

# In Touch with *Hope*

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF HOPE CHURCH

FEBRUARY 2026

**James Runcorn, D. Min.**

Lead Pastor

## What Is God Calling You to Today?

Sometimes, when I'm talking with people about major life decisions, they will describe how they've experienced a powerful pull from within. Often, this 'pull' can also be described as a prompting or calling. Scripture tells us, "do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God" (1 John 4:1 NIV). Self-evaluation, in light of God's Word, is vital.

I've met people who talk like this: *God said I should...The other day, God and I were talking about...I asked God about this and He said...*

Is it possible for God to speak to us today? Of course it is. Is it commonplace or to be expected? No. It would be completely out of the norm for God to speak audibly to any one of us today, especially on an ongoing basis.

So, how do we hear God today? We open up the Bible and read His Word.

What does that have to do with God's calling on our individual lives today? Well, let's open His Word together to see how we might take a step forward to discern His will. You can then apply that principle to your circumstance.

Romans 12:2 says, "Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is – his good, pleasing and perfect will."

This world has a pattern. That pattern is grounded in self. *What can I gain for my own benefit? What things can I accomplish in order to feel better about myself? How can I leverage this person or opportunity to my advantage?* As believers in Christ Jesus, we do not conform to that pattern any longer. We have a new directive – a different outlook – a fresh understanding.

Scripture teaches us that the entire law hinges on the most important commandments – to Love God first and to love others second (Matthew 22:37-40). Knowing that, we can be fully confident that His calling on our lives will most certainly glorify His name and build up others.

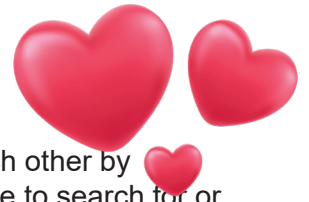
We will use this concept as our foundation for a 5-part discussion over the next few months.

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

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## Parents' Night Out



Parents' Night Out comes from a desire to encourage parents to take time to prioritize each other by removing one big obstacle: childcare! We provide free, fun and safe care so you don't have to search for or pay for it. This night is not only for couples though. Single parents, this night is for you, too!! Enjoy some much deserved "me time" or connect with friends while we hang out with your kiddo(s). Care will be provided for children ages 0 through 5th Grade.

### Here's a little reminder of the "why" behind this event.

God tells us throughout the Bible how to prioritize our life:

1. God (Mark 12:30)
2. If married, your spouse (Ephesians 5:21-33; Genesis 2:24)
3. If a parent, your child(ren) (Deuteronomy 11:18-19; Ephesians 6:4)

**Parent's Register Here** <https://hopechurchspencer.breezechms.com/form/PNO2026>

### Volunteers are NEEDED to make this event possible!

If you are in the stage of life where a babysitter is not needed in your home, please consider serving these young families by volunteering to help watch kids in the nursery, preschool or elementary areas.

**Volunteers Register Here** <https://hopechurchspencer.breezechms.com/form/PNOVOLUNTEER2026>

## Summer Camp!

It's cold outside, but warm weather will be here before you know it and that means Summer Camp is coming!! We offer \$100 scholarships per camper at each Inspiration Hills and Hidden Acres. Click on the links below to check out their awesome camps! Contact Julia for more information.



Registration opens February 2

<https://www.inspirationhills.org/summer-camp>

Registration is open.



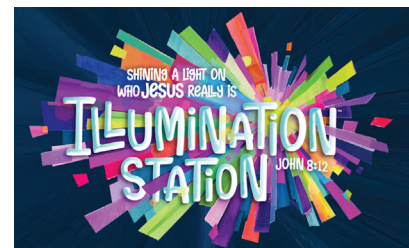
<https://www.hacamps.org/campers-and-parents>

