



The Voice of Hope

The newsletter of Hope Lutheran Church, San Mateo, CA
 “Knowing and sharing the good news of Hope in Christ”

Pastor Daniel Severson



Dear Friends,
 This year, I would like to make a somewhat radical suggestion for our celebration of the birth of God into human history. Just saying this: that God was born into human history, is mind bending. Such an assertion cannot be understood. It can create wonder. It can be awe inspiring. It can create a joy that is above and beyond any earthly joy because it suggests that we now have access to that which is eternal, everlasting, and forever, And it can give birth to hope that is beyond hope for the same reason. Earthly hopes and joys come and go. They have a time to be born and a time when they will no longer exist. This is a hope that is grounded in eternity—an idea that is itself beyond understanding.

This idea of God’s birth in our world becomes even more amazing when you consider the fact that the reason God emptied himself of his divine status in order to become human: that is, what motivated him to do so was love for us. In other words, God is not happy with the fact that those who were created in his image have fallen to a state where life is so fragile, debased, and subject to threats from every side: that life is now subject to fears, worries, anxiety, despair, frustration, depression, and all manner of darkness: that evil, an existential threat to our very existence, is everywhere a possibility.

In the short term, God is present to bless us in the midst of this darkness in so many ways. He provides for our bodily needs in abundance. He gives us the gift of each other as family, friends, and members of our community. He gives us a calling and meaningful ways to serve one another. He has given us an indescribably beautiful planet on which to live, and the wonders thereof to enjoy. He has given us the ability to create wonderful things that make life better and more enjoyable. In short, his blessings never

cease, and how boring life would be if we somehow began to take it all for granted. Or, conversely, if we became so greedy for more that we couldn’t enjoy what we have.

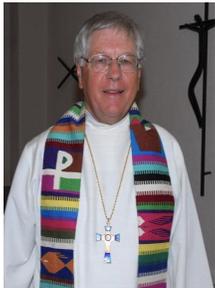
So it’s not as if life in this fallen world is joyless or nothing but one negative experience after the next. God created this world “good” (as the good book says) and there is much joy and happiness to be found in this world. However, at the same time, there is a shadow hanging over it. It’s joys are not permanent, and they are often swept away for reasons we cannot understand. So, for this reason, despite the fact that God provides in abundance for our needs and joys in this life, he wants more for us. This is why he was born in Bethlehem so many years ago, as the familiar story from Luke tells us. “Unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.”

That’s the message. He came, determined to boost the quality of our lives in an incalculable way, because he was not satisfied that we have only the fleeting joys of this world, and that life itself is so short. He came to give us the one thing needful: The Pearl of Great Price: That which gives us eternal love and eternal life. He came to give us Himself. For when Christ is born in us through the gift of the Spirit, the door of Heaven is opened, and the gifts of God are eternal.

Therefore, underneath all the noise, and the anxious activity spurred on by the desire to create the perfect Christmas, take time to stop, empty your mind of these distractions, and get in touch with the Spirit within. For the Spirit brings God’s gift of Christ into your heart. In this is an authentic celebration—first thing in the morning, throughout the day, and before you go to bed. For when we receive the gift of Christ, each passing moment becomes a glimpse of an eternal joy.

Blessings, Pastor Dan

Pastor Paul's Notes



Reformation 500
"How is this Advent different from all other Advents?" But this one will bring us into a year of commemorating the 500th anniversary of the Reformation. It will be a global event that will include celebrating our Lutheran heritage but also the

ongoing activity of reformation of own church and steps toward reconciliation with other churches. For example, a joint Lutheran-Catholic commemoration of the Reformation has as its theme , "From Conflict to Communion." Advent is a perfect time to lift up this possibility of Lutherans and Roman Catholics sharing the Eucharistic meal at the same altar.
(source: Sundays and Seasons)

Single Seniors had a very interesting guest speaker last month from the agency, "My New Red Shoes." We had not heard of it before but what we found out should be known throughout our community. So here is a snapshot:
"My New Red Shoes" provides Bay Area homeless and low-income children with a \$50 clothing gift card and a new pair of shoes , so that they can start the school year proud and ready to learn. It began in 2006 and to date 45,000 children have been served. During this past year 10,000 children from the five

counties in the Bay Area were provided with these gifts. "Red Shoes" connects with partner agencies to identify the children in their care with the greatest need for new shoes and clothing. With an office in Redwood Shores(Sobrato Center for Nonprofits, 330 Twin Dolphin D., Suite 135), there is opportunity for volunteers to be involved in various ways, from fabric donations (sewing gift bags) to hosting a shoe drive. Every student receives his or her personalized gift in a fabric bag that has been sewn by a volunteer. Inside each gift bag is a handwritten note from a volunteer with well wishes. To reach "My New Red Shoes" you may phone (650) 241-3911 or www.mynewredshoes.org. Our speaker was Becca Winslow.

