

## APRIL NEWSLETTER 2024

Dear Members and Friends of Hope Community Presbyterian Church,

As we step into the vibrant month of April and enter spring in Northern Minnesota, we are greeted by the unmistakable signs of spring all around us. In the midst of the thawing earth and the awakening of nature, we find ourselves immersed in the beauty of renewal, a theme echoed in the verses of Psalm 118:19-25:

*"Open for me the gates of the righteous; I will enter and give thanks to the Lord. This is the gate of the Lord through which the righteous may enter. I will give you thanks, for you answered me; you have become my salvation. The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone; the Lord has done this, and it is marvelous in our eyes. The Lord has done it this very day; let us rejoice today and be glad."*

In these verses, we are reminded of the gates of righteousness that stand open before us, inviting us to enter and give thanks to the Lord. Just as the earth awakens from its winter slumber, we too are called to awaken our hearts to gratitude and praise for the blessings that surround us.

In northern Minnesota, the transition from winter to spring is a profound testament to the faithfulness of God. The once-frozen landscape begins to thaw, revealing glimpses of new life waiting to burst forth. As the snow recedes, it uncovers patches of green grass and delicate wildflowers, a reminder of God's promise of renewal and restoration.

Moreover, the imagery of the rejected stone becoming the cornerstone speaks to the transformative power of God's love. In the same way that spring breathes new life into the world, God has the power to take what is broken and discarded and turn it into something beautiful and essential.

As we witness the marvels of spring unfolding around us, let us take a moment to pause and reflect on the ways in which God is working in our lives. Let us give thanks for the blessings of the past season and eagerly anticipate the blessings that await us in the season to come.

In this season of renewal, may we be inspired to open our hearts to the transforming power of God's love and to rejoice in the marvelous works of the Lord. Let us embrace the beauty of spring with hearts full of gratitude and praise, knowing that the Lord is indeed our salvation and our cornerstone.

Wishing you all a blessed and joyous April,  
Rev. Wendy

### Sunday Lectionary Readings for April 2024

Date	Old Testament	Psalm	New Testament	Gospel
April 7, 2024	Isaiah 65: 17-25	Psalm 133 Psalm 3	Acts 4: 32-35 1 John 1:1 – 2:2	John 20: 19-31
April 14, 2024	Isaiah 6: 1-9a	Psalm 40: 1-5 Psalm 4	Acts 3: 12-19 1 John 3: 1-7	Luke 24: 36b -48
April 21, 2024	Zech. 10: 1-12	Psalm 80: 1-7 Psalm 23	Acts 4: 5-12 1 John 3: 16-24	John 10: 11-18
April 28, 2024	Exodus 19: 1-6	Psalm 22: 25-31 Psalm 118: 19-25	Acts 8: 26-40 1 John 4: 7-21	John 15: 1-8

## Happy April Birthdays

- |                     |                        |
|---------------------|------------------------|
| 1 – Abigail Keelin  | 14 – Rebecca Staver    |
| 1 – Katie Keelin    | 17 – Sam DeVries       |
| 2 – Sue Stevens     | 18 – Ariella Reynolds  |
| 3 – Dorothy Tyndall | 20 – Nancy Judnick     |
| 4 – Arin Marks      | 22 – Alicia Atkins     |
| 6 – Andrew Lee      | 25 – Lauren Day        |
| 6 – Joel Moschler   | 25 – Marko Thompson    |
| 7 – Bob Prosen      | 26 – Kevin Koski       |
| 9 – Ben Remington   | 26 – Kathleen Stanaway |
|                     | 30 – Erin Hartline     |

## Session Highlights

- An Administrative Commission for selling the CE building has been assembled and had its first meeting on 3/20. The commission includes Rev. Wendy, Spencer Hjelle, Dawn Trexel, and 2 Presbytery representatives. The next step will be to have the commission chair, Diana Bell, sign the listing papers with a realtor.
- We will be getting a couple estimates on converting from steam heat. The conversion will need to take place by November 2026.
- Session reviewed ideas that were discussed during our 5 weekly Lenten meals and discussions. We will begin moving forward on some of those ideas.

## Sympathy

- We offer sympathy to Irene and her family on the passing of **Larry Salo** on 3/24. A memorial service will take place at our church on 4/3 at 11am with visitation beginning at 10am.
- We offer sympathy to the family of **Bill Moorefield** who passed away on 3/18 in Mesa, AZ. Condolences may be sent to Norma Jean Moorefield at 8265 E. Southern Ave. #333 Mesa, AZ 85209. A burial in Virginia will be arranged at a later date.

## Donna Burchell Funeral

The family of Donna Burchell is planning her funeral service to take place at our church on 6/22 at 1pm. If anyone has photos of Donna that they are willing to share with the family, please email them to Donna's daughter, Carol Oshiro, at [caroleegantt@aol.com](mailto:caroleegantt@aol.com).

