

# In Touch with *Hope*

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF HOPE CHURCH

MAY 2025

**James Runcorn, D. Min.**

Lead Pastor

## So Genuine!

Dearest friends in Christ,

As the gentle warmth of spring continues to unfold around us here in Spencer, I find myself reflecting on the beautiful connections we've cultivated together. It's within these very bonds, these shared moments of laughter, support, and even quiet reflection, that the truest messages often find their way into our hearts. Just as a seed needs fertile ground to take root and flourish, so too does truth blossom within the safe and nurturing space of genuine relationships. It's a privilege to walk alongside you, not just as your pastor, but as a fellow traveler on this journey of faith, sharing the profound and life-giving truths that shape our lives.

I want to clue you into something. I did not compose the opening paragraph. I provided a few prompts to an AI language model. From those prompts, the above paragraph was generated. Did it seem genuine? Did it seem sincere? Did it sound like my voice? Was there anything about it that didn't quite feel right? Maybe nothing seemed off. However, if I continued to have the program compose more, maybe you would've sensed something.

We live in a dangerous world. Deception can present itself as a close representation of the truth. False gospels are out there. False teachers are more common than not. Jesus said, "Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves" (Matthew 7:15 ESV). Paul warned, "See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the world, and not according to Christ" (Colossians 2:8).

So, how do we defend ourselves? How do we prepare to stand on truth when so much deception is being dispensed all around us? The psalmist writes, "I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you" (Psalm 119:11 NIV). Hank Hanegraaff says to, "Be so familiar with the truth that when counterfeits loom on the horizon, [you] recognize them instantaneously." Let us be a people of His Word. Read it. Consume it. Digest it. Treasure it. Speak it. Live it.



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## Crossroads Prison Ministries

Gregory grew up in a Christian family from a young age, but like many raised in the church, his spiritual life had its share of highs and lows. At fifteen, his parents' divorce triggered a crisis of faith that left him feeling lost. "For the next 6-7 years, I lived without any direction, although deep in my heart I truly desired to know God," Gregory shared.

As a young adult, he turned to drugs and alcohol, falling into the grip of addiction. "There was a long period in my life in which I heavily used and abused drugs and alcohol and became entrenched in addiction," he admitted. Around the age of 21, Gregory found his way back to God. "I have spent every day since growing closer to Him and seeking a deeper revelation of Him," he said.

However, the battle was far from over. Gregory continued to struggle with the strongholds of addiction. When he finally sought help, his journey took an unexpected turn. "I felt such utter shame and conviction over [things I had done] that I knew I needed help and made the decision to come forward of my own volition," he said. That decision led to a 10-year prison sentence and two years of parole.

But prison became a place of transformation. "I spent my time in prison really pressing into God and seeking His face," Gregory recalled. He immersed himself in Bible studies, completing dozens of programs. Among them was the **Crossroads** mentorship program.

**What impacted him most wasn't just the lessons—it was the Christ-centered relationship he formed with his Crossroads mentor.** Through her letters and guidance, she became like a grandmother to him, offering encouragement and support.

Hope Church supports the work of **Crossroads Prison Ministries** with our mission's money. This season reminds us of God's grace and boundless love - a love that offers endless chances to start fresh. This message of hope and renewal can transform lives for men and women incarcerated worldwide. With our support, **Crossroads** provides free lessons, Bibles, and letters of encouragement from mentors to remind them they are not forgotten.

### Terry Stevens

Director of Adult Discipleship

Hey there, Hope Church!!! Exciting news for all the Men of Hope! Mark your calendars for May 17th at 6:30 PM because we are kicking off our Men's Ministry with a fantastic soft launch event!

Get ready for some fun with yard games like bean bag toss and axe throwing—perfect for a little friendly competition! If games are not your thing, do not worry! There will be plenty of time for great conversations and connections.

And guess what? We will be delighting in some mouthwatering smoked food prepared by the one and only Gary Wan Wattering! After our feast, we will gather around a cozy bonfire for an uplifting Bible study that you will not want to miss.

Please make sure to RSVP using the QR code or link so we can prepare the right amount of food for everyone. I cannot wait to see all of you there—it is going to be an unforgettable evening!

