

In Touch with *Hope*



MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF HOPE CHURCH

OCTOBER 2025

James Runcorn, D. Min.

Lead Pastor

We Can't Afford to Wait

What is the most important reason we are here? When I say, “we,” I mean the church. To be clear, the church does not mean the building. The church is you. The church is me. The church is all of us – those who profess Christ Jesus as our LORD and Savior. Scripture actually describes the church as the “body” of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:27; Ephesians 1:23; Colossians 1:18).

If we are His body, let's think through some of the purposes of a body. A body moves. It has physical functions. It has been designed with intentionality by God for a purpose.

Wherever you are right now, as you're reading this, I invite you to pause and do something. Stand up, move to your front porch or window or sidewalk. Slowly turn around a full 360° and pray as you do this. Ask God to give you His eyes for the lost. Ask Him to place specific people on your heart to engage with. Ask Him to prompt you to some kind of action.

What does that first engagement look like? It might be picking up a piece of trash in someone else's yard. It might be striking up a conversation. It might be an opportunity to actually pray with a neighbor, or even a stranger. It might be a direct opportunity to share the gospel with someone who needs Jesus.

We talk fairly consistently about our need (the church) to reach the lost. How often do we truly take action? Can we start here? Can we start now? The answer is YES! Yes, we can. But to be more precise, WILL we start here and now?

In order for our community to change from darkness to light, it takes the response of the church to the will of God within our willing hearts, carried out in our actions.

As God's co-workers we urge you not to receive God's grace in vain. For he says, "In the time of my favor I heard you, and in the day of salvation I helped you." I tell you, now is the time of God's favor, now is the day of salvation.
(2 Corinthians 6:1-2)

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

IN THIS NEWSLETTER

Youth News.....	2
Missions	3
Library News.....	4
Outreach Events	4
Dates to Remember	5
Prayer Concerns.....	5
Men's Family Event	5
Consistory Notes.....	6
Photo Recap	7-8



YOUTH GROUP

Jay Van Gelder

Youth Pastor

Introducing “Into the Deep End”

A Note to Parents

Dear Parents of Hope Youth Students,

I hope you're doing well after School Starting and Fair ending and your school year is happening! We are going to be kicking off a new four-week series called Into the Deep End. Throughout this series, we'll be exploring four different spiritual disciplines (or habits) that will help us take our relationship with God to a deeper level.

We are excited that your youth will be joining us for this awesome series. Youth group is fun but we want your students to take next steps in their faith journey. Remind them of that as they come this year to dig into God's word.

Series Overview

This four-week series will help students discover that the spiritual disciplines of **prayer**, **scripture**, **worship**, and **community** can help them connect with God and with others in a transformational way.

Session 1: Prayer

Big Idea: Prayer is more than **just words**.

Question for Discussion: What do you think “never stop praying” actually looks like in everyday life for someone your age?

Session 2: Scripture

Big Idea: Scripture is more than **just a book**.

Question for Discussion: Have you ever felt like the Bible spoke directly to something you were going through?

Session 3: Worship

Big Idea: Worship is more than **just music**.

Question for Discussion: What are some “ordinary” things you do every day that could actually become acts of worship if you changed your mindset?

Session 4: Community

Big Idea: Community is more than **just conversation**.

Question for Discussion: What do you think makes a community feel real and not just like a group of people hanging out?

Our hope is that the discussion questions provided above might lead your family to open conversations about what it looks like for each of us to choose to grow deeper in our relationship with God.

As always, please feel free to reach out if you ever have any questions!



MISSIONS

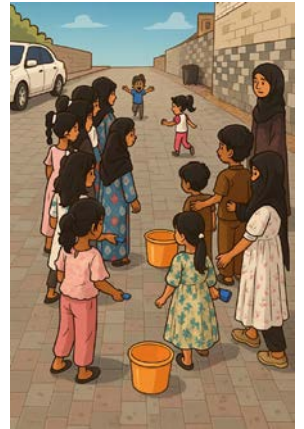


We are S and M, and we live with our four kids in a Muslim country with a population of about 5 million, and a very generous estimate is that there are still less than one hundred believers. Most of the people we meet have never heard that Jesus came to save sinners. They've never even heard that He rose from the grave. They've never had the opportunity to hold the Bible in their hands.

