



in touch with Hope

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF HOPE CHURCH, SPENCER, IOWA

October, 2020

by Pastor Russell Muilenburg

The Solas

Our church's full name is Hope Reformed Church. If you have taken a Starting Point class with me, you know that I like to talk about our first name, our last name, and our middle name. That is to say, "Church" is our last name, and it says perhaps the most important thing about us. Just like my last name was handed down to me from my father and grandfather and identifies me as a part of that family, "Church" tells us that we belong to Jesus and we are a part of His family.

"Hope" is our first name. "Hope" identifies the personality and characteristics of our local congregation. Just like my first name helps to distinguish me from my brother and my sister; the first name of our congregation helps to set us apart from other local fellowships; even while we are all still part of the larger family of Christ.

"Reformed", then, is our middle name. When I meet someone for the first time, we usually exchange first and last names; but middle names rarely come up. It is only later, after I've gotten to know someone better, that we might discuss our middle names. For example, my middle name is "Jay." Not everybody knows that. It's not something I'm embarrassed by. It's a perfectly good name. But, I don't reference it that often.

In the same way, when people are getting to know our congregation, I want the emphasis to be on our first and last names. I want them to know that we belong to Jesus, and I want them to know the unique character and personality of our particular body of believers. It's only later that our middle name will come up.

That's not to say that our middle name is unimportant. It says something about our denominational affiliation. We are a member congregation of the Reformed Church in America. More importantly, the word "Reformed" connects us to a wider stream of Christianity with a deep and vital history and theology.

The word "Reformed" connects us to a period of history when Christianity was beset by superstitious practices and superficial understanding. Over the course of many centuries, certain key Christian teachings had been forgotten or neglected, especially those around the issue of salvation. In the midst of this decline, the Reformation began. Key Reformers like Martin Luther and John Calvin attempted first to reform the Catholic church from within and then—when that proved too controversial—led a new expression of Christianity known as "Protestantism."

Key to this new movement was clarity about how we are saved. Over time, the key beliefs were summarized in 5 Latin phrases all using the word "*sola*", which means "alone." These "5 Pillars of the Reformation" are: "We are saved by grace alone (*sola gratis*) through faith alone (*sola fide*) in Christ alone (*sola Christus*) according to scripture alone (*sola scriptura*) so that God alone receives the glory (*sola deo gloria*)."

The Reformation began in October, 1517. It seemed fitting, then, to use this October to reflect on our Reformed heritage. The next five Sundays we will be looking at these foundational doctrines of the Reformation to see why they were important then, and why they still matter today. "Reformed" may be our middle name, but it still says something significant about us.

On Sunday, October 4, we will have the privilege and opportunity to safely participate at the Lord's Table for Communion at both worship services. Those who watch the 10:45 a.m. online service may participate in Communion at home and will want to have your Communion elements (juice, crackers/bread, etc.) on hand during the service.



Pastor Jay Van Gelder YOUTH MINISTRY NEWS



6TH, 7TH, 8TH GRADE YOUTH GROUP

We kicked off middle school youth group on September 23 and had 47 youth attend in person and 3 via Zoom. On September 30 we will start a 4-week series on friendship called *Squad Up*. Everyone wants a squad — a community of people that cares for us, helps and supports us, and gives us a place to belong. In short, we all want to be part of a community that feels like family. That kind of community isn't easy to come by, but it's exactly what Jesus had in mind for His followers when the Church first began. In this series, we'll discover why the word "Church" means something much bigger than a building, we'll learn what life was like for some of the earliest Christians, and we'll explore four big ideas that mean as much for us today as they did to the Jesus-followers who lived nearly 2,000 years ago.

SR. HIGH YOUTH GROUP



We had our senior high youth group kick-off on September 20 with 29 students attend in person and 5 via Zoom. On September 27 we began a 4-week series, *Together*. In our culture today, there is more division than there is unity. Some division is trivial. Some is life-changing. And yet, the Gospel speaks a profound truth: in Christ, we are united. We are together. Do your students know the difference between friendship and fellowship? Are your students unified with one another, regardless of their differences, by their common love for Christ? Is your youth ministry a safe place where students feel valued and cared for? Do your students lead out into culture, as one, motivated by the mission of advancing the Gospel?

