



In Touch with Hope

monthly newsletter of Hope Church, Spencer, IA

May, 2019

Pastor Russell Muilenburg

God's Love Chases Us Down

Psalm 23:6 says:

⁶ Surely your goodness and love will follow me
all the days of my life,
and I will dwell in the house of the Lord
forever.

The word “follow” comes off a little weak. To “follow” may imply that goodness and love are always trailing behind me, one or two steps back, never quite able to catch up. That wouldn't be all that encouraging. “Surely goodness and love will lag behind me all my days.” That doesn't sound all that hopeful.

But the word David uses here in the original language is actually much more vigorous than that. It's a word that could be translated as “pursue” or even “chase down.”

For a long time now, I have appreciated John Piper's modern illustration of what this might look like:

Imagine yourself driving nonchalantly down the freeway, when all of a sudden you see a red light flashing in your rear view mirror. And for some crazy reason you make the irrational decision to push the gas pedal instead of the brake. You roar down the freeway at one hundred miles per hour and try to get away from the highway patrol. All the times you went over the speed limit flash before your eyes. And as your sense of guilt mounts, all the faults of your life start popping up out of your unconsciousness where they had lain just waiting to make you miserable.

And all the while, you remember that if you get one more ticket, your license will be revoked and you won't be able to take that hard-earned vacation to Miami with your wife. But your car simply does not have the power of the highway patrol, and he finally forces you over. You sit there trembling as he walks up to your window and says, “Got a little guilty conscience there, don't you?” Then he reaches into his pocket and pulls out a wallet and says, “That motel you just left asked me to catch up with you and bring you your wallet you left on the counter.” So, you feel like an utter fool, and as you reach out to take it he says, “Oh, and there's one other thing. They had a drawing this morning for the sweepstakes you registered for at the motel last night, and you won a free trip for two to Miami if you phone in your acceptance by noon today.” <https://www.desiringgod.org/messages/the-shepherd-the-host-and-the-highway-patrol>

That's pretty improbable, and yet it is a pretty good illustration of what Psalm 23:6 is describing. God is a highway patrolman pursuing you—not with justice and wrath—but with goodness and love every day of your life. And He is fast.

At Hope Church right now we are doing a series of sermons based on Psalm 23. We are calling it “Walking with the Shepherd” because the dominant metaphor of the Psalm is found in its first line, “The LORD is my Shepherd.”

But we could also call it “The Pursuit Psalm.” Because the last image is one of God chasing us down. God delights to lavish His love and goodness upon us. All of our days, wherever we go, God is pursuing us with gracious gifts.

The question is: Will you let Him catch you?



Trenten Hansen Youth News

Sr. High Youth Retreat:

This year we took 35 senior high youth to Ironwood Springs Christian Ranch in Stewartville, MN. Our theme for the weekend was "Imitator," what it looks like to be a Christ-like follower in our world. Before we even started the retreat we had a few God moments. When we had the curriculum already picked for the weekend, there were some students who reached out to us and said they wanted to be challenged and grow deeper in their faith. Jay also had a tug in his heart saying the curriculum that was chosen was just not right for the moment, so the week before the retreat he changed the curriculum to "Digging Deeper - Being a Imitator of Christ." What was amazing was the "Digging Deeper" curriculum also had what it meant to be Christ-like tied into its lessons! God works in crazy ways! We talked about the foundational building blocks we have in our lives with the question being, "What are you building your life on?" We talked about how some of our blocks distract us from keeping God as our main foundation. A main discussion point that came up frequently was we don't necessarily need to get rid of those building blocks in our lives, but how we can use them more for God's glory!

6, 7, 8th Youth Retreat:

This year we took 25 middle school youth to Lakeshore Center at Okoboji. The theme for this weekend was God's amazing plan for purity in our lives. We discussed about the world's views on purity and how different they are from God's plan. We talked about why it's important to know our boundaries in life, create those boundaries, and make them known to others. Most importantly we talked about God's grace for us and regardless of what the world's standard of beauty is, He always sees us beautiful in His eyes. It was an encouraging week as the students asked exceptional questions.

