

# Hope Highlights

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## February 2024

### LIFE'S QUESTIONS

*". . . trembling with fear he (the Philippian jailer) fell down before Paul and Silas. Then he brought them out and said, 'Sirs, what must I do be saved?' And they said, 'Believe in the Lord Jesus. And you will be saved, you and your household'" (Acts 16:29-31).*

Have you ever wanted an answer to life's questions? I mean the really deep questions of life. Oliver Wendell Holmes, the father of the Supreme Court justice found those answers, or at least he thought he had. Working in the early days of anesthesia, Holmes was intrigued by the use of ether. In order to understand how his patients felt, he once had a dose of the anesthetic given to himself.

Between consciousness and oblivion, a profound thought came to him. The thought was of such magnitude that Holmes felt, if he could write it down, it would provide answers to the great questions of life. Sadly, when he awoke, the great thought was gone.

Hoping to recapture his answer, Holmes had the ether applied again; but this time he had a stenographer sitting nearby to record all that was said. The mask, holding a cloth saturated with ether, was placed over Holmes' nose and mouth. Just before he slipped into his anesthetized sleep, the thought reappeared. Using all his will, Holmes mumbled the meaningful message. Later, after he had revived, he asked the sentence be read to him. The sentence was, "The entire universe is permeated with a strong sense of turpentine."

I am sure you would agree the answers to life are not found in ether . . . or drugs . . . or money . . . or in any of the places where humankind normally looks. Sadly, many people are not as wise as Mr. Holmes who admitted he had been looking in the wrong places. The truth is, if you really wish to find the right answers to life's questions, you will need to turn to the Lord God. He who called this universe into being and knows everything about what was, is, and ever will be, is able to provide you and me with the answers we need to life's great questions.

Search the Scriptures and God will tell you how man's disobedience brought sin, sorrow and tragedy into His once-perfect world. In God's Word you can read how, when mankind asked, "Is there any way I can earn God's favor?" The Lord replied, "*No, the soul which sins shall die.*" But then the Lord took His answer one step further. He said, "No, you cannot save yourself. If you are going to be rescued, it will

happen by My will and according to My plan. That plan is this: so you might be saved, I have sent My only Son into this world. He will accomplish all the things you need to do, but cannot. He will fulfill My Law and atone for your sins and He will fulfill all the prophecies made about the Messiah. Finally, when all has been accomplished, He will die the death you deserved.

And when we ask the great question of life, "How can we be sure what You are telling us is true and trustworthy?" The Lord responds with His great answer. He says, "Go to My Son's grave and watch. If He has completed His work perfectly, He will rise from the dead." And so it was. Jesus did do as His Father had asked, and that was verified when He gloriously conquered sin, death and the power of the devil. On that day we received God's answer to our need: "*For God so loved the world, that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn, but that the world might be saved through Him*" (John 3:16-17).

Prayer: Dear Heavenly Father, for sending Your dear Son to answer our questions and provide the only way to forgiveness and eternal life, I offer You my heartfelt thanks and praise. Now may I bear witness to Him and the salvation His sacrifice has won for all mankind. In Jesus' name. Amen.



Eating a meal, opening a door, turning a page, picking up a hammer, are most often accomplished by using our hands. It would be very difficult for most of us to even imagine performing these and numerous other daily tasks without them.

Because hands are such an indispensable part of our lives, it should come as no surprise that human hands figure prominently in the events surrounding the Savior's suffering and death.

Our theme this Lent is *The Hands of the Passion*. When we consider Jesus and the people around Him in His Passion, we can't help but think of their hands - the hands that beat their chests, accepted money for betrayal, petulantly swung swords, pointed in accusation, beat and disavowed, praised, washed, were pierced, and offered eternal life. We can't help but think about how we sinners have had the same sinful hands of those who surrounded Jesus in His Passion, and how Jesus our Savior has touched us with His hands of grace and mercy. **Midweek Lenten services will begin at 1:00 PM on . . .**

Wednesday, February 14 Ash Wednesday - Hands of Repentance (Tax Collector)

Wednesday, February 21 Midweek 2 - Hands of Betrayal (Judas)

Wednesday, February 28 Midweek 3 - Hands of Misguided Zeal (Peter)

Wednesday, March 6 Midweek 4 - Hands of Hypocrisy (Caiaphas)

Wednesday, March 13 Midweek 5 - Hands of Brutality (Soldiers)

Wednesday, March 20 Midweek 6 - Hands of Self-Preservation (Pontius Pilate)



A big thank you to those who have donated food, and to those who have set up, heated and set out food, served and cleaned up in order for all of us to enjoy a time of fellowship together each week. To keep this much appreciated tradition going, **more volunteers are needed**. If you can serve on a team of two to take care of the setup, help with heating food and serving, please contact Nancy Vogt at (414)531-3411 or email bobandnancy4813@gmail.com. Training will be provided and you will serve no more than once per month. If you can help by bringing food or with clean-up/dishes, please do so as you are able. Thank you!



