

In Touch with *Hope*

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF HOPE CHURCH

MARCH 2024

Pastor James Runcorn

Lead Pastor

Intentional Growth

I used to care for multiple Bonsai trees (literally meaning, 'tray planting'). There were probably around 27 in my collection, ranging from juniper to pine to maple to ginkgo to several other varieties. I enjoyed the intentional process of gently pinching off unwanted growth, while shaping and directing the other parts of the plant towards the vision of maturity I had in my head. Hope Church is a wonderful community of faith. I am deeply thankful to be here with all of you. We are in a good place, but we cannot remain where we are. Without growth, we would become stagnate and die. That is why the vision for small groups is vital. Terry Stevens has accepted the role of Director of Adult Discipleship. His purpose on staff will be to oversee everything about small groups, to carry the vision for small groups and to equip leaders of small groups. Certain aspects of this role might involve some 'pinching' off in areas of unwanted growth, but overall, it will be to help shape and direct our congregation towards the vision of maturity we have through small groups. Please pray for Terry and his family as he steps into this role. Please pray for our church that we will ultimately listen to the direction of the Holy Spirit in this new and exciting journey.

And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people.

Ephesians 6:18

Soul Surfer Series



Since the beginning of the year, both Middle school and High School youth groups have been diving into the series Soul Surfer. Soul Surfer is based on the life of Bethany Hamilton who was a great surfer bitten by a shark and lost her left arm. Soul Surfer is an inspirational film about overcoming obstacles and turning tragedy into triumph. Through this we really focused on how we view life through our small window and there is a world beyond that window. We are not the main characters in the life that we live here on earth, we are here to show who Jesus is! In our study, we also learned through the story of Peter walking on water, that you have to get out of the boat for Jesus to do incredible things in your life!

Super Sunday Party!

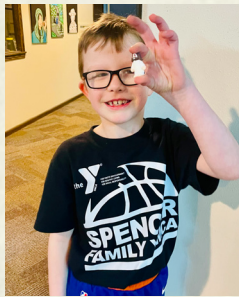
In February, we held our annual Super Bowl Party where we watched the game on 6 big screens. We had an awesome night (until the Chiefs won) with around 160 youth, and 30 youth attending a Hope Youth event for the first time. The night was filled with new inflatables, 9 square, Just Dance on the Wii and crafts, and a brand new laser tag. This year with the laser tag we created a scoring system that would track everyone's stats and calculate who was the best. Our first place winner was Caden Gress with a score of 711 winning by almost 400! We also want to say a special thank you to all the wonderful volunteers who helped make our Super Sunday Party super great!!



HOPE KIDS Parents' Night Out

Julia Andela
Children and Family Director

Thank you to all those who spent time caring for the 58 children we hosted at our 3rd annual Parents' Night Out! We pray that the parents and caregivers of the kiddos had a great evening to relax and reconnect! We are looking at hosting PNO more often - if you'd be interested in serving young families in this unique and meaningful way, please reach out to Julia to get connected.



Palm Sunday

All Preschool (age 3 to KinderKids) and K-5th grade students are invited to join Hope Kids for a celebration of Jesus, Our King, on **Palm Sunday, March 24 at both church services!!**

REHEARSAL INFORMATION:

- Preschoolers will practice during the Sunday School hour at 9:45 am on Sundays.
- Elementary students will practice on Wednesdays March 6, March 13 and March 20 from 5:15 pm - 6 pm.

PROGRAM DAY INFORMATION:

- Kids will need to be in their Sunday School classrooms between 8:00 - 8:15 am on Sunday, March 24.
- We will perform towards the beginning of both the 8:30 am and 10:45 am services.
- Kids will be dismissed to their parents/guardians immediately following each performance.
- **Sunday School will be held as usual at 9:45 am.** You do not need to pick them up after Sunday School. We will keep your kids until they are done performing at the 10:45 am service.

2024 Hope Kids VBS Dates to Remember

We are SO excited to dive into God's Rock Solid Truth with your kids this summer at Breaker Rock Beach!

