

# in touch with Hope

Monthly newsletter of Hope Church, Spencer, IA

November, 2019

by Pastor Russell Mulenburg

## foundations of faith

A while back I attended a conference where the renowned apologist Ravi Zacharias was a speaker. An apologist is not someone who is good at saying “I’m sorry”, but someone who defends the intellectual foundations of the Christian faith. Zacharias regularly speaks on university campuses and engages non-Christians in constructive debate. I’m convinced he’s one of the ten smartest people with whom I’ve ever been privileged to be in the same room.

Zacharias’s talk was about the foundational pillars on which our faith must stand, even as the world appears to be running into chaos. He suggested that these are arguments for faith which non-Christians cannot convincingly argue against. And so, with apologies to Mr. Zacharias, I thought I would pass these foundations of faith along to you:

### 1. The Dimension of Eternity

One thing that has not been sufficiently explained apart from God is the in-born sense of eternity that rests within us all; the sense that there is more than just this world, that we were meant for more than just turning the pages of the calendar. For example: have you ever noticed how surprised we are by the passage of time? You haven’t seen a niece or nephew in a while, and when you do you exclaim, “My, how you’ve grown!” Or, you see a high school teacher after 20 years and think to yourself, “Gee, he’s gotten older.” What else did we expect to happen? C.S. Lewis said our being surprised by the passage of time is akin to a fish being surprised by the wetness of water. Time is the dimension in which we live. Of course it passes. But suppose, Lewis goes on to say, the fish is destined to be a land animal. In that case, he would find the water to be very strange. And of course, the reason we find the passage of time to be strange is because we know, deep down, that we are destined for eternity. We know there is a time coming when the rules of time will no longer apply.

### 2. The Dimension of Morality

Another thing that cannot be sufficiently explained without God in the picture is morality. Without a divine, transcendent rule-giver there is really no reason to be good—or even a way to decide what “good” is. Atheists can lead very moral lives, and many who do not believe in God are fine and upstanding citizens. But as Zacharias points out, they have no rational explanation for their morality. Some have suggested that our concept of morality is a result of evolution—somehow those who developed morality were “fitter” than those without it and thus better adapted for survival. But, if the evolutionary law of survival of the fittest is the only rule that applies, then when the strong decide to eradicate the weak—the unborn, the elderly, the disabled, a different ethnic group—there is no rational reason to say that is wrong. Only a belief in a Creator God who defines right and wrong and to whom we will be accountable for our actions can give us a reason for morality—and the motivation to live by it.

### 3. The Dimension of Charity

Finally, Zacharias pointed to the practice of love. He said that in all of his experience in debate and all the arguments he has heard against the gospel, the one thing people have never been able to argue against is love. He urged us, therefore, to defend Christianity at the intellectual level, but also to show it at the practical level. Zacharias told the story of Father Joseph Damian. Damian was a Catholic Priest from Belgium who went to live among and serve the lepers in the government-sanctioned quarantine of Molokai in Hawaii. He eventually contracted and died of the disease, and is widely considered a “martyr of charity”. Originally, his body was buried on Molokai but eventually the government of Belgium—where he has been called “the greatest Belgian”—asked for his body’s return. The lepers of Molokai agreed to send the body back, but asked if one part could remain on the island. When asked what part they would want to keep, they answered: “His right hand, because it was the hand that touched us.”

We may not be able to convince everyone that life is eternal or that there is a Divine Law-Giver, but we can reach out and touch people with compassion and kindness. Against love there is no argument.



Pastor Jay Van Gelder  
Youth Ministry News

Youth Fundraising Auction



**Come Help Support Our Youth Ministry**  
Ribeye & Chicken Dinner

Catered by Hope Youth Volunteers who know how to cook really great meals!