## Lenten Sunday Morning Bible Study

### He Chose the Nails

In this five-session video Bible study, author Max Lucado explores the many gifts that Christ provided to us at His crucifixion. These include not only the gift of the cross but also the gift of the thorns that pierced His brow. The nails that tore His flesh. The seamless robe that He removed for us. The empty tomb where He forever defeated sin, death, and the devil. The only required act for our salvation was the

shedding of blood, yet God did so much more. As we consider these gifts, we hear Him whisper, "I did it just for you." **Join us beginning Sunday morning, February 18, at 8:15 AM.**



Volunteers are needed on Saturday, February 17<sup>th</sup>, to sell candy sleds at the **Blizzard Blast Craft Show** in Conover. The candy sleds were assembled by the Women of Hope to be sold at the Dog Sled Races on February 3, but that event was cancelled. Luckily, we were able to get a spot at the Conover event. If you can spare an hour or more between 9 am - 4 pm on February 17<sup>th</sup>, please let Vicky Holbrook know. The craft show is held indoors!

## February Birthdays & Wedding Anniversaries

### Birthdays . . .

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

### Anniversaries . . .

5 Chuck & Jean Konnow  
 27 Gary & Cheryl Chapman

**THANK YOU** for the generous response to the **Wisconsin Orphan Grain Train's** plea for much needed baby and children's clothing, shoes, and boots. Your help is greatly appreciated and will be a wonderful blessing to the children who will be blessed by your donations. God bless each of you!



**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!



***The Faith, Hope and Love Campaign***  
***Rooted in Faith, Strengthened by Hope to Share our Love***

Dear Members and Friends of Hope,

*The Faith, Hope and Love Campaign* kicked off in January and to date we have received almost \$1600.00. Our goal is to raise \$100,000 in two years to support a new full-time pastor so we can continue to grow our congregation. The ultimate goal is to grow the kingdom of believers in our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

There are a number of initiatives that will require these additional funds over the next two years. Our first goal is to raise \$30,000 to support the renovations to the parsonage. This includes updates to the kitchen including cabinets and new appliances, upgrades to the plumbing in the kitchen and half bath, new floors throughout the parsonage and new paint. The congregation unanimously passed a resolution at the congregational meeting on January 21, 2024, to move forward with the renovations, with the understanding these funds would be paid back to the General Fund as the Campaign moves forward.

Other capital needs in the future will include new furnaces (for the church and parsonage), new windows where needed in the church, maintenance to the parking lot and cement walks around the church, water heaters for the church and parsonage, technology software and hardware, and support for the full-time pastor's salary, as well as office support and organist to enhance our ministry.

As we move forward with the Campaign, we will provide you with information on the priority and timing of each of these needs.

You will be receiving new printed materials in the near future about the Campaign.

God's Blessings,

**Jim Holbrook**, Chairman

***"Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see."***

Hebrews 11:1.



**Flowers for Easter Sunday** - This year, our florist is requesting a six week lead to order flowers for Easter. Costs are:

Single Easter lily - \$15

Tulips - \$12

Azalea - \$30

7" Hydrangea - \$35

Hyacinth - \$12

Daisy Mums - \$15

Daffodils - \$12

**ORDERING DEADLINE IS SUNDAY, FEB. 18.**

## Special Gifts Received during January . . . We extend our heartfelt gratitude to . . .

Bruce and Muriel Cozzi - Thank offering

Kim Edgar - a gift through the Thrivent *CHOICE* program

Tom and Darleen Behling - The Faith, Hope and Love Campaign

Bob and Nancy Vogt - The Faith, Hope and Love Campaign

Dave Steffen - The Faith, Hope and Love Campaign

Bill and Rin Hansen - The Faith, Hope and Love Campaign - In loving memory of Armin Barth

Gene and Joan Hojan - The Faith, Hope and Love Campaign - In loving memory of Armin Barth