MEN'S MINISTRY



**MEN'S MINISTRY**  
**GRILL OUT**



**MAY 17 | 6:30 PM**  
FOOD • GAMES • BONFIRE • FELLOWSHIP

**RSVP NOW!**

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

Click Link  
or Scan  
QR Code



# DATES TO REMEMBER

## WEEKLY

### PRAYER & PRAISE

Wednesdays 6:30 pm in the Sanctuary

### MS YOUTH GROUP

Wednesdays: 5:30 pm - 6th Grade  
6:30 pm - 7th Grade  
7:30 pm - 8th Grade

### SR HIGH YOUTH GROUP

Sundays: 7:00 pm - 9-12th Grade

## SUNDAY, MAY 4

Rooted Finance Week  
12:30 pm in the Sanctuary

## WEDNESDAY, MAY 7

VBS Prep Night

## SUNDAY, MAY 11

Youth Sunday

## WEDNESDAY, MAY 14

VBS Prep Night

## THURSDAY, MAY 15

Consistory Meeting

## SATURDAY, MAY 17

Men's Ministry Grill Out (need to RSVP on  
6:30 pm SYC Ranch previous page)

## MONDAY, MAY 19

Missions Team Meeting  
7:00 pm in the Grace Room

## TUESDAY, MAY 20

Prayers & Squares Quilting Ministry  
1:00 pm in The Well

## TUESDAY, MAY 20

Rooted Celebration Dinner

## WEDNESDAY, MAY 21

VBS Prep Night

## SATURDAY, MAY 24

Young Adults Ministry (age 18-25)  
6:00 pm in The Well

## MONDAY, MAY 26

Memorial Day  
Church closed

## WEDNESDAY, MAY 28

VBS Prep Night

## CONCERNS FOR

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

- Velma Boonstra and her ongoing health issues
- Charity Winterboer as she heals from her shoulder surgery
- Harold Anderson and his ongoing health issues
- Laurie Gifford as her arm heals
- Linda Maxson as she heals from her bike injuries
- Mike Prange as he navigates his cancer journey
- Keith Fliss as he navigates his cancer journey
- Terry Wiese as she recovers from shoulder surgery
- Hannah Dibble - Todd & Barb Brockshus daughter, as she navigates her cancer journey and a new baby

## CONDOLENCES TO

Lori & Chris Swanson, Tami & Scott Gilderhus and their families on the passing of Lori & Tami's dad, Kent Kilpatrick, who passed from time to eternity on April 18.

Family and friends of Pam Meier who passed from time to eternity on April 23.

Dave Raveling and Anne & Ryan Johnson and family on the passing of Dave's wife and Anne's mom, Barb, on April 29.

## CELEBRATING WITH

Chris and Nicole Anderson with the birth of their daughter, Willa Gene, on April 22. Hallie is so excited to be a big sister!

Ryan and Kayla Hoskins with the birth of their daughter, Isla Jeanne, on April 24. Noah is so excited to be a big brother!





## Middle School Retreat

**Jay Van Gelder**  
Youth Pastor

As a 8th grader who has done MSR all three years of middle school I'd say it's the best way to start your faith journey. I remember in 6th grade, and even 8th grade, coming and always making new friends and stronger connections with people I didn't really know. About every moment you are on the MSR, you truly do feel the Lord's presence from worship and youth group time to playing games and talking with others.

~ Marly Prenzlow

The Middle School Retreat was the most life changing experience I have ever had. It made me feel better about life and to learn that God stays no matter what. We learned so much about God in such a short amount of time and I never wanted it to end. I finally accepted God during the retreat and I wouldn't trade the experience for anything. I can't wait to go to Power Connection. The staff there is considerate and gives us the best service possible. I loved how we could worship with total strangers but it felt like we knew each other because God was bringing us together. We had an emotional connection on Saturday night during youth group and I've never felt more safe and loved than I did in that moment. I thank everyone that set up the Middle School Retreat and gave us the best time ever.

~ Kylie Steil

A few weekends ago, I went on a youth group trip to Dayton, Iowa! When we got there, we unpacked our bags and had some time to explore! The first thing I did was meet up with a friend and we went hiking in the woods. My favorite things we did there was main session and free time. Why I liked main session the most was because in main session we learned about types of storms in our life. One of the storms that I think is most important is the protecting storm! Why I think the protecting storm is the most important is because it brings us closer to God. I think that free time is also one of my favorites is because we got to hang out with our friends and go roaming around! I would suggest any middle schoolers to go on the next youth group trip!

~ Addison Warren

The Middle School Retreat was a great experience for me with meeting new people, and my relationship with Jesus growing a lot bigger. In our vans, we really got to connect with our peers and learn a lot about each other and really just enjoyed each other's presence. At MSR we got to worship Jesus and praise him in fun ways like singing and learning about how he saves us. It really impacted how I connect with the Lord, and how I see him. The counselors at MSR were also great role models for me, and I now hope to have a great bond with Jesus just like their bond with him! They knew how to hype us up and showed us how we can have fun praising the Lord. The Middle School Retreat was truly an amazing experience and I look forward to going again next year!

