

FEBRUARY NEWSLETTER 2024

Dear Members and Friends of Hope Community Presbyterian Church,

As we find ourselves in the heart of mid-winter, it's not uncommon to experience feelings of loss and even a touch of the "mid-winter blues." The days are shorter, the temperatures are colder, and for some, this season can bring about a condition known as Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD). During these challenging times, we turn to the comforting words of Psalm 37 to find solace and hope.

Psalm 37 is a beautiful reflection on God's guidance, provision, and love, even in the midst of trials and difficulties. It reminds us that, like the changing seasons, our lives also go through various seasons. Let's explore some key verses from this Psalm and how they can help us navigate the mid-winter blues.

1. Trust in the Lord and do good.

The first verse of Psalm 37 encourages us to trust in the Lord and do good. When the winter months make us feel low, it's essential to remember that God is always with us. We can find joy by doing good deeds, helping others, and spreading kindness even during the darkest days.

2. Delight yourself in the Lord.

Verse 4 reminds us to delight in the Lord. Just as we find joy in the beauty of a snow-covered landscape, we can find delight in our relationship with God. Spending time in prayer, meditation, and seeking God's presence can bring warmth to our hearts.

3. Commit your way to the Lord.

Verse 5 advises us to commit our ways to the Lord. During times of loss or sadness, it's easy to feel overwhelmed. But by surrendering our worries and cares to God, we can find peace and strength to endure.

4. Rest in the Lord.

Verse 7 encourages us to rest in the Lord's presence. In the midst of seasonal affective disorder or other challenges, taking time to rest in God's love and grace can bring much-needed relief.

5. The steps of a man are established by the Lord.

Verse 23 reminds us that God guides our steps. When we feel lost or directionless, God is our compass. God leads us through the winter season and into the brighter days of spring.

6. Wait for the Lord and keep his way.

Verse 34 encourages us to wait for the Lord and keep God's way. Just as we patiently await the arrival of spring, we can trust that God's timing is perfect, and that God will bring new life and hope into our circumstances.

7. The salvation of the righteous is from the Lord.

Finally, verse 39 reminds us that our salvation comes from the Lord. In times of loss or despair, we can find hope in the assurance of God's ultimate deliverance and salvation.

As we journey through the mid-winter season, let us hold fast to the wisdom and comfort found in Psalm 37. It reminds us that even in the coldest and darkest moments of life, God's love and guidance are ever-present. We can find hope and joy by trusting in God, delighting in God's presence, and committing our ways to God's care. May the warmth of God's love fill your hearts and dispel the mid-winter blues, and may you find comfort and strength in God's promises.

Peace and blessings,
Rev. Wendy

Sunday Lectionary Readings for February 2024

Date	Old Testament	Psalm	New Testament	Gospel
2/04/2024	Isa. 40: 21-31	Psalm 147: 1-11 & 20c	1 Cor. 9: 16-23	Mark 1: 29-39
2/11/2024	2 Kings 2: 1-12	Psalm 50: 1-6	2 Cor. 4: 3-6	Mark 9: 2-9
2/18/2024	Gen. 9: 8-17	Psalm 25: 1-10	1 Peter 3: 18-22	Mark 1: 9-15
2/25/2024	Gen 17: 1-7 & 15-16	Psalm 22: 23-31	Rom. 4: 13-25	Mark 8: 31-38

Happy February Birthdays

- | | |
|-----------------------|-------------------------|
| 6- Wendy Christianson | 13- Craig Mason |
| 7- Greg Chad | 13- Meghan Green |
| 8- Lana Lee | 15- Paul Peterson |
| 9- Darlene Hadrava | 21- Dwight Day |
| 10- Beth Hestetune | 21- Joan Kaurala |
| 10- Miles Koski | 26- Jonathan Day |
| 13- Tom Kesanen | 26- Bev Peterson |
| | 28- Shelley Christensen |

Session Highlights

- The next step in selling the CE building will be assembling an Administrative Commission as approved at the Feb. 3 Presbytery meeting. Rev. Wendy, Spencer Hjelle, and Dawn Trexel have agreed to be on the commission.
- Arrangements were made for representatives from First Presbyterian Church in Phillips, WI to visit our church on 1/27 & 1/28.

In Sympathy

- We offer our sympathies to the family of **Jackie Anderson** who passed away on Jan. 8. A memorial service is planned for Sat., Feb. 10 at 1pm. The family is requesting a headcount for those planning to attend the catered meal following the service. Please contact the church to be added to the list of those planning to attend the meal.
- We offer our sympathies to the family of **Frank Del Greco** who passed away on Jan. 17. Funeral arrangements are pending.

Calendar

Mondays, 1:30 p.m. – Food for Thought
 Tuesdays, 2p.m. – Bible Study
 Sat, Feb. 10, 1p.m. – Jackie Anderson memorial
 Sun, Feb. 11, 10:00 a.m. – Jazz Sunday!
 Wed, Feb. 14, 5:30 p.m. – Ash Weds., meals begin

Phillips, WI Visitors

We are so appreciative that representatives from First Presbyterian Church in Phillips, WI took the time to visit our church on January 27 & 28. Our guests included Pastor Matthew Arneson and his wife, Denise, and Mark & Reggie Distin. The group met with Elders and Deacons Saturday evening for a discussion and meal. At Sunday worship, Pastor Matthew gave the sermon. Following worship, we met downstairs for a meal and a presentation on revitalization efforts at their church. During a time when many churches are struggling, we can find strength and comfort from relationships with other congregations who have and are experiencing similar challenges. Hearing their story may help us to creatively and thoughtfully navigate our own journey.

