

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,
 We are now entering the season of Epiphany. This word means the manifestation or appearance of God in the world. There are three texts from scripture that have traditionally been included in the lectionary readings

for the purpose of illustrating this theme. The first is the story of the three wise men who saw the bright star shining over the place where Jesus was, and who followed that star in order to bring the new born king gifts of gold and rare spices. The star indicated the appearance of the Son of God born for the salvation of all people, including the Gentiles represented by the three Magi. The second text is the story of Jesus' baptism by John the Baptist. When Jesus came up out of the water, the Holy Spirit descended on him in the form of a dove, anointing him for his mission, and a voice came from God saying, "This is my Son with whom I am well pleased." Here again, that Jesus was not just a man, but the divine Son of God was made manifest to those who witnessed this event. The third is the story of Jesus turning water into fine wine at the wedding in Cana, a small village in Galilee. Here again, Jesus' divine nature is made manifest through his first "sign."

The question for us to ponder is, "How do we experience the manifestation of Jesus' divine nature in our lives?" Was the epiphany a one-time event in the first century, or is it an ongoing thing that happens in many and various ways in every generation? The answer is "Yes" to both of these two options. It was a one-time event in the sense of Jesus' birth as a human being, and in the many ways he demonstrated his divine powers in first century Palestine. But the manifestation of Jesus as the Son of God is certainly not limited to his earthly life. It can be evident and it is perceivable today as well, albeit in a different way.

For example, wherever there are Christians, a miraculous thing has occurred. To be a Christian is to have faith, and faith in Jesus Christ is a manifestation of his presence in the lives of the faithful. This is so in two ways. First, faith is not a human work. It's not a decision we can make on the basis of our wisdom and insight. It is a gift of the Holy Spirit and as such, it is a miraculous event: a sign of the presence of our risen Lord in our hearts. As Luther said, "Faith lays hold of Christ just as an engagement ring holds a diamond." Another way to put it is that through faith, we actually participate in the life of Jesus Christ, present through the gift of the Spirit. Were faith a mere human work—something like the attempt to use positive thinking, meditation, psychotherapy, or any other human technic designed to build ourselves up or transcend our weaknesses in the face of tragic events or challenges that bring us to the brink of our limits, then we remain vulnerable to defeat and despair. In the 23rd Psalm, the psalmist did not say, "Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I am determined to rise up and keep going. I am determined to overcome this darkness through the force of my own will." No, what he said was, "... your rod and staff, they comfort me." In other words, it is the Shepherd who guides and strengthens us as we face the shadow of death in so many ways. Christian faith is a sign of the presence, the manifestation, of Jesus Christ.

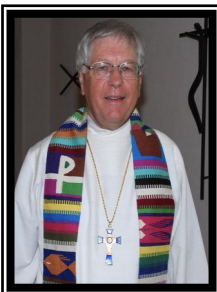
Secondly, Christ is manifest in our world wherever we see the fruits of faith at work reversing the devastating effects of evil and sin. While our faith is in what God has done for us in Jesus Christ, nevertheless, this faith has consequences with respect to how we live our lives. Faith gives us strength, perseverance, and hope in the midst of our suffering and weakness. The presence of Christ enables us to bear our crosses, whatever they might be, and avoid turning to one kind of golden calf or another as the children of Israel did after losing their nerve in the desert. Faith empowers us to affirm along with the Apostle Paul that no matter what we

may face—tribulation, famine, peril, sword—nothing can separate us from the love of Christ. Wherever people continues to live in faith and hope while at the same time facing difficult or devastating circumstances, there Christ is manifest. His presence keeps us safe from despair and hopelessness.

We also see the fruits of faith in the service people offer to those in need. Service can take many forms. It can be some form of direct aid. It can be a visit to someone who is lonely. It can be a listening ear to someone going through a bad time. Or, it can be the offer of support to someone in grief. Whatever form our service takes, when it is rendered in love for the sake of another person, the love of God in Christ has become visible. As Paul said, the love of God is poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit. That love is not meant to be locked up within us. It is meant to be the motivating force behind our desire to reach out to others. People of faith love because God first loved us. Therefore, wherever we see the love of God acted out, there Christ is manifest. May all of you experience the epiphany of our Lord throughout the coming year.

