

Hope Highlights

A publication of Hope Ev. Lutheran Church

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Pastor Gary Albert, editor

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The Light of the World

He was caught in an elevator during a power outage. There was a frightening jolt of the elevator when things suddenly stopped, and passengers were left in total darkness. The reaction of the seven folks caught in the elevator was predictable. They all started talking, some shouting for someone to push the buttons, to use the elevator phone to call 911. He said that everyone began to move around in the blackness to make sure they didn't touch anyone or get touched.

Then, after a few ominous minutes had passed, one of the passengers remembered the tiny flashlight he carried on his keychain. With the push of a button, a small, amber light filled the elevator car. Just like a little child relaxing when a night light is turned on in his/her bedroom, so, too, these weary and worried adults were encouraged by the light of the small flashlight, and found their fears disappeared with the darkness. For the next 45 minutes, they joked at their predicament, shared stories, and a bit of history about themselves. In our life experiences, that is the power of light overcoming darkness.

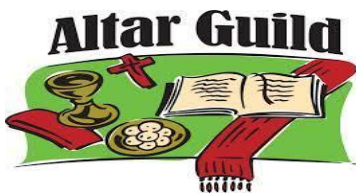
When Jesus walked among us, He said, *"I am the light of the world. Whoever follows Me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life"* (John 8:12). St. John, the evangelist, testifies in the opening verses of his gospel, *"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through Him all things were made; without Him nothing was made that has been made. In Him was life, and that life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it"* (John 1:1-5).

In our world where illumination takes place with the flip of a switch, we often forget the powerful impact and importance of those divine words. We forget just how dark things can be. Sadly, we forget that without the Savior we were all condemned to live in perpetual darkness and in the shadow of eternal death. Without the forgiveness Jesus Christ has won for all humanity, the blackness of our sin would be and remain all-encompassing.

Even worse, that darkness was damning. That is why Jesus Christ came into the world to be our light. He not only illuminates our many transgressions and temptations, He also shows how our Savior in His grace and mercy and through His sacrifice has taken away those sins through His atoning death on Calvary's cross. Now, we who are forgiven and freed from the deadly grasp of sin, death and the devil are given days, nights and an eternity where because of the Savior's great suffering, sacrifice, and glorious resurrection the darkness can no longer surround us. With Jesus, our path is bright and beautiful!

Dear Lord Jesus, modern ingenuity has given us artificial light. It is a wonder of human technology. But we are most truly grateful for Your light which has dispelled the darkness of humankind for 2,000 years. We rejoice that Your light will shine for all eternity. In Your name we give You our unending thanks and praise. Amen.

Pastor Gary Albert



We are looking for help with setting up for Holy Communion services. If you would be willing to assist with this special service opportunity, please contact Darleen Behling at # 906-544-2228. Your help would be greatly appreciated!



The Season of Lent begins on Wednesday, February 22nd. Our midweek Lenten services will be each Wednesday afternoon, beginning at 1:00 PM. Holy Communion will be celebrated on Ash Wednesday along with the imposition of ashes.

Our Lenten theme this year will focus on ***The Seven Last Words of Christ***. The words our Savior spoke from the cross reveal the love of the One who suffered there and His words inform us of the purpose, the meaning, the sufferings, and sufficiency of His atoning sacrifice. Seven times Jesus spoke from the cross and each of these seven last words still speak to us today as they remind us that the death of Christ is the clearest expression of God's redeeming love for all mankind.

Plan to join us for each of these midweek Lenten services. And why not invite a family member, neighbor, or friend to join you!

Hope Video/DVD Lending Library - For a change of pace these long winter days and nights, why not check out the excellent assortment of inspiring Christian videos and DVDs for your use. They are located on the shelves to the left of the greeting card display in the entryway. We ask that if you take one of the items, please put your name on the card attached to the item and put it in the ***checkout card box***. When you return the item, place it into the ***return basket***. The checkout system helps us keep track of the videos and DVDs. Notice, too, that there are some Christian music CDs and books on tape for your use. ENJOY!

