

# *In touch with Hope*

monthly newsletter of Hope Church, Spencer, IA

December, 2018



*Pastor Russell Mulenburg*

## *Coaching Trees and Teammate Changes*

As someone who watches a lot of televised sporting events, one of the broadcast narratives that I am familiar with is the “coaching tree.” This is when the commentators talk about the head coach and then they mention all the former players and assistant coaches who have been influenced by that coach and then have gone on to coach teams of their own. One measure of a coach’s influence on the game is to look at the branches of his or her coaching tree.

I’d like to fancy that pastors can also have coaching trees. That is to say, there are people who participate in a pastor’s ministry who then go on to be active in ministry themselves. It is my hope that everyone who spends time at Hope Church while I am pastor will grow in their relationship with Jesus and be equipped to serve Him in whatever walk of life they find themselves in; but there are also those who are called to a lifetime—or a season—of vocational ministry. To me, those people are branches on my pastoral coaching tree.

During the time that Jay and I have been at Hope Church, several young people have taken a place on our coaching tree. Karen Mechler serves with Cru. Heather Brown, Mercy Preston and Emily Weeks went on the World Race. Eric Meeter and Trent Hansen are currently serving on our staff. Reed Smith is serving with Candeo Church and the Salt Company in Cedar Falls. Jenna Veenbaas (now Fabiano) is a pastor at Willoughby Christian Reformed Church in Langley, British Columbia. And Milan Johnson is now the Lead Pastor of Christ’s Church in St. Peter’s, Missouri. All of these young people, and many others, have a place on our pastoral coaching tree. It is exciting to think about the influence we get to have for Jesus through their ministry.

With that in mind, we have an opportunity as a church to celebrate with Milan Johnson his ordination to the office of Minister of Word and Sacrament. **This special service of ordination will take place this Wednesday, December 5, at 6:30pm in the Sanctuary.** This service is open to everyone, and is a great way for us as a congregation to mark the ways God has used Hope Church to shape Milan’s life and to bless him as he answers the call to pastoral ministry.

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At the same time, Hope Church is marking a staff transition. The first position hire that I participated in was the hiring of a Children’s and Family Ministry director. Kim Smith was hired as someone who was a lifelong Christian who had a bunch of volunteer experience in Sunday School and VBS and a lot of real-life experience as a mom. She had not been trained to be a Children’s pastor, nor did she really think of it as a potential career before she was hired. Eleven years later she has turned a part-time job into a full-time job and under her leadership children’s ministry has become one of the driving forces of our church.

Kim’s love for Jesus, her love for kids, her creativity, her ability to throw a party and her love for Jesus (I know I listed that twice) have been a vibrant influence on kids and families at Hope Church for the last decade. She has balanced the need to train up the children of the church with the desire to have a ministry that is always welcoming new families and kids. She has recruited and trained and supported and encouraged scores of volunteers. For as long as I have been pastor here, Kim has been my teammate. It is hard to imagine what ministry will look like without her in the office across the hall from mine.

Kim is stepping aside from the Children and Family Ministry position in order to follow God’s call for the next season of her life. Her 11 years on the job far exceeds the national average for such a position. It is a demanding and at times an overwhelming job. What Kim learned on the job is a testament to her flexibility and adaptability. We are grateful for the ways God has blessed our church through her service.

**We will be honoring Kim on Sunday, December 16, during both worship services. Let’s shower her with gift cards, notes and words of encouragement.** Please have your cards and/or notes to the church office by Friday, December 14.

## Traveling Lock-In



We had a blast at the traveling lock-in and we hope your students did too! We had a great time getting to know new people and seeing returning faces that we haven't seen awhile! Two churches joined us for their first time on the traveling lock-in and we hope that they'll join us in future years! We had 34 students who were new to Hope Youth, and we also had 23 students who indicated they did not have a youth group home who we have seen once in the past. Our goal is to follow up with these students and try to help them find a supportive, faith community that they can be plugged into.

