

## DECEMBER NEWSLETTER 2023

Dear members and friends of Hope Community Presbyterian Church,

As we gather in the midst of a crisp and enchanting Northern Minnesota winter, we find ourselves on the threshold of the Advent season—a time of hope, anticipation, and reflection on the profound significance of Christ's birth. In this December newsletter, we will explore the themes of Advent through the lens of the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, finding inspiration in the teachings and stories of Jesus.

**Matthew: The Gospel of Hope** In the Gospel of Matthew, we encounter the story of Joseph and Mary, who embraced the unexpected arrival of the Messiah with unwavering faith. This Advent, let us take a cue from their courage and trust in God's plan, even when the path ahead is uncertain. As we gaze upon the snow-covered landscapes of our beloved Northern Minnesota, let it be a reminder that God's promises, like the first snowfall, are always a breathtaking gift.

**Mark: Preparing the Way** In the Gospel of Mark, we hear the voice of John the Baptist, crying out in the wilderness, "Prepare the way for the Lord!" As we prepare for the Advent season, let us examine our hearts and lives. Just as we ensure our homes are warm and cozy for the winter, let us also create a welcoming space within our hearts for the arrival of Christ.

**Luke: The Story of the Shepherds** In Luke's Gospel, we encounter the shepherds who received the angelic proclamation of Jesus' birth. These humble workers in the fields remind us that the good news of Christ is for all people, regardless of their station in life. As we share warmth and kindness with our neighbors during the cold winter months, may we also share the message of hope found in the birth of our Savior.

**John: The Light of the World** The Gospel of John beautifully describes Jesus as the Light that shines in the darkness. In the darkest days of winter, let us remember that the light of Christ can never be extinguished. The Advent candles we light each week serve as a reminder of the increasing light in our lives as we draw nearer to the celebration of Christ's birth.

As we come together in worship and fellowship throughout this Advent season, let us keep these Gospel messages close to our hearts. Together, we can find joy and hope in the midst of the Northern Minnesota winter, just as the people of old found hope in the promise of the Messiah.

Join us for our Advent services and activities, where we will explore these Gospel themes in greater depth and celebrate the birth of our Savior. Let us also take this opportunity to share the warmth of Christ's love with our community through acts of kindness and generosity.

May your December be filled with the peace, love, and joy that only Christ can bring.

Peace and blessings,  
Rev. Wendy

## Sunday Lectionary Readings for December 2023

Date	Old Testament	Psalm	New Testament	Gospel
12/3/2023	Isa. 64: 1-9	Psalm 80: 1-7 & 17-19	1 Cor. 1: 3-9	Mark 13:24-37
12/10/2023	Isa. 40: 1-11	Psalm 85: 1-2 & 8-13	2 Peter 3: 8-15a	Mark 1: 1-8
12/17/2023	Isa. 61: 1-4 & 8-11	Psalm 126	1 Thess. 5: 16-24	John 1: 6-8 & 19-28
12/24/2023 Morning	2 Samuel 7: 1-11 & 16 and Luke 1: 46b-55	Psalm 89: 1-4 & 19-26	Romans 16: 25-27	Luke 1: 26-38
12/24/2023 Evening	Isa. 9: 2-7	Psalm 96	Titus 2: 11-14	Luke 2: 1-14 & 15-20
12/25/2023 Dawn	Isa. 62: 6-12	Psalm 97	Titus 3: 4-7	Luke 2: 1-7 & 8-20
12/25/2023 Day	Isa. 52: 7-10	Psalm 98	Heb. 1: 1-4 & 5-12	John 1: 1-14
12/31/2023	Isa. 61:10 – 62:3	Psalm 148	Gal. 4:4-7	Luke 2: 22-40

### Happy December Birthdays

- |                     |                      |
|---------------------|----------------------|
| 1- Bruce Bergman    | 19- Holly Hadrava    |
| 3- Janet Koski      | 24- Larry Salo       |
| 6- Spencer Hjelle   | 28- Claude Erickson  |
| 12- Ophelia Bergman | 29- Diane Hakala     |
| 14- Carol Umhauer   | 29- Armand Rafferty  |
| 15- Tom Hewett      | 30- Barb Christenson |

### Session Highlights

- The Memorial Committee has decided to transfer memorial funds to the church general fund to be available when needed.
- We are waiting to hear back from the Phillips, WI Presbyterian church about having some of their members come give a presentation on their successful revitalization efforts.
- Congregational discussions will be planned to follow that presentation and will happen no later than the season of Lent.

