

IN TOUCH WITH HOPE

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF HOPE CHURCH

APRIL, 2021

BY PASTOR RUSSELL MUILENBURG

THE CHAMPION

Carman died last month. If you were into Christian Contemporary music in the '80s and '90s you'll know who Carman was. He was a particular kind of showman: spoken word, rap, rock opera, Las Vegas production. There really are no labels that fully capture him. But, he loved Jesus and he made it his mission to share the gospel. One of his best-known songs is called "The Champion."

The song pictures this big arena, filled on one side with saints and angels all wearing white. Moses, David, Elijah, Abraham. They're all there. On the other side are all these sinners and demons wearing black. The great villains of history: Hitler, Napoleon, Pharaoh, Capone. They're all there. In the middle of the arena is a boxing ring. In one corner sits Satan. He is huge and terrible looking. In the other corner sits Jesus. He looks rather small and plain. And, in the middle of the ring is God the Father. He's the referee.

As the fight begins, Satan comes out with a fury. He throws everything he has at Jesus. But, Jesus just covers up and the blows fall off Him. Satan cannot hurt Him. And yet, Jesus does not take a big swing at his opponent. The match goes on and on, and appears to be headed for a draw. But then, in the final round, Jesus comes out and exchanges a look with His Father. This time when Satan comes at Him, He doesn't defend Himself. He just stands there. Satan hits Him-- once, twice, three times. He starts to bleed from His wrists, from His feet, from His head.

The fans dressed in black start to go wild. Those dressed in white look on in stunned horror. Satan is nearly foaming at the mouth now as he winds up to deliver one last, fatal blow. He brings a huge roundhouse punch right to Jesus' ribs. Jesus' side opens up and the blood and the water come flowing out. Jesus falls to the mat, dead.

Satan is ecstatic. The demons are starting to tear down the house. It seems they have won. But then something unusual happens. God the Father, the referee, starts to count, but He counts backwards...

10... 9... 8 ...

Satan doesn't get it. He thinks he has won. But the count goes on...

7... 6... 5...

Satan starts to get nervous. "Hey God, you're counting the wrong way. What's going on?"

4... 3...

Jesus, crumpled on the mat, starts to move. Now, suddenly, it is the demons who are stunned into silence.

2... 1!

Jesus stands back up, and Satan falls over in dismay. The fight is over, but it is Jesus who has won. He is the Champion!

It's an over-the-top kind of song. If you don't believe me, look it up on [Youtube](#). It's a fun seven minutes. But, I love the concept of God counting backwards. The image of the defeated Christ rising off the mat.

What Satan thought was his great achievement turned out to be the signature on his own death warrant. What looked to be the triumph of evil was in fact the triumph of good. That's what we are celebrating this weekend with Easter. Jesus' victory over death and the grave. 1 Corinthians 15:55:

Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death is your sting?

...thanks be to God!

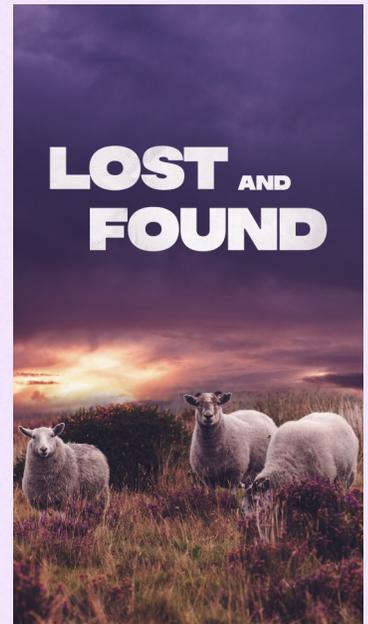
He gives us the victory through Jesus Christ.



