

# In Touch with *Hope*



MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF HOPE CHURCH

JANUARY 2026

**James Runcorn, D. Min.**

Lead Pastor

## Welcome to 2026!!

We always hear things like this, don't we?

**I can't believe it's already a new year!**

**New year, new me.**

**This is the year I finally \_\_\_\_\_.**

**Out with the old, in with the new.**

**This year will be different.**

Time does seem to go by faster as we get older. Maybe that's because we are more aware of things that are truly important. We are also more starkly aware of our mistakes and failures.

When we make bold promises or attempt to change things, we often do so in our own strength. We also limit our vision to a particular habit or trait that isn't beneficial (late night snacking for example), while wishing or hoping for something much more constructive (like exercise and healthy eating habits).

If we look to Scripture and rely on God's truth, something profound emerges. We don't accomplish amazing and wonderful things by our own strength. In fact, the most amazing gift (life) comes from God alone. Not only does life come from Him, but NEW life in Christ Jesus.

You see, we don't have to try and change little things so that we can feel a sense of accomplishment with ourselves. We can see with clarity the new life, the entire eternal destiny we have, in Him, as a wholistic gift of newness. That is by His power and by His power alone.

The new life we have in Him, is life-changing, perspective-shifting, holy-convicting and more amazing than anything we could ever attempt on our own. The result? We don't merely cheer with pride at our own accomplishments, but with awe, reverence and worship at the changes He has given. From that, our entire future is changing, moment by moment as He refines us.

*Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!* (2 Corinthians 5:17)

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

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# CHILDREN

**Julia Andela**

Director of Children & Family Ministries

## Spring Semester Dates to Know

January 4	Sunday School Resumes
March 15	No Sunday School - Spring Break
March 29	Palm Sunday Program (No Children's Church)
April 4	Easter Sunday (No Sunday School)
May 10	Last day of Sunday School



**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.

**Wednesdays**

**January 14 - March 4**

**6:00 - 7:30PM**

↓ Click link below to register ↓

<https://hopechurchspencer.breezechms.com/form/BRICK2026>

**SAVE THE DATE • SAVE THE DATE • SAVE THE DATE**

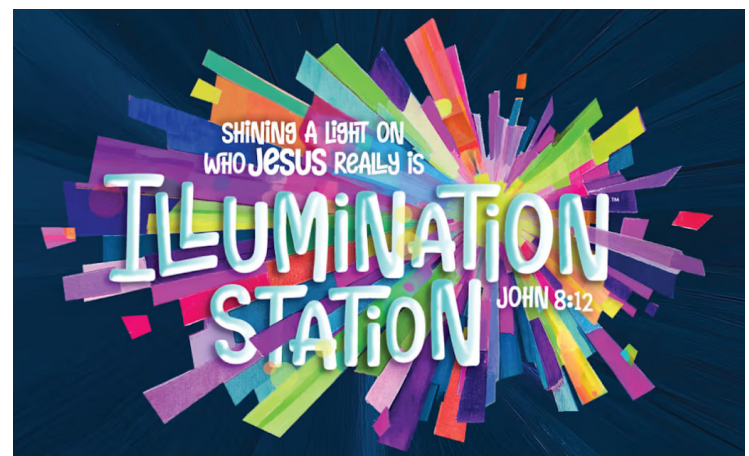
## MANDATORY CAAPP TRAINING

**Sunday, February 22  
12 Noon**

This is for ALL volunteers who work with children 0-18 years old.

A meal will be provided.

**VBS 2026  
JUNE 8-12**





# MISSIONS



1.9 million people are serving time behind bars in the United States. 95% will ultimately be released. 2 out of 3 of those released will be rearrested. Too often, formerly incarcerated people return to prison because they lack encouragement, mature faith, and a supportive church family.

Crossroads Prison Ministries help men and women rebuild their lives on a foundation of faith so they leave prison as new people, ready to serve their families and communities. This is done by connecting people behind bars with mentors on the outside to study God's Word together through the mail. Life-changing Bible studies have been developed. These completed lessons are sent to a volunteer mentor who reads through the lesson and reviews it. The mentors help students to better understand God's Word and to apply it to their lives. An encouraging letter is sent with the lesson when it is sent back to the prisoner. These may be the only message of hope and love they receive.