## Save the Dates!

### Mandatory CAAPP Training

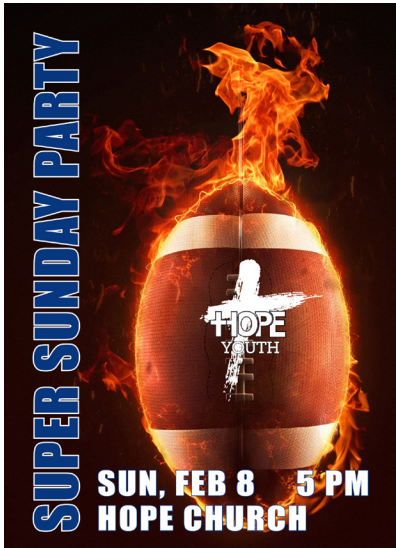
Sunday, February 22  
12 Noon

### VBS - June 8-12, 2026



## Upcoming Events to Register For

Contact Jay with any questions: 712-363-0885



### Super Sunday Party

February 8 | 5 pm

All Youth 6-12th grade are invited to the Super Sunday Party on February 8! Join us for a night of FUN and bring your friends! There will be 9 Square, Laser Tag and Inflatables.

Cost is \$10 per person.

Sign up for food order by clicking the link below:

<https://hopechurchspencer.breezechms.com/form/supersunday2026>

## 6, 7 & 8th Grade



### Middle School Retreat

April 17-19 | Hidden Acres, Dayton, IA

Registration Opens February 2  
<https://cultivate-co.org/msr>



### Immerse Summer Trip

June 23-28 | Lincoln, NE

Registration Coming Soon!!!

## 9-12th Grade

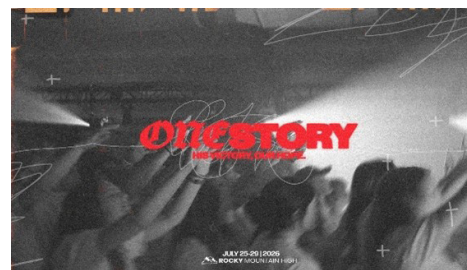


### Spiritual Retreat

March 13-15 | Des Moines, IA

Registration Now

<https://hopechurchspencer.breezechms.com/form/Retreat2026>



### Rocky Mountain High

July 19-29 | Colorado Springs, CO

Registration Opens February 2

<https://www.rockymountainhighinfo.com>



# MISSIONS



→ **JOHN & KAREN**  
CORRIGAN →

As I look ahead to the spring semester, I think of daffodils. They are one of the first flowers to pop up every year here in the Pioneer Valley. When I see daffodils I'm reminded of hope, of new life, and the resurrection of Jesus. I see Christ's victory over death and the promise of eternal life popping up out of a seemingly dead, fruitless landscape. I've seen a trend of this life popping up out of the seemingly dead landscape among college students every spring too. In the fall we often gather many Christians, and see maybe a few students come to know Jesus, but in the spring God seems to bring more students to know Him! The spring is when newer students from the fall start taking greater steps of faith. Valentine's day, and Easter give students

easy opportunities to talk about love and hope that are only ever ultimately fulfilled in Jesus. I met with student leaders these past couple of weeks who are excited to see God save lives and help Christians take scary steps of faith to display and proclaim the love of Jesus in the Pioneer Valley! The student leaders' passion and creativity has me excited for God to do a new work this semester.

- Luke, a senior, showed up to our UMass Cru leadership meeting with ideas to work with other campus ministries to do outreaches and a worship night together.
- Andreas, a junior, shared, "I'm going to take guys out with me as a pair to go talk with people around campus about Jesus more this semester."
- Daniela, a senior, is excited to rework our Valentine's Day outreach because "we handed out a bunch of carnations, Bible verses, and briefly shared about God's love, but I want us to be able to do something that helps us get into better conversations with people, and talk about the gospel more."
- The Epic student leaders came up with three priorities to live out in the power of the Holy Spirit. 1) Show Up Spiritually, Not Just Socially. 2) Reach Out Intentionally, Every Event, Every Week. 3) Build Up New Leaders.

## PLEASE PRAY

Will you pray with us that these student leaders maintain their passion and focus on Jesus and his call on their lives as the whirlwind of the semester begins?

Pray for the students going to the Northeast Winter Conference that is coming up 1/30-2/1. We have at least 16 students going so far from the Pioneer Valley, and about 600 from all of New England. The best part of the conference, in my opinion, is that students are taught about and challenged to integrate Jesus into every aspect of their lives. Things start to radically change when students return to campus willing to go, do, say, and give whatever Jesus asks of them.

Pray for our family's health. We all have been sick multiple times over break.

Pray for students to consider interning with us after they graduate. My team has shrunk over the past few years, and we could use more help on mission!