VBS Dates:

June 10-14 • 8:30 am - 11:45 am

Registration for Hope Kids Families:

Sunday, April 7

Registration for the Community:

Monday, April 15

HERE'S A REMINDER ON THE AGE GUIDELINES:

Preschool VBS - Children turning 4 years old by June 10, 2024 through KinderKids (current 2023-2024 school year) will be enrolled in Preschool VBS.

Elementary VBS - Kindergarten through 4th grade (current 2023-2024 school year) will be enrolled in Elementary VBS.

VBS Volunteers - Adults and 5th-12th graders (current 2023-2024 school year)

If you have any questions, please contact Julia!



Missions Focus

UCI Update: Answered Prayers in God's Perfect Timing

So many of you have been praying for Franck, one of the last witchdoctors in Bohoc. We put in a cement floor for his house and his son's house and we shared about the gospel. He came to evangelistic outreaches to witchdoctors and he heard good teaching. His grandkids went to our school and starting to come to church and brought their parents, Franck's son and daughter-in-law. Many mission teams went to Franck's home to talk to him about Jesus and prayed over his household. He has been at our house many, many times over the last 15+ years. Seeds were planted, but remained dormant. We are so happy to share that Franck has given his life to Christ last week while praying with Pastor Milord, a theological graduate of our university and pastor of the church plant in the satellite school in the marketplace. Angels are rejoicing over a lost sheep. He came to our church yesterday and his wife gave her life! He asked JeanJean and our staff to burn his house of vodou worship and all the vodou paraphernalia that he put his faith in after church. Many people came to gather to see this astonishing site. One of the people in the crowd came forward to ask to pray to accept Jesus. A family conflict was reconciled while the vodou house was burning. We witnessed the power of His Word, His Truth! Oh, what joy fills our hearts. And Franck also wants to give some land for us to build a church building for the church that meets in the school. Amazing.



Franck and his wife digging up vodou items—not willing for anything to be hidden!

Terry Stevens

Adult Discipleship

Small Groups

Hello Hope Church! I am extremely grateful God opened the door for me to be the Director of Adult Discipleship. I want to thank the consistory and Pastor James for seeing my heart and passion. I am super excited to see where God takes Hope through this position. Adult discipleship is vital for a strong church family.

Many of you have been wondering about small groups. I am pleased to report that we plan to launch small groups this fall! Currently there are 7 couples, including Erin and myself, going through a small group framework called Rooted. This is a 10-week study and discussion experience designed to help you build a deeper connection with God, the church and your purpose.

The building of our relationship with the other 6 couples is wonderful. It affirms how much we need each other in the Church. Many of us are experiencing James 5:16 in action, "Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective." Building these kinds of relationships to enrich our service to God in a genuine and deeper way is inspiring and necessary.

My desire is for all of you to have the same opportunity to build new connections within Hope. Watch for information that we share as we move closer to our fall launch. Please feel free to reach out to me if you have any questions at tstevens@spencerhope.org.

Rooted together in Him ~ Terry

The Armor of God and His Mighty Power

The Breastplate of Righteousness

How many of you have heard of the legendary Greek hero from the story of The Iliad named Achilles? Have you ever heard of Achilles heel? The story is told that to make Achilles immortal, his mother dipped him as an infant in the river Styx, but the heel was left vulnerable by which she held him. As the legendary story goes, eventually Achilles dies because of a wound to his heel. His heel was the only part of his body that was not supposedly covered with water.

As we develop further what it means to be strong in the Lord and the power of His might, it is imperative that we put on the second piece of God's armor. The next piece of God's armor is described in Ephesians 6:14, we are strong in the Lord and power of His might when we "stand firm with the belt of truth and the **breastplate of righteousness in place.**"

In this verse Paul compares the second piece of God's armor to the breastplate of a Roman soldier. The breastplate worn by a soldier was a piece of battle gear used to protect the chest with its vital organs. It was made of layers of linen, leather and overlapping pieces of metal attached to a harness of leather fitted for the soldier's body.

