

# Our Family

Hope Lutheran Monthly Newsletter

February 2023

Volume 13 No. 02

## *From the Pastor*

Usually, my Newsletter articles are a devotional talk to the people in (and outside of) the congregation. In light of the Congregation Meeting coming up on Feb 19 for planning, for this article I thought it would be good to speak to (1) what we decided in the past year, (2) what we did based on those decisions, and (3) where we are now. This will assist in letting the whole congregation know what is going on, since there may be things of which members are unaware since not everyone attends the quarterly meetings.

(1) What did the congregation decide regarding ministry? The question of our ministry was up in the air somewhat during the vacancy and pandemic.

All Christians have the broad directive to make disciples of all nations by baptizing and teaching them (Matt 28:18-20). Christ has delivered us from sin, death, and the power of the devil. He has brought us into salvation. Now we wish for others to join us in this good and gracious gift offered through the message of the Gospel.

The purpose of the Congregation Meeting on 27 Feb 2022 was to direct us in mission when the pandemic and its restrictions were mostly alleviated; we wanted to get back into the swing of things. The issue, though, was that Hope Lutheran Church has changed over the past few decades. We are a small congregation now; our attendance is typically under thirty on Sundays. The pool of people with available time, treasures, and talents is

shrinking. If we broaden our mission too much, we may not have the resources to effectively carry out all our missional goals as a congregation, which means we need to be more targeted in our approach.

When establishing a goal, we must be mindful of our starting point so we can make it realistic. After a lot of discussion at the Feb 2022 meeting, we reached a decision for our immediate goal: Make Hope Lutheran Church our mission. We decided to work to strengthen our own congregation in order to work on longer term goals in the future (outreach, evangelism, and missions). This mission acknowledges our starting point of fewer members and lower income as a congregation. Next up would be formulating measurable steps towards meeting our goal. This was set as the focus of our next meeting on 15 May 2022, which would also feature the election of members to the Parish Planning Council.

The May 2022 meeting revealed some significant issues that our congregation was facing, resulting from the stresses experienced over the past few years. One of them was readily evident when less than half the available leadership positions in the church were filled. In fact, if one person had not decided to let their name stand for the Council shortly before this meeting, we would not have enough people to still count as a charity under the BC Societies Act. That would mean we would lose our tax exemption status, among other things.

The major reason for empty positions at Hope is burnout. Many members have felt the strain of the great effort required to maintain

our church. This was definitely an issue before the pandemic with the pandemic only making it worse. Also, the fact that it really surprised congregants we had fewer people willing to serve revealed another major issue in our congregation: A breakdown in communication between the governing positions and the general body of the congregation.

The prolonged discussion at the May 2022 meeting determined a number of actions we could take to help Hope Lutheran Church. These include improving leadership and coordination between leadership and the congregation; improving communication; having an available list of tasks for people in the congregation to perform; putting out a request to the congregation to reflect on personal gifts, abilities, and resources they could offer to further Hope Lutheran's mission; offer new topics or styles of Bible studies; and hold more congregational events for our fellowship.

(2) What did we do? In general, we improved coordination and leadership as well as compiled or refreshed lists of Roles and Responsibilities for the various positions of service at the church.

Given the current size of our congregation, there is no way that we can fulfill everything listed in our bylaws. The Roles and Responsibilities lists are meant to simplify the listed tasks, especially for our smaller groups. There are different versions of the descriptions of the roles, from general (pamphlets) to moderate amounts of description (handouts) to more comprehensive information (detailed descriptions upon request). The information is available but there has yet to be any expressed interest from within the congregation, aside from those already in positions, by anyone willing to take on leadership roles in the church. Therefore, most positions on the PPC and boards are still vacant.

And then comes mentorship. It was suggested for younger members of our church

to have churchly mentors. While we do not have any formal system in place, after participating in a joint Altar Guild and Confirmation study on our worship space in the sanctuary, the confirmands may be called upon by the Altar Guild and other congregants serving in worship to assist with worship services in various capacities.

