



# In Touch with *Hope*

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF HOPE CHURCH

MAY 2024

**Pastor James Runcorn**

Lead Pastor

## I Go to Church ~ I'm Good, Right?

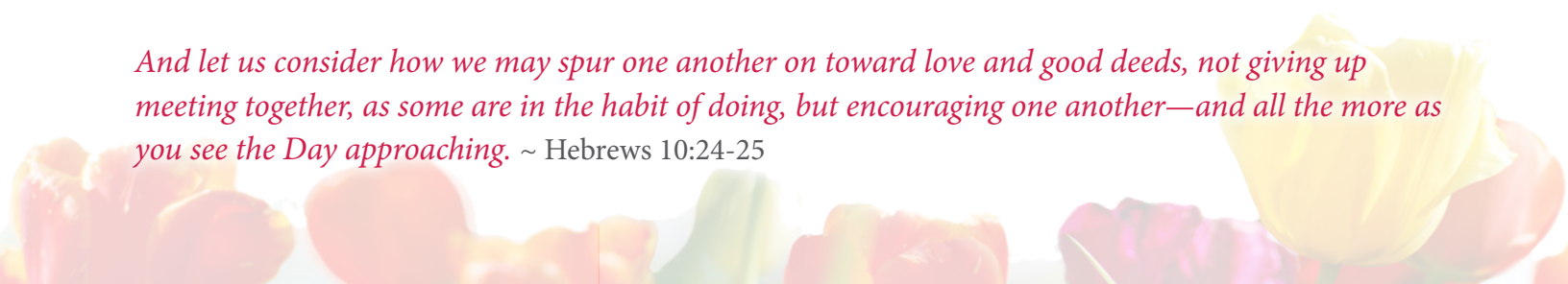
Church is more than a Sunday morning event. The word, "church" in Scripture comes from the Greek word, "ἐκκλησία" (ekklēsia), which means, "assembly or gathering." This ekklēsia of believers is also defined as, "Followers of Christ who derived their identity and mission from Jesus and understood themselves to be the true eschatological community of God." (Lexham Bible Dictionary, 2015).

Did you catch that? Your identity is found in Jesus, not in the church building or denomination you belong to. Your mission in life comes directly from Jesus, not from the livestream, podcast or sermon of the week.

Church attendance is important, don't get me wrong. This is where we gather together to worship, pray, give, serve, encourage one another and learn. This is also where we are reminded and equipped to find our identity and mission for life itself, in Christ alone.

Church attendance is a great place to start, but our walk with God does not end when we exit the building. Let us carry our identity in Him, lived out through His mission for us, in our thoughts, words and actions, every moment of every day.

*And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching. ~ Hebrews 10:24-25*



# Pastor Jay Van Gelder

Youth Pastor



We had an awesome Middle School Retreat. We took 70 people; here are a few highlights from some of the youth that went.

This trip really helped me get closer to God and my friends, and having NO phones made us have better conversations = Keely S.



The food was very good and it was very good for me to get out of my comfort zone and meet new people = Hudson G.

Building relationships with youth, being able to pray with youth, hearing all the youth sing and dance to Jesus = Sally P.

Getting stuck in the middle of the pond, reconnecting with God and worshipping together = Jolie R.

Highlight to my trip was going to the main sessions and growing in my faith with God, not having phones on the trip = Alayna M.

Was getting to worship God with everyone, feeling God work His way through everyone. = Jaycee M.



Retreat was very powerful and Bradley, the speaker, reminded us what God thinks of us is more important than what other people think of us = Bailey S.

Trip changed my path of faith. After hearing Bradley speak on Saturday night I realized I'm able to take the next step in my faith = Haleigh K.

I loved how God opened up ways for friendships and how our no phone rule opened up a way to experience things from a new perspective = Makenna S.



Most important was the youth group time on Saturday night = Miranda M.

Hearing others testimonies, worship, rescuing someone from the pond. Definitely got a lot closer to God and being able to worship with others I don't really talk to. It was also really fun without my phone = Gabriela G.

I really liked when we had time to be serious and take time to be with God and growing in our faith. I really loved Saturday night when I could just be alone in prayer and worship God = Josie H.