YOUTH AUCTION

Our annual youth fundraising auction is temporarily on hold for this fall. We are looking at the possibility of doing something early next year and how to do it safely for everyone to enjoy. Stay tuned!



MONDAY NIGHT MEN'S BIBLE STUDY

The Monday night Men's Bible Study meets at 8:00 p.m. on Monday evenings in the Lobby. They are beginning a new 12-week video study on 1st Corinthians through RightNow Media on October 5. This would be a great time to join the group! Please contact Todd Brockshus at 260-8951 with any questions.

WEDNESDAY MORNING WOMEN'S BIBLE STUDY

The Wednesday morning Women's Bible Study resumes October 7 at 9:30 a.m. in the Well.



HUNT 'N' TREAT



- Drive through the Hope Church parking lot to get your BINGO card.
- Go "Hunt 'N' Treat" at the "official stops" listed on your BINGO card for candy and fun!
- Get a "BINGO" and drive back through Hope Church parking lot for a prize!

**We are needing "official stops" for our Hunt 'n' Treat this year!
Decorate your garage, porch or car trunk in your driveway.
Same rules apply as past years, and masks allowed but not scary.**

**Candy will be equally dispersed to all "official stops" and
distributed to kids from there.**

Sign up at the Information Desk by October 21.

**Lots of candy is needed to hand out at this community outreach event
and your generosity is much appreciated! Bags of candy may be
placed in the large container in the lobby.**

FAMILY SUNDAY SCHOOL



AXIS Family Sunday School has been quite the success with families enjoying this dynamic & exciting way to learn about God. Feel like you missed out? We are offering Family Sunday School for a second 6-week session beginning November 1 through December 13 (No Sunday School on November 29). Here's your chance to join the fun! Sign up will be October 11 through October 25 online [here](#). If you attended the first 6 weeks, you do not have to register online again; However, you will need to let Sarah know you're participating.

MOPS (Mothers of Preschoolers)

An invitation poster for MOPS (Mothers of Preschoolers) in Spencer. The top section has a yellow background with the text 'YOU'RE INVITED!' in white. Below that, the words 'DECIDE TO RISE' are written in large, blue, serif letters, with a white dove in flight behind them. A quote from Psalm 139:14 is written in small text: 'I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well.' The bottom section has a white background with a large red 'M' logo. To the right of the logo is the text '2020-2021 SCHEDULE THE 3RD TUESDAY AT 7:00 P.M.' followed by a list of dates: 'TUESDAY, OCT. 20', 'TUESDAY, NOV. 17', 'TUESDAY, DEC. 15', 'TUESDAY, JAN. 19', 'TUESDAY, FEB. 16', 'TUESDAY, MAR. 16', 'TUESDAY, APR. 20', and 'TUESDAY, MAY 18'. Below the dates, it says 'CHILD CARE IS NOT PROVIDED AT THIS TIME.' At the bottom, it says 'MORE INFO & REGISTER AT FACEBOOK.COM/@MOPSOFSPENCER'.



Beth Muilenburg
DISCIPLESHIP & CARE

He Giveth More Grace

But He giveth more grace. James 4:6

He giveth more grace when the burdens grow greater,
He sendeth more strength when the labors increase;
To added afflictions He addeth His mercy,
To multiplied trials, His multiplied peace

When we have exhausted our store of endurance,
When our strength has failed ere the day is half done,
When we reach the end of our hoarded resources,
Our Father's full giving is only begun.

Fear not that thy need shall exceed His provision,
Our God ever yearns His resources to share;
Lean hard on the arm everlasting, availing—
The Father both thee and thy load will upbear.

His love has no limits, His grace has no measure,
His power no boundary known unto men;
For, out of His infinite riches in Jesus,
He giveth, and giveth, and giveth again.

A. J. Flint

Concerns for:

- Tami Gilderhus was in the hospital with COVID pneumonia. She has since returned home.
- Bill Van Wattering was in the hospital with COVID pneumonia. He has since returned home.
- Mike Schmillen had evaluations done at the Mayo Clinic for face pain.
- Lexi Keefer was involved in a car accident on September 19 and sustained a concussion, whiplash, and multiple sprains.
- Dean Mechler had shoulder surgery on September 30.
- Darlene Oetken begins chemotherapy soon for her recently diagnosed Hodgkin's and Non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma.

