



IN TOUCH WITH HOPE CHURCH

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF HOPE CHURCH, SPENCER, IA

MAY, 2021

BY PASTOR RUSSELL MUILENBURG

THE REST OF GOD

Beginning on May 17 I will be on Sabbatical. This extended break from work will last until July 12, and is part 2 of a break I took in December. Part of this time off will include a trip to Turkey with Beth and Ellie to visit the sites of the 7 Churches of Revelation. The balance of the time will consist of time on retreat, visits with extended family, and simple rest. I am very grateful to the Consistory and the church staff for making this Sabbatical possible for me.

The root of the word Sabbatical is, of course, “sabbath.” We associate Sabbath with a day of the week (in the Old Testament, it was Saturday; for Christians remembering the resurrection, it is Sunday). But the Hebrew word “sabbath” simply means “cease from labor;” and while God instructs us to take off 1 day in 7, the concept of regular rest extends beyond what we do on Sundays. As I prepare for my time of Sabbath, here are some thoughts about rest from the Bible.

1. **Sabbath is modeled.** When the work of creation is described for us, Genesis 2:2 includes this observation: *By the seventh day God had finished the work he had been doing; so on the seventh day he rested from all his work.*

God didn't need to rest. He's God. He never slumbers or sleeps (Psalm 121:4). But He took a day anyway. He blessed it and made it holy. He took a day to enjoy Himself and all that He had made. He created something else by stopping from creating, He was creating the concept of rest.

2. **Sabbath is commanded.** In God's Top Ten List of instructions, resting makes the list. Exodus 20:8, the Fourth Commandment: *Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy.*

A key word here is “remember.” Remember. As fallen human beings, we need reminders. We have a tendency to forget. We have a tendency to think that everything we have comes to us because we have earned it. And, so we have a tendency to think that we have to keep working or we'll lose out. We feel we cannot rest until our work is done, and our work never feels done. We put ourselves where only God belongs. We attempt to engineer our own lives. And then God comes along with the fourth commandment and tells us to remember that we are not God. He requires us to just stop, and remember that we cannot control everything. To just stop, and leave some things in His capable hands.

3. **Sabbath is a gift.** As fallen humans, we have a tendency to make rules around Sabbath. We can turn even times of rest into a burden. But Jesus said this in Mark 2:27: *The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath.*

In other words: God has given Sabbath to us as a gift, not a punishment. Sabbath rest “was instituted for our good, for our benefit, for our refreshment. Keeping the Sabbath was never intended to be an end in itself. It was meant to minister to the wholeness, rest, and renewal of human lives in communion with God.” (William C. Brownson, *Meeting Jesus*, p. 191)

4. **Sabbath is a person.** One of the primary messages of the Christian gospel is that Jesus does the work, not us. One of the benefits of slowing down and resting is to bring our focus back to Him. Matthew 11:28: *Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.*

Christianity is a religion of rest. Jesus invites us to bring our weary and over-burdened lives to Him and find rest for our souls. Where other religions tell us we have to work to earn God's approval, Christianity tells us what we really need to do is rest in the work He's already done.

Personally, I am looking forward to a break where I can remember that everything does NOT depend on me. I am looking forward to re-connecting in a different way to the One who has done the work for me. I am receiving this break as a gift—from God, and from the Church.

And I want to encourage you to find ways to rest as well.



2021 GRADUATING SENIORS

Congratulations to our 2021 high school graduates! The following high school seniors have been involved at Hope Church and were asked the following questions:

- What have you been involved in at Hope Church?
- How has Hope Church helped you grow as a person?
- What are your future plans after graduation?



Sam Brandt
Son of Dave & Sara Schmidt

At Hope Church I am involved in Youth Group. I also enjoy volunteering in the nursery and at Trunk or Treat. Hope has helped me in my journey by helping me understand faith and strengthening my relationship with God. In the fall I will attend Northwestern University and major in biology/pre-med.



