

in touch with Hope

monthly newsletter of Hope Church
Spencer, Iowa

January, 2021

By Youth Pastor Jay Van Gelder

Happy New Year

As we were sitting in a staff meeting at the beginning of December, we started talking about the idea of what is the reason for the season of Christmas. As we started talking, we discussed the idea of “waiting.” As we look back before the very first Christmas ever happened, we see a world of people (specifically the Israelites) who were living their lives waiting for the Messiah to come and reign over them as their earthly mighty king. And as they waited, the days passed by, years passed by, and generations came and went in the hope that the Messiah the Mighty King would come.

Then one day in the little town of Bethlehem the Messiah Jesus Christ was born. But it was different than anyone could have expected. A baby born of a virgin, not a King born of royalty. A small helpless infant, not a trained and groomed warrior. I am sure people wondered, “A baby couldn’t be the answer to our waiting. Could it? How could this tiny baby be the one that is to be the Savior of the world?” The question many had was most likely, “Was this what we have been waiting for?”

As we prepare for a new year, we too are “waiting” as well, just like they were such a long time ago. In fact, we are waiting for the exact same Hope they were waiting for: For the Messiah to return and bring hope, peace, and love to our world.

If you have accepted Jesus Christ as your personal Lord and Savior, your waiting is over because you know and believe in the ending of the story. Christ came into this world as a baby and then went to the cross as a man to pay for our sins. And now, our waiting has turned into waiting for that glorious day when He returns and wipes every tear from each person’s eye. There will be no more sadness, no more pain, and no more hurt because the old has passed away and the new has come. Christ is born, and Christ is coming back again! And, that is the best news as we begin a new year. Happy New Year!



PREACH TO YOURSELF

SERMON SERIES
JANUARY 3 - FEBRUARY 14

Nobody talks to you more than you; so what you say to yourself matters. The messages you communicate to yourself shape your view of God, life, and the world. This sermon series will look at Bible passages that help us preach the good news of the Bible to ourselves when we are tempted to lose sight of God.



Trenten Hansen Youth Assistant

Oh, how 2020 was a memorable year! Youth ministry looked different for the year, but Jay and I are thankful we were able to continue to find creative ways of doing ministry.

We started something new in the months of November and December for the Sr. High youth where the Sr. High students met in small group teams. These teams were Administration, Social Media, Drama, Hands & Feet, and Tech & Sound. The students got to choose to participate in one of these five teams that they felt best fit their interests. These teams have empowered the students to use their God-given skills, talents, and personalities to serve our youth group in making it the best experience possible. It's been great to see students get excited about contributing to the youth program. These teams have been working well and we plan to have this continue in the future.

One thing we hope for and look forward to in 2021 is being able to participate in youth gatherings again, such as spiritual retreats and work project trips. We continue to pray for these opportunities as they approach closer. With that said, listed to the left are some dates to mark on your calendar.



The Hands & Feet Team serving at The Market.

6th, 7th, 8th Grade

Parent meeting

When: Wednesday, January 13 at 6:30P.M
(during youth group time)



Spiritual Retreat: Magnify

When: April 9-11

Registration begins January 4 and closes February 25.

Immerse/Power Connection

When: Jun 21-Jun 27

Registration begins January 4 and closes February 1



Sr. High

Spiritual Retreat: Ignite

When: March 12-14

Registration to be determined

Youth Group Return Dates

6th, 7th, 8th Grade:

Wednesday, January 13 from 6:30 - 8:00 p.m.

**Parent Meeting also on this date and time.

Sr. High:

Sunday, January 17 from 7:00 - 8:30 p.m.

Welcome January!

**If anyone is in Christ,
he is a new creation;
old things have passed away;
behold, all things have become new.**

2 Corinthians 5:17

Sarah Kerns
Children & Family Ministry News



As we close 2020 and dive, skip, jump, or maybe faceplant into 2021, I am conflicted in my feelings.

The changing of the calendar year has always held a hopeful excitement for me. Even if I didn't actually make a tangible resolution, I've always felt deep down a renewal of energy and perspective. This year seems different...

Imagine that! I wanted to fill this January newsletter with an abundance of activities and "new beginnings" for our Children & Family Ministries. Unfortunately, I must be patient. ← Not my favorite thing! As 2021 begins, what I *can* do is promise that I am praying and seeking God's vision for this ministry in the New Year. I am keeping my heart and mind open to the work He wants us to do this year.