Pastor Dan

Pastor Paul's Notes



Thanks be to God for the lives of Liisa Schroeder, Ruben Clevon and Amanda Johnson who have passed away in the past month. We pray that the families will be given courage and faith in meeting the days ahead, receiving a sure confidence in God's loving care.

SENIORS will have a lunch-outing on Thursday, January 17. We will meet at "Hobee's" Restaurant, 1101 Shoreway Road, Belmont, at 1pm. Carpool from church at 12:30pm. Please sign up in Nielsen Hall or notify the church office if you would like to attend.

Since January 1st is a Tuesday, we will not have an event that day. The next session will be

Tuesday, February 5th, in Nielsen Hall, 12:30-2pm. Bring a bag lunch.

We will have the privilege of hearing from guest speakers from the Red Cross. This is an opportunity to hear first hand the story of the Red Cross as it has served in so many ways, particularly with the recent firestorms. Red Cross services, as we know, were in high demand in 2018 and the need may be greater in 2019.

It is good to know that...

"An average of 91 cents of every dollar the American Red Cross spends is invested in humanitarian services and programs."

We will also hear of volunteer opportunities through which we can make significant contributions.

ALL ARE WELCOME TO ATTEND OF FEBRUARY 5!

A moment of reflection as we begin a new year:

"Life shrinks or expands in proportion to one's courage"

- Anais Nin

Life shrinks or expands
in proportion
to one's courage.

- Anais Nin

Simple Reminders
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From our Council President



Were you in church the week before Christmas when our young people led the worship service? If not, you missed something special. I was impressed by the young people's willingness to participate and the poise and talent that they displayed. In addition to singing many favorite Christmas carols, it was simply an uplifting service to witness. This shows that there is "hope" for the future of the Church. I hope the young people got as much out of participating as they put into leading the service for us.

On top of that, the youth (with much help from their families) put on quite a spread at the international brunch following worship. There was something for everyone, and all agreed that it was a delicious meal that formed the centerpiece for fellowship. As I looked around Nielsen Hall, the tables were filled with people enjoying each other's company. There were longtime friends, to be sure, but also members becoming newly acquainted. I sensed a warmth of caring. It was as though we were one large family. That's not far off the mark. As you may know, I've been around Hope for a long time – from the beginning, in fact. I've always felt that sense of family when we at Hope come together. It just seemed particularly intense at the brunch. We take turns putting some effort into providing for each other or helping each other out, and we are paid back by gratitude and other expressions of love.

I often find myself reminiscing when I have a few free minutes. (It must be an old habit; I was caught more than once daydreaming in grade school – at Knolls School across 42nd Avenue.) In the early days of Hope, when Nielsen Hall was the only building, the parking lot was gravel. As a kid, I could tell by the cars in the parking lot who was upstairs in church. In fact, if it was a two-car family, I knew if it was Mr. or Mrs. Most of those early members volunteered in a variety of ways to help the congregation function. I don't remember it being called volunteering. People just stepped up to do whatever was needed. I remember coming up to Hope with my father on Saturdays when Nielsen Hall was being built in 1956. (Hope met in a storefront down on 41st Avenue in

those days.) The contractor left enough tasks at the end of the week so that church members could come together in a Saturday work party (Is that an oxymoron?) and get things done, saving some money for the church.

Hope has a long history of being an active, participatory congregation. There is something here for everyone. It's nice to see everyone on Sunday morning, but Hope offers so much more than one hour a week. We have sign-up lists for a variety of things. Hosting Café Hope, providing altar flowers, giving rides for events, seniors field trips, etc. Consider how you want to participate and look for the sign-up sheets in the narthex of Nielsen Hall. There are other activities that you might enjoy, such as singing in the choir, providing special music, leading Spark groups for the young, even ushering. I haven't even mentioned classes and Bible studies. No sign-ups are needed; just show up, and you will be enriched.