What they have heard is many lies from Islam. They have heard that Christians believe in 3 gods. They have heard that Christians follow Jesus, but locals believe that Muhammad gave the last and final words from God, so Muhammad's words are far superior. They ask us, "Why would you read old, outdated books, when the Koran is newer and better?" Another question we are often asked, and are overjoyed to have the opportunity to answer is, "Why don't you become a Muslim?" Praise the Lord, so much for this question, because even strangers ask us this question, and

we have the opportunity to share.

Another cultural phenomenon we praise the Lord for as we pray for the gospel to spread here is close-knit families. To know a person is usually to know his entire extended family. John, a recent new brother from a nearby country, had five of his family-members follow him into the kingdom in less than a year, in a country where being a Christian means definite torture and often death. S will often sit in a living room with 12 brothers and their father and grandfather, while M and the kids sit around in the other living room with a similar number of female relatives. We are so grateful for gospel conversations that happen in these contexts, because we are praying for whole households to come to faith together.



Despite the fact that people are willing to listen to Bible stories and this leads to many lively conversations about God's Word, the reality is that there are so many barriers to faith. One is the confusing lies of Islam, another is our shaky, imperfect Arabic, but beyond that there is a very high cost to professing faith in Jesus. When someone comes to faith, they may be kicked out of their very tight-knit family. They may lose their job. They may be arrested and threatened by the government, both them and their families. Christians may be locked up, beaten, or even killed for their faith.

Despite these many barriers, we know that Jesus is "able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through Him." (Hebrews 7:25). So we ask you to join us in praying:

- That God would give us wide open doors and we would be able to clearly communicate the gospel
- That the seeds planted would fall on good soil and multiply thirty, sixty, and a hundredfold.
- That whole households would come to faith and that the kingdom would spread like wildfire
- That God would protect believers in this land and give them freedom to have a church community around them

[Picture descriptions: Top - Our family dressed up for a local holiday, Middle - M doing an afternoon English club with neighborhood kids, Bottom - S spending time with a group of guys at a wedding]





LIBRARY NEWS

This month the library is focusing on humor. There are some great humorous Christian writers.

Here are some I found worth a mention:

“Confessions of a Proverbs 32 Woman” This is a tongue in cheek look at Proverbs 31. Can we ever live up? I'm guessing all female Christian Bible readers can relate to this. Kerri Pomarolli works in a very liberal industry yet maintains her Christianity and does it with humor.

“Funny How” by Michael Jr. This was more a book about perseverance than his stand up comedy. It is dusted with funny situations and a good read if you are just thinking of giving up.

“Happy Happy Happy” by Phil Robertson. I can neither confirm nor deny I watch Duck Dynasty. I did read the book however and really enjoyed learning about his amazing life. The patriarch died in May of 2025 leaving behind a ...well dynasty. I even learned several duck hunting tips I will never use. Although very wealthy he lived simply and shared his wisdom of living a clean Christian life with his family and in his books.

“Big Dumb Eyes” by Nate Bargatze and my favorite comedian. “Comedian Nate Bargatze said being a clean comic is his religious calling and he's committed to maintaining a career that aligns with his Christian faith.” Fun read.



OUTREACH EVENTS

TRUNK OR TREAT

Join us for Trunk or Treat!

This is a wonderful, safe event for kiddos to dress up, get some candy and hear about Jesus!

Trunk or Treat is on October 26th from 5-7pm. We'll have fun games, food and prizes for the top 3 cars!

Sign up in the lobby to volunteer or to have a car in the lineup. Candy donations can be dropped off in the Lobby. Invite your friends and family for a great night!

Operation Christmas Child

Christmas is coming and the heart of giving is a huge part of the season. This year, we will be participating in Operation Christmas Child with Samaritan's Purse.