Improving congregational communication—another of our objectives—has been difficult since notice boards, monthly newsletters, weekly emails, our website, Facebook page, YouTube channel, etc. were already functioning and being regularly updated with new information. The only thing that we could change is having more face-to-face (or phone-to-phone) conversations about matters directly involving people in the congregation.

Along with the Roles and Responsibilities lists for different leadership positions previously mentioned, various lists of tasks that could be done at the church were compiled and included regular activities or help with one-off events. These lists were provided in the "Stewards in All Seasons" pamphlets printed in Sept 2022 (still available in the narthex and upon request). They have appeared elsewhere as well. A more targeted task list, for example, is the sign-up sheet for after-service coffee and fellowship, which is pinned to a notice board in the narthex to which several people have leant their names.

Congregational reflection on personal gifts, abilities, and resources has also been presented, and as a result some new people stepped forward to offer their efforts toward certain tasks around the church. Some of these tasks were one-offs and others were of limited duration.

Regarding Bible studies, a questionnaire was sent out twice asking congregants to suggest times and subjects of study but there were only a few returned. Therefore, weekly

Tuesday and Sunday studies and the monthly LWMLC study resumed per usual. Something new was a book discussion launched in Langford, currently reading through "The Hammer of God" by Bo Giertz. All four groups are usually small with a couple of new people often attending aside from our regulars.

And then we have congregational events. We had Rally Day on the second Sunday in September for the first time in years and our first Oktoberfest luncheon on Reformation Sunday. Both had good attendance (almost everyone in worship on Reformation Sunday came to the luncheon) but only a few of our relatively inactive members attended. The second annual tree decoration (complete with movie and treats afterward) also had a number of people come out, mostly the younger families. While we also considered worship events, like hymn-sing services, none have taken place so far.

(3) So where do we go from here? This is for the congregation to decide and will be discussed at the upcoming Congregation Meeting on 19 Feb 2023.

Until then, I can offer a number of considerations.

Our current goal:

- Strengthening Hope Lutheran Church is our mission
- We should focus on strengthening our congregation for
  - o Outreach
  - o Evangelism
  - o Missions

Where we are now:

- Slight improvements to congregational participation in worship, devotion, fellowship, and stewardship
- No new personnel in church leadership with many positions vacant
- Few new members attending
- Some faithful members have passed away this past year

- Our projected budget for 2023 has a deficit of \$33 586.75

Questions to consider:

- What would encourage people in the congregation to participate more?
- How do we reach people in our families who are not coming?
- What can we do to spread the Gospel
  - o among family and friends?
  - o in the neighbourhood?
  - o in the city?
- Do you feel reluctant to share your faith and what would help encourage you?
- What events at the church (e.g., talks, open question nights, open house, etc.) do you think might bring people in the door at least once?
- What should we do to address the budget?

May we all consider our roles and responsibilities to our congregation in faith. The Lord Jesus Christ bless and preserve us according to His good and gracious will that we may continue to live in and proclaim the Gospel all the days of our life. Amen.

God Bless,

Pastor Adam Chandler

## *Volunteer Appreciation Month*

February may be known as Friendship Month, but it is also Volunteer Appreciation Month!

Thanks to God who has blessed us with Pastor Chandler, a Shepherd to guide our flock!

Thanks to the Russell confirmands for baking cookies for after-church coffee this past Sunday. Please add your name to the sheet on the bulletin board if you have treats to share for future coffee hours.

Thanks to Eric, Nicole and their sons, and Bert, for organizing and taking care of our Sunday coffee hour.

There are new plants in the foyer. Would someone like to water them on the first Sunday of each month? Please let Louise know.

Thanks for putting your used stamps off your Christmas cards and letters into the round box in the foyer. They will be taken to the next LWML-C Convention with the sale proceeds to go to Mites.