## National Youth Workers' Convention

I had the privilege of experiencing my first National Youth Workers' Convention in St. Louis this year with Jay. What a great experience this was and a very encouraging one! It was amazing to not only see the diversity of youth workers attending the conference but also hearing about the diverse years of experience each youth worker had. It was also great to see and feel the appreciation and support that all the youth workers gave each other! I attended many workshops and learned a lot, but one point that impacted me was in Doug Fields' message on the last day. One of the things he said was, "Doubt in your calling is part of your leadership, even Moses doubted." It was reassuring to hear even someone who did so much such as Moses still doubted himself. Yet God used the abilities he provided Moses with and overcame that doubt. I pray that when I doubt myself, I will fully trust in God to help me overcome that doubt. I was thankful to experience this conference with Jay as he was able to guide me in showing me what exhibitors and resources I could use for my future ministries. Lastly, it was cool to see the lineages of youth pastors reminding me of the ways that I'm blessed to be working with Jay, a youth pastor who has past students being youth pastors and lead pastors.

## Eric Meeter Music & Worship News

A new program started at Hope this year is our Hope Youth Music Network for Students otherwise known as the H.Y.M.N.S! So far, our year has mainly consisted of deep diving into the elements that make up a worship service and why music is a huge part of our Sunday mornings.

Earlier this semester we had the opportunity to attend a worship conference at Northwestern and through the course of the day the students studied, crafted, and participated in a worship service. Several of the students really enjoyed this activity and I wanted to give our entire group this opportunity. So, in the beginning of October I told the students they were going to have the opportunity to plan the Thanksgiving Eve service. After visiting with Russell, we laid out a few elements for the students to incorporate, but from there it was purely the student's imaginations and planning.

One thing that we wanted to root this service in was the spoken Word of God. So, the H.Y.M.N.S. team came up with a scripture they wanted the congregation to memorize. A group of them put together a choral reading presentation of Psalm 136. Another group wrote, memorized, and rehearsed a dramatic re-telling of Luke 24 and the story of the road to Emmaus. They helped pick all of the music and put everything together in an order that flowed. They really owned this project and put in a great effort!

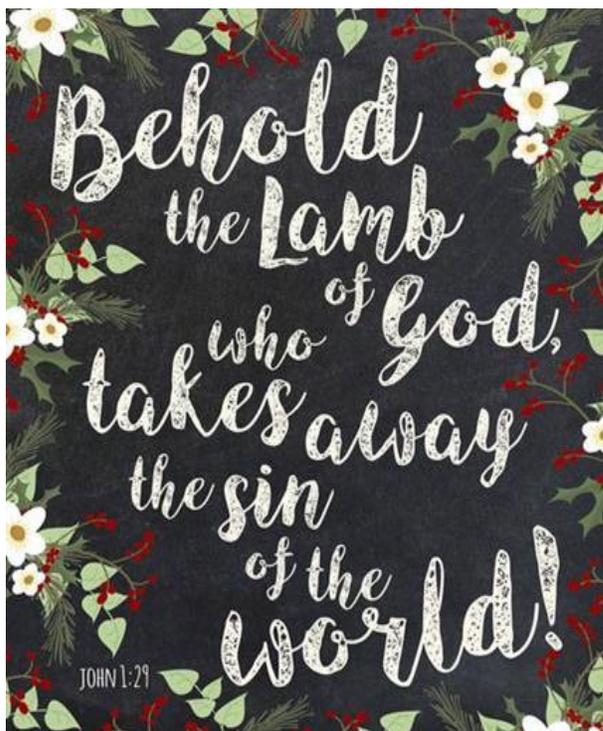
Overall, the Thanksgiving worship service was a tremendous success. I just want to personally thank all of the students who helped plan and were a part of the service itself. I also want to thank all of you who came and participated in the service. The students hope was that you might come away with a greater appreciation for the gift we have in God's word, and you may have seen it come to life in a new way!

## Beth Muilenburg Adult News

### Small Groups

It was great to see God working during our *Grace is Greater* series! As I visited the groups, I saw great discussions, moments of authentic vulnerability, and the people of God caring for one another. It was a beautiful thing to see! May God bless you as you continue to seek Him and grow in love for one another!

### Bible Promise



## Consistory News

The regular meeting of the Hope Reformed Church met at 7:00 p. m. in the Harbor.