By filling ordinary shoeboxes full of toys and other fun items, you can be part of giving boys and girls what may be their first gift ever! Local churches in more than 100 nations hand out these Operation Christmas Child shoebox gifts at festive outreach events where the Gospel is presented in a child-friendly way. Each box bursting with items such as a soccer ball, doll, or stuffed animal becomes a tangible expression of God's love to the child, their family, and their community.

Many shoebox recipients also participate in our 12-lesson follow-up discipleship program, The Greatest Journey.

Join us as we share the love of Christ in this ministry.

Keep an eye out for more information and look in the lobby to grab a shoebox!

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

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 5

Communion Both Services

New Members Class 9:45 am

MONDAY, OCTOBER 6

Men of Hope Bible Study 7:00 pm

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 7

Missions Team Meeting 7:15 pm

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 9

Consistory Meeting 7:00 pm

SUNDAY OCTOBER 12

New Members Class 9:45 am

MONDAY, OCTOBER 13

Men of Hope Bible Study 7:00 pm

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 19

New Member Recognition Both Services

Young Adults Meeting 9:45 am

Men of Hope Family Event 4:00 pm

- Pumpkin Painting

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 21

Prayers & Squares Quilting 1:00 pm

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 26

Trunk or Treat 5:00 pm

CONCERNS FOR

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

The following as they navigate their cancer journeys

- Bill Van Wettering
- Keith Fliss
- Hannah Dibble - Todd & Barb Brockshus daughter
- David Stephens - Brian & Greta Rouse brother in law
- Gaye - Joyce Klein's daughter
- Dee - Sandy Boisen's friend
- Chlea Rafdal

- Cody, 17 year old brother of James & Tena's daughter-in-law, recovering from injuries from a fall and trauma to the brain
- Jamie Erdman - granddaughter of Joyce Vermulm, as she continues to navigate health issues related to her spina bifida
- Harlan Boeve - as he heals from cellulitis
- Joe & Joyce Klein - Joe recovery from elbow surgery; Joyce - answers for health issue
- Bill Hughes - as he navigates his health issues
- Aaron Zinn - as he heals from surgery and waits for test results



MEN OF HOPE FAMILY EVENT PUMPKIN PAINTING

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 19

4:00 PM

HOPE CHURCH

*Bring your families for
a fun afternoon of
fellowship and
painting pumpkins!*

PLEASE PRE-REGISTER

So we know how many
pumpkins we'll need

Scan the code or click the link!



<https://hopechurchspencer.breezechms.com/form/PUMPKINS2025>

CONDOLENCES TO

Keith and Karen Swancutt on the passing of Keith's sister, Lisa Scott, from time to eternity on September 12, 2025.



CONSISTORY MINUTES



Present: James Runcorn, Jay Van Gelder. **Elders:** Bob Campbell, Doug Siepkes, Dean Mechler, Kevin Vander Stoep, Mark Lockey, Gary Zeutenhorst. **Deacons:** Knut Brown, Kelly Geerdes, Kevin Goeken, Ryan Murray.
August 21, 2025 • 7:00 pm

Opening prayer: James Runcorn

Mark Lockey covered questions 127-128, James Runcorn covered question 129 of the Heidelberg Catechism.

REGULAR BUSINESS

Approved the June 12, 2025 minutes- MMSC (Kevin G/Mark)

Approved June 12, 2025 financials-MMSC (Knut/Kevin)

June/July giving and attendance analysis by Jay.