Bill and Ellen Minchik - The Faith, Hope and Love Campaign - In loving memory of Armin Barth

Jim and Vicky Holbrook - The Faith, Hope and Love Campaign - In loving memory of Rodney Bathke

Richard and Denice Neil - The Faith, Hope and Love Campaign - In loving memory of Rodney Bathke

Barbara Dorlac - The Faith, Hope and Love Campaign - In loving memory of Rodney Bathke

Carole Givens - The Faith, Hope and Love Campaign

Pastor Gary & Jolene Albert - The Faith, Hope and Love Campaign - In loving memory of Rod Bathke

Thank you to Cheryl and Bill Gyzen for the beautiful *Lion and the Lamb* figure in the Fellowship Hall.



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!

### THE DIVINE SERVICE: An Explanation

Our worship before God is based on what He has taught us through His Word, the Bible. Since it is God who graciously gives us life and salvation, we first receive from Him and then respond in prayer and praise. This is called a "Divine Service" because in it God serves us His Word and Sacraments. He serves us His gifts, and we thankfully receive. Our worship stems from our faith, and speaks the words of faith given us by God. A *Liturgy* describes the order and structure of any given church service. Our Church follows the basic liturgical orders used by the Church for the last 2,000 years. It has its roots in the Old Testament worship practices and, as seen by the Scripture passages below, is based on the teaching of the Bible. The particular liturgy outlined is the order of service for Holy Communion, the primary Sunday service of the Church.

**SERVICE PART:** Pre-service Music

**Scriptural Basis:** I Samuel 16:23

**Meaning:** Once seated, silently pray the *Prayer upon Entering* provided in your bulletin. Use this time to reverently reflect on your relationship with God and other people this past week as you prepare to receive the Lord's Supper. Step away from the clutter and busy-ness of everyday life with moments of prayer, such as those in the front cover of your hymnal.

cont'd.

**SERVICE PART:** Invocation

**Scriptural Basis:** Matthew 28:19; Colossians 3:17

**Meaning:** We begin in the name of the Holy Trinity, one God in three Persons, to signify our worship as exclusively Christian and to remember we gather as God's baptized people. Gathered in His name, we are sure of His presence and His blessing.

**SERVICE PART:** Confession

**Scriptural Basis:** I John 1:8-9; Romans 3:9-12, & 7:8-25. Psalm 51

**Meaning:** We cannot approach the holy God in our natural condition as sinners. Confession assures us of a clean slate before God and prepare us to worship with a clear conscience.

**SERVICE PART:** Absolution

**Scriptural Basis:** John 20: 21-23; Matthew 18:18.

**Meaning:** God is gracious and merciful. He forgives us for Christ's sake. This assures us that we receive the rest of His gifts in this Divine Service and give Him thanks for them, having been set free from the burden of sin.



***"So these three things continue forever: faith, hope, and love. And the greatest of these is love" I Corinthians 13:13.***

God loves you, because God is love. He loves you, not because of who you are, but because of who He is. He just can't help loving you. Do you feel unlovable? It doesn't matter. God still loves you. You can't stop that kind of love. You can only surrender.

Here's hoping that this year, Valentine's Day finds you feeling loved by the One who loves you most. The very One who has put your name on His palm, who has counted the very hairs on your head, and who has shown you love by sacrificing His only Son.

Over the years, candy conversation hearts remain a favorite to give and receive. So, what if you imagined God's words to you on them? Here are four candy hearts from God to your sweet soul, His beloved children.

1. **MY LOVE** - God told us in John 15:13, *"Greater love has no one than this . . ."* And then He mentioned His Son. Truly the love that God shows you is real. And in John 15:9, Jesus reminds you, *"As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Abide in My love."*
2. **FEAR NOT** - Our heavenly Father knows we are sometimes afraid, and yet He whispers to us that we do not have to fear. It has been said that God mentions fear over 365 times in His Word. Enough times for you to read one verse for each day of the year.
3. **4EVER LOVE** - God tells you in Jeremiah 31:3, that He has loved you with an everlasting love. You are forever loved. It is a love that will never end.
4. **U R MINE** - Isaiah 43:1 tells you that God has called you by name, and then He tells you, "You are Mine forever." To be called by name, by the very One who hung the stars in place. Wow!

*Father, thank You for loving me unconditionally. Help me pass that love along today to someone who needs it. Amen.*