## Welcome New Members!

We would like to welcome Sandy & Don Breckon to our church family as they transfer their membership from Parkville Presbyterian Church in Parkville, MO. Welcome Sandy & Don!

## Earth Fest

Earth Fest will take place on Saturday, April 20 from 9 am to 3 pm at the Iron Trail Motors Event Center in Virginia. Admission is free.

## Congregations Caring for the Earth

Congregations Caring for the Earth is planning an Earth Fest kick-off event on Friday, April 19. The time and location is still being determined, so contact the office for more information. Their next meeting will be Monday, April 15 at 10am.

## Lenten Discussions

Many of us attended our 5 Wednesday soup meals during Lent. During the meals, we had discussions related to the future of our church. We began with reviewing our Mission Statement and reflected on how we are called to live out our mission. We also had focused discussions on outreach and finances. Ideas that came out of these discussions are included later in this newsletter. Ideas in bold type are ones that were identified as recurring themes.

## Christmas Tree

Don't forget that we are accepting donations to purchase an artificial Christmas tree. Sue Stevens will be shopping for a tree later in the year if we raise enough funds.



## Easter Lily Memorials

**Rev. Wendy Christianson** – In memory of Wallace & Joyce Christianson

**The Falkowskis & Johnsons** – Prayers for our loved ones, and for peace and hope in the world

**Diane Hakala** – In memory of loved ones

**Kay & Gordy Hoelscher** – In memory of past Easters with family

**Janet & Roger Koski** – To honor loved ones gone

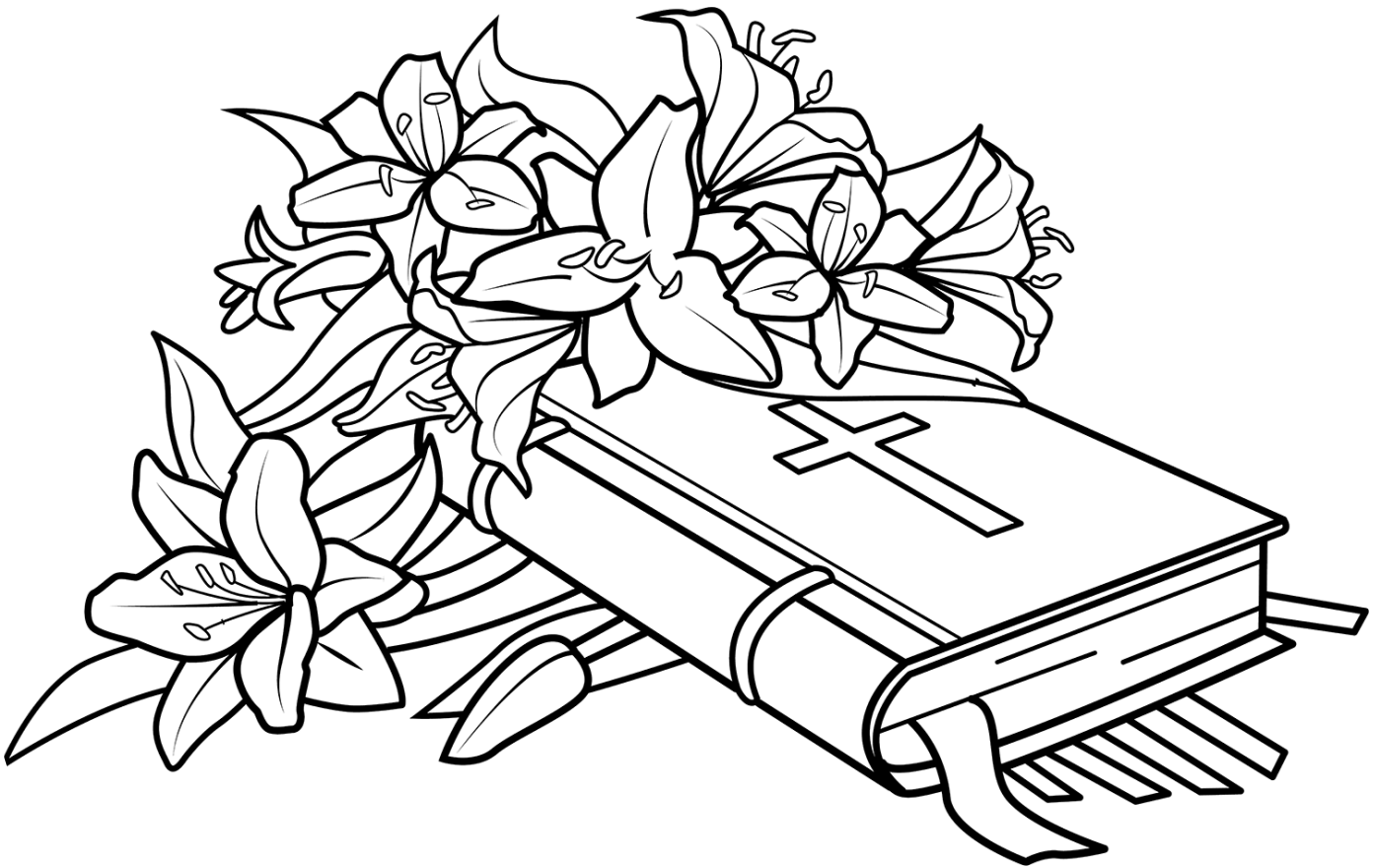
**Marianne Loscheider** – In memory of Harry Digerness and Peter Loscheider