## How can you help?

- **Become a mentor** to bring hope and life to those behind prison walls.
- **Give financially.** Hope Church does support this ministry so that there is no cost to the students. You can support this ministry as well.
- **Prayer powerful.** Pray that God will continue to change lives, prisons, churches, and entire communities through the ministry of Crossroads.

To learn more about Crossroads Prison Ministries or to donate go to [www.cpministries.org](http://www.cpministries.org).

# ADULT DISCIPLESHIP

Terry Stevens

Director of Adult Discipleship

Hello and Happy New Year! I am filled with hope and anticipation for all the wonderful things God has in store for us in 2026. As we begin this new year, I'm thrilled to announce **ROOTED**—a 10-week small group journey meant to inspire, uplift, and empower you to serve and connect with one another. We'll kick off with our first meeting in the sanctuary on January 25th at 12:30 PM. Don't miss this opportunity to grow together! Be sure to sign up by January 18th—I can't wait to see your name on the list and to share this uplifting experience with you.

**ROOTED LINK TO SIGN UP:** <https://hopechurchspencer.breezechms.com/form/Rooted2026>

Are you looking for inspiration or fresh material for your Bible study? Or maybe you want to dive deeper into God's Word on your own? Perhaps you're a parent hoping to guide your kids toward uplifting, positive content. **RIGHTNOW MEDIA** is an incredible resource filled with encouragement for everyone—offering everything from in-depth studies of the books of the Bible, to men's and women's groups, parenting resources, and engaging kids' educational content. We're blessed to have access to this wonderful tool at Hope Church. If you'd like to learn more or get your own login, just let me know—I'd be delighted to help you get started!



# 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

## THURSDAY, JANUARY 1

Church will be locked

## MONDAY, JANUARY 5

Men's Ministry Bible Study 7:00 pm

## MONDAY, JANUARY 12

Men's Ministry Bible Study 7:00 pm

## WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 14

BRICK 6:00 pm

## MONDAY, JANUARY 19

Missions Team Meeting 7:00 pm

## TUESDAY, JANUARY 20

Prayers & Squares 1:00 pm

## WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 21

BRICK 6:00 pm

## THURSDAY, JANUARY 22

Consistory Meeting 7:00 pm

## SUNDAY, JANUARY 25

Rooted Kick Off 12:30 pm

## SUNDAY, JANUARY 25

Chili Cook Off 5:30 pm

## LIBRARY NEWS

January is the time of resolutions. How about challenging yourself to read one book a month. We have all genres.

The first shelf is our highlighted books. We will have different genres out front so you can get an idea of our great selections.

*Happy Reading!*



# 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

- Dean Mechler - healing from corrective hip surgery
- Jamie & Heather Storey - Mark Flikkema's boss & wife as they recover from a car accident
- Janet Mims - friend of Terry Wiese
- Stacey Hoffrichter - to feel God's presence
- Kim - Kelly Geerdes sister as she navigates her health issues

# CONDOLENCES TO

Jody Surber, Lewis, Caitlin and Larson Vulk and their families on the passing of Jody's dad and Lewis and Larson's grandfather, Dwight Surber, who passed from time to eternity on November 30.

*Join us for our annual*

*Chili*  
**COOK OFF**

**January 25th**

**5:30-7:30pm**

**In The Harbor**

*It is a fun night of great food, fellowship and some friendly competition.*

*You are invited to sign up as an entry or just come for the fun!*

*The sign up sheet is available in the Lobby!*

# 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, Ryan Murray, Kevin Goeken, Alex Johnson, Jason Warren, Kelly Geerdes  
November 13, 2025 • 7:00 pm

Opening prayer: Kelly Geerdes

Devotional: James read the following scriptures; Act 6:2-4, 15:1-2, 15:22, 20:28, 1 Timothy 4:14, 5:17, 1 Peter 5:1-4, Hebrews 13:17 to look at the role and responsibilities of Elders in the church.

## REGULAR BUSINESS

Approved October 9, 2025 minutes-MMSC-(Bob/Mark)

Approved October 9, 2025 financials-MMSC(Dean/Gary)

October giving and attendance analysis by Alex

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

## TEAM REPORTS

**Purposeful Learning** Dean/Knut, Dean stated that Julia has the children memorizing scripture and has ways to include the congregation in having the kids recite their verses to members of the congregation. Julia also is talking about raising money to buy a donkey for a person in Haiti. Jay reported a very successful Youth Auction bringing in \$38,210. I had the middle school lock-in and that went well. Had a youth leadership retreat last month and planned a Senior High lock-in 11/22.