When we are keeping **in place** this piece of the armor of God; we will find that we are completely covered and protected in every way from the fatal, spiritual life threatening assaults of Satan through the righteousness of Jesus Christ. The phrase completely covered or protected reminds me of several insurance companies who make the claim that they can provide complete service and protection for all of one's needs. But they can't protect us, spiritually, mentally and emotionally, from the assaults, the attacks, the subtle sly jabs or the darts of the devil. But when we have the **breastplate of God's armor in place**, namely the righteousness of Christ, we are protected from the deadly fatal assaults of the Master Deceiver.

The righteousness of Christ is our breastplate. An individual is clothed with the righteousness of Christ when he or she repents of their sin and commits themselves to the life changing work of Jesus Christ, His forgiveness, love and control of the Holy Spirit. We are covered with the righteousness of Christ, when we trust in Him alone for our salvation. If you want to dig deeper, read Romans 3:21-23; 5:1;10:4, 2nd Cor. 5:21, Phil. 3:9.

Sometimes Satan finds that we have let the armor slip, by trusting in ourselves for salvation and eternal life, instead of Jesus Christ. It is then that the Evil One attacks, subtly slips in, jabs and fires darts hoping to destroy our victory, weaken our hope, rob our joy and devastate our peace in Christ.

No one can come to God except by the righteousness that comes through faith and trust in Jesus Christ. Trusting in ourselves is a tempting sign of self-righteousness: resulting in the behavior of proving I'm a good person, I am not so bad, I'm okay, I'm not such a bad sinner, I'm at least better than someone else I know. Those darts of the devil can slip in so fast and so quick. We need to be aware, because it results in behaviors like arrogance, putting others down and despising them.

We have no righteousness of our own, all our good morals, right and decent living is as filthy rags to God. We need to trust in Jesus Christ and Him alone, then we can stand before God and others with humbleness. Even when we are overcome by our failures, weaknesses, imperfections and sinfulness, we should not deny them but be honest, confess them and trust in Christ and His righteousness for our forgiveness and worthiness.

The apostle Paul talks about His struggle with sin and doing that which is good in Romans 7:18-8:2. He concludes by rejoicing in the Lord Jesus Christ; for there is no condemnation for those who are in Him.

We become stronger in the Lord and power of His might and are more and more able to stand against the wiles of the devil as our trust in and dependence on Jesus Christ deepens on a diligent, daily basis. An infant child is completely and utterly dependent on his or her mother and father, so we need to become more and more dependent on Jesus Christ and diligently trust in Him.

Let's put on God's armor and be strong in the Lord!

Consistory News

Present: Pastor James Runcorn, Pastor Jay Van Gelder
Elders: Bruce Groen, Jeff Helmink, Doug Siepkes, Bob Campbell, Gary Zeutenhorst
Deacons: Ryan Hoskins, Jason Warren, Knut Brown
January 11, 2024 • 7 pm

Meeting called to order.

Opening prayer - Gary Zeutenhorst. Devotion - Pastor James on Church Culture 1 Tim 1:5 and 2 Tim 1:7.
Developing a culture of love instead of a culture of fear

REGULAR BUSINESS

Welcome new members: Elders Gary Zeutenhorst and Kevin Vanderstoep(not present) and Deacons Knut Brown and Jason Warren

Reviewed and approved December 14, 2023 minutes MMSC (Ryan Hoskins)

Jay reviewed December 2023 and Year end 2023 financials they were approved MMSC (Bob and Bruce)

2023 attendance and giving reviewed by Pastor Jay

Pastor James challenged consistory to look at what is working and opportunities for growth in our church such as having people up front after services to pray with those desiring prayer

Pastor's report

Sermon series on Galatians: problem=sin, solution=Jesus

Small group series Rooted to begin with 12 couples

Director of Adult Discipleship position discussed, 10 hrs/week to start approved. MMSC (Bob, Doug)

Discussed Starting "Coffee with the Pastor" for him to get to know more people, date TBD

Vision update: Corey (evaluation of streaming equipment) and updating design team development

Big Team Leadership meeting date TBD to recognize leaders and share vision of the church, sometime after Easter

