

in touch with Hope

monthly newsletter of Hope Church, Spencer, IA



July, 2019

by Pastor Russell Muilenburg

The Sun

I'm somewhat obsessive about sunscreen. When I was a kid, I never worried about it. I could spend all day at the pool and I wouldn't worry about covering up at all. By the end of the summer I would be as coppery as a penny. But these days, I find it doesn't take long in the sun for me to burn. So if I'm going to be out in the sun very long, I slather on the SPF 50. I don't like the discomfort of having a sunburn, and I worry about doing long term damage to my skin. If you pay attention to the doctors on TV, you know that you should always protect yourself from the sun.

But then I heard a news report of at least one doctor suggesting that maybe we hide from the sun too much. Pointing out that the sun provides a number of health benefits, such as Vitamin D, he made the case that we should all get at least a little sun on a regular basis. Not that he was encouraging us all to go get fried to a crisp, but he argued that there is some truth to what our parents would say when they told us, "A little sun would be good for you." And, of course, there's Seasonal Affective Disorder. When the days get shorter in the winter, or we go several days with overcast, I can tell it makes everything feel gloomy. A sunny day after several days of clouds can do wonders for my mood. Maybe the sun is getting a bad rap.

All of these reflections on the sun made me think of Revelation 21 and 22. There, as John describes his vision of heaven, he writes:

²³The city does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and the Lamb is its lamp... ⁵There will be no more night. They will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, for the Lord God will give them light. And they will reign for ever and ever.

In other words, in heaven, God takes the place of the sun. In heaven, God *is* the sun. This, I think, is an apt analogy for God. Scientists would tell us that the sun is absolutely critical to life on this planet. Never mind Vitamin D or its affect on our mood, the sun is what makes this planet temperate enough to live on. The sun is vital to plant growth and the water cycle. And, of course, it is the sun that drives away the dark of night and makes it possible for us to see. If there is no sun, there is no life.

Couldn't we say the same about God? To be sure, the image of God as the sun is meant to be symbolic, like so much of Revelation. I'm not sure we can say for certainty what the state of our solar system will be for eternity. But, the idea of God being as vital to our existence and well-being as the sun is certainly compelling.

On the same day that I was reflecting on the sun's importance, I learned that the French word for sunflower is *tournesol*. The name honors the distinctive way the flower follows the sun across the sky. A sunflower will always face the sun.

And so, it seems to me, that we should all take a lesson from the sunflower. Turn your face toward the "sun." *Tournesol*. Keep your eyes fixed on the one who creates and sustains us, provides us with the Living Water of salvation, and lightens our night.



Pastor Jay Van Gelder
Youth News

Middle School Youth/Parent Meeting

There will be a meeting for the 6th, 7th & 8th grade parents and youth going to Power Connection on Wednesday, July 17 at 6:30 p.m. in the Youth Room.

6th, 7th & 8th Grade Work Trip

The following middle school students will be traveling to Bethel College for a work trip and Power Connection July 23—28: Kaylee Bell, Shaylee Brown, Carli Bryan, Alex Busch, Jill Card, Dylan Connor, Trevor Cooke, Andrew Crane, Aliza Edwards, Skylar Fletcher, Dalton Flikkema, Grace Gilderhus, Abby Goeken, Bob Graham, Elsie Graham, Graycelyn Hameister, Javen Hamrick, Riley Hamrick, Trenten Hansen, Braden Haviland, Jaxon Hefner, Millie Hemann, Alivia Herzenach, Lauren Horst, Sadie Kahley, Katelyn Kivela, Faith Klatt, Preston Krukow, Jill Lowe, Kendra Lowe, Aurora McCusker, Jill Moser, Caitlyn Mueggenberg, Ellie Muilenburg, Aria Musser, Gave Reiman, Miles Robbins, Cohen Roth, Jadey Salton, Sydney Stanley, Aubrey Stell, Raegan Stevens, Tyriana Vail, Jay Van Gelder, Kamdyn Van Gelder, AJ Ver Steeg, Jody Vulk, Lewis Vulk and AJ Zinn.

Spoudazo Concert



"Washed By The Water" is a presentation that features music made popular by Christian artists such as For King and Country, Need to Breathe, Ryan Stevenson, and Lauren Daigle.

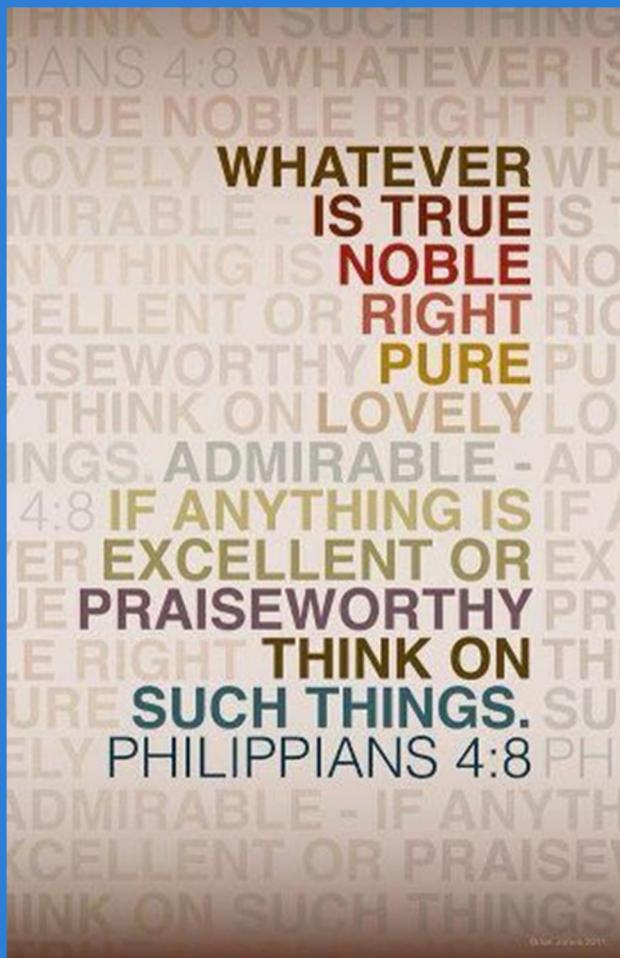
Songs will be interspersed with skits and narration.