Soon, the kids will return to school, routines (ish) will be re-established, and a temporary normal will commence once again. As was done in 2020, I will continue to be creative and out-of-the-box coming up with ways that we can learn about, connect with, and share the news of Jesus Christ. Hopefully, we will be able to be physically together more often as the months progress.

I would encourage you to watch for opportunities for kids and families of all shapes and sizes coming soon! Sunday school planning is in the works. Nursery will re-open soon. Children's Church options are being considered (Woo Hoo! Right, parents?!). And, many other ideas, strategies, and game plans are being mapped out. Communications and announcements can be found on Hope Kids Facebook page, monthly newsletters, weekly bulletins, and church wide/parent specific emails. If you do not have access to these, please contact Lori in the church office to get you set up!

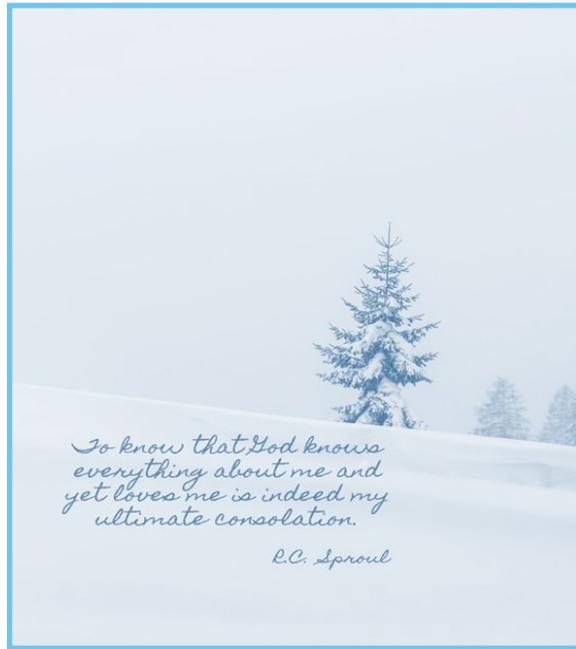
In the meantime, if you could fill out this survey on what you would like to see in the upcoming year and how we can support you, I would greatly appreciate it! This will help me identify needs, prioritize opportunities, and assist in the direction of the ministry and events. For taking your time to fill this out, your name will be entered in a drawing for a \$25 gift card to HyVee.

<https://hopechurchspencer.breezechms.com/form/9a4f05>

Happy New Year to all our Hope Kids and families! I miss you greatly, I think of you often, and I am praying to see you soon! Know that God loves you and is with us every step of the way!

Beth Muilenburg Discipleship and Care

As we start 2021, instead of making a list of everything that you would like to be different, take a moment to rest in the goodness and grace of God's love for you. Yes, God does not want you to stay stuck in your old nature. He promises to make us a new creation. Yet, trust His timing and His Spirit in changing your heart to be more like His. Instead of comparing yourself to the world's ideas of perfection, know that you have a Heavenly Father who loves you with a love that will never end. Then, ask Him to move in your life and give you the willingness of heart and the obedience of will to follow. May God bless you this



Concerns for

- LaVern (Joe) Hamrick was admitted to the Spencer Hospital on December 7 for Covid.
- Keith Swancutt suffered a heart attack and was hospitalized in Sioux Falls, and he is continuing physical and occupational therapy there.
- Paul VandeBerg has a tumor on his right kidney and is doctoring to determine needs and direction.

Condolences to

- Dave & Amona Brink on the passing of Dave's mother, Dorothy Zuercher of Bella Vista, AR from time to eternity on December 5.
- Angie & John Hameister and daughter on the passing of Angie's father, Eugene Johnson of Spencer, from time to eternity on December 6.
- The family of Mildred Klett on her passing from time to eternity on December 13.
- Michael & Mandy Seeley, Michelle & Dustin Reynolds and family, and Laura & Mitch Wiemers on the passing of Michael, Michelle & Laura's father, Dick Seeley, from time to eternity on December 15.
- Lyle & Katrina Howard and family on the passing of Lyle's father, Leonard Howard of Estherville, from time to eternity on December 16.



**RESUMING
MONDAY
JANUARY 18
7:00 - 8:30 p.m.**

Hey Solid Rockers: We will be picking up where we left off in November and continue learning more about the Bible and making the connection between the New Testament and the Divine Author.