### In Sympathy

- We offer our sympathies to the family of **Carol Ewens** who passed away on Nov. 26. Arrangements are pending with Bauman Family Funeral Home.
- We offer our sympathies to the family of **Donna Burchell** who passed away on Nov. 19. A memorial service will be planned for next summer.

### Congregational Meeting

We will hold our Annual Congregational Meeting on Sunday, Dec. 3 following worship. The purpose of the meeting will be to elect Class of 2026 Elders and Deacons and to discuss the business of selling the CE building.

### Calendar

Mondays, 1:30 p.m. – Food for Thought  
 Tuesdays, 2:00 p.m. – Bible Study (not Jan. 2)  
 Sun, Dec. 3, 10:00 a.m. – Advent begins,  
     Congregational Meeting, Hanging Greens  
 Tue, Dec. 5, 12:15 p.m. – Worship Committee  
 Sun, Dec. 17, 11:00 a.m. – Burning Prayers  
 Thur, Dec. 21, 12:30 p.m. – Support Committee  
 Thur, Dec. 21, 1:00 p.m. – Session meeting  
 Sun, Dec. 24, 10:00 a.m. – Christmas Eve Sunday  
     morning service  
 Sun, Dec. 24, 4:30 p.m. – Christmas Eve  
     Candlelit service  
 Sun, Dec. 31, 10:00 a.m. – Stephanie F. preaches  
 Sun, Jan. 7, 10:00 a.m. – Rev. Davis preaches

### Christmas Joy Offering

Each year we collect the PC(USA) Christmas Joy offering which goes to support church workers in financial need and students in Presbyterian-related schools. If you would like to donate to this offering, you may use the Christmas Joy envelope or write a check to HCPC and write ‘Christmas Joy’ in your check memo.

### **Poinsettias**

If you would like to purchase a poinsettia, the cost will be \$10. Please let the office know the names of people who the poinsettia will be in memory/honor of.

### **Prayer Burning**

You are welcome to place private prayers in the **prayer box** at the back of the sanctuary anytime. These unread prayers will be burned outside the church following worship on Dec. 17, and the ashes will be spread on the church gardens.

### **Deacons**

The Deacons are again collecting donations of hats, mittens and other winter wear to hang on our Community Clothesline. Donations of food or money are also welcome to help keep our Little Free Pantry stocked. Checks can be made out to the Deacons Fund.

### **Offering Envelopes**

Envelopes will soon be available to pick up at the church. If you would like yours mailed to you, please contact the church office.

### **Christmas Concerts**

- Choralaires – Fri. 12/1, 7pm Gethsemane, Virginia
  - Sun, 12/3, 2pm Our Saviors, Virginia
- Voices of Reason –
  - Sun. 12/3, 3pm Our Saviors, Hibbing
- Range of Voices
  - Fri. 12/8, 7pm – Chisholm Baptist Church
  - Sun. 12/10, 2pm – Gethsemane, Virginia
- Merry Tuba Christmas
  - Sat. 12/9, 1pm – Rock Ridge High School
- The Sectionals
  - Tue. 12/12, 6pm – United Ch. of Christ, Biwabik
- Mesabi Community Band
  - Thurs. 12/14, 7pm Eveleth Auditorium



# Merry Christmas

## Christian Education

DECEMBER 2023

### Advent Season

**December 3- HOPE**  
Mark 13:24-37

- Signs of things to come -Advent can mean Waiting
- Listen to Jesus' words and stay close to Him
- We have nothing to fear. His gift to us is His presence
- God is faithful and gives us many spiritual gifts

**December 10 - PEACE**  
Mark 1:1-8

- God sent John the Baptist to prepare the way for Jesus -
- instead of using God to make our lives more comfortable we need to listen and follow his words