Congratulations to our high school graduates! The following high school seniors have been involved at Hope Church and were asked the following questions:

- What have you been involved in at Hope Church?
- How has Hope Church helped you grow as a person?
- What are your future plans after graduation?



Michelle Howard
Daughter of Lyle & Katrina Howard

I have been involved in Youth Group and VBS. Hope Church has helped me grow in my faith by the sermons, music, youth group and mentor/mentee program. After graduation I will be moving into a group home in Spencer and working at Many Hands Market.



Ezra Meyer
Son of Nathaniel & Susan Meyer

Since I was a preschooler, my involvement with Hope Church has included Vacation Bible School, Sunday School and Hope Youth with a few Hope Youth retreats. With those activities the church has exposed me to Christianity and encourages me to want to start to be all for Christ. I will be attending Northwestern College in Orange City this fall with interest in their Accounting and Actuarial Science program. I also have signed on with Northwestern's golf program and am looking forward to competing at the college level.

Spring Youth Group Schedule

6th, 7th, 8th Grade

May 1: No Youth Group
May 8: 6:30-8:00 p.m.
May 15: 6:30-8:00 p.m.
May 22: 6:30-8:00 p.m.
May 29: 6:30-8:00 p.m.

Sr. High

May 5: 7:00-8:30 p.m.
May 12: No Youth Group
Baccalaureate
May 19: No Youth Group
Commencement
May 26: 7:00-8:30 p.m.



Christina Mueggenberg
Daughter of Brian & Charity Mueggenberg

Throughout the last 7 years, I have become very involved at Hope Church. Youth group has become a weekly routine for me I'm also involved in everything music. I am part of the praise team, the youth H.Y.M.N.S. team, and have participated in multiple special services and cantatas. I would have to say growing in my faith on both summer mission trips and our spring spiritual retreats are my favorite part though. We get the opportunity to serve God and truly take the time to listen to Him. I am so grateful for the opportunities Hope has given me all these years. I have learned to better serve, better communicate, live out my passions, but most of all - to love. I pray with all my heart that I will continue to love in this manner as I move onto college at Northwestern College in Orange City to become a nurse. It seems oh too real that I will be leaving my home soon, but I know that my heart will always be here.



Abby Weeks
Daughter of Kurt and Kim Weeks

I have been involved in VBS, Kids Connection, Sunday school, youth group, a high school leader at middle school youth group, I've gone on each summer mission trip, multiple trips to Haiti, and the mentoring program. I was born and raised in Hope Church, which has helped to build a strong foundation in my faith walk. Through youth group, I have met some of my best and closest friends who share the same beliefs and walk alongside of me in my faith journey. Next fall, I will attend Iowa State University and will major in Elementary Education.

We will be honoring our high school graduates at the First Wednesday Worship & Prayer Service on Wednesday, August 7, at 6:30 p.m.

Community Meals

Sunday, May 5 is the last Community Meal for the summer . It will resume in the fall.

Cinco De Mayo Volunteer Fun

On Sunday, May 5, the new RCA church plant, Iglesia Roca Fuerte (Solid Rock Church) in Storm Lake, is hosting a Cinco de Mayo family fun day from 3:30 - 7:00 p.m. Hope Church is looking for volunteers to help them staff their games and serve refreshments. If you would like to volunteer in this capacity, please sign up at the Information Desk. We will leave the Hope Church parking lot at 1:15 p.m. on May 5.

Baptism

The next baptism celebration will be on Sunday, May 12. If you would like baptism administered to yourself or a child, please contact Pastor Russell at 262-3016 or 346-8480 so arrangements can be made.

Church Softball League

Let's Play Ball! Church Softball League will begin late May. Anyone age 16 or older can join in the fun! Sign up at the Information Desk if you are interested in playing.

Building Repair Donations

Hope Church has several building repairs that need attention this spring. The detailed list of items is printed on donation envelopes in the lobby. The envelope amounts range from \$1 to \$5,000. The amounts on these envelopes have been set so that everyone has an opportunity to give at a level they are comfortable with. If you would like to make a donation to the needed repairs, choose an envelope from the board in the lobby and return to the office or in the offering plate by May 19.