New member class starting 1/14 for 2 weeks

Staff Management Report

Pastor James and newly elected Vice President of Consistory, Bob Campbell, and Chair of the Deacons will be Ryan Christoffel

Classis Alliance delegates will be Gary Zeutenhorst and Doug Siepkes for Elders and Ryan Christoffel and Terry Stevens for Deacons

Ministry Liaison Report

Possible changes yet to be determined but for now: Purposeful learning -Jeff Helmink and Alex Johnson, Holy living-Gary Zeutenhorst and Ryan Hoskins, Fellowship-Doug Siepkes and Jason Warren, Worship-Kevin Vanderstoep and Terry Stevens, Service-Bruce Groen and Ryan Christoffel, Outreach -Bob Campbell and Knut Brown

Other Business

Upcoming congregational events, next Consistory meeting set, Executive Team meeting TBD

Closing Prayer by Pastor James

ELDER MEETING

Opening prayer by Bob Campbell

Congregational Care-some marriage retreats coming up in the area, marriage prayer challenge for Hope Church in February

Closing prayer by Pastor James

DEACON MEETING - January 4, 2024

Deacons: Ryan Christoffel, Terry Stevens, Ryan Hoskins, Alex Johnson, Knut Brown, Jason Warren

Pastors: James Runcorn, Jay Van Gelder

Prayer by Pastor James

TV/hardwiring update

New pastor earpiece approved

Approved 2024 Deacon positions

Set 2024 giving statements meeting

Closing Prayer by Pastor Jay

Concerns for

Please continue to lift up the following people and families in prayer:

Joyce Lemke who was in the hospital and currently at home.

Bob Faulkender who recently had heart surgery and has been experiencing various health issues.

Harold Anderson who has been experiencing a number of health related issues.

Haleigh Kuhlman who recently had an appointment at Mayo Clinic for FSHD.

Condolences to

Dee Van Enter and Carla van Holsteijn and family on the passing of Dee's husband and Carla's dad, Norman, from time to eternity.

Maddie Palmer and family on the passing of Maddie's husband, Scott, on February 21, from time to eternity.



THE LAST SUPPER

DRAMATIC PRODUCTION

Thursday, March 28

7:00 pm

Hope Church

Palm Sunday

SUNDAY, MARCH 24 | 8:30 AM & 10:45 AM

We look forward to our Palm Sunday celebrating King Jesus and being led in worship by our preschool and elementary Hope Kids as well as hearing a great message by Pastor James.

Maundy Thursday

THURSDAY, MARCH 28 | 7:00 PM

The Living Dramatization of The Last Supper

Easter Sunday

SUNDAY, MARCH 31 | 8:30 AM & 10:45 AM

Celebrate with us the Resurrection of Jesus!

EASTER GARDEN

A colorful Easter Garden is planned for Easter Sunday, March 31.

You will be able to purchase a flowering plant in memory of, or in honor of, a loved one(s).

Envelopes are available at the Information Desk.

Cost is \$20 per plant

Join us for a

WOMEN'S MINISTRY

BRUNCH

Saturday, March 16 • 9 am - 12 Noon



SIGN UP: by March 13 at the Kiosk, using the QR Code or calling the church office at 262-3016.

Program Speaker: Becky Weber
New Things from Broken Places

Freewill donation





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Spencer, IA 51301
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hrc@spencerhope.org

Worship Services

SUNDAYS: 8:30 am and 10:45 am in the Sanctuary
8:30 am services live-streamed online: www.youtube.com/hopechurchspencer

Sunday School

SUNDAYS: 9:45 - 10:40 am ~ Preschool through Adult

Hope Church Staff

James Runcorn	Lead Pastor
Jay Van Gelder	Youth Pastor
Julia Andela	Children & Families Director
Ryan Hoskins	Worship Director
Austin Bryan	Youth Ministries Intern
Perry DeGroot	Pastor Emeritus/Congregational Care
Terry Stevens	Adult Discipleship
Josh Hamrick	Facilities Manager
Jill Lowe	Office Administrator
Tim Yeager	Maintenance
Levi Morris	Treasurer
Missy Lair	Nursery