If you have furniture, bedding, or kitchen ware that you are looking to donate, the Living Hope Church (the congregation who are renting our church hall) support families moving to Canada and setting up a new home. Please contact Louise, Pastor Alan or Evelyn for more info.

Thanks for all your donations to the clothing bin.

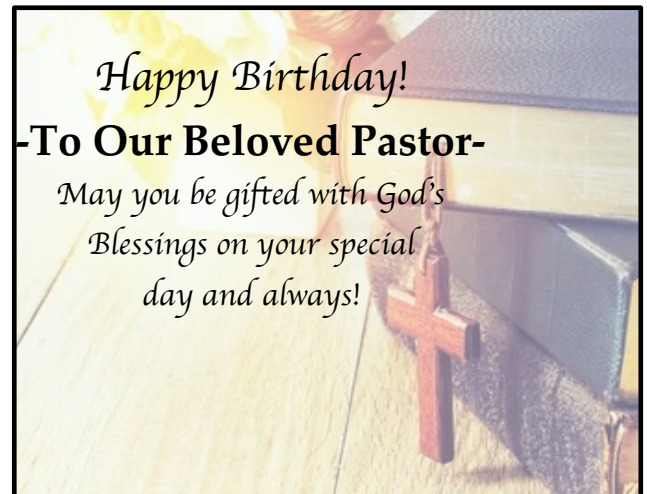
Thanks to the people who have already volunteered to be Greeters, as we would like to reinstate the tradition of welcoming people on Sunday mornings. If you haven't had a chance to do so yet, please contact Louise to let her know which Sunday works for you.

There is always room for one more participant on the PPC boards or as chairs; in the Thursday afternoon sewing group, the weekly or monthly Bible Studies, and the "one off" jobs around the church. Pastor or an Elder would be happy to direct you to whoever you need to speak with to share your time and talents.

Special thanks to Mario and Barbara for the Lenten soups for each Wednesday. Please speak to Barbara if you are able to help with setup or cleanup.

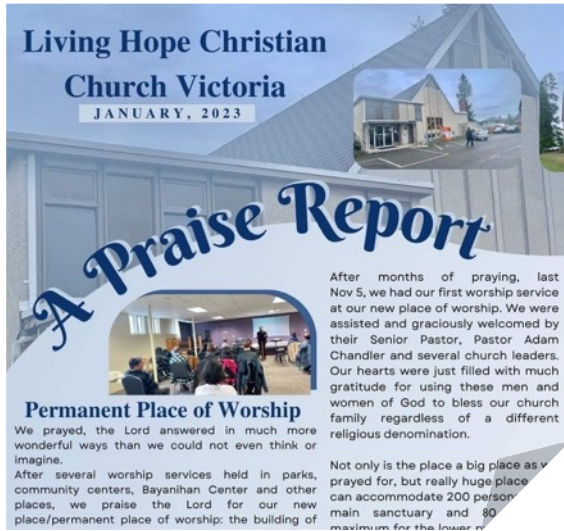
Thanks to each of you for prayers and for quietly doing God's work, such as: encouraging and supporting one another, doing tasks to keep our congregation and building functioning, supporting our Pastor, running the office and finance end of church business, telling, lecturing, writing, phoning or visiting others, serving on a board or committee or our music team, cleaning or gardening, baking or cooking, driving, helping people feel welcome, volunteering for something that you have not done before, and for the myriad other tasks that you do to give thanks to God by doing His work and sharing God's love with others. God's blessings to you all!

Louise



## Living Hope Christian Church

Living Hope Christian Church has a monthly Newsletter and in their January edition they express their thanks and praise to the Lord in finding a new home to worship in. To read the entire newsletter, a copy is posted on the bulletin board.