JD Bumgarner
Son of Darren & Hope Bumgarner

I have been involved in both Sunday School and Vacation Bible School over the years. Making friends is hard for me, but I know Jesus is my best friend, that He loves me and lives in my heart, and that I will see him in Heaven. After graduation, I plan to continue welding and making metal art and growing my business, JD's Creations.



Kady Cline
Son of Dan & Tami Cline

I feel blessed to be a part of Hope Church. I enjoy attending worship services and appreciate the Biblical teaching and life application I take away from the sermons. I have had the opportunity to attend Hope Youth group and to be involved in fun activities and events that have helped point me towards a personal relationship with Jesus. I plan to attend Morningside University to study Marketing and Sports Management, and I will continue to run and will be involved in cross country and track. I am thankful for the opportunities I have been given to learn and grow in my faith through Hope Church. Thank you for the love and support you have provided me.



Jazmine Edwards
Daughter of Brian & Robin Edwards

I am an active member of the Hope Youth Group and enjoy helping out with various volunteer activities within the church. Hope Church has allowed me to continue my faith journey by surrounding me with great people of faith. I have met some amazing people through Hope Church and the mentor program that has helped me grow in my faith. After graduation I plan to attend Iowa State University; I will be majoring in biochemistry with later goals of toxicology.



Heather Howard
Daughter of Lyle & Katrina Howard

I have been involved in youth group since 6th grade and have been on many youth trips. I have also helped in VBS over the summers. Hope Church has helped me to grow in my faith journey by providing a mentor/mentee program which has really helped me grow as well as providing a lot of opportunities and encouragement on youth trips or activities within the church. After graduation I plan on attending Augustana University in Sioux Falls for either Kinesiology or Exercise Science and then continuing on to get a Doctorate in Physical Therapy.



Lexi Keefer
Daughter of Cody & Sarah Kerns

This fall I will be attending the University of Iowa to pursue nursing. I have been involved in youth group, Sunday School, Feed Our Children, Love Spencer, Children's Church, church softball, and VBS. Hope Church has taught me how to have a relationship with Christ and others, and I have learned how to be Christ-like and share His love.



Sophie Krukow
Daughter of Todd & Missy Krukow

I have been involved with Hope Youth since Middle School. I have loved participating in the retreats, going on Youth trips, Trunk or Treat, Lock-ins and VBS. I am especially excited to see what God has in store for me on the Rocky trip this year. Hope Church has guided my faith journey by going to youth group and forming relationships. I will be working full time at Del's Garden Center after graduation.



Cayle Peterson
Daughter of Casey & Cassady Peterson

I have been involved in Youth Group and various plays and solos at Hope Church. Hope Church has helped me grow my faith by always being there for me and showing me how good God is. My plans after graduation are to go to Iowa State University and major in public relations.



Shayler Van Gelder
Daughter of Jay & Shantel Van Gelder

I have been at Hope Church for 12 years and have helped at VBS and gone on work projects with the Youth Group in both middle school and high school. I was a part of the K-5th program growing up and have attended Sunday School since I was little as well. In middle school I accepted Christ for the first time and made Profession of Faith in 7th grade. Hope Church has encouraged me through my faith journey and has always been there for me no matter what I am going through. I plan on attending Northwestern College to major in Biology with a focus on Pre-Medicine in hopes of becoming an Orthopedic Surgeon.



SENIOR RECOGNITION

Come join us in celebrating our graduating seniors in between the two worship services on Sunday, May 23, at 9:45 a.m. in the Sanctuary.

The regularly scheduled meeting of the Hope Reformed Consistory met at 7:00 p.m. in the Well. Present: Deacons Derek Bailey, Bob Graham, Luke Lovin, Kyle Mechler, Levi Morris and Eric Van Der Heide. Elders Arvin Druvenga, Dean Mechler, Darrell Todd, Kurt Weeks and Jim Hill. Pastors Russell Muilenburg and Jay Van Gelder.

The meeting was switched this month as the Elders and Deacons met separately to begin the night.