Present: Deacons; Jason Warren, Craig Van Drunen, Eric Van Der Heide, John Haak, Gary Van Wettering. Elders; Gary Zeutenhorst, Brian Christopher, Karmen Brown, Terry Johnson, Brad Olsen, Doug Siepkes. Pastors: Russell Muilenburg. Absent; Deacon Danny Dekker and Pastor Jay Van Gelder.

Pastor Russell opened the meeting with reading from Philippians 1:15-18 and then led the discussion on the scripture and video *Accidental Pharisees* by Larry Osburn. He ended the devotional time with prayer.

### ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION AND DECISION

**MMSC** to approve the minutes of October 11, 2018.

**MMSC** approve the October financials as presented by the deacons. Pastor Russell reported on a meeting he and Eric Van Der Heide and Karmen Brown had with Ricky and Tery Sanchez who will be the pastor for the new church start up in Storm Lake.

**MMSC** to give \$10,000 a year for 3 years to assist with church start in Storm Lake.

The Deacons presented the budget for 2019.

Staff management presented recommendations for staff salaries and raises.

**MMSC** to approve the 2019 budget as proposed by the Deacons.

**MMSC** to approve the 30-hour position for Trent Hanson.

Pastor Russell reported on the nomination process to date.

**MMSC** to allow spouses of staff members to be listed as eligible to be considered for consistory, and that consistory members spouses be allowed to apply for job positions listed at the church.

### ELDERS MEETING

Pastor Russell opened the meeting with prayer.

Constitutional question was asked and answered in the negative.

Specific congregational concerns were discussed.

Closed the meeting with prayer.

### DEACONS MEETING

The Deacons met on 10/30/2018 to review the 2019 ministry budget proposal. In-depth discussion was had regarding the proposal and a final draft was approved to be presented to the full Consistory. No Deacon meeting was held on 11/08/2018.

## Volunteer Spotlight

### Meet Tori Rasmussen – Design Team Coordinator



#### What do you do on the Design Team?

We have the opportunity to decorate the church for Easter, Thanksgiving, and Christmas. We also find items to visually tie in to a variety of sermon series.

#### Why is the church's physical environment so important to you?

I find joy in creating beauty. I don't think God wants us to worship in a ho-hum place.

#### What about being a part of the Design Team excites you?

It is a good way for me to meet other people in church. I love to have new ideas or brainstorm ideas on ways to make our church a visually appealing place for worship. I love how it comes together when it is done.

#### If someone wants to join the Design Team, what should they do?

They can contact me. My information is in the church directory. We are looking for people to join us to get ready for the upcoming Easter season.

# Christmas Eve Candlelight Worship Service

Please join us on Monday, December 24 for our special candlelight worship service, *God's Presence Brings Good News*.

We are having three worship services:

5:00 p.m. (nursery provided)

7:00 p.m. (nursery provided)

11:00 p.m.



Kim Smith  
Children & Family News



All kids K-5<sup>th</sup> grade are invited to a Birthday Party for Jesus at Kid's Connection on Wednesday, December 5 from 12:30-3:00 p.m. We will be playing Bingo and other fun games, making a Christmas decoration and enjoying snacks while celebrating the birth of Jesus. Bring your friends!

## Children's Christmas Choir

**\*\*PLEASE NOTE DATES & TIME CHANGES:\*\***

Sunday, December 2: 12:00-1:30 p.m. - Pizza Practice (Bring \$4.00 if you are able & watch Facebook for weather info)

Wednesday, December 5: 5:00-6:30 p.m. - Pizza Practice and Dress Rehearsal (Bring \$4.00 if you are able)

Thursday, December 6: 6:30-7:30 p.m.

Saturday, December 8: 10:00-11:00 a.m.

Sunday, December 9: Christmas Choir presentation at both the 8:30 a.m. and 10:45 a.m. worship services. Please have your child here by 8:00 a.m.

## Hope Church Caroling Party

Everyone of all ages is invited to join us on Thursday, December 20 at 6:00 p.m. to go Christmas caroling by bus. After caroling we will come back to the church for hot cocoa and goodies. Everyone is welcome to bundle up and join the fun.