Lenten Meals and Discussions

To follow-up on ideas we gained from our Phillips, WI visitors, we plan to have a series of six congregational discussions in conjunction with Lenten soup meals. These will begin on Ash Wednesday, Feb. 14 at 5:30 p.m. We will have a short liturgy and then a focused discussion during the meal. The discussions will help us develop a vision for the future of our church and a plan for how to achieve our goals. We hope you will join us!

Jazz Worship Service

February 11

We are hosting a Jazz Worship Service on Sunday, Feb. 11, at our 10:00 am Worship Service. You are encouraged to join this celebration of the Transfiguration of Jesus. Talented area musicians will join our Instruments of Hope to present a transforming worship experience for all. Bring your friends and neighbors. See you there!



Annual Report

Annual reports will be available at the church by Sunday, Feb. 11. Session will review and approve the report at the Feb. 15 Session meeting. If you would like a copy of the report sent to you, please contact the church.

One Great Hour of Sharing

Lent is the time that the One Great Hour of Sharing special offering is collected. This offering is made by Presbyterians around the world to provide relief from natural disasters, hunger, poverty and oppression. You may use the special OGHS envelopes at the church, or checks made out to HCPC with OGHS in the memo can be mailed to the church.

Souper Bowl of Caring

Once again, we will be collecting donations for the “Souper Bowl of Caring” which is February 11th - Super Bowl Sunday. The soup pots will be out on that Sunday but there will also be a “Tomato Soup Can” container out in the South room the next few Sundays for you to use any time between now then. Donations go to the Salvation Army Supper Club. Please make checks out to HCPC with Souper Bowl in the memo. Thank you so much for your support, it is greatly appreciated.



Artificial Christmas Tree Fund

Instigated by Sue Stevens, Self-appointed Chief Elf of Hope Community Presbyterian Church

Our congregation is slowly but surely reaching the age of maturity. In other words, most of us are in our golden years and finding that things we used to do without giving a second thought are having us think twice, or perhaps thrice, before beginning a routine task. Nothing has brought this to the forefront like the acquiring, the decorating, and the dismantling of our church’s Christmas tree.

This year, Judy and Claude Erickson volunteered to retrieve a tree from their land and haul it to the church. Once there, the tree had to be fashioned to fit into the sturdy tree stand. As you may know, decorating the tree begins with someone climbing the 8-foot ladder and creatively draping the tree lights. Once the lights are draped, the decorating commences – making sure to get some bulbs on those uppermost branches.

I was not there for the input of the tree, but I was there to water it and to dispose of it. John Pearsall, with the aid of his trusty little battery powered chainsaw, cut off the lower branches before toppling the tree with me holding onto the topple part and easing it down to the floor as it toppled. A mess of tree shavings remained as a trail of pine needles led from the sanctuary, down the stairs and out the door to his pickup.

With an artificial-pre-lit tree, we could forego the fetching and dismantling of a real tree and the angst of getting the lights on the uppermost branches.

At ½ price, a good pre-lit 10 to 12-foot tree can run up to \$1,500. This amount is more than we will need, which would allow us the flexibility to purchase other decorations we might want OR donate the extra funds to our Little Free Food Pantry: a win/win scenario, in my opinion.

Please send your donations to the office. Dawn and I will keep track of the donations on our “Artificial CHRISTMAS TREE Fund” thermometer, displayed between the sanctuary and the coffee room. A red donation bucket will also be placed there for you to toss in any extra change you might have on Sunday mornings.

May the spirit of Christmas be in your heart all year long.

Your Chief Elf, Sue



LOVE & LENT



CHRISTIAN EDUCATION & YOUTH NEWS

February 2024



Elementary Sunday School

February 4
Mark 1:29-39

We learn Jesus is a source of healing and restoration.

February 11
Transfiguration Sunday
Souper Bowl of Caring

Jazz Sunday
Mark 9:2-9

With the Transformation we know Jesus is God's beloved Son. We are to listen to him.

February 18
Mark 1:9-15

We learn as Jesus is tempted, that trials and temptations do not stop Jesus or stop God's plans.

February 25
Mark 8:31-38

God's ways and plans are not like ours, but we can trust He is in control even when things do not go our way. Trust in God, always.

Love & accept one another as God loves us. 

Souper Bowl of Caring

Super Bowl Sunday this year is **Sunday, February 12**. We are still trying to "tackle hunger." The donations will go to the Salvation Army Supper Club again this year.

Please try to continue to contribute to this cause.

Thank you so much as your help is greatly appreciated. You may mail donations or just drop them off at church.



One Great Hour of Sharing

I will mail the Lenten Fish Banks in February. Remember to try to fill them a little each day or week. We will be collecting them on **Palm Sunday March 24**.

They may be brought to church, or dropped off at the CE Building any time.

The first Sunday before Lent is February 11th which will be a Jazz service.

Ages 8+

February 26, 2024 - Mark 8:11-26

Jesus Tells What Is to Come

Jesus spoke plainly to His disciples. He told them that He would suffer many things.

Find these items in the picture below.



Hope Community Presbyterian Church
212 So. 5th Ave. Virginia, MN 55790
<http://www.hopcpe.com>



Christian Education Calendar

Sunday February 4	Sunday February 11	Ash Wednesday February 14	Sunday February 18	Sunday February 25
Mark 1:29-39 Jesus heals many.	Mark 9:2-9 Transfiguration Jazz Celebration Sunday 	Love One Another Valentine's day 	Mark 1:9-15 John the Baptist prepares the way.	Mark 8:31-38 Taking up one's cross.
		 Lent		