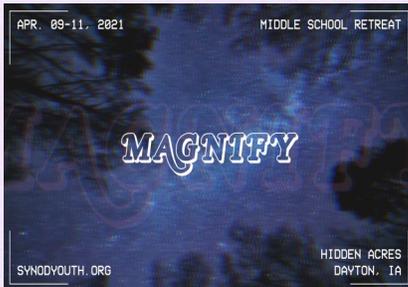
PASTOR JAY VAN GELDER YOUTH NEWS

LOST AND FOUND

Have you ever been lost? Maybe you wandered away from your parents, took a wrong turn, or lost track of your friends in a crowd? It can be scary to realize you're not sure where you are or how to get home again, and the same thing is true when it comes to our faith. See, you and I were created to be close to the God who made and loves us. But some of us don't know our Creator yet. And some of us know Jesus but we wander (or at least we feel) far away from Him. Beginning April 7 for 4 weeks, the 6th, 7th & 8th Grade and Sr. High Youth Groups will explore stories that Jesus once told about things that were lost and then got found again. Through these stories, we'll discover that Jesus notices you, values you, welcomes you back when you've strayed, and invites you to the party when others come home.



MIDDLE SCHOOL RETREAT



We have *ideas* of ourselves that are too simplified, too broad, and/or influenced by people and culture, and we need to *take a closer look*. Sometimes we have the same issue with our idea of God, and we need to take a closer look. The Bible tells us about times when Jesus gave humanity an up-close, magnified, encounter with God and showed God's character to be *different* than what we expected. The weekend of April 9-11 at Hidden Acres Christian Center in Dayton, IA Synod Youth Ministries is partnering with Northwestern College students for an awesome weekend of worship, large group sessions, youth group time and, of course, recreation and games. The following middle school students and adult sponsors will be attending: Kiera Brown, Bob Graham, Simon Graham, Trenten Hansen, Jacob Jones, Paisley Krukow, Avery Nelson, Sally Peterson, Brayden Schuster, Colby Sherrod and Aaden Techen.

Journey to the Cross

A SPECIAL EASTER EXPERIENCE !

TRAVEL THROUGH 8 SURPRISING AND
ENGAGING STATIONS AND DISCOVER THE JOY,
SORROW AND INCREDIBLE
GRACE OF GOD.

GOOD FRIDAY, APRIL 2

HOPE CHURCH

5:00-8:00 P.M.

5:00-6:30 P.M. MASKS REQUIRED

6:30-8:00 P.M. MASKS OPTIONAL



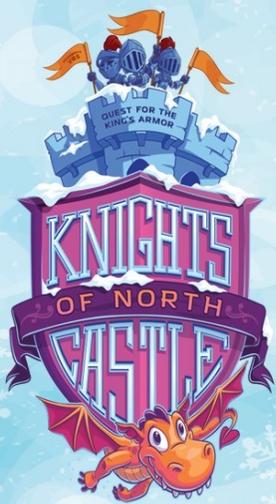
A SPECIAL EVENT FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY! NURSERY PROVIDED FOR CHILDREN BIRTH-2 YRS. OLD

**PEACE IS NOT FOUND IN THE
ABSENCE OF STRESS ~
IT IS FOUND IN THE
PRESENCE OF JESUS.**

**SARAH KERNS
CHILDREN & FAMILY NEWS**



VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL



**VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL
JUNE 7-11 @ HOPE CHURCH
LIMITED TO 150 KIDS
(110 ELEMENTARY/40 PRESCHOOL)
ONLINE REGISTRATION OPENS TO
HOPE FAMILIES: APRIL 11-20
GENERAL PUBLIC: APRIL 21-MAY 4
(OR UNTIL FULL)**

The logo for "Knights of North Castle" features a shield with a castle on top and a dragon at the bottom. The shield is divided into four quadrants with the words "KNIGHTS OF NORTH CASTLE". Above the shield is a banner that says "QUEST FOR THE KING'S ARMOR".

SUMMER CAMP

Inspiration Hills Church Camp is for all youth entering 1st thru 12th grades. Camp brochures are available in the lobby. You will need to mail in your registration or register online by April 15 to get the reduced savings. Hope Church will pay \$100 per camper toward the camp registration, so please contact me at 262-3016 with what camp and the dates your child will be attending. Camp scholarships are available; please see me for details.



BETH MUILENBURG CONGREGATIONAL CARE

We all know that prayer is important, but sometimes we feel stuck in our prayer routine. Here are a couple of things to try with your family this month.