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

TEAM REPORTS (Purposeful Learning) Dean/Knut, Sunday school and youth group will be starting in two weeks. Paul VB and Dean will begin adult Sunday school. Jay is going to start a mentoring program that will be helping youth as they request making professions of faith. Jay is still looking for some youth sponsors. Julia also needed a couple of Sunday school teachers as well. **(Holy Living)** Gary/Ryan, Ryan stated that the Men's Ministry launch had 63-64 men show. Good discussions about digging into the bible. They would be doing a service project at Sacred Heart. Library committee has disposed of old books. They are relabeling the shelves and set 9/21 as a date for an "open house" in between services. They will be highlighting books on the display shelf in the hall each month. Right now, they are highlighting books on parenting and family. Women's ministry had 4 tables at the Okoboji Bible conference Women's Luncheon 8/6. They are promoting the movie "Esther" put on by the Sight and Sound Theatre in Branson Missouri in Emmetsburg on 8/24. The committee will be meeting again in September to plan for fall activities. **(Loving Outreach)** Bob/Alex, Bob stated that Missions did not meet. They have decided to meet every other month and to meet on odd number of months. Care team continues to be active. They had one member decide to step down. Bob stated that he feels that there was not a need to add someone since he feels that the Elders can continue to meet with members of the congregation if there is prayer request or other needs that come up in the congregation. Jill can contact the Elders if there is a need from someone in their shepherding group. **(Passionate Worship)** Kevin/Jason, Kevin reported that there had been complaints about the sound at one of the services recently. He stated that Eric has been taking a decibel reader in the service to monitor this issue. Discussed the fact that everyone is going through a learning curve when it comes to learning and using the sound system as well and the lights in the new system. Discussed the need for more volunteers for helping with the tech side of the worship service. **(Meaningful Fellowship)** Doug/Kelly, Doug and Kelly both have had interactions with ushers, greeters and those serving coffee and everyone has been feeling that things have been going well. They have gotten the new lanyards and have to decide when they will need to start using these. Michael has been feeling good about how the security team has been operating. **(Wholehearted Service)** Mark/Kevin G, Mark reported that Jill indicated that they are exploring the possibility of getting new phones in the staff offices. Kristal Jensen has delivered some meals to new moms recently. Abby has indicated that there has been an increased activity on social media and those watching service online. They are planning a Valentine event and will be meeting in September to develop a clothing drive. They are hoping that they can utilize Trunk or Treat also as an opportunity to continue the clothing drive there as well. Kevin stated that they will need to look at budgeting for more repairs to the parking lot. There are some areas on the parking lot as well as the curb and sidewalk on the north end near the entrance that will need to be repaired in the future. Discussed adding more handicapped spaces in the parking lot. Jay indicated that we used to have stand up signs to signify handicapped parking. He stated we may still have those items in the garage; he will explore that further.

PASTOR'S REPORT

James discussed Phase 2 changes to the sanctuary. Some time was spent discussing the sermon series and feedback so far. Have heard lots of positive feedback! James stated he continues to lead the Young adults program. They meet on the 3rd Sunday of the month for ages 18-25. Youth Sunday 8/24 and then Mark Schwartz will be preaching 8/31. James stated that he will be having Terry Stevens focus more on getting adults and families plugged into the church now that the Men's Ministries program has been launched.

OTHER BUSINESS

New members "Starting Point" class will be held 10/5 and 10/12 at 9:45 and be recognized at the 10/19 service. James stated that radio station Life 96.5 out of Sioux Falls will be broadcasting Hodgepodge Theology podcast weekly for free. James stated they are looking at a policy and procedure to address for volunteers to serve in any capacity at Hope.

Closing prayer; Gary Zeutenhorst

ELDER MEETING

Opening prayer: Bob Campbell

Discussed congregational care concerns. Elders approved the requests for baptism of Kylie Steil and Destyne Lighter. Baptism 8/24. The constitutional question was asked and answered in the negative. Date was set to visit the Highlands. James will contact Kelly L. Discussed communion and ways to streamline the process. Discussed the importance of an Elder being present for baptisms and dedications A dedication has been scheduled for 9/7.

Closing prayer: Doug Siepkes

DEACON MEETING

Opening Prayer - Kevin Goeken

Reconciled expenses and current giving for Building Hope Campaign. MMSC Goeken/Murray for money to finish the basement. Discussed 2 items for requests for funds - Money moved to funds. MMSC Brown/Goeken to move money to youth fund for trip vans above budget. Getting quotes for gutters on South side of Harbor and screen covers. Discussed updating phone system. MMSC Goeken/Geerdes. Discussed other needs/requests for cosmetic improvements. Tabled for future meeting.

Closing Prayer - Ryan Murray





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