*If you are unable to make it to the auction and would still like to donate to the youth work project, checks can be made to Hope Church and given to Jay.*

Our annual Youth Auction Fundraiser is Sunday, November 3 at 5:00 p.m. in the Harbor. A catered meal of grilled ribeye and chicken will be served during the auction and childcare will be provided. You will not want to miss the fun at this annual fundraiser to benefit our youth programs! *All auction items (or printed paper certificates indicating your auction items) need to be to the Harbor by 2:00 p.m. Sunday, November 3. Thank you!*

## 6th, 7th, 8th Grade Canned Food Drive

On Wednesday October 30, the 6,7,8th youth group did a canned food drive to support the Upper Des Moines food pantry. The youth were able to collect 723 cans in less than an hour of collecting! This food will go to help support the daily needs of Upper Des Moines and also help them to prepare for the holiday season.



## 6th thru 12th Grade Traveling Lock-In

HIGH SCHOOL AND MIDDLE SCHOOL YOUTH

**TRAVELING**

**LOCK**

**IN**



**NOV 16-17, 2019**



**ONLINE REGISTRATION**

**CLOSES: SUN, NOV 10**

**FIRST COME, FIRST SERVED**

**LINK TO REGISTER**

<https://hopechurchspencer.breezechms.com/form/b6d2d7>

**Check In Sat: 4:00-4:30 PM**

**Return Sun: 6:00-6:30 AM**

### THINGS THAT ARE HAPPENING!!

A stop along the way, pizza, rides, games and A Lot of **FUN** People!

### COST

**You & a Friend: \$40 + \$40**

**Hope Youth Alone: \$65**

### BRING ALONG

Money for snacks & other games,

Sweatshirt or Jacket, Pillow and/or blanket (for bus ride)



# Beth Muilenburg

## Discipleship and Care

### Young Adult Potluck Game Night

Calling all 20/30 - somethings! Please join us for a potluck and game night on Friday, November 15 at 6:00 p.m.

Where: Pastor Russell and Beth's home  
1308 W 12th St., Spencer

Please text me at 712.346.8481 if you can join the fun!

### Bible Promise

**MEMORY VERSES FOR GROWING the Fruit of the Spirit**

**Love** 1 COR. 13:4-8 "Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth... Love never ends."

**Joy** PSALM 16:8-11 "...You make known to me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore."

**Peace** ISAIAH 26:3 "You keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on you, because he trusts in you."

**Patience** PSALM 37:5-7 "...Be still before the Lord and wait patiently for him; fret not yourself over the one who prospers in his way, over the man who carries out evil devices!"

**Kindness** EPHESIANS 4:32 "Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you."

**Goodness** EPHESIANS 2:10 "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them."

**Faithfulness** MATTHEW 25:21 "His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant...'"

**Gentleness** 1 PETER 3:4 "...let your adorning be the hidden person of the heart with the imperishable beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which in God's sight is very precious."

**Self-Control** 2 TIMOTHY 1:7 "...for God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control."

All Scripture quotations from the English Standard Version.

## Volunteer Spotlight



### Renee Egesdal

## Wednesday Morning Women's Bible Study Leader

What do you think small groups are important?

I LOVE Bible studies! My heart in leading a Bible study to help us share and grow deeper in our faith. It is a passion of mine to share God's goodness in His word. It warms my heart to see women talk and share.

What do you enjoy about your group?

I like how we do things together and individually. We do the study together and we also do some social events as a group, like having tea time twice a month or having a movie day. I also try to do things individually with each woman in the group. I like to take individuals out to lunch to know them better.

How do small groups bring joy to Jesus?

I think small groups make our faith more personal and deeper. We are not meant to go through life alone. I think Jesus smiles when we learn about Him and each other.

## Wind and Fire Study

We are in the middle of Hope Church's church-wide study that will follow Pastor Russell's sermon series, Wind and Fire. The guide for small groups or independent study can be found on our church website: [www.spencerhope.com](http://www.spencerhope.com)

Click on the MEDIA tab.

Click on RESOURCES.

Click on WIND and FIRE.