Christmas is  
*Real*  
Christmas Cantata

Sunday, December 16  
8:30 a.m. &  
10:45 a.m.



Christmas isn't just a warm, nostalgic tale. It's the Word-became-flesh, God-coming-to-rescue-us story. This ancient story really happened on an incredible night long ago, yet can make a difference in every life today.

Christmas is real.

Real joy, hope, peace, and love is available to all of us right here and right now.

### *Celebrating with:*

- Tylor & Kelsey Sarchet and family as new members to Hope Church.

### *Concerns for:*

- Elaine Weir had knee replacement surgery on November 14.
- Becky Christoffer had hip replacement surgery on Thursday, November 29

### *Condolences to:*

- Jane & Chris Gude on the passing of Jane's father, Norm Schaap from Sioux Center, from time to eternity on November 9.

*“All the Christmas presents in the world are worth nothing without the presence of Christ.”*

*David Jeremiah*



### *Library Order*

The Library Team is putting together an order for new books and DVDs. If you have specific requests of titles you would like purchased for the church library, please leave a note with the title and author in the check-out box on the library desk or email Char Maertens at charmaertens@gmail.com by December 1.

### *First Wednesday Prayer & Worship*

There will be no First Wednesday Prayer & Worship on December 5 as we will be hosting Milan Johnson's ordination service.

### *Milan Johnson's Ordination Service*

On Wednesday, December 5 at 6:30 p.m. we are having an ordination service for Milan Johnson here at Hope Church. Milan grew up attending Hope, served as our Facility Director for a couple years, and recently graduated from Covenant Seminary. He has now accepted a call to be the lead pastor at Christ's Church in St. Peters, MO. Everyone is invited to attend this special worship service with a reception to follow.

### *Congregational Celebration*

All confessing members of Hope Church are invited to our annual Congregational Celebration on Sunday, December 9. We will be celebrating what God has done in 2018, look ahead at 2019, and participate in the selection of new church officers by the drawing of lots. Elder nominees are Paul Abrahamson, Dean Mechler, Doug Van Hofwegen and Kurt Weeks. Deacon nominees are Bob Graham, Alex Johnson, Luke Lovin and Kyle Mechler. We will begin promptly at 5:00 p.m. with a dessert potluck and the meeting will begin promptly at 5:30 p.m. Each family attending is asked to bring 1 dessert to share. Nursery will be provided.

### *Bible Donation Opportunity*

During this Christmas season Hope Church is assisting The Gideons International by taking monetary donations for Bibles. These Bibles help spread the Good News and honor Jesus by sharing His story. Bible donation envelopes are located at the Information Desk. Please leave completed envelopes at the Information Desk or return to the office by Sunday, December 30.

### *Year-End Tithing*

Year-end financial donations to the church will be received through noon on Monday, December 31. Donations can be dropped off at the church office.

# HOPE CHURCH

BRING JOY. EXPERIENCE JOY.

919 Grand Avenue  
Spencer, IA 51301  
(712)262-3016  
www.spencerhope.com

## WORSHIP

Sundays: 8:30 a.m. & 10:45 a.m.

Monday, December 24

Christmas Eve Candlelight Worship

5:00 p.m., 7:00 p.m. & 11:00 p.m.

Sunday School: 9:45 - 10:40 a.m.

Ages 3 years old through Adult

*There will be no Sunday School on December 23 or 30.*

## schedule & sermons



### Christmas Presence

- December 2 *If God Does Not Go with Us*  
Exodus 33
- December 9 *God's Presence Brings Joy*  
Psalm 16
- December 16 *God's Presence Shakes the Earth*  
Psalm 114
- December 23 *God's Presence Saves*  
Isaiah 63
- December 24 *God's Presence Brings Good News*  
Luke 1:19
- December 30 *God's Presence Preserves*  
Jude 1:24

### Hope Church Staff:

Russell Muilenburg, *Lead Pastor*; Jay Van Gelder, *Pastor of Student Ministries*; Josh Hamrick, *Facilities*; Trent Hansen, *Youth Intern*; Eric Meeter, *Worship/Music*; Beth Muilenburg, *Congregational Care*; Kim Smith, *Children & Families*; Lori Swanson, *Office Administrator*.