- John & Karen Corrigan

# 75th Anniversary WORSHIP NIGHT

February 28 | 6:30 pm

Worship through the Ages

We will be looking back on all the Lord has done through Hope Church in the last 75 years and looking forward for what HE has in store! God has blessed us so much and it is His provision, guidance and Word that allows us to continue to gather, equip and grow as a church body.

**Dessert potluck to follow. Join us for worship, prayer and fellowship!**

## LIBRARY NEWS



Each month, we will have someone review a book from the Church Library.

Our first book reviewer is Lainey Christoffel. She read a book from the series "The Dead Sea Squirrels," by Mike Nawrocki, co-creator of Veggietales.

Michael and Justin sneak into a cave and find old squirrels and get lost. His family and friend looked for him. They thought they heard a big spider, but it was his dad. They were going somewhere so they went to the airport and the detector detective (*detected???*) them!

The squirrels became alive and did lots of things on vacation with them. The squirrels told them God said to honor your parents and lots of other things the Bible tells you to do.

Michael was happy to be back; he and his parents prayed "thank you for a great summer and all the fun and for keeping us safe. Amen."

February is the month of love and our Library has many books on Christian romance. Check out our highlighted shelf.

## PRAYERS & SQUARES



Can you touch a prayer? Can you pull it close and feel its comfort? You can if it's part of a prayer quilt.

The idea behind these quilts is simple, yet powerful. A heavy thread is used to take stitches through the quilt layers, and the ends are left free to be tied with a square knot. As each knot is tied, a prayer is offered for a Hope family friend. The quilt is then given to that person.

These quilts are made and given for those who feel a need for prayer because of health issues, family problems, or some kind of crisis. We also give prayer quilts to those receiving baptism.

What makes each quilt so special is not the pattern, color or workmanship, but the fact that prayer is symbolically tied into each one. These comforters are a statement of faith, and a testimony to our belief in God and in the power of prayer.

Anyone can request a quilt. If you know of a Hope family person who you think might benefit from our prayers and the comfort of a quilt ask the person if they would like to receive one then/or call Gloria Schmillen at 712-260-8531 or the church office.



# 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, FEBRUARY 1

Communion at both services

### MONDAY, FEBRUARY 2

Men's Ministry Bible Study 7:00 pm

### WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 4

BRICK 6:00 pm

### MONDAY, FEBRUARY 9

Men's Ministry Bible Study 7:00 pm

### TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 10

Mom Connect 9:00 am

### WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 11

BRICK 6:00 pm

### THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 12

Consistory Meeting 7:00 pm

### TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 17

Prayers & Squares 1:00 pm

### WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 18

BRICK Time TBD

### WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 18

Ash Wednesday Service 6:30 pm

### SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 22

CAAPP Training (Mandatory) 12:00 pm

### TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 24

Mom Connect 9:00 am

### WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 25

BRICK 6:00 pm

### FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 27

Parents' Night Out 5:30 pm

### SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 28

75th Anniversary 6:30 pm

Worship Through the Ages

# 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 - Todd & Barb Brockshus daughter
- David Stephens - Brian & Greta Rouse's brother in law
- Chery Haden - Melissa Stell's mom
- Carl Johnson - Greta Rouse's dad

- Kim - Kelly Geerdes sister as she navigates her health issues
- Kevin Bell - as he recovers from heart surgery
- Dana Anderson - as she recovers from foot surgery
- Laurie Gifford - health concerns and other issues going on in her life

# CONDOLENCES TO

Kyle & Mallory Rehnstrom and family with the passing of Kyle's uncle, Skip Sorenson, from time to eternity on January 23.

## CHRISTIAN MEN OF SPENCER

## FEBRUARY

### EVENTS:

2/2/26: Bible Study- 7pm- Hope

2/9/26: Bible Study- 7pm- Hope

2/16/26: Outreach Spencer- 3-7pm

2/28/26: Worship Night- 6:30pm- Hope

## Ash Wednesday Service

February 18  
6:30 pm  
in the Sanctuary



# CONSISTORY MINUTES

Pastors: James Runcorn, Jay Van Gelder. Elders: Doug Siepkes, Dean Mechler, Kevin Vander Stoep, Mark Lockey, Gary Zeutenhorst  
Deacons: Knut Brown, Ryan Murray, Kevin Goeken, Alex Johnson, Jason Warren, Kelly Geerdes  
December 18, 2025. 7:00 pm

Opening prayer: Jay Van Gelder

Devotional: James read from Matthew :15-17

## REGULAR BUSINESS

Approved November 13, 2025 minutes-MMSC-(Kevin/Kelly)

Approved November 13, 2025 financials-MMSC-(Kelly/Knut)

Giving and attendance analysis done by Alex.