February Birthdays & Wedding Anniversaries

Birthdays . . .

2	Luanne Gregas
10	Ken Boksa Duane Heikkinen
13	Marsha Musial
15	Bill Minchk
19	Joan Hojan
24	Paul Perlewitz
25	Leslie Baer
27	Otto Bramstadt

Anniversaries . . .

27	Gary & Cheryl Chapman
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Orphan Grain Train continues to send clothes and supplies to refugees from Ukraine. An urgent need right now is for new socks and underwear for children who are in desperate need of these basic items. All sizes for both boys and girls are needed. You may drop off your donations of these and other clothing items at

church through **Sunday, February 12**. Cash donations are also welcome. A delivery of all donated items will be made to St. Mark Lutheran Church in Wausau and then for delivery to the Orphan Grain Train Facility in Westfield. Thank you for opening your heart to this ministry. Questions can be directed to Vicky Holbrook or Joan Hojan. There is a basket in the Entryway for you to place your donations.

GIFTS RECEIVED DURING JANUARY . . . We extend our heartfelt gratitude to . . .

Tom & Darleen Behling - Organ Fund

Bonnie McAuly - Organ Fund

Tom & Linda Bybee - Thank offering

Memorial - In loving memory of Marsha Rosenberg given by her family and friends - Organ Fund

Memorial - In loving memory of Marsha Rosenberg given by her family and friends - General Fund

To date, gifts to the Organ Fund total \$61,824.63. The balance remaining is \$5,475.00. Our sincere thanks to all who have so generously supported the purchase of a new organ!



In preparation for the coming Lenten - Holy Week - Easter seasons, we are resuming choir rehearsals on **Sunday, February 12th** and **26th**, immediately following Fellowship. Choir will be singing for our worship services on Good Friday and Easter Sunday. New choir members are always most welcome. If you have questions, or for further information, please talk with our director, Jolene Albert.

AMAZONSMILE Program will be ending as of February 20. Our thanks to those who have supported Hope congregation through your participation in the program.

WOMEN OF HOPE - During the month of February, the *Women of Hope* will be collecting deodorant and paper towels for the Headwaters Food Pantry in Land O' Lakes. Your donations may be placed in the basket in the Narthex. Thank you for your support!

LWML Mite Boxes are available in the hallway by the Fellowship Hall doors. If you have used one in the past or are interested in supporting the mission ministries of the Lutheran Women's Missionary League please consider taking another one and using it to collect your mites for missions!

Camp Luther Registration Information for the upcoming summer is available on the shelves in the Narthex. A variety of exciting programs for children, youth, and adults are featured each summer. Camp Luther is just north of Three Lakes, right off Hwy 45. The camp facilities are amazing! Check it out! Hope congregation will provide financial assistance to any of our children who are interested in going to camp. For information, please speak with Pastor. Summer programs for kids are filling up quickly!

A Stewardship Thought - February 14th is Valentines Day and many people will claim that this is the day devoted to love. Gifts will be exchanged by many couples and much will be written about love. But if we stop and ask what is really true and never ending about love, we find the answer in God's Word. Look at and think about John 3:16: *"God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him, shall not perish, but have everlasting life."* What greater gift could any of us receive during this month or for the rest of our lives!

A Variety of Lenten Devotional Materials will be available on the table in the entryway. Please feel free to help yourself. The Lenten season provides a meaningful opportunity for you to begin personal/family devotions if you are not already doing so. Feel free to share any of the materials with others, also.

The Value of the Family for Children



Children brought up in the homes of their married dads and moms are more likely to finish school, not get in trouble with the law, experience better physical and emotional health, avoid addictions, and more, than children brought up in any other family structure. All of this has again and again been substantiated by extensive research. God's plan for the family works; by design it is intended to be the very best environment for children to grow up and become constructive, contributing adults. We know this is true, but how to make marriage and child-rearing acceptable and popular is the challenge. Let's make marriage and family popular again!