Blessings,

Don Hermansen

Preschool Corner



Wishing you all an amazing 2019! May you be blessed with good health and happiness.

Registrations are now being accepted and we will be hosting tours throughout the months ahead.

January will be filled with fun and educational science activities. The children are excited for Pajama Day where they get to also enjoy hot coco and doughnut holes.

Blessings,

Tracy



This Photo by Unknown

Stitches & Ties x x x x x

Just as a fabric scrap can find a place in a charitable quilt, so can an individual who participates in Hope Quilters.

Find appreciation and pleasure in 'doing God's work, Our hands.'

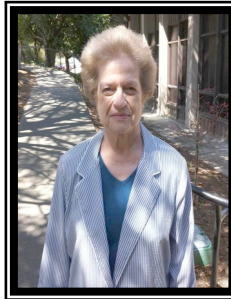
Hope Quilters will meet on Tuesday, January 8, 9am to 3pm in Nielsen Hall. Homemade soup is a feature of the first meeting of each new year. Everyone is requested to bring an item ready for the soup kettle.

This year Quilters hope to provide, from Hope, Quilts to the Butte County Camp fire victims as well as families locally.

Come, observe and participate!



From our Choir Director



A new, clean start:

Hopefully the Christmas clutter is cleaned up and put away until next year, and we can start again with a clean slate for the New Year. Our musicians continue to do their usual good job, but we'll be starting fresh soon.

Believe it or not, we'll soon be thinking about and working on music for Lent and Easter. Fortunately it's late this year, Easter is April 1.

We've all been blessed with the birth of our Lord, and we can look forward to his rising. Our musicians will be working hard toward the new season, and there is always room for new members. The choir has room and empty chairs for new members, and we have more bells that we don't currently use, and we need new ringers to play those big babies. (There are small ones available too.)

Wishing a blessed year for all of you in 2019.

Shirley



Offering Envelopes

Using offering envelopes are important in the process of accounting for your pledges and for the financial organization of the church.

Each week, offerings are counted by a team of counters and that money is deposited in the bank. Your offering envelopes go to the Financial Secretary, who keeps a record of the amount of your gift **by the number on the offering envelope**. Your personal pledge and offerings are not revealed to anyone outside of the Financial Secretary, who prepares your summary statements at the end of the year.

The Treasurer and the accountant pay bills for the congregation as an organization, from the accounts where the money has been deposited. The Treasurer does not deal with any individual's offerings. He/she accounts for expenditures from budgeted sections of the entire Hope budget.



Valentines Dinner Fundraiser

Save the Date!

Hope Lutheran Church will be hosting a Dinner Fundraiser on Sunday, February 10th at 5pm.

More information to come soon!



HELC Thankoffering

The response to our recent HLCW Thankoffering was heartwarming.

Through your generosity, the HLCW was able to present a check in the amount of \$3,100 to Second Harvest Food Bank to help feed the hungry in San Mateo County.

Thank you for caring and sharing.



Treasurer Quarterly Update

12.16.18 International Brunch



12.15.18 Making Lefse for the International Brunch





THE BIBLE AND LIFE

HOW KEY BIBLICAL STORIES HELP US UNDERSTAND THE LIFE OF FAITH

Last summer, we looked at how the stories in the first eleven chapters of Genesis can give us insight into contemporary events. These stories are about human nature and sin and are therefore timeless in their application. They are stories meant to describe the highs and lows of human behavior. For example, Caine responds to failure by lashing out in a murderous way against his more fortunate brother, Abel. Noah deals with the evils he sees around him by staying close to God, and is thereby saved from disaster. And the story of The Tower of Babel represents the ambitions of humanity to reach heaven through their own efforts. These stories help us understand the human condition and the tragic events we see around us on a daily basis.

On Wednesday, January 9th at 1:00 pm, we will meet again to read certain central biblical stories that can help us understand what faith in God entails, and how faith can help us deal with the challenges and suffering in life without losing strength and hope. Faith, because it is a divine gift implanted in our hearts through the Holy Spirit, is the single most important factor in giving us the ability to navigate life from a position of spiritual strength. Faith does not necessarily give us answers to difficult questions. But it does give us the foundation we need to avoid becoming victims of painful and confusing experiences, and it gives us a source of new life derived from the eternal and unchangeable love and grace of God.