## Take Them A Meal Ministry

Take Them a Meal is a ministry that is coordinated online through Kristal Jensen. It is used for anyone that has been hospitalized, had surgery or a new baby in the family. Meals do not have to be elaborate, they can be as simple as soup, casserole, etc., because the families are just appreciative and blessed by the meals as it takes a small burden off of them and is one less thing they need to worry about while recovering. More volunteers are needed to provide meals and can contact Kristal at [jensen1995@smunet.net](mailto:jensen1995@smunet.net) or 712-260-6724.

If you are currently on the Take Them A Meal volunteer team and have a new email, please contact Kristal at [jensen1995@smunet.net](mailto:jensen1995@smunet.net). She has had emails returned to her after setting up the meal delivery schedule.

# Sarah Kerns Children Family Ministry News

## Trunk or Treat

WOW! Over 1,600 people were in attendance and plenty of fun was had at Trunk or Treat. Thank you to EVERYONE who helped make this huge outreach event such a success and to everyone who donated candy. We cannot do this event without you!



## Children's Christmas Choir

All children Kindergarten through 5<sup>th</sup> Grade are invited to join the Children's Christmas Choir. We are practicing on Wednesday evenings from 6:30-7:30 p.m. in the Harbor basement. We will be singing at both worship services on Sunday, December 15. The preschoolers will also be participating in both worship services on December 15 with their Christmas songs, and they will be practicing during their Sunday School hour. Please see me with any questions

THANKSGIVING  
FAMILY WORSHIP  
SERVICE

WEDNESDAY,  
NOVEMBER 27  
7:00 P.M.  
HARBOR ROOM

The nursery will be open but not staffed.  
(please do not leave children unattended)

← →  
The church building will be locked on  
Thursday, November 28, and the  
church office will be closed on  
Friday, November 29.

## First Wednesday Prayer Worship

First Wednesday Prayer & Worship will be Wednesday, November 6 at 6:30 p.m. in the Sanctuary. Please join us as we spend time worshipping through music and praying for our friends, family, for ourselves, our community and our world.

## Haiti Color Run fundraiser

Our annual Haiti Fundraiser event will take place November 17 - December 1. A \$50 donation will sponsor a Haitian runner and provides their t-shirt, two meals, a special gift from Hope Church, and they get to hear the Gospel! Making a donation would make a great Christmas present - donate in honor or in memory of a loved one! Stop at the kiosk in the lobby to donate. **This will be our only Haiti fundraising event for the year.**

## Congratulations to

- Ryan & Marlee Christoffel on the birth of their daughter, Quinn, on October 9.
- Taylor Glover & Kevin Martinson who were united in marriage on October 19.
- Terry & Erin Stevens on the birth of their son, Jaxson, on October 25.

## Concerns for

- Elaine Weir had knee surgery on October 1.
- Lisa Wunschel had surgery on October 21.
- Todd Brockshus had knee surgery on October 21.
- Vicki Dodge had neck surgery on October 29.

## Condolences to

- the family of Alma Birchard on her passing from time to eternity on September 30.
- the family of Jay Prange on his passing from time to eternity on October 5.
- Donette Hanson on the passing of her son, Mike Darnell of Spring Hill, FL, from time to eternity on October 6.

Craig Cannon  
Worship Music Ministry News



Hope Church is presenting a Christmas Musical, *The Song of Bethlehem*, on Sunday, December 8 during both worship services. Practice is on Sundays, beginning November 3, at 4:00 p.m. in the Sanctuary. Middle school youth through adults are encouraged to participate. If you are interested in participating, contact me at [ccannon@spencerhope.org](mailto:ccannon@spencerhope.org).

# Consistory News

The regular meeting of the Hope Reformed Consistory met at 7:00 p.m. on October 10 in the Harbor. Present: Deacons Bob Graham, John Haak, Chris Swanson, Craig Van Drunen and Jason Warren. Elders Gary Zeutenhorst, Dean Mechler, Brad Olsen, Doug Siepkes, Bryan Christoffer, and Kurt Weeks. Pastors Russell Mulenburg and Jay Van Gelder. Absent: Deacon Kyle Mechler.