*Friday, July 19, 2019 * 7:00pm * Hope Church
Ice Cream Social to follow*

Spoudazo, an ecumenical high school music and drama group, is on tour this summer throughout the Midwest. There are approximately 40 students and adults who are in need of housing while in Spencer the evening of July 19. If you would be willing to be a host home, please contact Trenten Hansen and let him know how many students you can house.

Beth Muilenburg Discipleship and Care

Bible Promise:



Volunteer Spotlight: Allan Hansen

You serve as a representative from Hope Church for St. Luke's Roundup. What do you do?

Six times a year, once a month for every other month, I go to St. Luke's on Sunday morning at 9:15 a.m. When the residents are done with breakfast, I ask if they would like to go to church. If so, I wheel them down to the lounge where they have worship. I sit with them during church and then wheel them back when they are done.



Why do you like to serve in this way?

I feel those people need all the help they can get. If they want to go to church, I want to help them get there.

How do you encourage the residents?

I like to smile and chat. I tell them, "It is nice you want to go to church. I feel privileged to take you." Then, I try to cheer them up with small talk or ask questions about them.

How do the residents encourage you?

When I see them, I feel how lucky I am to do what I can do. It makes me thankful for the health I have. And, I am encouraged that they still want to go to worship.

What do you think Jesus thinks of older people?

I think he loves them very much. I think he loves us regardless of our age.

Celebrating with:

- Karen Mechler & John Corrigan who were united in marriage on May 20.
- Shelby Ranslow and Ethan Reese who were united in marriage on June 1.
- Clark Johnson & Adrienne Anderson who were united in marriage on June 9.
- Kristopher Rhode & Alexa Cashatt who were united in marriage on June 15.
- Trevor Kunzmann and Rachael Oziomek who were united in marriage on June 29.

Concerns for:

- Tom Steinkamp as he was hospitalized for blood clots in his lungs, blood pressure concerns, and a high fever.
- Sue Sears as she is undergoing chemotherapy for her peritoneal cancer.
- Brady Hare who has a severe infection and is in the Primghar Rehab & Care Center for IV antibiotics.
- Dawn Tripp who is hospitalized in Sioux Falls.

Sarah Kerns

Children/Family Ministry News

\$4,194 offering raised, 1.62 tons of sand, 2,500 feet of brown kraft paper, 1000 bobby pins, 450 hamburgers, 437 t-shirts, 425 cupcakes, 220 Creole Children's Bibles purchased for Haiti, 210 music CDs, 200 mini jungle animals, 125 pounds of flour, and 20 rolls of Gorilla Tape.

So many have asked me, "Did VBS go well?" or "Was your first year of VBS as Director, successful?" I haven't always known what kind of answer they wanted. Did they want numbers? Did they want shocking statistics? Stories? Budget reports? Proof that I am completely exhausted? How do we measure the success of our Vacation Bible School? As a planner, I know that all those crazy numbers, ridiculous requests, massive amounts of supplies, and seemingly mindless projects are necessary to pull this off. But what's also necessary are willing hearts. People that have a desire to share the message of Jesus Christ to these children.

400+ people, young and old, were able to hear that GOD IS GOOD every day for a week. 15 hours of intense discipleship. 7 months worth of ministry in one week. 98 children asked to have Jesus as their forever friend (crazy exciting, right?!?). Countless kids (and adults, too!) are still singing His praises through the songs that were taught, reciting the verses we memorized, and reminding each other of the promise that God is good. I hear stories every day of the continued success of our VBS. Conclusion: we succeeded. We put a smile on Jesus' face. We brought joy to Him, and we surely experienced joy in Him!



Church Softball

A total of 5 churches are playing softball this summer in the Church Softball League: Faith Lutheran, Crosswinds, Living Word, First Baptist and Hope (2 teams). Games are on Tuesday nights at either 7:00 p.m. or 8:15 p.m. at Pedersen Park. Both teams from Hope (the purple team and grey team) have had a great season so far!



On Tuesday, June 25 the purple and grey teams from Hope played each other. We provided the popcorn, snacks and water for an evening of fun and fellowship watching the game and cheering for both teams!



The game was a close one, but the grey team came through in the clutch for the win!

First Wednesday

Our First Wednesday Worship & Prayer Service is July 3 at 6:30 p.m. in the Sanctuary. This special time of prayer and worship is an opportunity to reconnect and refocus on Jesus. Please join us as we spend time worshipping through music and praying for our friends and family, for ourselves, our community and our world.

Independence Day

The church offices will be closed and the building will be locked on Thursday, July 4 in observance of Independence Day.

Baptism

The next baptism celebration will be on Sunday, July 14. 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.

HOPE CHURCH

BRING JOY. EXPERIENCE JOY.

919 Grand Avenue

Spencer, IA 51301

(712) 262-3016

www.spencerhope.com

Worship

Sundays:

9:00 a.m. & 10:45 a.m.

First Wednesday Worship & Prayer

July 3, 2019

7:00 p.m.

Schedule & Sermons



Legendary Heroes of the Bible

July 7 Caleb

July 14 Shadrach, Meshach & Abednego

July 21 Elijah

July 28 Daniel

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*