ELDERS MEETING

- Dean Mechler opened with prayer.
- Arv Druvenga followed with devotions and scripture, John 15:12-17
- **MMSC** to accept March minutes.
- **MMSC** to accept March financials presented by the Deacons.
- Constitutional question was asked and answered in the negative.
- Congregational concerns were discussed and prayed for.
- It was decided to keep COVID guidelines as they have been in the most recent services, masks used at the first service and optional masks at the second service while all strings blocking some seating will be removed.

DEACONS MEETING

- Bob opened the meeting with prayer.
- We played 'Get to Know Your Deacon' about Luke. Kyle is up next month.
- We went over the new, portable walls for the Harbor that were purchased to replace the broken ones.
- We covered the church database transition.
- A local need was brought to our attention. **MMSC** to approve.
- We talked about Josh's projects he submitted for this year.
- Jay brought up Power Connection in Pella; However, we tabled the discussion.
- Levi closed the meeting with prayer.

DEACONS AND ELDERS

- A lengthy discussion was held about potential staff changes/updates.
- **MMSC** to explore restructuring staff management and administration responsibilities to help with smoother workflow, focus on responsibilities/priorities and offer improved dedication to each individual ministry to help with future growth and development at Hope Church. This may include creating a new part time HR/Administrative position to fulfill current and future needs.
- Dean Mechler closed with prayer.

HOPE CHILDREN & FAMILY NEWS



VBS

Join in the VBS fun! Adult volunteers are still needed for Vacation Bible School June 7-11. Positions are available for any level of help at VBS. We have a great time getting to know the children that are attending and each other as we serve together!

Register online at <https://hopechurchspencer.breezechms.com/form/d427d13>.



SUNDAY SCHOOL

The last day of Sunday School for the Summer months will be on May 2.

CHURCH SOFTBALL

Unfortunately, there will be no church softball league this summer. However, there will be a one day tournament in July. Be watching for more details.

SUMMER SCHEDULE

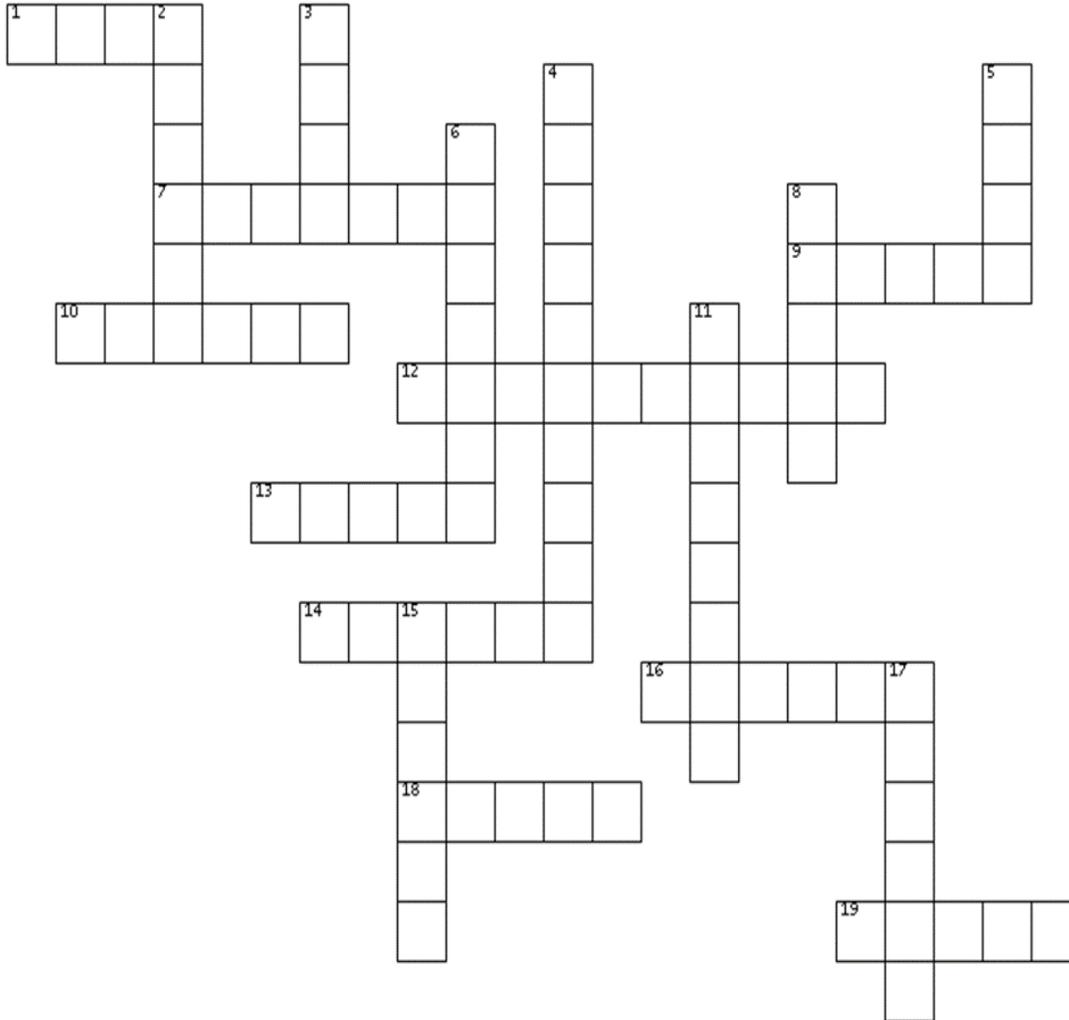
On Sunday, May 30, we begin our summer worship schedule of 9:00 a.m. and 10:45 a.m. with no Sunday School during the summer months. The 10:45 a.m. worship service will continue to be livestreamed online.



