

IN TOUCH WITH HOPE

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF HOPE CHURCH, SPENCER, IA

JANUARY, 2020

BY PASTOR RUSSELL MUILENBURG

IN THE HABIT

*Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing...
Hebrews 10:25*

A New Year is a time for thinking about habits. Many of our New Year's resolutions have to do with changing bad habits or starting good habits. We want to quit smoking or give up junk food. We want to spend less time in front of a screen. Or, we want to exercise more. We want do a better job of staying in touch with out-of-town friends and relatives. Most New Year's resolutions are to minimize bad habits and maximize good habits.

Habits, by definition, are neither good nor bad. A book called *The Power of Habit* by Charles Duhigg defines them as "the choices that all of us deliberately make at some point, and then stop thinking about but continue doing." (p. xvii) Habits are when our minds go into a sort of auto-pilot, and scientific research suggests that we are designed to develop habits as a way of saving mental energy. The book says, "When a habit emerges, the brain stops fully participating in decision making. It stops working so hard, or diverts focus to other tasks. So unless you deliberately fight a habit—unless you find new routines—the pattern will unfold automatically." (p. 20) One paper published by a Duke University researcher in 2006 found that more than 40 percent of the actions people performed each day weren't actual decisions, but habits. (p. xvi)

Think about it. If we had to go through a lengthy decision-making process with every choice we made—from brushing our teeth to driving to work to going to bed at night—we would be too exhausted to ever think a new thought. We depend on habits to get us through our day. The bad news, however, is that some of our habits are not in our best interest. But, the good news is that habits are not fixed. While they are powerful, they can be changed. Researchers describe a habit loop consisting of Cue, Routine, and Reward. They suggest that the more you understand about the Cues that prompt certain behaviors, and the Rewards that reinforce them, the more you can tinker with your habits and change your Routines in positive directions.

So, what does all this have to do with church? The verse cited above, Hebrews 10:25, suggests that meeting together—that is, attending church—is a habit. And, it can be something you are in the habit of doing, or it can be something you are in the habit of not doing. Either way, there comes a point when you stop really thinking about it. Either you get up on Sunday morning and prepare to attend the worship service, or you don't.

Hebrews 10 implies that meeting together is a good habit, and I would like to echo that. So, as we begin the year 2020, we are going to spend some time in this passage looking at the Rewards of attending church. As you make your New Year's resolutions, I want to challenge you to examine your habits when it comes to Sunday mornings. Can we reinforce your habit of attending church? Or, if you find you have developed a habit of missing church, can we work on changing that to a habit of regular attendance?

In 2020 let's resolve to make a good habit of meeting together.



PASTOR JAY VAN GELDER YOUTH NEWS

6TH, 7TH, 8TH YOUTH GROUP

- January 1 No Youth Group (New Years Day)
- January 8 No Youth Group (Youth Staff Vision Night)
- January 15 6:30—8:00 p.m. New Years Series Night 1
- January 22 6:30—8:00 p.m. New Years Series Night 2
- January 29 6:30—8:00 p.m. New Years Series Night 3
- February 2 5:00 p.m. Super Youth Football Party

SR. HIGH YOUTH GROUP

- January 5 No Youth Group
- January 12 No Youth Group (Youth Staff Vision Night)
- January 19 Parent Night
(Rocky Mtn/Colorado Springs Sign-Up)
- January 26 7:00-8:30 p.m.
- February 2 5:00 p.m. Super Youth Football Party

SR. HIGH ~



MIDDLE SCHOOL ~

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NO APOLOGIES

No Apologies is under construction and will be returning remodeled and refreshed Spring 2021

Middle School WORK PROJECT

June 23-28, 2020 • Lincoln, NE

Registration Deadline: January 26, 2020
\$100 deposit due at this time
Questions: Contact Jay and Trent at 712-262-3016

Immerse yourself in Service, Community and God's Word!

BETH MUILENBURG DISCIPLESHIP & CARE

IF YOU WAKE UP FEELING FRAGILE,
REMEMBER THAT GOD IS NOT,
AND THEN TRUST HIM TO BE
EVERYTHING YOU NEED TODAY.