~ Kathryn Manwarren

***After the MSR, youth were ask what bible verse helps them Hold Fast (retreat theme) when the storms in their lives come. These were there responses:***

### 6TH GRADE

Ephesians 3:20-21 (x2)  
Psalm 46:10  
Romans 8:28  
Joshua 1:9 (x2)  
John 16:33  
Philippians 4:13 (x3)  
John 3:16 (x2)  
Psalm 3:6  
Isaiah 40:31  
Lamentations 3:21-23  
2 Corinthians 12:9 (x3)  
Genesis 1:4  
John 14:8  
2 Timothy 2:12

Psalm 46:9  
Psalm 59:1  
Psalm 123:1  
Romans 12:3-8  
Colossians 3:23-24  
Deuteronomy 6:5  
Psalm 91:1  
Proverbs 31:25  
1 Peter 2:13  
1 Samuel 6:3  
Isaiah 6:22  
Isaiah 41:10

### 7TH GRADE

1 Corinthians 10:24  
Psalm 18:3  
Luke 1:37  
2 Corinthians 5:7  
Philippians 4:13  
Matthew 18:18-19  
Isaiah 41:10  
1 John 4:19  
Psalm 27:1  
John 13:7  
Psalm 46:5 (x2)  
Matthew 19:26  
Romans 8:18  
Matthew 6:8

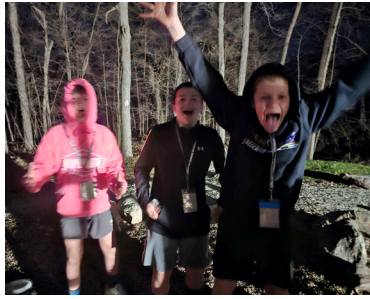
Matthew 6:34  
1 Peter 5:7  
Acts 26:18  
Psalm 33:8-11  
Romans 15:7

### 8TH GRADE

1 Corinthians 13:4-7  
Isaiah 41:13  
Psalm 56:11  
Proverbs 27:19  
Matthew 5:8  
Jeremiah 29:11  
Luke 15:21-24  
John 4:13-14  
Psalm 72:26  
Luke 1:45  
Matthew 19:26  
John 8:12



# PHOTO RECAP







# CHILDREN/FAMILIES

**Julia Andela**

Director of Children & Family Ministry



## VBS

### Important dates to remember!

May 18	VBS National Day of Prayer
May 7, 14, 21, 28 June 4	VBS Prep Nights
June 5 (pm) June 9 (am)	Mandatory VBS Safety Training
June 2-6	VBS Prep Week <b>ALL HANDS ON DECK!</b>
June 9-13	VBS WEEK

## REGISTRATION IS STILL OPEN!

(Until May 12 - Click links below to register)

### VOLUNTEER

<https://hopechurchspencer.breezechms.com/form/VBSVolunteer25>

### ELEMENTARY

<https://hopechurchspencer.breezechms.com/form/ELEMVBS25>

### PRESCHOOL

<https://hopechurchspencer.breezechms.com/form/PREKVBS25>

## BRICK

**Congratulations to Layla Stevens and  
Mallory Madison upon the completion of the  
BRICK Bible Foundations Course!**



*Layla*



*Mallory*

This 8-week course encouraged the students to  
Build Relationship in Christ's Kingdom!

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!

*A special thank you to Luke Lovin for  
leading families through an overview  
of the Bible and helping them to build lasting  
relationships in Christ's Kingdom!*

## SUNDAY SCHOOL

***Our last day is May 11***

I am so thankful to God for the opportunity to share The Gospel each week, and for the incredible people that live out their faith by serving in Hope Kids Sunday School. There are few things more important than helping a child learn about our loving Savior. The seeds these volunteers have planted have an eternal impact! 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:

### Attendance

Kathy Druvenga  
Dawn Grimmus

### Preschool Team

Marlee Christoffel  
Kristy Connor  
Robin Edwards  
Jill Lowe  
Greta Rouse

### Elementary Team

Luke Lovin  
Molly Lovin  
Sam Madison  
Jordon Rasmussen  
Kyle Rehnstrom  
Mallory Rehnstrom  
Ashley Reinholdt  
Rob Reinholdt  
Erin Stevens

### Elementary Team Cont'd

Rachel Van Der Heide  
Sandra Warren  
Briana Wetrich

### Substitute Team

Elsie Amendolare  
Knut Brown  
Molly Brown  
Missy Burns  
Alyssa Clark  
Jen Coates  
Kenzie Connor  
Terri Groen  
Shelly Helmink  
Katie Morris  
Levi Morris  
Angie Murray  
Ryan Murray  
Tena Runcorn  
Luanne Todd

I want to thank our **Children's Church** team who loves on our preschool students year round while parents and caregivers are learning about Jesus in "big church"!