Jumping into freezing pond, main sessions and singing, hanging out with friends, vans rides with each other singing = Lilly S.



Feeling the presence of God with the whole youth group. Being the Queen for a day and dedicating my win to Jay and Austin = Marley P.

Favorite thing was main session in the front row worshipping with all of the people. Journey walk with Ethan, Jackson, and AJ = Brayden W.

Fun part of the retreat was hanging out with friends and praising God = Eli R.

I was able to grow in my faith through the main sessions. The speaker talked about Identities and all the noise it creates in us. I had a lot of fun. Playing Nine Square, carpet ball, and hanging out with friends = Jackson B.



Turn down the noise of the outside world and the voices inside of you, listen to who God says you are = Hallie B.

I recommend going on the Middle School Retreat because you get closer to God and the most people who got mad because they can't have their phones, once your with out it I think you will be okay = Quinn S.



# SUNDAY SCHOOL IS WRAPPING UP FOR THE 2023-2024 SCHOOL YEAR!

I am so thankful to God for the opportunity to share The Gospel each week, and for the incredible people that live out their faith by serving in Hope Kids Sunday School. There are few things more important than helping a child learn about our loving Savior. The seeds you have planted do have an eternal impact! A special thank you to Missy Lair and the nursery team for opening the nursery during Sunday School for parents who teach and to the following preschool and elementary teammates who have committed to loving on our Hope Kids each week:

## ELEMENTARY TEAM

Knut Brown  
Molly Brown  
Kathy Druvenga (attendance)  
Luke Lovin  
Molly Lovin  
Kellen Madison  
Sam Madison  
Jordon Rasmussen  
Kyle Rehnstrom  
Mallory Rehnstrom  
Ashley Reinholdt  
Rob Reinholdt  
Kim Rhode (attendance)  
Rachel Van Der Heide  
Sandra Warren  
Briana Wetrich

## PRESCHOOL TEAM

Marlee Christoffel  
Kristy Connor  
Robin Edwards  
Jill Lowe  
Erin Stevens  
Greta Rouse

## SUBSTITUTE TEACHER TEAM

Jason Holt  
Katie Morris  
Levi Morris  
Angie Murray  
Krista Odens  
Missy Burns (PK)  
Alyssa Clark (PK)  
Kenzie Connor (PK)  
Aliza Edwards (PK)  
Brian Rouse (PK)  
Luanne Todd (PK)  
Terri Groen (attendance)  
Shelly Helmink (attendance)

## CHILDREN'S CHURCH

*We would love to have Children's Church at both services, BUT we need 3-4 more volunteers to do this. It would be 1 service, 1 Sunday a month. Lessons are simple, pre-planned and training will be provided.*

*Contact Julia if you can help!*

**Julia Andela**

Children and Family Director



We need more Adult Volunteers to help lead PreK & Elementary Crews, so please consider serving this way!

Spots are still available for PreK & Elementary kids!

**USE LINKS BELOW**

## VBS REGISTRATION IS OPEN UNTIL TUESDAY, MAY 7!

### VOLUNTEERS

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

<https://hopechurchspencer.breezechms.com/form/VBSVolunteer24>

### PRESCHOOL

4 years old (by June 10, 2024) - KinderKids (current 2023-2024 school year)

<https://hopechurchspencer.breezechms.com/form/PREKVBS24>

### ELEMENTARY

Kindergarten - 4th grade (current 2023-2024 school year)

<https://hopechurchspencer.breezechms.com/form/ELEMVBS24>

## UPCOMING DATES

**MAY 12**

Last day of Sunday School

**MAY 1, 8, 15, 22 and 29**

VBS WORTH IT NIGHTS - 6 PM

**JUNE 3-7**

VBS Prep Week

**JUNE 10-14**

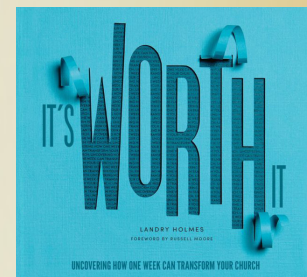
VBS Week



Lifeway (our VBS curriculum creators) said it best:

"VBS is the one week that mobilizes the entire church to reach the community with the gospel, while simultaneously providing a unique discipleship experience for the individual child and volunteer". VBS week gives us 15 hours to fill kids with the truth of the gospel - that's almost 4 months of Sunday School in one week!! There's no question that VBS week is huge in terms of Kingdom impact, so the months of planning, the extra time spent preparing our hearts and this building is so WORTH IT!