### What is Love?

by Gaylene Haugen, Christian Growth,  
Central LWML-C

*By this we know that we abide in Him and He in us, because He has given us of His Spirit. And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent His Son to be the Savior of the world. Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God. So we have come to know and to believe the love that God has for us. God is love, and whoever abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him. - 1 John 4:13-16 (ESV)*

SINCE I WAS A LITTLE GIRL growing up in small-town Saskatchewan, I have enjoyed the winter season; the snow falling and putting our area of the world to bed until spring. I like that cozy feeling you get as you start to warm up after being out in the cold. And, of course, the joy of the Christmas season at the end of the

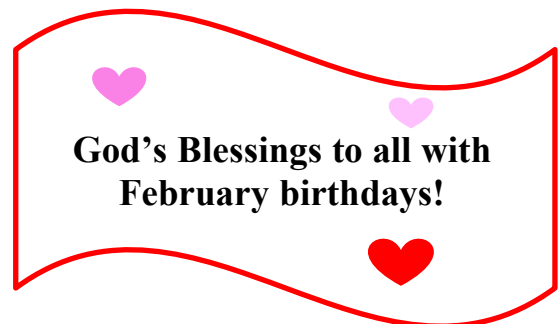
penitent season of Advent. Then we replace our kitchen calendar with a new one and wait for the promise of spring to appear.

In central Canada the winter temperatures and weather remain frigid well into March and sometimes even into April. In February, we turn our thoughts to the theme of LOVE. We look forward to celebrating—or avoiding—Valentine’s Day. There are decorations of hearts in classrooms, store windows, office buildings and restaurants. But what is LOVE?



As sinful human beings we live with the knowledge that “all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified by His grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus” (Romans 3:23-24). The world has a view of what love should look like, and many are often left disappointed because this view is fleeting. “For God so loved the world, that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life” (John 3:16). GOD IS LOVE!

**Prayer:** Thank you, dear heavenly Father, for love. Help us to acknowledge the earthly blessings You provide every day. Guide us to love because You first loved us by sending Your Son to be the atonement for our sins. In your name we pray. Amen





*February, the Month of Love — What Is This Thing Called Love?*

Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God... In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another... God is love... (1 John 4:7, 10-11, 16; ESV)

The cross of Jesus is the greatest demonstration of God’s love for us. We love because He first loved us. As God loves us, He also calls us to love others and our love is displayed through our actions. God also gifts us with the skills to do what we love to do.

The ladies of Redeemer and Hope LWMLC share their love for each other in weekly fellowship and love of neighbors by creating and distributing numerous tangible gifts of love: knitted sweaters and sewn receiving blankets for the babies of the Westshore health unit; and knitted lap robes and homemade clothing protectors for the elderly residents of Jesken Aerie. More quilts helped to create a home away from home for children and their families staying at Jenece Place while they received medical care in Victoria.



With service as our main focus to Esquimalt Neighborhood House, we assembled with loving hands: numerous pairs of mittens, toques, scarves, slippers, and pjs. These went into Christmas hampers just days before the snow came, and any extras were given to drop-in clients needing protection from the cold. With congregational support, eight boxes, two bags of groceries, and a cheque to the Mustard Seed Food Bank were delivered following Epiphany.

It is with great joy that we celebrated our first anniversary of sewing heart pillows for cardiac patients at the Royal Jubilee. Thus far, 500 pillows have been sewn. God calls us to be the love in our world. As the song goes, “They will know we are Christians by our love.” All glory and praise is His alone.

Where love is, God is! God’s love is unconditional, and as we feel God’s love and fill our hearts with His love, we share His love with the world.

In His Humble Service  
Deborah

*Back by Popular Demand ---Pancakes!*

Join us on February 22 for a Pancake Supper prior to the Ash Wednesday Service. This will be an opportunity to enjoy good company, good food, and to support our youth in their efforts to raise funds for their participation in the All-Lutheran Youth Gathering in Grand Forks, B.C., in July.