SKITTLES PRAYER

PICK A CANDY OUT OF THE BAG (OR BOWL).

RED: PRAY FOR SOMEONE YOU LOVE

ORANGE: PRAY FOR A FRIEND OR NEIGHBOUR

GREEN: THANK GOD FOR ONE GOOD THING IN YOUR LIFE

YELLOW: PRAY FOR A LEADER OR SOMEONE IN CHARGE

PURPLE: PRAY FOR YOURSELF - SOMETHING YOU ARE SORRY FOR, WORRIED ABOUT, OR NEED HELP WITH

5 Finger Prayer

1) Your **thumb** is closest to your heart, so pray for those closest to you - your family and friends.

2) The **pointer finger** is used to give directions. Pray for **teachers, coaches, therapists, doctors, and first responders.**

3) The **middle finger** is the tallest. Pray for **leaders in government, business, and the church.**

4) The **ring finger** is the weakest. Pray for the sick, poor, and those most in need.

5) The **pinkie finger** is the smallest. Pray for yourself and your own needs.

www.KathrynShirey.com

CELEBRATING WITH:

- Chad & Alison Kutzbach on the birth of their daughter, Hallie Sue, born on March 2.
- Andrew & MacKenzie Wimmer on the birth of their daughter, Finley Ann, born on March 30.

CONCERNS FOR:

- Brian Ver Mulm was hospitalized in the Spencer Hospital for COVID pneumonia and other health concerns.
- Lee Boltjes had an angioplasty with two stents placed in Sioux Falls on March 26.
- Kent Kilpatrick had a heart procedure done in Sioux Falls on March 31.

CONDOLENCES TO:

- Kylee & Aaron Zinn and family on the passing of Kylee's dad, Jerry Gross of Greenville, from time to eternity on March 14.
- Norb & Kim Manwarren on the passing of Norb's brother, Doc Manwarren of Spirit Lake, from time to eternity on March 26.

Holy Week at Hope Church ~ You're Invited!

Maundy Thursday
April 1



Worship &
Communion

7:00 PM*
masks optional

*also livestreamed online at
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xodXsO9-jo8>

Good Friday
April 2



*Journey to
the Cross*

Wander through engaging stations & discover
the joy, sorrow, and incredible grace of God.

5:00-6:30 PM | 6:30-8:00 PM
masks required | masks optional

Easter
April 4



Worship

8:30 AM | 10:45 AM*
masks required | masks optional

*also livestreamed online at
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kdWTgI2pOCQ>

CONSISTORY NEWS

The regular meeting of the Hope Reformed Consistory met at 7:00 p.m. on March 11 in the Well at the church. Present: Deacons Derek Bailey, Bob Graham, Luke Lovin, Kyle Mechler, Levi Morris, and Eric Van Der Heide. Elders Dean Mechler, Darrell Todd, Cedric Winterboer, Arvin Druvenga, Kurt Weeks, and Jim Hill. Pastors Russell Muilenburg and Jay Van Gelder. Pastor Russell began with opening devotions from Mark 9:14-29 followed by review and questions from the book, *Canoeing the Mountains*. Discussion over Chapters 3 and 4 with the Consistory. He closed with prayer.

ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION AND DECISION

- **MMSC** to approve the February 2021 minutes.
- **MMSC** to approve the February 2021 financials presented by the deacons.
- A Classis meeting update was presented by Bob Graham and Arvin Druvenga, followed by discussion with the Consistory related to the future of the RCA and current progress and options.
- At the request of the Staff Management Committee, Russell and Jay were asked to leave the meeting while the Consistory received an update of the SMC's progress with staff concerns. Discussion was led by Dean Mechler, Derek Bailey and Arvin Druvenga during this time. The SMC will follow up on any decisions and requests made during this meeting's discussion. Bob Graham closed this discussion time with prayer.