Summer Schedule

Effective Sunday, May 26 our morning worship services will be at 9:00 a.m. and 10:45 a.m. during the summer months, with no summer Sunday School. The last day for Sunday School and Children's Worship for the summer will be May 19.

Consistory News

The regular meeting of the Hope Reformed Consistory met at 7:00 p.m. in the Harbor. Present: Deacons: Jason Warren, John Haak, Chris Swanson, and Bob Graham. Elders: Gary Zeutenhorst, Dean Mechler, Brad Olson, Bryan Christoffer, Kurt Weeks and Doug Siepkes. Pastors Russell Mulenburg and Jay Van Gelder. Absent: Deacons Craig Van Drunen and Kyle Mechler.

Pastor Russell opened the meeting with prayer and then read scripture from Mark 10: 35-45 and led the discussion on the scripture and video regarding Sticky Teams.

ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION AND DECISION

- Josh Hamrick shared with the consistory his assessment of facilities needs currently as it relates to planning for future expenditures related the church building.
- **MMSC** to approve the minutes of March 14, 2019.
- **MMSC** to approve the March financials as presented by the Deacons.
- Pastor Jay reported on recent weekend retreats by Senior High and Middle School youth groups.
- Pastor Russell discussed the Volunteer Appreciation on May 1st. He indicated there were 400 invitations sent out. He discussed the importance of volunteer help in the running of the church and the importance of showing appreciation to all those who volunteer their time and talents in the work of the church.
- Pastor Russell shared with and discussed the next Staff Thematic Goal that they will be working on after Easter. It will be Sharing Hope's Mission. They usually work on this for about 3-4 months.
- John Haak and the Deacons shared some ideas regarding fundraising for some of the building needs and how to keep the congregation informed of those needs.
- Pastor Russell closed this portion of the meeting with prayer.

ELDERS MEETING

- The constitutional question was asked and answered in the negative with some discussion.
- Starting Point class will continue this Sunday at 1:00.
- Specific congregational concerns were discussed.
- The meeting was closed with prayer.

DEACONS MEETING

- Chris Swanson opened the meeting with prayer.
- Josh was invited to discuss the needs of the church regarding building repairs. A detailed list of items was presented, along with how to meet these needs. **MMSC** to approve a Building Envelope opportunity. The envelopes will be a fun way to inform and involve the entire congregation of our building repair needs, as well as offer them an opportunity to give to the cause. Tentative plans are to begin this shortly after Easter with an informative video and a display in the lobby.
- Jay contacted our insurance company about the sewer issues; however, it did not meet the deductible nor would have been covered anyway. Insurance cost and customer service is an issue with our current provider, so Jay is looking into other options.
- Jason Warren closed the meeting with prayer.

Sarah Kerns Children & Family News



VBS

Time is running out to register and space is limited! You may register your child (age 4 through entering 5th Grade in the fall) for VBS online until May 4, or until we are full. Positions are available for any level of help at VBS. We have a great time getting to know the children that are attending and each other as we serve together! We can use people of every age, ability and time frame.

Register online for both at <http://spencerhope.churchcenter.com/registrations/events/217621>

Also, we are collecting newspaper (not shiny or coated) for a VBS project. Please place newspaper in the bin in the lobby. Thank you!

HOPE CHURCH

BRING JOY. EXPERIENCE JOY.

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

Worship & Sunday School

Sundays:

8:30 a.m. & 10:45 a.m.
through May 19

9:00 a.m. & 10:45 a.m.
beginning May 26

Sunday School:

9:45—10:40 a.m.

Ages 3 years old through Adult
*The last day of Sunday School for the
school year will be May 19.*

Schedule & Sermons



Psalm 23
Walking with the Shepherd

May 5 *Green Pastures, Quiet Waters*



May 12 Youth Sunday

May 19 *Paths of Righteousness*

May 26 *I Will Fear No Evil*

Hope Church Staff:

Russell Muilenburg, *Lead Pastor*; Jay Van Gelder, *Pastor of Student Ministries*; Josh Hamrick, *Facilities*; Trent Hansen, *Youth Ministries Assistant & Communication*; Sarah Kerns, *Children & Families*; Eric Meeter, *Worship/Music*; Beth Muilenburg, *Discipleship & Care*; Lori Swanson, *Office Administrator*