**December 17 - JOY**  
John 1:6-8,19-28

- Do what is good; rejoice always and have courage
- John the Baptist teaches us courage to trust one another just like how the people trusted John the Baptist when he said that Jesus will be our way to wash our sins away

**December 24 - LOVE**  
Christmas Eve - Sunday  
Candlelight Service

- Glory to God forever through Christ

**December 25 - CHRIST**  
Christmas Day

Luke 2: 1-20; John 1: 1-14  
Blessings of the Christ Child

Just believe God does impossible things

December 31

New Year's Eve

And the Child grew and became strong in spirit, filled with wisdom; and the grace [favor] of God was upon Him." This is the normal expectation for every Christian. Specifically, like Jesus, we are to grow noticeably, vigorously, spiritually and relationally.

**Birthday Corner**  
Hollie Hadrawa December 19  
Riley Zezel December 19

### Christian Education

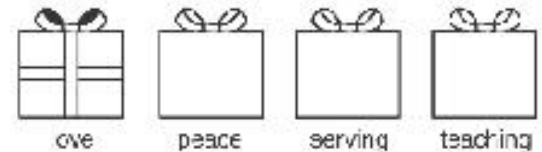
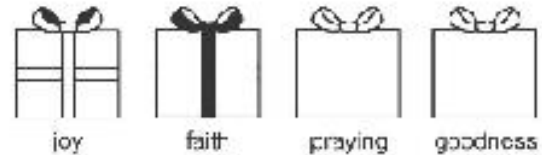
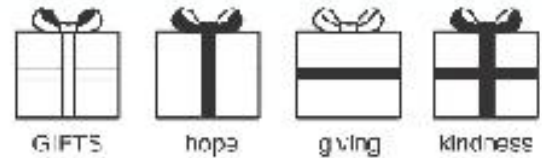
Ages 3+

December 3, 2023 - 1 Corinthians 1:3-9

God is Faithful

God gives us many spiritual gifts.

Draw on the gift boxes to fill in the pattern.



Hope Community Presbyterian Church  
212 So 5th Ave. Virginia, MN 55792  
<http://hopecommunitypc.org>

Enter your **SECRET CODE** to unlock games on  
[games.childrensbulletins.com](http://games.childrensbulletins.com)































**SECRET CODE!**  
**AKMBE7**

We are in Advent season and remember advent means coming or arrival, or even waiting. Who is coming? We watch with hope, peace, joy, and love at the arrival of Jesus, the Christ child. Think of ways you can share your deepest gifts: hope and faith, peace, love, and joy with those around you.

**Peace and Blessings**

Sunday Dec. 3	Sunday Dec. 10	Sunday Dec. 17	Sunday Dec. 24	Monday Dec. 25	Sunday Dec. 31 New Year's Eve
<p>Mark 13:24-37 <b>HOPE</b> Communion Hanging of the Greens and pizza</p>	<p>Mark 1:1-8 <b>PEACE</b></p>	<p>John 1:6-8; 19-28 <b>JOY</b></p>	<p>Christmas Eve Candlelight Service <b>LOVE</b></p>	<p>Christmas Luke 2: 1-20; John 1: 1-14 </p>	<p>Happy New Year </p>

# Christmas Advent Calendar

<b>1</b>  Luke 1:26	<b>2</b>  Luke 1:30	<b>3</b>  Luke 1:31	Luke 1:32 <b>4</b> 	<b>5</b>  Luke 1:38
Luke 2:1 <b>6</b> 	Luke 2:3   	Luke 2:4-5 <b>8</b> 	<b>9</b>  Luke 2:6	 Luke 2:7 <b>10</b> 
<b>11</b>  Luke 2:8	Luke 2:9 <b>12</b> 	<b>13</b>  Luke 2:10	Luke 2:11 <b>14</b> 	 Luke 2:12 <b>15</b> 
Luke 2:13-14 <b>16</b> 	<b>17</b> Luke 2:16   	Luke 2:17  <b>18</b>	<b>19</b>  Luke 2:20	Mathew 2:1  <b>20</b> 
<b>21</b>  Mathew 2:10	Mathew 2:11 <b>22</b> 	<b>23</b>  Isaiah 9:6	John 3:16 <b>24</b>	<i>Merry Christmas</i>