FULL CONSISTORY

- Discussion of COVID protocols and possible changes we can make as a church at this time was discussed. It was decided that the pews left and right of the center pews, as well as the balcony pews, will have the string barriers removed while the center pews will remain the same with partial string barriers for safe spacing. Services will remain as currently done; first service will stay as mandatory masks while the second service will remain masks optional.
- Discussion was held about future get-togethers and group events. It was decided that it is too early to comfortably make decisions for church large groups and will be reviewed as time progresses.
- Russell closed in prayer.

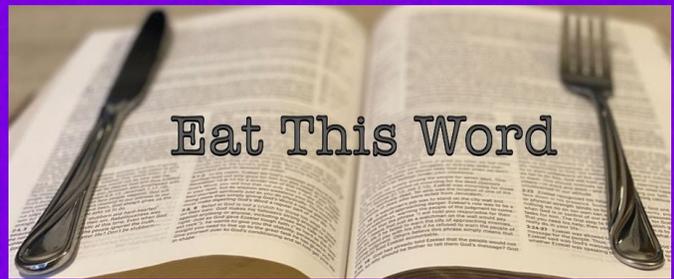
ELDERS MEETING

- Russell opened with prayer.
- Discussion and reminder that we will be having communion at the Maundy Thursday service on April 1 and at the Sunday services on April 11.
- The Constitutional question was asked and answered in the negative.
- Congregational concerns were discussed.
- Discussion and review of Russell's sabbatical schedule and related pulpit services during that time.
- The meeting was closed with prayer in-the-round from each Elder.

DEACONS MEETING

- Kyle opened with prayer.
- We played "Get to Know Your Deacon" about Levi.
- We went over a correction of the general fund/youth fund.
- We discussed and considered using Breeze for our tithing database.
- We covered this past month's 'Serving Deacons' project.
- Levi closed with prayer.

EAT THIS WORD



Pastor Russell has re-vamped his mid-week Facebook devotionals. They are now called "Eat This Word" and the goal is to serve up bite-sized bits of the Bible every Wednesday evening. The videos are 6-10 minutes long and involve an in-depth look at one or two Bible verses at a time. "Eat This Word" can be found on its own [Facebook page](#), [YouTube](#), and linked through our [Spencer Hope Facebook page](#).

STARTING POINT

Starting Point will be held on Sundays, April 18 and 25 from 1:00-2:00 p.m. in the Well. This class is intended for adults and is your pathway to membership at Hope Church. It is a great opportunity to find out about our church and the church we are trying to be. Attending does not commit you to joining Hope Church, but it helps you make that decision wisely. Sign up at the Information Desk.

HAITI TRIPS

SUMMER HAITI TRIP:

July 7-16, 2021

SIGN-UP DEADLINE: April 30, 2021

WINTER HAITI TRIP:

January 26 - February 4th, 2022

If you are interested in going on either of these mission trips to Haiti with Hope Church, call or text Karmen Brown at 712-240-4897, or email her at kbrown@mh4h.org.



**HOPE
CHURCH**
BRING JOY. EXPERIENCE JOY.
**MANY HANDS
FOR HAITI**

THANK YOU

Thank you to Lorelei Meeter for the construction of the red fabric scarf hanging over the cross in the Sanctuary during this Lenten season.

HOPE CHURCH

BRING JOY. EXPERIENCE JOY.

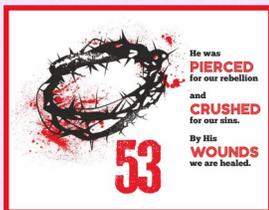
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Spencer, IA 51301

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SERMONS



53

April 4—Easter

The Conquering Christ

Isaiah 53:11-12



*A Faith
That Works*

April 11

Persevering Under Trial

James 1:12

April 18

Listening and Doing

James 1:22

April 25

Faith Without Action is Dead

James 2:17

WORSHIP SERVICES

Sundays

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

Sanctuary

10:45 a.m.

Live-streamed online YouTube

www.youtube.com/hopechurchspencer

Maundy Thursday, April 1

7:00 p.m.

Sanctuary

Live-streamed online YouTube

www.youtube.com/watch?v=xodXsOq-jos

HOPE CHURCH STAFF:

Russell Muilenburg: *Lead Pastor*

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Lori Swanson: *Office Administrator*

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