JOHN PIPER



FIRM FOUNDATION CLASS

Starting on January 20, Pastor Russell will be leading a new class on Monday nights at 7:00 p.m. This class will last between 6-8 weeks. *Firm Foundation* is not a Bible Study or a Sunday School class. Done in a lecture format, we will see how the story of Jesus weaves through the Old Testament. Sign up at the Information Desk to participate.

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT



NOAH REIMAN, PROJECTION

What do you like about doing projection for Sunday mornings?

It has widened my horizons. It gives me a way to help out on Sunday mornings and at other times at church. And, it helps me understand how everything comes together on a Sunday morning.

Talk about serving behind the scenes.

I am a kid who likes to do work behind the scenes. I don't like to be out there. I like that I don't need to be seen, but I can still do things.

How can doing projection bring joy to Jesus?

Jesus gave me this talent to use computers well enough to serve the church. I am not as techy as some, but I can do this. I like being able to be a part of helping others worship.

FIRM FOUNDATION

Start 2020 by deepening your faith, growing in your knowledge of the Bible and learning how the story of Jesus weaves through the Old Testament.

Mondays beginning January 20 for 6-8 weeks @ 7:00 p.m.

Sign up at the Information Desk to participate or call 262-3016.



FAMILY FUN NIGHT

~ SATURDAY, JANUARY 25 ~

6:00 PM - 8:00 PM

HARBOR ROOM

6:00 PM MEAL SERVED (it's free!)

**7:00 PM ENTERTAINMENT BY
LUKE WINGER**
entertainer/juggler/speaker

**Beat the winter blues and bring the whole
family for a night of fun!**



VBS

Announcing
Vacation
Bible
School!

Mark your summer calendars
for June 8 - 12, 2020!

Stay tuned for what the
theme is, for more details,
and sign-up information!

OFFERING ENVELOPES

If you used offering envelopes in 2019 your 2020 envelopes are ready to pick up in the lobby. If you haven't had offering envelopes in the past and wish to use them, they are available in the lobby as well. The Deacons strongly encourage the use of offering envelopes, or tithe by automatic withdrawal (ACH), to ensure accurate record keeping and regular giving.

FIRST WEDNESDAY PRAYER & WORSHIP

First Wednesday Prayer & Worship will be Wednesday, January 8 (due to the New Year's holiday) at 6:30 p.m. in the Sanctuary. Come at 6:30 p.m. to reconnect and refocus on Jesus in the new year, and pray for our church family, community and world.

ELDER & DEACON INSTALLATION

In accordance with the Constitution of the Reformed Church in America, unless there are reasonable spiritual objections presented to the Board of Elders, Darrell Todd will be ordained as an Elder and Cedric Winterboer will be installed as an Elder, and Derek Bailey and Levi Morris will be ordained as Deacons on January 5 as they were elected at the Congregational Celebration on December 8.

CELEBRATING WITH

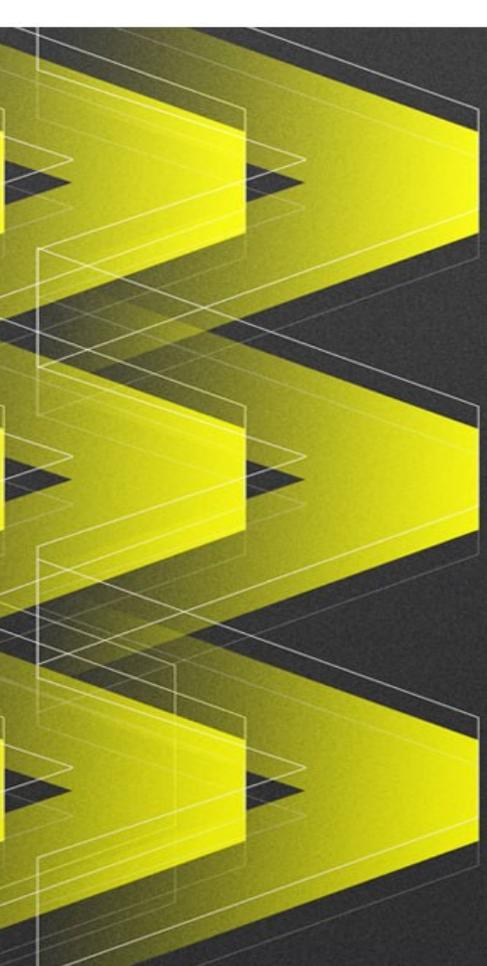
- Bonnie Lindahl and children, Lillianna, Madison and Gunner, on their Baptisms on December 15.