We received word that long-time member, Laura Headley, passed away last week, on November 15. For over a year she and her husband, Sam, had been living in the Sacramento area near her son, Gary, and family. Until about two years ago Laura could be seen at Hope in her favorite pew on Sunday mornings. She had been a member of Hope since 1960.

from our Choirs Director



Christmas Music

I don't know many people who don't like to sing Christmas Music. My Mother loved to sing and drove me crazy by singing Christmas Carols in the summer. Well it's not summer now so we'd like to offer you the opportunity to sing Christmas music with us now.

Christmas Eve. We rehearse on Wednesdays @ 7:45. We will schedule the Christmas music so that you don't have to stay forever for a full rehearsal but only for the cantata. Or just come to rehearsal.

We'd love to share the joy of singing Christmas music with you. There's always room for more,

Shirley Fitzgerald

We would like to transform our choir into a Festival Choir by adding extra singers to our regular choir. This opens up the opportunity to sing with a short term commitment. We will be working on a Christmas Cantata which we will sing at 10:00



From our Council President



Dear Brothers and Sisters,
As I sit down to write an article for the December Voice of Hope, I am amazed at how quickly another year is going by, Thanksgiving has arrived, Christmas is around the corner, and the Council is working on the 2017 budget for Hope. I want to thank everyone who turned in your pledge cards it is a great help in planning for the coming year. We will complete the budget planning over the next month and I am looking forward to our January semi-annual meeting where we can present the budget for 2017 and discuss plans for the New Year.

I think we have a lot to look forward to in the New Year, the Call Committee is continuing to work through the Call process and we are hopeful that will lead to the calling of a new Pastor early in 2017. We

are continuing to meet with the Council from Saint Andrews to plan joint activities for youth and the entire congregation, and develop plans to celebrate the 500 anniversary of the Reformation. So there is a lot to look forward to in 2017 and many things to remember from 2016. The past year has brought all of us sorrows, happiness, challenges, and successes and we can expect more in the future, but together as the family of Hope we can support and share God's love with each other, and the community and world around us, and make the New Year something wonderful.

I hope all of you had a wonderful Thanksgiving holiday with family and friends, and that you have a joyful and blessed Christmas.

Council President
Jack Coyne



Social Concerns

For the Social Concerns Committee, Advent signals a time when we are busiest with our efforts to help our community experience the love of God. To this end, we are excited to announce several avenues whereby we can touch our neighbors' lives this Christmas.

Sharing a roof

Our final Home and Hope hosting week for this year is December 4 to 10. A season when the warmth of home and the joy of family is emphasized is also likely to be a difficult time for our homeless guests. Come join us as we share a bite and commune with the families to offer them our love and hope. We welcome your help with setting up or cleaning up the facilities before and after the hosting week, cooking dinner, hosting at dinner and through the evening, and staying overnight. Sign up to participate in this unique ministry in Nielsen Hall.

Sharing a gift

Last year, Samaritan House gave over 5,000 toys and 500 new coats to more than 1,000 children in our community. This year they aim to reach even more children. You can help to create a happy holiday for children whose families are scrambling to pay the rent, let alone purchase gifts.

Collection bins are available in the narthex for:

- New coats in sizes 5-14 for boys and girls
- Unwrapped toys for a child aged infant to 15 years, like Legos, educational baby toys, arts and crafts kits, cars and trucks, sports equipment, action figures, and popular character dolls

You may also place the following in the offering plate marked for Samaritan House:

- A \$25 gift card to Target or a local department store
- A financial gift payable directly to Samaritan House for purchasing toys

The deadline for making a donation is Monday, December 12.

Sharing a meal

Call Primrose provides special meal supplies to over 700 families during the holidays each year. You can help by participating in Fill A Box – Feed a Family. Fill a box with the requested grocery items and leave it in the narthex by Monday, December 5. Packing lists are available in the narthex or by calling the church office. Alternatively, make a financial donation earmarked for Call Primrose and the Social Concerns Committee will do the shopping. It costs about \$45 to fill one box.