Some of the stories we will be looking at include those which describe the wondering of the Children of Israel in the desert as recorded in the book of Exodus, the story of Job, and the resurrection appearances of Jesus to his disciples. The class will meet through the month of February, with the option of going further should folks so desire. Since the Youth Room can be cramped and oppressively hot in the afternoon, we will meet in Nielsen Hall. I look forward to seeing you all there, together with anyone else you may know who may be interested in understanding the Bible in an in depth way.

Pastor Dan

Men's Breakfast Bible Study



The Men's Breakfast and Bible study meets again on Saturday, January 19th from 7:30 to 9:00 am in Nielsen Hall. I have exciting news regarding this first class group of men. We will begin reading and discussing a new book that I'm sure will be of interest to everyone. The title is, "They Were Christians: The Inspiring Faith of Men and Women Who Changed the World" by author Christobal Krusen. Each short chapter describes how the faith of great men and women such as Abraham Lincoln, Fredrick Douglas, Fyodor Dostoyevsky, Florence Nightingale, and many more motivated and shaped them so as to make such a positive difference in the lives of many people. These stories can help us better understand how faith intersects with day to day life and our calling to serve God by serving others. The book is available on Amazon (of course) and perhaps through other book sellers as well. I hope all the men of Hope will want to join us for another great year of good food, inspired reading, informative discussion, and good fellowship. I look forward to seeing not only the regulars, but new people as well.

Sunday Morning Bible Study



Our regular bible study class will resume on Sunday, January 6th at 11:45 in the educational building. We are currently working our way through Paul's letter to the Romans, his most in depth reflection on Christian faith and the book that has had an enormous impact of Christian theology throughout the centuries of the Christian era. If you came to the Bible study in the past but got out of the habit, why not make a resolution for the new year to start coming again. We would love to welcome you back!!

HELC Women's Christmas Dinner

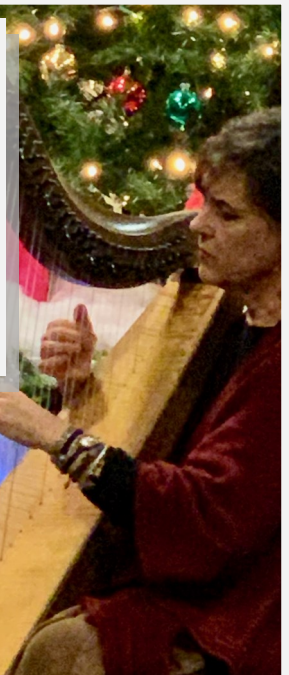


Photo credit to Maggie Timeus

Upcoming Healing Service



On Sunday, January 13th, our regular worship service will include something different.

The worship committee has decided to replace the regular liturgy with that of the healing service taken from the Lutheran Book of Worship. The responsive readings, the scripture texts, and the hymns will focus on the theme of healing. Prayers and reflections on the healing of body, mind, and spirit can be an extremely helpful way of experiencing the power of God's grace in the context of a supportive community. Healing in a Christian sense includes more than the hope for physical restoration. Through God's word as it comes to us in the entire liturgy of the service, we experience the presence of Christ who said, "Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest... for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls." (Matthew 11:28-30)

The order of service will be the same as usual and will include communion. Added will be a time for individual prayer should anyone desire to come forward with a specific prayer request. If you know of anyone who may have specific concerns related to healing, please invite them to attend.

All are welcome. The invitation is from Jesus himself.

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(See Genesis 3)

12-30-2013

REMEMBER THAT NEW YEAR RESOLUTION YOU MADE TO TRY NEW THINGS?

