



# IN TOUCH WITH HOPE

## MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF HOPE CHURCH, SPENCER, IOWA

NOVEMBER, 2020

BY PASTOR RUSSELL MUILENBURG

### PRAY ESPECIALLY FOR RULERS

(Note: this article is the same article I wrote 4 years ago prior to the last Presidential election. I believe it's just as relevant today as it was then.)

The Election is upon us. In just a few days we will have the opportunity to exercise our freedom as citizens of a democracy by going to the voting booth and making a choice with regard to the President, Senate, House of Representatives, and many local offices as well.

Elections can fill us with cynicism. Elections often highlight the divisions we have in our country in terms of priorities, goals, and strategies for getting there. Campaign rhetoric often devolves into name calling and rumor mongering. Often, our strongest reaction to election season is a desire for it to be over.

But, we are blessed to live in a country where we have a voice in the way our nation is governed. We can vote, we can campaign on behalf of candidates, we can run for office ourselves. And, perhaps most importantly, we can pray. 1 Timothy 2:1-2 says:

"I urge, then, first of all, that petitions, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for all people—<sup>2</sup>for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness."

Paul wrote these words at a time when Nero was Emperor of the Roman Empire. Nero was not a good man. He had his own mother and two of his wives killed. When a fire destroyed much of Rome and threatened his reign, he laid the blame on Christians and had a number of them executed in horrible and public ways. Some historians believe him to be the most criminally insane ruler to ever lead a major world power. And yet, Paul urged Timothy to pray for Nero. If the early Christians could pray for leaders like that, we can certainly pray for the candidates being offered to us this year. So, what should we pray? I have five suggestions:

**1. Pray that our leaders would come to salvation.** The next two verses in 1 Timothy say: <sup>3</sup>This is good, and pleases God our Savior, <sup>4</sup>who wants all people to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth." (1 Timothy 2:3-4) As Christians, our first priority should always be that others know and love Jesus. So pray that if leaders do not know Him, that they will come to know Him. And if they do, pray that they will grow ever deeper in their relationship with Him.

**2. Pray for the health and safety of our leaders.** In Ezra 6:10 the non-believing King Darius asks the faithful people of Jerusalem to pray for the well-being of the king and his sons. It is appropriate to pray that God would protect the lives of those in leadership.

**3. Pray that our leaders would execute justice.** 1 Peter 2:14 says one of the chief responsibilities of government is "to punish those who do wrong and to commend those who do right." Pray that our leaders would embrace that responsibility and, especially, that they would have a clear understanding of what is wrong and what is right.

**4. Pray that our leaders will govern with wisdom for the welfare of all.** Jeremiah 29:7 reminds us to seek the peace and prosperity of the city in which we live, because if it prospers we will prosper. Pray that our leaders will govern in a way that allows us to live peaceful and quiet lives.

**5. Pray that God will turn the hearts of our leaders where He pleases.** Proverbs 21:1 reminds us that no matter who holds earthly positions of authority, they are still under the sovereign control of the almighty God. In the same way, Psalm 2 tells us that God laughs at those earthly rulers who think they can defy Him.

So, no matter how contentious or strange the election gets, Christians must not lose sight of the bigger picture: God is still enthroned in heaven, and His will shall be done on earth. It is our privilege to come before Him and pray for our leaders and our nation, and it is a task we should take up with all earnestness.

Charles Spurgeon once said: "Prayer is the slender nerve that moves the omnipotent muscle of God." On Election Day, the sanctuary will be open for prayer. We urge you to stop by and spend some time praying to our Sovereign God for the candidates, for the election, and for our nation. This is good, and pleases God our Savior.



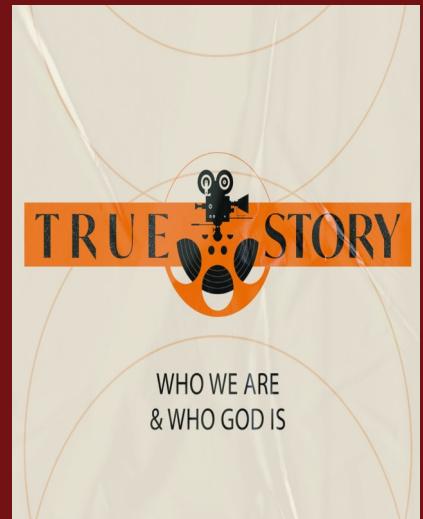
## PASTOR JAY VAN GELDER YOUTH NEWS



### 6TH, 7TH, 8TH GRADE YOUTH GROUP

Many of our favorite movies, from *Toy Story* to *Moana*, tell the stories of characters who are on a journey to discover who they are and what they were created to do. The stories in Scripture are like this too, but with one big difference: in the Bible, humans aren't the main characters — God is.