Hence, **VBS WORTH IT:** We want to intentionally pour into our volunteers at these WORTH IT nights so that volunteers are equipped to, in turn, pour into the kids spending their week with us. We will be learning the Bible Stories, songs and games ahead of time as well as working to transform our church into a forest campground where they'll explore the Rock Solid Truth God offers us in His Word!



**Wednesdays in May at 6 pm**

# The Armor of God and His Mighty Power

## Without Prayer a Person is Powerless

What does prayer mean to you? A Christian may know all about the armor of God and be able to quote scripture. But if one is not keeping a daily time with the Lord in prayer and living in an attitude of prayer; it is impossible to know the protection of the armor of God and His mighty power.

In our final segment of this study, we will look one more time at the illustration of the Roman soldier as used by the Apostle Paul. A soldier could have the armor and the weapons. But if he was not trained nor prepared to use it; the armor was useless and he was defenseless. The Roman soldier had to keep himself prepared through physical training and hone his skills by practicing with the sword and shield.

The same is true for the Christian in spiritual warfare, our battle with the evil one and his temptations. He/she must keep a diligent, disciplined prayer time, talking with the Lord daily in a specific time and place, as well as being in a constant attitude of prayer.

Read what Paul says, in Ephesians 6:18, under the inspiration of God the Holy Spirit, "pray always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with **all** perseverance and supplication for all the saints." I heard a Bible teacher recently who noted this. This is a summons or command to come back to headquarters. You and I need to come to Jesus in prayer who is at the right of the Heavenly Father always interceding on our behalf. Check out what it says in Hebrews 7:25.

Read James 4:1-10 and be sure to take special notice of the truth in verses 7 and 8. "Submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Prayer is a vital part of drawing near to God. Conversation with the Lord is absolutely essential in being prepared to resist the subtle temptations of the evil one, quench his fiery darts of wickedness, battle the principalities, powers, rulers of the darkness of this age, and take stand against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly place.

How can an athlete compete unless he/she has physically trained and mentally prepared? How can a student take a test unless they are mentally and physically prepared? Our strength and power in the Lord will not rise above our time in conversation with the Lord Jesus Christ. Our triumph over temptation will not rise above our time spent drawing closer to the Lord. Time with the Lord is absolutely necessary. We need to come to Him with an attitude of humbleness, reverence, and worship. We need to confess our sins and sinfulness, seeking His cleansing daily to remove barriers and obstacles that are built up through our selfishness and disobedience. We need to take time to be grateful; in His goodness, He has provided us with all our blessings, materially, physically, emotionally, relationally, and spiritually. We need to express our gratitude and thanksgiving. And yet there is a time to be still and listen for His leading as we read the Bible. And then we need to seek the Lord for His help for others and being His servants to everyone He brings into our daily lives. The importance of prayer in experiencing the power of God cannot be stressed enough. We need to pray for ourselves and on behalf of others.

In prayer Jesus obeyed His Heavenly Father and went to the cross for your sins and mine. In prayer Paul experienced the strength of the Lord and the power of His might to persevere as a prisoner for the Lord and boldly proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ.

This quote from Oliver Greene's commentary on Ephesians 6:18 sums up everything so well. We are not only to pray, but we are to watch `with all perseverance and supplication for all saints, *'sinners who believe in the saving work of Jesus Christ. We are to pray for ourselves, and for all other believers, remembering that we all fight the same warfare against the same powerful `principalities and powers, and rulers of spiritual wickedness in high places.'* When we are praying for others, we are strengthened in the inner man ourselves. Prayer is an imperative if we would be victorious over the world, the flesh, and the devil.".....*Italicized phrase added for explanation.*

**Let's be praying people, experiencing the amazing  
grace and power of the Lord Jesus Christ!**





# Small Groups

## Terry Stevens

Director of Adult Discipleship

Hello Hope Church!!

My wife, Erin, and I, along with 6 other couples recently finished the first Rooted series! It was an amazing 10 weeks of experiencing Him, our purpose and growing closer together as a community.