HLCW Circles

Mary Circle

3rd Tuesday of the month 10:00 am
Location Varies
Contact: Martha Welch

Priscilla Circle

3rd Tuesday of the month 9:30 am
Location Varies
Contact: Joan Clevon

Sarah Circle

3rd Tuesday of the month 10:00 am
Location Varies
Contact: Lois Nieman

Lydia Circle is open to women of all ages and stages; Evening or weekend meetings; Our schedule is flexible. Location: Hope Youth Room
Contact: Heidi Waters

Call Committee News:

The Call Committee continues to meet in expectation of a list of potential pastors from the synod. Our recent focus has been to establish the interview process and set up Skype equipment so that we can promptly act on any and all names that we receive. We ask the congregation to continue to pray for Pr. Katy Grindberg at the synod who is focusing on our call process and for our call committee that we may be responsive to the will of God for our church.



Donate a poinsettia for \$12 each to beautify our sanctuary during the Christmas season.

Forms will be in the weekly bulletins as well as in the Narthex.



Preschool Corner



The month of Jesus' birth is one to celebrate with love, blessings, and songs. The most beautiful songs I know are Christmas songs and we are having great fun teaching our little ones songs that reflect the reason for the season as well as some cute favorites.

If you hear our little angels you must have a smile -everyone is happier when they sing.



Merry Christmas from the teachers at Hope Lutheran Preschool-may blessings and good wishes be your.
Jeanne, Tracy, Lorraine



HOPE PRAYER CHAIN

If you have a need to place a prayer request on the PRAYER CHAIN, please contact either Dolores Roscoe or Else Welch. They will make certain that your request is forwarded to those on the PRAYER CHAIN list.



Education

The Louvre, The Tate, The de Young, ... The Hope?

The Education Committee is assisting Bible Study in presenting an all-Hope Art Exhibit to coincide with the Epiphany. We are soliciting the congregation to lend artwork to help tell the story of Jesus' "I Am" sayings and His signs and miracles. Whether on loan from your own collections or newly created for the occasion, please help this effort.

We would like works to help convey the following themes

SIGNS & MIRACLES	"I AM SAYINGS OF JESUS"
Changing water into wine	I am the bread of life
Healing the royal official's son	I am the light of the world
Healing the Paralytic	I am the gate
Feeding the 5,000	I am the good shepherd
Jesus walking on water	I am the resurrection and the light
Healing the man blind from birth	I am the way, the truth and the life
Raising Lazarus from the dead	I am the true vine

So, break out your oil and canvas, your chisel and marble and call on your inner Rembrandt or Degas or simply blow the dust off that forgotten masterpiece mouldering in the attic and support Hope's 2017 Art Exhibit on January 8th (setting up on Saturday, January 7th). Contact Elaine Dummler for details.

Evangelism

ADVENT CALENDAR "REFILLS" – At Café Hope

Do you have an Advent Calendar at home that you use every year (or maybe you don't use it because putting coins and toys in a box or envelope doesn't really explain what Advent is – preparing for the coming of Christ)? This year, instead of filling it with candy and trinkets and coins, how about filling the little boxes or slots with RANDOM ACTS OF KINDNESS? At Café Hope, on December 4th, during our Advent Event, please look for little packets of "RANDOM ACTS OF KINDNESS". There will be 24 ideas, each one cut so that you can slip it into your Advent Calendar spaces. Some of the ideas on these papers: Give a Compliment to a friend; or tell a silly joke to make someone smile. You get the picture! These are fun and easy ways to experience our faith with our families, friends, and fellow human beings! Even if you do not have an advent calendar, you can make one with a regular calendar and tack/tape the slips onto it. Or you can put them in an "ADVENT

JAR", and pull a random one each day for you and your family to work on! Look for the basket of "RANDOM ACTS OF KINDNESS" in Café Hope on December 4th.

****Supplies for Advent Event needed****

Do you have any wide-mouthed jars you can spare for our Advent Event? We are making luminaries, and we need quart-sized canning jars – or even glass pickle & mayonnaise jars will work perfectly. If you have one or more, please bring them to the office and we'll tuck them away until December 4th's

ADVENT EVENT!!

Thank you – Sandi Kane

Christian Education

We have just completed another Sunday morning Bible study, this time on the Gospel of John. All the lectures, and the written versions include much more information than there is time for in class, have been or are in the process of being typed by Elaine Dummler. Thank you Elaine! When they are completed, copies will be made available for anyone interested in having one. The individual lectures will also be available on the website.