In this series, we are exploring the stories of people like Cain and Abel, Elijah, Naomi, Ruth, Esther, and some of the earliest Jesus-followers in order to see that who we are can best be understood in the context of who God is. When we discover who our Creator is, we can better understand who we were created to be. Because of who God is, we can trust how God has made us, we can do difficult things, we can embrace the unknown, and we can take risks for others.



### SR. HIGH YOUTH GROUP

If your faith were a muscle, how flexible would it be? Could it stretch to your knees? Your shins? Your toes? Or are you not sure you even have any faith to stretch in the first place? Just like our bodies, if we want a faith that is strong, growing, and capable of carrying us through difficult challenges, we are going to need to stretch it. It might be fun. It might be challenging. But it will definitely be worthwhile.

In this series, we're discovering four ways we can stretch our faith from Paul, the author of the book of Romans and a man whose life was completely transformed by Jesus. Thanks to Paul's words, we know we can stretch our faith by making a commitment, by starting something new, and by letting something go. We can even stretch our faith when we feel like we've failed.



**SARAH KERNS  
CHILDREN & FAMILY NEWS**

**HUNT N' TREAT**

~~TRUNK~~ **HUNT** 'N' **TREAT**  
SATURDAY, OCTOBER 31  
5 - 8 PM

- 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!

The Official Stops are full, the volunteers are ready, and it's time to enjoy the hunt for treats and fun! One of our favorite events each year is Trunk or Treat. We are disappointed that we are unable to safely gather in our parking lot this year, but hope this alternative event for your family will bring you joy!

**FAMILY SUNDAY SCHOOL**

ALL KIDS -  
3 YEARS OLD  
THROUGH  
12TH GRADE  
ATTEND WITH THEIR  
FAMILIES!

**SUNDAYS  
9:45 AM  
NOV. 1 - DEC 13  
(NO SUNDAY SCHOOL  
11/29)**

**FAMILY STYLE  
SUNDAY SCHOOL  
SESSION 2**

Here's your chance to join the fun! If you attended the first 6 weeks, you do not have to register online again; However, you will need to let Sarah Kerns know you're participating.

Harbor -1st grade through 12th grade (and parents)  
Harbor Basement - Ages 3 through Kindergarten (and parents)  
Nursery - Birth through 2 years old

You do not want to miss out on this unique and exciting opportunity!

**SIGN UP AT:**  
<https://hopechurchspencer.breezechms.com/form/ccf6f263>  
OR CALL SARAH KERNS AT 262-3016

FUN WHILE DISTANCING  
MASKS WHEN NOT ABLE  
ENTERTAINMENT  
BIBLE SKILLS  
GAMES  
SNACKS

AXIS Family Sunday School has been so much fun this fall with families enjoying an interactive way to learn about God! Feel like you missed out? We are offering it again for a second 6-week session beginning Sunday, November 1. It's not too late to sign up [here](#)! If you attended the first 6 weeks, you do not have to register online again; However, you will need to let Sarah Kerns know you're participating.

**ELECTION PRAYER VIGIL**

The sanctuary will be open for prayer from 6:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. on Tuesday, November 3. Everyone is invited to come on as their schedules allow and pray for the election and our nation. Prayer guides will be available.

**2021 ELDER & DEACON NOMINATIONS**

All confessing members of Hope Church are reminded that your Elder & Deacon nomination papers for 2021 are due to the office by Sunday, November 8.

## BETH MUILENBURG DISCIPLESHIP & CARE

### 30 DAYS OF PSALMS OF PRAISE

To prepare our hearts for Thanksgiving, read a psalm of thanksgiving every day of November. May we be overwhelmed with the goodness and grace of our God!

November 1: Psalm 100  
November 2: Psalm 34  
November 3: Psalm 30  
November 4: Psalm 62  
November 5: Psalm 46  
November 6: Psalm 136  
November 7: Psalm 37  
November 8: Psalm 42  
November 9: Psalm 63  
November 10: Psalm 111  
November 11: Psalm 118  
November 12: Psalm 27  
November 13: Psalm 90  
November 14: Psalm 116  
November 15: Psalm 19  
November 16: Psalm 44  
November 17: Psalm 104  
November 18: Psalm 8  
November 19: Psalm 103  
November 20: Psalm 23  
November 21: Psalm 30  
November 22: Psalm 91  
November 23: Psalm 107  
November 24: Psalm 121  
November 25: Psalm 25  
November 26: Psalm 105  
November 27: Psalm 106  
November 28: Psalm 95  
November 29: Psalm 16  
November 30: Psalm 150

### CELEBRATING WITH

- Chris Anderson and Nicole Lauck who were united in marriage on October 3.
- Malin Lovin, daughter of Lucas & Molly Lovin, on her baptism October 11.