## *Lenten Services*

February 22, 2023	Wednesday	6:00 pm	Pancake Supper (free will offering, proceeds will go to fund our Youth's Activity)
		7:00 pm	Ash Wednesday Service
February 26, 2023	Sunday	10:30 am	First Sunday in Lent
March 1, 2023	Wednesday	6:00 pm	Soup Supper
		7:00 pm	Mid-week Service, Lent 1
March 5, 2023	Sunday	10:30 am	Second Sunday in Lent
March 8, 2023	Wednesday	6:00 pm	Soup Supper
		7:00 pm	Mid-week Service, Lent 2
March 12, 2023	Sunday	10:30 am	Third Sunday in Lent
March 15, 2023	Wednesday	6:00 pm	Soup Supper
		7:00 pm	Mid-week Service, Lent 3
March 19, 2023	Sunday	10:30 am	Forth Sunday in Lent
March 22, 2023	Wednesday	6:00 pm	Soup Supper
		7:00 pm	Mid-week Service, Lent 4
March 26, 2023	Sunday	10:30 am	Fifth Sunday in Lent
March 29, 2023	Wednesday	6:00 pm	Soup Supper
		7:00 pm	Mid-week Service, Lent 5
April 2, 2023	Sunday	10:30 am	Passion/Palm Sunday
April 6, 2023	Thursday	7:00 pm	Holy Thursday Service
April 7, 2023	Friday	10:30 am	Good Friday Service
April 9, 2-23	Sunday	9:00 am	Easter Breakfast (free will offering, proceeds will go to fund our Youth's Activity)
		10:30 am	Easter Sunday Service



Please invite a friend and/or family and join us this Lenten Season for fellowship and worship.

# Children's Corner and for those Young at Heart

*What is Ash Wednesday all about?*



You may see something strange happening in church on Ash Wednesday. You'll see your family and friends go forward to receive the sign of the cross on their foreheads. The unusual part about all of this is that it will be done with the ashes from last year's Palm Sunday palm branches.



*Why do we do this?*

Usually when someone gets dirty, they know they need water to get clean. The ashes that are put on our foreheads remind us that in sin we are dirty and need to be cleaned. It also helps us to remember the first time the sign of the cross was made on us at our Baptism. In the waters of Baptism, we are cleaned, and the dirt of sin is washed away. Ash Wednesday helps to remind us of this.

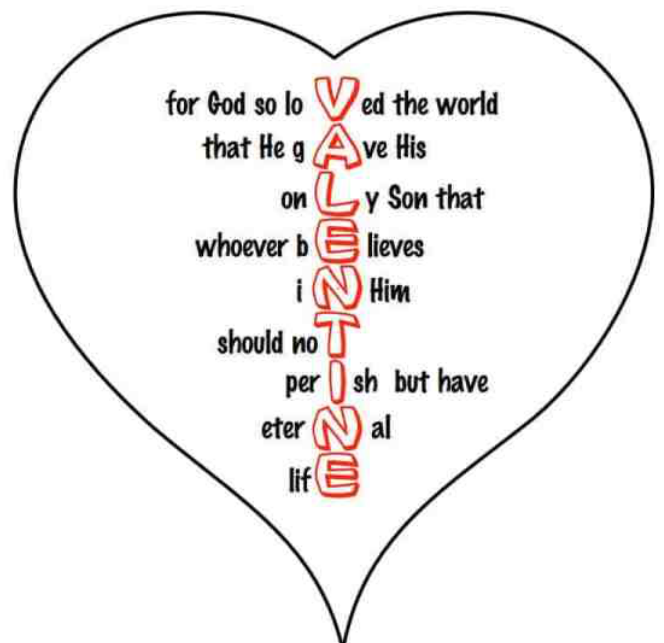
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## Lent Word Search



WEDNESDAY	RELIGION	EASTER	ASHES	CROSS
SACRIFICE	LITURGY	CHURCH	JESUS	PALMS
KINDNESS	FASTING	PURPLE	FORTY	LENT

## John 3:16



*Happy Valentine's Day!*



