, MAY 18

Missions Team Meeting 7:00 pm

TUESDAY, MAY 19

Prayers & Squares Quilting 1:00 pm

WEDNESDAY, MAY 20

Young Women's Bible Study 9:30 am
VBS Prep Night 6:00 pm
Women's Bible Study 6:30 pm

SUNDAY, MAY 24

Evangelism 101 9:45 am

MONDAY, MAY 25

Church Closed for Memorial Day

CONCERNS FOR

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

The following as they navigate their cancer journeys

- Keith Fliss
- Hannah Dibble
- David Stephens
- Chery Haden
- Carl Johnson
- Mark Lockey
- Martha Oskvig

- Melissa Busch's niece, Rachel - for a successful pregnancy after a cervical cerclage procedure
- Mike & Cheri Prange's grandson, Dawson, as he continues to heal from a stomach infection
- Ronnie Smith - healing from surgery and meningitis
- Jerry & Ceil Faulkner - health concerns

CONDOLENCES TO

Linda and Lance Grave and family on the passing of Linda's mom, Hilda Hilbrands, who passed from time to eternity on April 19.

Marlis Kuiper and family on the passing of Marlis' husband, Gary, who passed from time to eternity on April 30.



HIS story is YOUR story
Evangelism 101

Sundays
in May
9:45 am
in the
Sanctuary

CHURCH
IN THE
PARK

JUNE 21st 10 AM

EAST LEACH PARK
BAND SHELL

CONSISTORY MINUTES



Pastors: James Runcorn, Jay Van Gelder. Elders: Arv Druvenga Cedric Winterboer, Dean Mechler, Gary Zeutenhorst, Kevin Vander Stoep, Mark Lockey. Deacons: Eric Van Der Hiede, Jason Warren, Kevin Goeken, Knut Brown, Mike Bryan, Ryan Murray.
March 12, 2026. 7:00 pm. Opening prayer: Ryan Murray. Devotional: James read from Psalms and discussed the importance of being in the word and memorizing scripture.

REGULAR BUSINESS

Approved February 12, 2026 minutes, MMSC-(Dean/Cedric)

Approved February 12, 2026 financials, MMSC-(Mike/Knut)

Giving and attendance analysis done by Eric.

Around the room check in with each of the consistory and the pastors. Kevin Vander Stoep closed in prayer.

TEAM REPORTS

(Purposeful Learning) Dean/Knut, Jay stated that he has 60 signed up for the middle school retreat on April 17-19 at Hidden Acres in Dayton IA. Planning a Parent night worship service with middle and senior high students in Rock Valley on March 18th.

(Holy Living) Gary/Ryan, Gary reported the Library committee has gotten their computer back logging in books again. Have local authors highlighted in the bulletin and books displayed in the library. They have gotten positive feedback on the kids' Valentines displayed in the library. The Women's Ministry committee met 3/11 to work on details for the April 11th women's conference. They are hoping to get the 3 bible studies started soon. Terry and James have set up 4 speakers for the month of May to talk about how to share your faith with others. This will be held in the Sanctuary between the services.

(Wholehearted Service) Mark/Eric, Mark stated that Jill is working on a flyer that has activities for Holy Week. She is also working on an insert in the bulletin to sign up for the Women's Ministries bible studies. Michael is working on scheduling a spring cleanup day outside the church.

(Passionate Worship) Kevin/Jason, Kevin reported that James and Eric are working on the Easter service. Eric has volunteers scheduled for the month of April. He will be having appreciation/vision casting get together with current volunteers on the worship team on March 26. Discussed the Ash Wednesday service feedback and experiences.

(Meaning Fellowship) Arv/Mike, Arv state that they have had good participation with the greeters and ushers and they have more people volunteer to serve in those areas. Discussed the positive turnout and excellent service to celebrate the 75th Anniversary of Hope Church.

(Loving Outreach) Cedric/Kevin G., Kevin/Cedric reported that missions committee met. Kevin G stated that the group planning on going to Africa met to determine and finalize who will be going on the trip in August.

PASTORS REPORT

James reported that the Horizon Network gave Hope a grant for \$1300 for the radio ministry.

James stated that they are planning on the Maundy Thursday service, last supper reenactment being open to the public. There are several pastors from the community participating in the reenactment. There will be 2 services at 6:00 and 7:30. Jay will be doing the communion. They are planning another worship service in the park on June 21st. The theme will be Celebrating the Good Father. Monies collected at the service will go to the Long-Term Recovery program in Clay County.

James closed with prayer.

ELDERS MEETING

James opened with prayer.

The constitutional question was asked and answered in the negative. Discussed congregational care issues. Discussed ideas regarding Prayer and Praise on Tuesday nights. Text approval, 03/02/2026, for a request of membership transfer of Mitch and Laura Wiemers to Community Reformed Church in Sioux Falls SD.

Cedric closed with prayer.

DEACONS MEETING

Kevin Goeken opened in prayer.

Approved the updated/revised quote (Van Der Heide/Bryan) from Mr B's to carpet the Harbor after VBS for \$25,727.72. Discussion around purchasing a carpet tape to put on the new Harbor carpet. Denied an outside group using the facility. Had discussion around church use, church member personal use, and where the line crosses to be an Event Space. Hope Church is not an Event Center. Approved a quote (Van Der Heide/Bryan) to fix a couple roof leaks for \$2500. Michael is seeking budget money to start spring/fall clean up days to feed volunteers. Deacons encouraged Michael to use volunteer appreciation account fund and let it go over, if volunteers show up. Eric is looking for \$1000 to use from the Video/Sound equipment budget line to update a space to record announcements that will start playing before the start of church on the Sanctuary screens (MMSC Brown/Goeken) Approved. Discussion on a request for financial support. Approved a request (Warren/Goeken) from Jay for a license to Logos ministry. Also pre-approved for Pastor James to upgrade his license, when available. Church in the Park is scheduled for Father's Day, June 21, 2026. We will partner with 5 churches. An offering will be collected for Clay County Long Term Recovery. Deacon's supported this request.

Pastor Jay closed in prayer.



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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
Eric Meeter, Worship/Tech Director
Michael Fujimoto, Facilities Director
Jill Lowe, Office Administrator
Abbey Fujimoto, Media Specialist
Tim Yeager, Maintenance
Levi Morris, Treasurer
Missy Lair, Nursery Coordinator