HLCW Circles

Mary Circle

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

Sarah Circle

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



Celebrating birthdays in January

Anne Hermansen	1/1	Jerry Butler	1/25
Holly Hermansen	1/4	Douglas Johnson	1/27
Ann Haritatos	1/13	Marilyn Johnson	
Mehri Vatanparast	1/14	Gilbert Schroeder	1/28
Jack Coyne Jr.	1/20		
Anders Voss			
Margo Kannenberg	1/21		
Gregory Pedro			

Names in bold = our brothers/sisters turning 90-90+ years!

* = Friend of Congregation



Spark Time Sunday School

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
January 6	Jesus the Word	John 1:10-18
January 13	Jesus' Baptism	Luke 3:15-17, 21-22
January 20	Wedding at Cana	John 2:1-11
January 27	Jesus Goes to Nazareth	Luke 4:14-30

Ministry Assistants

Date	Assisting Ministers	Communion Assistants	Readers	Spark Leaders
1/6	Bill Kannenberg	Sandra Polster Kirsten Severson	Bill Hroziencik	Judy Jeschke
1/13	Skip Dahl	Robert Mendes Dustynne Mendes	Monika Hastings	Monika Hastings
1/20	Hank Harper	Nancy Kehl Monika Hastings	Skip Dahl	Debra Stucke Hank Harper
1/27	Margo Kannenberg	David Phillips Mary Phillips	Karl Voss	Sandi Kane Hank Harper

Upcoming Events

ADULT BIBLE STUDY Sundays @ 11:45am

The Sunday morning Bible Study continues our journey through the book of Romans.

In his introduction to Romans, Martin Luther wrote, "this epistle is in truth the most important document in the New Testament, the gospel in its purest expression...It is a brilliant light, almost enough to illumine the whole Bible." In preparation for this study, I have ordered lectures on Romans by Dr. Walter F. Taylor, professor of New Testament, Trinity Lutheran Seminary. These lectures are on DVD so we can use some of them in our classes. The lectures focus on such themes as how God makes humanity right with God, others, and ourselves, faith, baptism, Christian community, and transformed lives. This will be a great study. Everyone is invited to attend in the educational building on Sundays from 11:45 am. to 12:30 pm.

Seniors Luncheon—January 17

A lunch outing is planned for Thursday, January 17th. We will be going to Hobee's in Belmont. If you would like to carpool with us, please be at Hope Lutheran 5-10 mins before 12:30pm. Otherwise you can meet us at Hobee's at 1pm. Signups can be found in Nielsen Hall.

ST. ANDREW'S LUNCHEON—MARCH 9

On the second Saturday every three months @ 11:15am, St. Andrew's will be hosting their Senior Caring Communion Service and Luncheon. If you are interested in attending, please RSVP ASAP! From Hope Lutheran there is room for only the first 10 people who RSVP. If you would like more information about this event or would like to attend, please call the church office.

THE BIBLE AND LIFE—January 9

On Wednesday, January 9th at 1:00pm, we will meet again to read certain central biblical stories that can help us understand what faith in God entails, and how faith can help us deal with the challenges and suffering in life without losing strength and hope.

The class will meet through the month of February, with the option of going further should folks desire. We will be meeting in Nielsen Hall.

Seniors Ministry

This month the Seniors Ministry will not be having an event the first Tuesday of January. There will be a Senior luncheon event on January 17th.

Men's Breakfast

The Men's breakfast meets the first and third Saturday of each month in Nielsen Hall. Breakfast is served at 7:30am and the study begins at around 8:00am.

Men's Breakfast will meet on Saturday, January 19th.

BOOK CLUB—January 3

Our next meeting of the book club will be on Thursday, January 3rd at 1:30pm in the Fireside Room. The book we will be discussing is entitled, Be the Hands and Feet: Living Out God's Love For All His People by Nick Vujicic. Please join us for inspiration and a great discussion.

Confirmation Classes

Confirmation classes will be hosted at Hope Lutheran Church.

The schedule is as follows:

January 6

January 27

February 17

March 24

April 28

May 19

If you have any questions, please contact Pastor Dan Severson (650) 349-0100 x102

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January 2019

Voice of Hope Deadline for February edition: Friday, January 18



Hope Lutheran Church

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Sunday Worship at 10:00 AM

Sunday School at 11:00 AM



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