Our fall launch seems far away, but it will be here before you know it. I've connected with the Rooted trainer as well as people in other churches who have completed Rooted. Through their successful experiences, I'm getting great ideas and as much support as I can. We have launched another pilot session to prepare for fall.

If you have any questions about the fall launch of Rooted, please feel free to reach out to me digitally or in person.

Rooted in Christ, Terry  
tstevens@spencerhope.org

## Austin

Thank you Hope Church. I knew that this day would come when I was moving onto different opportunities as I followed the Lord's calling on my life. The last two and a half years have been a wonderful experience full of joy! That being said, May 12th will be my last Sunday at Hope Reformed Church as I have accepted the role of Worship Coordinator at Inspiration Hills. Hope will forever have a place in my heart as I continue to trust in the Lord.

Thank you! ~ Austin Bryan

## Perry

There are seasons of life and ministry. For the last couple of years, I have had the privilege and the opportunity by God's grace to serve Hope Church in a variety of ways. During the last half year, I have been approached about the Chaplain position at St Luke Nursing Home and Family Services. After prayerful consideration I have accepted that position, therefore, I am concluding my ministry with Hope Church. May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.

~ Pastor Perry

# Missions Focus

This month the Missions Team is excited to introduce to the congregation a missions work we have just begun supporting. This family has a strong Hope Church connection, and they have been facilitating disciple-making movements for ten years among people who are largely unreached by the Gospel.

There is an element of danger in sharing the Gospel in some areas of the world, and a few of the missionaries we support caution us against sharing information about their work in a way that may be discoverable on the internet. That is the case for this family, as they write, "We kindly ask that nothing be put on the internet. AI technology and global security measures are too acute, and our and our colleagues' standing can be jeopardized where we live and serve."

For this reason, we will be introducing this new missionary family through a bulletin insert one Sunday in May instead of providing a description of them in this newsletter. Keep an eye out for it!



# Summer Services

Our summer services will stay at 8:30 am and 10:45 am

## Consistory Minutes

Present: Pastor James Runcorn, Pastor Jay Van Gelder

Elders: Bruce Groen, Jeff Helmink, Doug Siepkes, Bob Campbell, Gary Zeutenhorst, Kevin Vander Stoep

Deacons: Ryan Hoskins, Knut Brown, Terry Stevens, Ryan Christoffel

March 15, 2024 • 7:00 pm

Meeting called to order.

Opening prayer - Pastor James

Devotional: Pastor Jay covered Questions 92-93 in Heidelberg Catechism covering Ten Commandments and how Jesus came to fulfill the commandments and the law

### REGULAR BUSINESS

- Approved February 8, 2024 minutes MMSC (Doug/Bob)
- Approved February 8, 2024 financials Ryan Christoffel MMSC (Bob/Gary)
- February 2024 attendance and giving reviewed by Ryan Christoffel
- Weekend Services/Special Services (What is working and where are there opportunities for growth? Ongoing request from Pastor James if anyone has thoughts for improvement, he would always welcome.

### Pastor's report

- Sermon series-finishing Ruth this week then on to Romans titled "This is the Way"
- Group distinctions explained by Pastor James- Small groups, Bible Study groups and Ministry
- Lent-Discussed the linen on the cross
- Vision update: Corey evaluated streaming equipment 2/13/24-discussed redoing the stage and updating sound system which will have to be done over time due to cost constraints, make online presence better by updating the website and streaming
- Gossip discussed & how detrimental it can be to the Church - chatter that doesn't build up the body of Christ has no place in the Church
- Consistory retreat date: September 27-28 at Ingham Okoboji
- Discussed adding names and photos of consistory to the website
- Handbook reviewed (policies and procedures for staff) and changes suggested to be added and or deleted from proposed handbook before finalized copy then to be presented later
- Infant dedication to start officially this weekend approved unanimously by Elders-MMSC (Bob/Doug) but decided that Elders would be informed ahead of time on who is getting dedicated, but no formal approval needed, discretion of the Pastor
- Officially joined Horizon Network and Hope is now on their website
- Contract team: New contract for employees in works-Jay will work on
- Jay is accepted to pathway of Alliance on Pathway for Ordination
- Compassion Sunday is April 28, 2024 and will have a table set up for people to "Adopt Compassion Children"