Alyssa Clark  
Abby Johnson  
Molly Lovin  
Jill Lowe  
Kyle Rehnstrom  
Mallory Rehnstrom  
Jean Steen  
Briana Wetrich

***If you'd like to help  
in Kids Ministry,  
contact Julia!***

[jandela@spencerhope.org](mailto:jandela@spencerhope.org)





# CONSISTORY MINUTES

**Present:** James Runcorn, Jay Van Gelder

**Elders:** Doug Siepkes, Dean Mechler, Kevin Vander Stoep, Mark Lockey, Gary Zeutenhorst.

**Deacons:** Alex Johnson, Jason Warren, Kelley Geerdes, Ryan Murry.

March 13, 2025 • 7:00 pm

Opening prayer: Jay Van Gelder

Devotional: Doug Siepkes covered questions 122 of the Heidelberg Catechism.

## REGULAR BUSINESS

Approved February 13, 2025 meeting minutes-MMSC (Kevin/Jason). Correction: Kevin stated they have talked with Michael about other projects to address once the basement has been finished.

Approved February 13, 2025 financials-MMSC (Doug/Kelly)

February 2025 giving and attendance was reviewed by Alex

Around the room check in with each of the consistory and pastors

Team reports: **(Purposeful Living)** Dean indicated that Julia was feeling positive about improvements made to classrooms.

Nursery has new carpet and Dean helped with updating a laptop for use in the nursery. Jay reported that this will be the biggest middle school group they have had for a retreat with 65 students/adults attending. There are 21 individuals going on the senior high retreat in Minneapolis. (3/21-23). **(Wholehearted Service)** Mark reported that Kristal has been busy with bringing meals to those who have had babies recently. She has done this for 7 families. Jill is feeling like things have been going well with

administration issues. **(Holy Living)** Gary stated that Terry Stevens, adult discipleship director indicated they had 25 people signed up for the next Rooted Series starting March 16th. They will have 3 groups. Women's ministry has an all-day retreat April 12th. **(Meaningful Fellowship)** Doug reported that greeters and ushers have been active. Consistory members have gotten feedback from individuals that they have felt like they have been welcomed beyond what the greeters do at the door. Discussion was had regarding security issues once greeters leave their post/area at the Harbor entrance. Discussed having the CAPS team give some recommendations regarding access issues. **(Passionate Worship)** James shared that there was one person who had applied for the Tech position that had been advertised. There have been no other applicants. Decision was made to leave the position open for the time identified in the initial job opening. If no other applications come in then the position will be closed and then will start background checks before we proceed any further.

## PASTOR'S REPORT

Finishing the book of Romans series this Sunday. Chris Anderson will be preaching on Psalm 33 on the 23rd. James will then preach from 1 Corinthians 12. Easter Sunday 4/20. The Genesis through Revelation series will start after Easter.

## OTHER BUSINESS

James has been talking to Matt regarding radio ministries. He will continue to explore this.

Watermark Ministries will be coming in 2 weeks to do more flood relief work. They will stay in the basement.

Discussed current policy of cancelling church programs/activities when the local schools cancel classes due to weather. MMSC (Jason/Kevin) to revise the policy that the cancellation decision is left at a staff level; that an email/text and over social media sent out by 12:00pm to the congregation regarding cancellation of afternoon/evening events. This would relate mostly to situations where school is cancelled the day before and weather conditions change.

Closing prayer: James Runcorn

## ELDER MEETING

Opening Prayer - Doug Siepkes

Discussed issues of congregational care.

Discussed the last prayer and praise meeting and expectations for the future.

Discussed bringing back the opportunity for prayer after the services up front.

Closing prayer - Gary Zeutenhorst

## DEACON MEETING

Opening Prayer - Kelly Geerdes

Northwest Bank is requesting fund to be reconciled quarterly instead of annually.

Property Insurance premium went up 25%. This was budgeted for, no concerns.

Approved purchase of a laptop for a staff member. MMSC (Jason/Kelly). All approved

Closing Prayer - Kelly Geerdes





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hrc@spencerhope.org

## Worship Services

**SUNDAYS:** 8:30 am and 10:45 am

Live-streamed online:

[www.youtube.com/hopechurchspencer](http://www.youtube.com/hopechurchspencer)

## Sunday School

**SUNDAYS:** 9:45 - 10:40 am

Preschool through Adult  
(through May 11)

## 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