**Barbara & Craig Mason** – In memory of all those who came ahead of us and made it all possible

**Carolyn Olsen** – In memory of my parents and husband, Earl

**Susie & John Pearsall** – In honor of our loved ones

**Sue & Craig Stevens** – In memory of our parents, Dona & John and Red & Chrys-Meree



## Summary of 2024 Lenten Discussions

Mission Statement: Hope Community Presbyterian Church shares Christ's love and concern for all people, emphasizing the unifying aspects of the Holy Spirit, by serving downtown Virginia and the surrounding communities of the Quad Cities.

### How is our church called to live out our mission?

- food pantry/food shelf
- provide food, clothes, housing
- serve vulnerable/needy people
- serve church members
- meet spiritual needs
- offer music events, joyful events, youth events
- provide community space, support other community organizations
- cookie program
- share talents with community
- join with other congregations
- meet all people where they are regardless of religious affiliation or economic background
- create a just world for all
- engage with people in the community
- represent a form of Christianity that serves future generations
- provide worship services
- offer diversity in worship style, music
- support groups - food for thought, bible study
- community service
- support physical and spiritual needs
- provide transportation to members on Sundays
- reach out to surrounding communities
- share, communicate Christ's love
- invite others to attend church
- ecumenical philosophy
- work at soup kitchen
- share the Gospel
- talk
- smile
- show love
- show concern
- be welcoming
- witness for Jesus
- outreach

### Outreach Ideas

- **After school program** – children's choir, drama
- **Music events/services**
- **Forums**
- **Collaboration with other community organizations**
- Publicity – articles, events, boost Facebook posts
- Land of the Loon – article in paper
- Neighborhood canvassing – event flyers
- Folk dances upstairs
- Exercise classes
- Health screenings
- Spa day
- Community meal
- Have church open during week for quiet/prayer time
- Family activities
- Elevator/lift or long ramp for better access

### Finance Ideas

- Rent/sell CE building
- Musical events – like Rockin' the Roof Café, organ concerts
- Pasties
- **Online donations** – update website
- Visibility – forums
- **Grants** – presbytery
- Historic register – potential grants
- Church yoking
- Sell stuff – online
- Share/rent space to organizations
- Thrift sale

# HOPE COMMUNITY PRESBYTERIAN CHRISTIAN EDUCATION & YOUTH NEWS

April 2024

## Sunday School

April 7th

**John 20:19 - 31**

**"Doubting Thomas"**

*We learn that faith can be hard but Jesus is willing to help us believe.*

April 14th

**Luke 24:36b-48**

Jesus promises our sins are forgiven

April 21st

**John 10:11-18**

**A good shepherd lays down his life for his sheep**

God is our shepherd and He loves and protects us at all times. He knows us inside and out.

April 28th

**John 15:1-8**

**I am the vine you are the branches**  
Jesus want us to produce good fruits like kindness, generosity and faithfulness. He want us to love others as He has loved us.

*Have faith in Jesus.*

### Birthday Corner

Ariella Reynolds April 18

Marko Thompson April 25



Spring is springing up this month.  
Spring up with new friends,  
Helping neighbors,  
Working hard at home and school,  
and enjoy the outside.

Ages 3+

April 7, 2024 - John 20:19-31

### Jesus Appears to His Disciples

On the 1st Easter evening, the disciples were together with the doors locked. Suddenly, Jesus came and stood among them!

Find and count the  6 or 7?  7 or 8?



Hope Community Presbyterian Church  
212 So. 5th Ave. Virginia, MI 48762  
<https://hopecommunity.pc.org>

## Christian Education Calendar

Sunday April 7

Sunday April 14

Sunday April 21

Sunday April 28

Communion Sunday  
**"Doubting Thomas"**

**Jesus promises our sins are forgiven**

**"The Good Shepherd"**  
Knows his sheep

**Grow good Fruits**  
Kindness, generosity,  
faithfulness