CONCERNS FOR

- Bryan Christoffer had knee surgery on December 9.
- Darrell Todd had back surgery on December 10.
- Grace Gilderhus had a cyst removed from her thyroid and vocal cord on December 31.

CONDOLENCES TO

- Valerie & Bill Tulip on the passing of Valerie's mother, Elaine Crew of Spencer, from time to eternity on November 22.
- Carol & Lee Seaman and Chad & Kristy Seaman and family on the passing of Carol's mother/Chad's grandmother, Phyllis Schott of Spencer, from time to eternity on November 26.
- Ivan & Dawn Crane and family on the passing of Ivan's father, Carl Crane of Spencer, from time to eternity on November 26.
- Karen & Pete Marsing on the passing of Karen's mother, Marylyn McMahan from Wapato, WA, from time to eternity on December 27.



PRAY WITHOUT CEASING BECAUSE SATAN IS PREYING WITHOUT CEASING.

TOBY MAC

CONSISTORY NEWS

The regular meeting of the Hope Reformed Church Deacons met at 7:00 p.m. in the lobby on Thursday, December 12, 2019. Present: John Haak, Jason Warren, Bob Graham, Kyle Mechler, Craig Van Drunen, and Pastor Jay Van Gelder. Absent: Chris Swanson

DEACONS MEETING

- Jay opened the meeting in prayer.
- There was discussion about the air conditioning unit getting replaced from the hailstorm this spring and Josh is getting prices on new gutters and fascia.
- **MMSC** to transfer a line item figure from Capital Campaign to Undesignated Capital Improvement
- Jason closed the meeting in prayer.

The regular meeting of the Hope Reformed Church Elders met at 7:00 p.m. in the pastor's study on Thursday, December 19, 2019. Present: Dean Mechler, Gary Zeutenhorst, Brad Olson, Kurt Weeks, Doug Siepkes, and Pastor Russell Muilenburg. Absent: Bryan Christoffer

ELDERS MEETING

- Pastor Russell read from Luke 1: 67-75 and led the discussion on the scripture passage. He closed the discussion with prayer.
- The constitutional question was asked and answered in the negative.
- **MMSC** the baptism request for Quinn Christoffel, daughter of Ryan and Marlee Christoffel.
- Congregational concerns were discussed.
- Closed the meeting in prayer.

HOPE CHURCH

BRING JOY. EXPERIENCE JOY.

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www.spencerhope.com

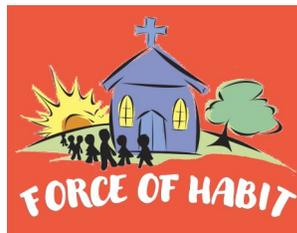
WORSHIP

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

First Wednesday Prayer & Worship
Wednesday, January 8
6:30 p.m.

Sunday School: 9:45 - 10:40 a.m.
Ages 3 years old through Adult

schedule & sermons



Force of Habit

- January 5 *The Habit of Meeting Together*
Hebrews 10:19-25
- January 12 *Draw Near to God*
Hebrews 10:22
- January 19 *The Hope We Profess*
Hebrew 10:23
- January 26 *Spur One Another On*
Hebrews 10:24

Hope Church Staff:

Russell Muilenburg, *Lead Pastor*; Jay Van Gelder, *Pastor of Student Ministries*; Craig Cannon, *Worship/Music*; Josh Hamrick, *Facilities*; Trent Hansen, *Youth Ministries Asst./Communications*; Beth Muilenburg, *Congregational Care*; Lori Swanson, *Office Administrator*