### CONCERNS FOR

- Dick Seeley was hospitalized with pneumonia and blood clots in his lungs and recently diagnosed with colon cancer.
- Kent Kilpatrick is experiencing internal bleeding concerns requiring infusions and testing.



**MONDAYS**  
**NOVEMBER 2 - DECEMBER 7**  
**7:00 - 8:30 p.m.**  
**IN THE HARBOR**

Done in a lecture format, we will be learning more about the Bible and making the connection between the New Testament and the Divine Author.

Contact the church office at 262-3016 to sign up.



## **CONSISTORY NEWS**

The regular meeting of the Hope Reformed Consistory met at 7:00 p.m. in the Well on Thursday, October 8. Present: Deacons Derek Bailey, John Haak, Kyle Mechler, Bob Graham, and Levi Morris. Elders Dean Mechler, Cedric Winterboer, Darrell Todd, Kurt Weeks, and Gary Zeutenhorst. Pastors Russell Muilenburg and Jay Van Gelder. Absent: Deacon Craig Van Drunen and Elder Brad Olson. Pastor Russell led devotions by reading 2 Chronicles 20:12 and closed with prayer.

### **ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION AND DECISION**

- **MMSC** to approve the September 10, 2020 minutes.
- **MMSC** to approve the September financials as presented by the Deacons.
- Pastor Russell opened up the discussion on feedback on programming since September 20. The Elders shared that they had received positive feedback about the option of masks and masks optional in the two services. The attendance for both services combined for the last two weeks of September were over 220 for each week. An increase in live-stream viewing has increased as well. Pastor Russell stated that Sarah has seen consistent attendance at the preschool and grade school family Sunday school. Pastor Russell reported that at this point we have not had any children in the nursery. They will continue to monitor this. Pastor Jay indicated that they have 8 new middle school youth attending youth group. They have 40 high schoolers and 27 middle schoolers this year.
- Pastor Russell discussed Thanksgiving service and indicated that we will do a traditional service in place of having members meet in the Harbor around tables as we have done in the past.
- Pastor Russell discussed the Candlelight service held on December 24. Traditionally we had significant numbers at 5:00 and 7:00 p.m. and a smaller number at 11:00 p.m. He suggested that we possibly add some afternoon services 1:00...3:00...5:00...7:00 and then not have the 11:00 service. Discussed having people make reservations for particular services to help with planning and to assist in knowing how many services we would need. No decisions were made at this time.
- Bob Graham reported on a 2-day workshop that he and Deb Wittrock attended related to a program sponsored by the Reformed and Christian Reformed denominations to work with congregations to increase more of an intergenerational ministry approach. The goal is to include youth in a more active role in the church. There are 6 core themes that they will be working with to incorporate in the ministries of the church.
- Derek Bailey reported that Staff Management will be meeting with Pastor Russell and staff to look at setting more clear job expectations as well as doing the normal staff performance reviews.
- Pastor Russell discussed the nominations process for the upcoming Congregational Meeting. Nominations will be handed out starting this Sunday and the rest that aren't picked up will be sent out in the mail. The Nominations Committee is Gary Zeutenhorst, Brad Olson, John Haak, and Craig Van Drunen and will meet on November 8 when the nominations are due. The Congregational Meeting will be Sunday, December 13.
- Pastor Russell closed this portion of the meeting with prayer.

### **ELDERS MEETING**

- Constitutional question was asked and answered in the negative.
- Anna Coffin transfer membership to First Presbyterian Church in Spirit Lake, IA.
- Congregational concerns were discussed.
- The meeting was closed in prayer.

### **DEACONS MEETING**

- John opened the meeting with prayer.
- We covered the financials.
- Josh inquired about having the exterior doors painted, and we accepted the bid proposed.
- A budget meeting was set for November.
- The Youth Auction has been postponed.
- Jay closed the meeting with prayer.

**GRATITUDE PRODUCES  
DEEP, ABIDING JOY  
BECAUSE WE KNOW THAT  
GOD IS WORKING IN US,  
EVEN THROUGH  
DIFFICULTIES.**

**CHARLES STANLEY**





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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*

*Oct. 25 - Nov. 1*

**Sorry:  
A Series on  
Forgiveness**

*Nov. 8 - 22*



## HOPE CHURCH STAFF:

Russell Muilenburg, *Lead Pastor*

Jay Van Gelder, *Pastor of Student Ministries*

Craig Cannon, *Worship/Music*

Josh Hamrick, *Facilities*

Trenten Hansen, *Youth Assistant/Communications*

Sarah Kerns, *Children/Families*

Beth Muilenburg, *Congregational Care*

Lori Swanson, *Office Administrator*