Condolences to:

- Paul & Julie Kassel on the passing of Paul's mother, Janice Kassel of Emmetsburg, from time to eternity on September 19.
- Laura & Tom Wakefield on the passing of Laura's mother, Gene Raak of Hospers, from time to eternity on September 24.

HOPE CHURCH ONLINE STORE

Last Call! If you wish to purchase Hope Church apparel and merchandise our online store, hopechurch.itemorder.com, closes on October 13. There are a variety of options and something for all ages. 10% of all sales will go towards children, youth, and outreach ministries.

Consistory News

The regular meeting of the Hope Reformed Consistory met at 7:00 p.m. in the Harbor. Present: Deacons Derek Bailey, John Haak, Bob Graham, Levi Morris, Craig Van Drunen and Kyle Mechler. Elders Dean Mechler, Kurt Weeks, Darrell Todd, Cedric Winterboer and Gary Zeutenhorst. Pastors Russell Muilenburg and Jay Van Gelder. Absent: Elder Brad Olsen. Pastor Russell led the devotional time by reading from 2 Thessalonian 2:13-17 and closed with prayer.

ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION AND DECISION

- **MMSC** to approve the August 13 and August 19 minutes.
- **MMSC** to approve August financials as presented by the Deacons.
- Pastor Russell presented a grant program from the Northwest Iowa Care Connections Mental Health and Disability Services. It is money, \$600,000.00, from the Cares Act for six counties in the region to support providers who serve individuals with mental health and disabilities to assist them in serving those persons. After some discussion it was decided that we will not participate in this program.
- Pastor Russell opened discussion regarding the decision that needs to be made as to how to proceed on the PPP Loan that was applied for and received for \$70,000.00. Options are to return the whole amount, apply for the loan amount to be forgiven, or keep it and pay it back at 1% interest.
- **MMSC** to keep the money and pay it back at 1% interest.
- **MMSC** to apply 13% of the \$70,000.00 to missions and the remainder to the loan repayment of the PPP. There was one member who abstained from the vote.
- Pastor Russell brought up the issue of Coronavirus precautions beginning September 20 when we start with both services in the church.
- **MMSC** that at 1st Service masks are required throughout the entire service even if social distancing is possible, and at 2nd service masks are optional. Cedric Winterboer will make an announcement at the September 13 Sunday services regarding this decision. It will also be sent out in an email and on our Facebook page.
- Pastor Russell shared with the Consistory the names of the persons who had volunteered to be a part of the RCA Future Study Group: Cedric Winterboer, Dave Johnson, Terry Hill, Jim Hill, Karmen Brown, Arvin Druvenga, Eric Van Der Heide and Gordon Schmidt.
- **MMSC** to accept the volunteers for the RCA Future Study Group.
- Pastor Russell closed this portion of the meeting with prayer.

ELDERS MEETING

- The constitutional question was asked and answered in the negative.
- Discussed Communion and the decision was made to have Communion on October 4.
- **MMSC** to approve Linda Bryan's Request of Transfer from Dickens United Methodist Church.
- Pastor Russell will be starting another Starting Point class on October 4 and 11.
- Congregational concerns were discussed.
- The meeting was closed with prayer.

DEACONS MEETING

- John opened the meeting with prayer.
- Covered financials.
- Considered options for doing church offering upon return to regular worship.
- Looked at snowplow and concrete repair options.
- Discussed the Youth Auction this fall.
- Levi closed the meeting with prayer.



HOPE CHURCH

BRING JOY. EXPERIENCE JOY.

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WORSHIP SERVICES

Sundays

8:30 a.m. (masks required)
10:45 a.m. (masks optional)
Sanctuary

10:45 a.m.
Live-streamed online

SUNDAY SCHOOL

9:45 a.m. - 10:40 a.m.
Family Sunday School—Harbor
Adults—Well

SERMONS



The 5 Solas of the Reformation

- October 4 ***Sola Gratia***: *Saved by Grace Alone*
Ephesians 2:1-10
- October 11 ***Sola Fide***: *Through Faith Alone*
Galatians 3:1-14
- October 18 ***Solus Christus***: *In Christ Alone*
Romans 5
- October 25 ***Sola Scriptura***: *According to Scripture Alone*
2 Timothy 3:16-17

HOPE CHURCH STAFF:

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