We also completed a rather unique course designed to look at the close connections between the Gospel as it was originally proclaimed by the apostles, the record of which we have in the New Testament, the formulation of basic Christian doctrine by the Church Fathers, and Martin Luther's idea of faith—the way in which Christ becomes present in us with his gift of love and eternal life. These lectures are currently being compiled into a book and copies will be made available for anyone who might want to read this material.

Next year, starting on Sunday, January 8th, we will begin a study of the Gospel of Matthew. Matthew was a Jew from Palestine and he shapes the story of Jesus in his narrative in a very different way from that of John. Jesus' "Jewishness" comes out much more clearly, and his interest in the meaning of the law is emphasized by Matthew. I think you will enjoy this study. It will give us an opportunity to learn much more about the history of the period, the way of life of the people living in first century Galilee, and the close connection between the appearance of God in Jesus

Christ, and God as he is portrayed in the Hebrew Scriptures.

Also next year, we want to continue our observance of the 500th anniversary of the Reformation by looking at another important aspect of Luther's influence in the church. This time, starting on Monday, January 9th at 1:00 pm in the Youth Room, we will dive into Luther's ongoing influence on theology into the modern period. Due to the time period covered, this will involve such topics as science and religion, mysticism and experiences of God, the role of the church in a secular society, politics and religion, and religion as a vital force for healing body, mind, and spirit. I think you will find this class helpful in terms of gaining a better perspective of the place of the church in our own time and place.

Also coming next year, David Phillips and I are starting a book club centered on works that can help us better understand and practice spirituality in our lives. We are hoping to invite people from the community to join us in this potentially enlightening group experience. While the start date is yet to be set, at this point we plan on meeting Thursday afternoons in the Fireside room. We have chosen two books by modern spiritual masters, both of which have exercised a great deal of influence in this area. If you know of someone who may be interested, please invite them. The start date will be in the bulletin soon.

May the Word dwell in your heart richly.

Pastor Dan Severson





Christmas Worship Schedule

**Saturday, December 24,
5 pm Christmas Eve Family Service
with LED Candlelight**

**10 pm Christmas Eve Festival Service with Choir, Bells &
LED Candlelight**

**Sunday, December 25,
10 am Christmas Day
Carols Communion Setting**

**January 1, 2017
First Sunday of Christmas 10 am
with Carols Hymn Sing**



Upcoming Events

Hope's Advent Event

Sunday, December 4, immediately following Worship in NIELSEN HALL

The Evangelism Committee is hosting a very special Advent Event immediately following Church on Sunday, December 4th. This event will be held during the Cafe Hope hour in Nielsen Hall and in honor of the event,



We hope you will be able to join us and...:

- Enjoy delicious food
- Participate in a voluntary cookie exchange (bring 3 to 4 doz cookies)
- Make a Luminary made with Mason jars.
- Have a family holiday picture taken (optional)
- Enjoy a time of fellowship with others

We hope to see you there! Please bring friends. They are most welcome.

For more info, you can contact Sandi Kane

Women's Christmas Potluck Dinner

**Tuesday, December 6, 2016
6 PM in Nielsen Hall**

Special entertainment will be provided by Karen Hutchinson on piano



ATTENTION!! All Women of Hope you are invited to an annual tradition known and loved formerly as the "SMORGASBORD."

Save the date, plan your potluck contribution and invite your guests! Sign up on the patio November 20, 27 and December 4.

Don't miss this festive event!!!

IT'S THAT TIME OF YEAR--

As impossible as it seems, the Christmas season is here and that means it's time to decorate the church.

December 3rd at 9:30 am we will decorate the church. We need your help. Even if you can only give us an hour of your time we would be delighted if you could help get the church ready for a happy, but busy season. Kids are welcome.

Any questions email Nancy Kehl.



Mark your calendars

Semi-Annual Congregational Meeting

**Sunday, January 29, 2017
following worship**

Upcoming Events



Decorating Nielsen Hall Saturday, December 3rd

In the spirit of ADVENT (getting ready), we are going to be decorating Nielsen Hall – starting at around 9-10 a.m. All are welcome to provide ideas, muscles, and moral support. We will also be walking the neighborhood to hand out postcards that contain dates and information about our holiday services.

This is a neighborhood church – and this is a great way to reach out to our neighbors on and around 42nd Ave. We will also be providing lunch to boost energy levels and replace those calories burned during the walking of the neighborhood.