### Other Business

- Executive Team meeting - TBD. Consistory Meeting - March meeting April 11, 2024

Closing Prayer: Bob Campbell

### ELDER MEETING

Prayer- Pastor James

- Congregational Care - discussed home communion for shut-ins-a request has been made and elders will make accommodations for them-Doug and Bob
- Pastor Perry stepping down as Pastor Emeritus 4/15/24
- Baby Dedication 3/17/24: Elliotte Carolyn Meeter, Parents Eric and Kristen Meeter

Closing prayer: Kevin Vander Stoep

### DEACON MEETING

Present: Jay, Ryan H, Knut, Ryan C, Terry

- Ryan H opened in prayer
- New budget w/ new hire of Terry & Michael and insurance going up, snow blower, and Tims hours. Jay is re-doing money for audio guy
- Audits \$5,000 – \$8,000 to do one. Do we need to do one as a church?
- Jay sabbatical discussed. Jay is still working on the logistics for it.

# Callings All Green Thumbs!

Do you have a knack for gardening and a love for the outdoors? We have two areas that need your help!



Pots out front



Flowerbed around marquee

By volunteering to maintain these spaces, you'll play a crucial role in keeping our church grounds beautiful and inviting. For more information and to get involved please contact the office at [hrc@spencerhope.org](mailto:hrc@spencerhope.org) or 712-262-3016.



We are also looking for someone to do the inspirational and uplifting quotes on the marquee beginning mid May.

**Call the office if interested!**

# Concerns for

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

- Harold Anderson who recently had surgery.
- Bill Van Wattering - he was diagnosed with cancer and will be starting radiation treatment/other medicines.
- Dennis Zylstra as he heals from his heart attack.
- Lily Chapman - she was hospitalized with RSV and is now home.
- Ray Ohrtman - being treated for an infection in his foot on an outpatient basis.
- Mike Schmillen - for relief from pain and for his new doctor to find the correct path for this.
- Denny Houseman's brother, Bob, who is still hospitalized as he heals from his car accident and deals other health issues that have come up.
- Norb Manwarren - heart procedures done in early April.
- Joyce Lemke who is back in the hospital. They think she has pneumonia.

# Condolences to

Stacy, Ken and Kayla Mol and family on the passing of Stacy's dad, Ron Grove, on April 11 from time to eternity.

Jack Hamrick and family on the passing of Jack's wife, Charlene, on April 16 from time to eternity.

# Ryan Hoskins

Worship Director

Hello Hope Church! This is my first article for the newsletter and I wanted to use this opportunity to explain a difference you might've noticed since Easter Sunday. A few months back, we had a consultant come in to give suggestions on how we can improve our sound, lighting, and live stream. This consultant spent around 5 hours reviewing our current sound system, lighting, and computer systems we use. The consultant thought the area where we were lacking the most was with lighting in the sanctuary. After some discussion and thought, we decided that we would see some improvement if we installed LED string lights on the back of the cross. The LED lighting helps to provide some depth where you can now see the cross is in front of the white wall. The lighting also adds a neat outline on the back accent wall.

I have included two photos below so you can see the difference. I was really excited to see the improvement from one week to the next and thought this change made a positive difference to our live stream and in-person worship. I hope you can see the difference too!



Before



After





919 Grand Avenue  
Spencer, IA 51301  
(712)262-3016  
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](http://www.youtube.com/hopechurchspencer)

## Sunday School

**SUNDAYS:** 9:45 - 10:40 am ~ Preschool through Adult  
(until May 12)

## Hope Church Staff

<b>James Runcorn</b>	Lead Pastor
<b>Jay Van Gelder</b>	Youth Pastor
<b>Julia Andela</b>	Children & Families Director
<b>Ryan Hoskins</b>	Worship Director
<b>Terry Stevens</b>	Director of Adult Discipleship
<b>Michael Fujimoto</b>	Facilities Manager
<b>Jill Lowe</b>	Office Administrator
<b>Austin Bryan</b>	Youth Ministries Intern
<b>Tim Yeager</b>	Maintenance
<b>Levi Morris</b>	Treasurer
<b>Missy Lair</b>	Nursery