## TEAM REPORTS

**(Purposeful Learning)** Dean/Knut, Jay discussed Julia having Christmas practice and had 80 preschool through 5th grade involved in the Sunday morning Christmas program. She is looking at adding a 3rd preschool room due to an increase in students. They have a missions team member come in monthly to talk about the missionaries supported by Hope. Brick will be starting again in January. Jay stated he had 70 middle school students bowling last night. Both middle school and senior high students delivered cookies to members of the church.

**(Wholehearted Service)** Mark/Kevin, Jill reported that she has been getting offering envelopes out and will follow up on those that have not been picked up. New phones have been working well and still getting used to new features. She will be taking some vacation on 15, 21, 26, 28 and ½ days on the 24th and the 31st. Also, some early out days to get her vacation time taken. Abby will be organizing caroling to the Highlands and St. Luke's. She and Eric are still working on details for the January 17th 75th anniversary. She will continue working on increasing social media content and online interaction. Will be trying to post a reel at least once a week starting in January.

**(Holy Living)** Gary/Ryan, Women's Ministry had their Christmas Tea December 6th and this was well attended. The committee will be meeting on 1/14 to review information from their survey that they sent out and start planning for the Spring conference. Library is still waiting to get the computer back to get started getting activity information plugged in. Men's ministry has been meeting regularly on Monday evenings for bible study and they have been doing some service projects, one of which was providing a Thanksgiving dinner for the community.

**(Loving Outreach)** Bob/Alex, Alex stated that Hope will be helping with Meals on Wheels for December. The Missions team is going to Sunday school monthly and sharing information about the missionaries supported by Hope. The Missions committee will be reviewing their support and making any year end recommendations to the consistory. Alex stated that Bob has indicated that he will be stepping down from his position on the Missions committee. Alex stated that there has been an elder on the committee and so that may be something to look at as committee assignments are made. **(Passionate Worship)** Kevin/Jason, Ryan has been working on the Christmas Eve service. Eric reported that all the updates with the new screens have been completed. **(Meaningful Fellowship)** Doug/Kelly, No report

## PASTORS REPORT

James reported that the luncheon for the Eswatini mission trip raised \$1200. Discussed some ideas that could raise more interest in the congregation regarding the trip. James stated that the consistory retreat is February 7th at the Okoboji Bible Conference from 8:00 am to 1:00 pm with the consistory of Good News Community Church.

## OTHER BUSINESS

James brought the following motion from the Worship Director search committee, proposed that we hire Eric Meeter for the Worship Director position at Hope Church allowing for negotiations within reason by the search team to satisfy both Eric and Hope Church. MMSC (Kelly/Knut) discussion around not filling the Tech position since the aspects that Eric had been hired for had been accomplished and there may need to add a position down the road but not at this time. Discussed other information in the interview regarding his vision for the position. MMSC to hire Eric for the position.

Doug Siepkes closed in prayer.

## ELDER MEETING

Mark Lockey opened with prayer

Constitutional question was asked and answered in the negative. James stated the baptism for Austin Rouse was postponed due to family issues. Other congregational needs were discussed.

Kevin Vander Stoep closed in prayer

## DEACON MEETING

Opening Prayer by Kelly Geerdes

A short discussion on the updates from the design team. Discussion about the worship team rotation after Ryan's last Sunday. Discussion about the oven and microwave in the Harbor kitchen and the microwave in the North kitchen. Washer/Dryer- Discussion about if we need one. Discussion about paint bids for Harbor. Deacons would like to paint the Harbor after VBS 2026. Old Sound System from the Harbor- Eric M will look at options to donate. Discussion around full-time staff gift. Discussion to donate to Kings and Queens and also Rocky. Met in closed session to discuss salary of Worship Director

Closing prayer by Knut Brown



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](http://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

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