BETH MUILENBURG
CONGREGATIONAL CARE

JAMES CROSSWORD PUZZLE

Use the clues to fill in the words below. Words can go across or down. Letters are shared when the words intersect.
Answers found on the back page



ACROSS

1. _____ to speak
7. Do not merely listen to the word, and so _____ yourselves. Do what it says.
9. slow to become _____
10. God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the _____
12. blessed is the one who _____ under trial.
13. but when you ask, you must believe and not _____
14. Everyone should be quick to _____
16. Nobody can tame the _____
18. _____ triumphs over judgment
19. Show me your _____ without deeds

DOWN

2. if you lack _____ you should ask God
3. how many chapters are in this book of the Bible
4. The Lord is full of _____ and mercy
5. Is anyone among you in trouble? Let them _____
6. Every good and _____ gift comes from above
8. the book Pastor Russell is preaching on now
11. _____ that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this; to look after orphans and Widows
15. _____ yourselves, then to God.
17. _____ prayed and it did not rain for 3 1/2 years.

CONCERNS FOR:

- Joyce Lemke had an angiogram on April 19 in Sioux Falls.

CONDOLENCES TO:

- the family of Tim Menke as he passed from time to eternity on April 8.
- Marlene Bruns on the passing of her husband, Ernie, from time to eternity on April 13.
- Tara & Willy Rabenberg & family on the passing of Tara's father, Keith Dannatt of Milford, from time to eternity on April 14.



WORSHIP SERVICES

Sundays

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

10:45 a.m.  **YouTube**

Live-streamed online

www.youtube.com/hopechurchspencer

HOPE CHURCH STAFF:

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SERMONS



*A Faith
That Works*

May 2

Consider the Tongue

James 3:6

May 9

Friendship with the World

James 4:4

May 16

The Prayer Offered in Faith

James 5:15

May 23

Pastor Perry DeGroot preaching

May 30

Ben Vos preaching

CROSSWORD ANSWER KEY

ACROSS
1. SLOW
7. DECEIVE
9. ANGRY
10. HUMBLE
12. PERSEVERES
13. DOUBT
14. LISTEN
16. TONGUE
18. MERCY
19. FAITH

DOWN
2. WISDOM
3. FIVE
4. COMPASSION
5. PRAY
6. PERFECT
8. JAMES
11. RELIGION
15. SUBMIT
17. ELIJAH