Pastor Russell opened the discussion with reading from Psalm 78:1-6 and then led the discussion on Sticky Teams with Larry Osborne on "Equipped to Lead" and closed the discussion with prayer.

## ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION AND DECISION

- **MMSC** to approve the minutes from September 12, 2019.
- **MMSC** to approve September financials as presented by the deacons.
- Pastor Jay reported that they have been working on the 2020 budget for next year. He is planning on having the budget ready for review at the November consistory meeting.
- Pastor Russell discussed the status of the nominations process. He stated that there had not been very many nominations submitted to date. A suggestion was made to make an announcement from the pulpit to encourage the congregation to submit their nominations. Nominations forms were mailed out to all congregation members who had not picked up their forms. The Nominations Committee will bring recommendations to the next consistory meeting.
- Pastor Russell discussed the next steps in recommendations related to the Reformed Church's 2020 Vision report. Some time was spent discussing feedback on Pastor Russell's sermon on Homosexuality and the two Thursday night presentations.
- Pastor Russell reported on the recent conference that the staff attended in Nashville. He indicated there was a lot of good information and staff would be talking about how to incorporate/apply this information into the programs at Hope.
- Craig Van Drunen shared information about changes in the labor laws starting 2020 regarding overtime hours. These changes impact all the staff except for Pastor Russell and Jay. Staff management and the staff have been looking at the implications of this for how they track their hours as well as the implications for the budget.
- Pastor Russell closed this portion of the meeting with prayer.

## ELDERS MEETING

- The Constitutional question was asked and answered in the negative.
- **MMSC** to approve new member requests:
  - Chris Lindahl, Reaffirmation of Faith
  - Bonnie Lindahl, Profession of Faith
  - Darlene Oetken, Letter of Transfer, St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Emerson, NE
  - Melissa Stell, Letter of Transfer, Emanuel St. John Lutheran Church, Lytton, IA
  - Donavon Wunschel, Letter of Transfer, First English Lutheran Church, Spencer, IA
  - Lisa Wunschel, Letter of Transfer, Brandon Lutheran Church, Brandon, SD
- **MMSC** to approve baptism requests:
  - Milo Johnson, son of Alex & Mackenzie Johnson
  - Bonnie Lindahl and children, Lilliana, Madison and Gunner
  - Tucker Rehnstrom, son of Kyle & Mallory Rehnstrom
- Congregational concerns were discussed.
- Closed the meeting with prayer.

## DEACONS MEETING

- Chris opened the meeting with prayer.
- Weather permitting, the outside painting should begin yet in October.
- There was discussion about the current giving shortfalls.
- Jay gave an update on the testing of a new program software.
- 2020 Budget Planning is scheduled for November 12 at 6:00 p.m.
- Jay closed the meeting in prayer.

## *A Note from the Deacons...*

We would like to thank you for all of your giving so far this year, and want to share an update on our financial standing at this point. To date, the church is approximately \$40,000 behind in expenditures compared to giving. We would appreciate your prayerful consideration to contribute more to your monthly/end of the year giving if your budget allows.



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Spencer, IA 51301  
712-262-3016  
www.spencerhope.com  
hrc@spencerhope.org

## Worship & Sunday School

### Sundays:

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

### First Wednesday Worship & Prayer

November 6, 2019

7:00 p.m.

### Sunday School

9:45 -10:40 a.m.

for ages 18 months through Adult

## Schedule & Sermons



### Wind & Fire Sermons on the Holy Spirit

- November 3 *The Power of the Holy Spirit*
- November 10 *Praying By/In/With the Holy Spirit*
- November 17 *Pursuing the Holy Spirit*
- November 24 *The Presence of the Holy Spirit*
  
- November 27 *Thanksgiving Family Worship Service*

### Hope Church Staff:

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