Youth-led worship service and International brunch December 18th

(with prep day on Saturday, December 17th at 9am) - Youth of all age will help with almost all parts of the service (music, reading, ushering, communion, greeting, Spark, etc) – so please keep the date open on the 18th. Youth will also be helping prepare and serve our annual International Brunch (formerly the “Lefse Brunch”).

Prep work on the brunch will be on Saturday (starting at about 9-10 am). There will be things for youth of all ages on both Saturday and Sunday – so please plan on attending!



Celebrating birthdays in December

Helena Dummler
Ryan McAuliffe
Marlys Loveall
Skip Dahl
Timothy Helland
Carl Kistner
John Kreslake*
Nina Amarandos
Shafer Smith

Michael Sallander
William Fischer
Sally Worthge
Diane Bare
Linda Havenor
Leena Tuohey
May Fong
Karen Reed
Kevin McAuliffe

Angamma Prasad
Roger Childs
Pastor Paul
Avnit Prasad
Bill Hastings
Katlin Kane
Jerry Milner

* = Friend of Congregation

*Happy
Birthday!*



Spark Time Sunday School in December



Children from Kindergarten thru Grade 6
dismissed to Sunday School during Sending Hymn and
join parents in Café Hope after approximately 30 minutes of study and activity.

Date	Theme	Scripture
December 4	God's Peaceful World	Isaiah 11:1-10
December 11	John the Baptist	Matthew 11:2-11
December 18	Angels Visit	Matthew 1:18-25
December 25	<i>No Sermon Release & Sunday School on Christmas Day</i>	

Ministry Assistants

Date	Assisting Ministers	Communion Assistants	Readers	Spark Leaders
12/4	Jack Coyne	David & Mary Phillips	Martha Welch	Hank Harper Ken Struven
12/11	Sandi Kane	Tom & Deb Stucke	David Phillips	Sandi Kane
12/18 <i>Youth-led Service</i>	Heidi Waters	<i>Youth</i>	<i>Youth</i>	Judy Jeschke
12/25 <i>Christmas Day</i>	<i>TBA</i>	Bob & Ruth Lillo	Kristen Severson	<i>No Spark Sermon Release & Sunday School</i>

~ December 2016 ~

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
Nov. 27 10am Worship 11am Café Hope * = Outside Organization	28 9:30am Aerobics 7:30pm AA*	29	30 9:30am Aerobics 6:45pm Bells 7:45pm Choir	1 7pm Evangelism Committee Mtg.	2 9:30am Aerobics 8pm AA*	3 7:30am Men's Breakfast 9:30am Christmas Decorating Church & Nielsen Hall
4 Home & Hope 10am Worship 11am Café Hope: Advent Event 5pm Confirmation Class @Good Shepherd Church	5 Home & Hope 9:30am Aerobics 7:30pm AA*	6 Home & Hope 12pm Staff Meeting 6pm Women's Christmas Potluck Dinner	7 Home & Hope 9:30am Aerobics 3:45 pm Preschool Board Meeting 6:45pm Bells 7:45pm Choir	8 Home & Hope 7pm Council Meeting	9 Home & Hope 9:30am Aerobics 8pm AA*	10 Home & Hope
11 10am Worship 11am Café Hope	12 9:30am Aerobics 10am Bible Study Leaders 7:30pm AA*	13	14 9:30am Aerobics 2pm Worship Committee Mtg. 6:45pm Bells 7:45pm Choir	15 11am Preschool: Christmas Sings 3pm Preschool: Christmas Sings	16 9:30am Aerobics 8pm AA*	17 7:30am Men's Breakfast
18 10am Worship: Youth-led Service 11am Café Hope 5pm Confirmation Class @Good Shepherd Church	19 9:30am Aerobics 7:30pm AA*	20 9:30am Priscilla Circle 10am Mary Cir. 10am Sarah Cir. 12pm Staff Meeting	21 9:30am Aerobics 6:45pm Bells 7:45pm Choir	22	23 9:30am Aerobics 8pm AA*	24 Christmas Eve 5pm Christmas Eve: Family Worship Service 10pm Christmas Eve: Traditional Candlelight Service
25 Christmas Day 10am Christmas Day Worship 11am Café Hope	26 Office Closed 9:30am Aerobics 7:30pm AA*	27	28 9:30am Aerobics 6:45pm Bells 7:45pm Choir	29	30 9:30am Aerobics 8pm AA*	31