**Holy Living** Gary/Ryan, Gary reported that the Women's Ministry has a Christmas Tea scheduled for December 6th. They are in the process of gathering information by surveying the women of Hope for ideas for future activities. Library has sent in their computer to get it upgraded and is waiting to get this back. Ryan reported the Men's Ministry is planning a Turkey dinner on Saturday the 22nd from 11:00 to 1:00. This is a fund raiser for the Men's Ministry to fund future activities and not have to rely on church funds if possible.

**Wholehearted Service** Mark/Kevin G, Mark reported that Jill indicated the new phones have been installed and they will be getting some new updates in January. Kristy indicated that they could use more volunteers for funerals.

**Loving Outreach** Bob/Alex, Alex reported that Hope is responsible for Meals on Wheels for the month of December. Still need to have people sign up for this. Discussed that there are three mission funds, one designated for Haiti and two other funds undesignated. MMSC to change the Haiti fund to Mission Trip Fund. MMSC to combine all three Mission Funds into one fund "Mission Trip Fund" (Alex/Jason). People who are planning on going on the Eswatini trip are holding a fundraiser meal in the Harbor on from 11:00-1:00 on the Sunday the 16th to raise money for the mission trip.

**Passionate Worship** Kevin/Jason, Kevin reported that Ryan has started to plan for December and Christmas Eve service. Eric stated they have 2 coats of paint on the front stage. The rest of the stage extension will be done end of the week. Carpet will be put in next which will be all the same across the stage. December 2nd the company that we bought the video screens will be coming to help install the screens.

**Meaningful Fellowship** Doug/Kelly, Doug stated that Steve and Kim Rhode have volunteered to take over the role of coordinating greeters and ushers. One of the issues discussed was to incorporate more of an emphasis on intentional focus on 1st time visitors and get them more connected.

## PASTORS REPORT

Thanksgiving Eve service format is people can use QR code and ask questions or write questions about issue they have on their hearts. James will respond to some of those and do short sermonette and then give time to reflect and then do another set of questions. James stated that he has initially posted the worship leader position posted to Ozark Christian College, Grand Canyon University, Northwestern and the church website. December 7th is the Congregational meeting. There have been 29 nominations that have been turned in for Elder Deacon positions. Pastor James, Doug Siepkes, Bob Campbell, Alex Johnson and Kelly Geerdes are on the nominating committee.

## OTHER BUSINESS

Jay reviewed the 2026 proposed salaries and budget that the Deacons are recommending. MMSC to approve the revised budget and salary proposals sent out via email by Jay for fiscal year 2026. (Dean/Alex).

Closing prayer: Doug Siepkes

## ELDER MEETING

The constitutional question was asked and answered in the negative.

MMSC to approve Katie Vander Stoep's request to transfer her membership to Living Water Church in Sheldon IA (Bob/Dean).

MMSC to approve baptism of Brian and Greta Rouse's child Austin on 12/14 at 2nd service (Gary/Doug).

## DEACON MEETING

Opening Prayer: Kevin Goeken

Discussion about progress with design team getting new quotes for paint. Worship team has rotation in place to know when to come.

Thank you Ryan Hoskins for setting that up for the coming months. Approved to purchase two AED's to replace the expired unit. \$1400 each.

Discussion for planning the end of year tasks that need to happen. Nominations, Prep for Congregational meeting, January Deacon meeting with new Deacons.

Closing prayer: Ryan Murray



# YOUTH

Jay Van Gelder

Youth Pastor

## SAVE THE DATES!

**MARCH 13-15, 2026**

Senior High Spiritual Retreat

**APRIL 17-19, 2026**

Middle School Retreat

**JUNE 23-28, 2026**

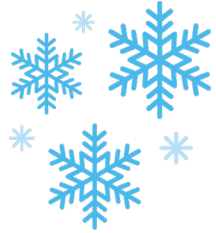
6th, 7th, 8th Grade Work Project - Immerse,  
Lincoln, NE

**JULY 19-29, 2026**

Senior High Colorado Springs Work Project/Rocky

# WOMEN'S MINISTRY

## PLEASE TAKE OUR SURVEY



Click link to take survey

<https://forms.gle/J9Lpk4ZcoptdXjwPA>

Your input will help us plan meaningful gatherings that meet the needs of women of all ages and stages of life.

Please take a moment to fill out the short survey above.

Thank You!

The Women's Ministry Team



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