Consistory News

The regular meeting of the Hope Reformed Consistory met at 7:00 in the Well. Present: Deacons Derek Bailey, Bob Graham, John Haak, Kyle Mechler and Craig Van Drunen. Elders Brad Olsen, Darrell Todd, Dean Mechler, Gary Zeutenhorst, Kurt Weeks, and Cedric Winterboer. Pastor Jay Van Gelder. Absent: Deacon Levi Morris and Pastor Russell Muilenburg.

Pastor Jay opened the meeting with prayer. Brad Olsen led devotions by reading from Philippians 4:6-8.

ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION AND DECISION

- **MMSC** to approve the November 12, 2020 minutes.
- **MMSC** to approve the November financials as presented by the Deacons.
- Craig Van Drunen reported that the Staff Management team will be meeting with the church staff to discuss 2021 and to give them their contracts.
- Pastor Jay discussed the need to come back to the decision made in the November Consistory meeting regarding the change to masks required at both services. At that time, it was approved with recommendation to review the policy at the December meeting. **MMS** to continue current policy for the rest of December with masks required for both services. Vote was done by written ballot. Five for the motion, six against the motion, motion defeated. **MMSC** to have 1st service masks required and 2nd service masks optional to be reviewed again at the January 14 Consistory meeting.
- Pastor Jay discussed the format for the Christmas Eve Service. The plan is for 5:00 p.m., 7:00 p.m., and 11:00 p.m. worship services. **MMSC** for masks required at the 5:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m. services and masks optional at the 11:00 p.m. service. The 5:00 p.m. service will be live streamed online and in the Harbor in case of capacity issues. Pastor Jay is planning to put a video out regarding times and expectations for the Christmas Eve Service.
- Pastor Jay reported on some of the ministries at Hope. Sarah has given out 70 Advent packets to families who wanted one. She is planning to start Sunday School in the building again on January 17. Pastor Jay reported that Senior High Youth Group has been meeting in smaller groups of 15 or less, and this has gone over very well. They have seen their numbers increase with this approach. Middle School Youth Group has gone to Zoom meetings and they have seen decrease in numbers since going back to this format.
- Pastor Jay shared that the next two Sundays John Pausley will be preaching. Pastor Jay will be doing the Christmas Eve services. Craig Cannon will be leading the December 27 service with singing Christmas Carols along with some devotional readings.
- Pastor Jay reviewed the items to be addressed at the Congregational Celebration on December 13 in between the two worship services.
- **MMSC** that staff will be receive paid leave of 2 weeks if they contract COVID 19 if they are unable to do their jobs from home.
- This portion of the meeting was closed with prayer.

ELDERS MEETING

- Constitutional questions were asked and answered in the negative.
- Congregational concerns were discussed.
- The meeting was closed with prayer.

DEACONS MEETING

- John Haak opened the meeting in prayer.
- Discussion on how to remind members on ways to give online, text, mail or use the drop box in the lobby.
- Tabled discussion on using surplus savings to pay off the Farmers Bank loan until we see how we end this year financially.
- Discussed changing how we share the offering totals in the weekly bulletin to monthly actuals vs budgeted needs.
- **MMSC** to increase pulpit supply per diem to \$250.
- **MMSC** staff Christmas gift.
- Craig Van Drunen closed the meeting in prayer.

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, Arvin Druvenga and Jim Hill will be installed as Elders and Luke Lovin and Eric Vander Heide will be installed as Deacons next Sunday, January 10 as they were elected at the Congregational Celebration on December 13.



919 Grand Avenue
Spencer, IA 51301
(712)262-3016
www.spencerhope.com

WORSHIP SERVICES

Sundays

8:30 a.m. (masks required)

10:45 a.m. (masks optional)

Sanctuary

10:45 a.m.

Live-streamed online



www.youtube.com/hopechurchspencer

At Your Convenience



Online:

www.spencerhope.com



SMU Channel 3:

(on Sundays at 9:00 a.m. & 7:00 p.m.)

SERMONS

Preach to Yourself

January 3

Take Every Thought Captive

January 10

When the World is Crumbling Around You

January 17

When the Wicked Seem to Prosper

January 24

When the Headlines Make You Cringe

January 31

When You Don't Feel Like Worshipping



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 Manager