

This Week

TODAY:

9AM: Choir Practice

9:15AM: Fellowship

10AM: Worship Service

11AM: Sunday School
SHP Bible Study

Liturgist: JR Hanson

Ushers: Bob & Madge Toland

Greeters: Roxann Hughes & Christine Kamwara

Accompanist: Gail Keck

MEALS ON WHEELS THIS WEEK!

Monday, November 17:

1-3PM: Interfaith Caregivers BINGO

Tuesday, November 18:

6-6:45PM: Sermon Scriptures Bible Study

Wednesday, November 19:

7AM: Youth Bible Study (*Cabin Coffee*)

9:30AM: Communion Stewards Meeting

12PM: Worship Committee Meeting?

2:30PM – 4:15PM: Early Release

7-8PM: Confirmation

Thursday, November 20:

9:30AM: Joy Circle

10AM: Sermon Scriptures Bible Study

1-3PM: Mat Weaving

Saturday, November 22:

10AM-12PM: Bundle Up

Sunday, November 23:

9AM: Choir Practice

9:15AM: Fellowship

10AM: Worship Service

11AM: Sunday School
SHP Bible Study

Liturgist: JR Hanson

Ushers: Bob & Madge Toland

Greeters: Roxann Hughes & Christine Kamwara

Accompanist: David & Sandra Murray

ANNOUNCEMENTS

5th Sunday of the Month Meal!

After worship on Sunday, 11/30/25 – main dish casseroles/hot dishes will be provided. If you are able, please bring a salad or dessert to share. Free will offering to go towards Layne McCleary's medical expenses and all are welcome (whether you bring food or not)!

From Pat & Chuck McCleary:

A huge thank you from the McCleary family for all the prayers & kindness being sent his way to during Layne's recovery after his accident. It means so much to Pat & Chuck (Layne's parents) and they wanted to share their gratitude for all the support shown to Layne's family!

BUNDLE UP

Our Bundle Up Program started Saturday, 11/8! Pass the word to all – open through Saturday, 12/6, from 10AM-12PM.

Children's Christmas Program

Program practice for our kids will be on Wednesdays during Early Release and the program will be held during our worship service on Sunday, 12/14. NO EARLY RELEASE on Wed, 11/26.

Confirmation Volunteers Wanted:

Pastor Godfrey is seeking volunteers to accompany him during the Confirmation studies on Wednesday nights from 7-8PM. Teaching/instructing will not be required. Please see Pastor Godfrey if interested or with any questions.

Want to financially support God's ministry at Hope? Offering plates will be passed around during worship OR scan this code to give online!



Sunday, November 16, 2025

Twenty-Third Sunday after Pentecost

Hope United Methodist Church

www.behopeumc.com | (507) 526-2144 | hopeumc@bevcomm.net

Church office hours: Mondays 8:15am-12:15pm, Wednesdays 8:15am-4:15pm

Pastor Godfrey Gakuru: (740) 803-6762 hopepastor@bevcomm.net

Administrative Assistant, Carolyn Kaiser: (763) 567-9004 hopeumc@bevcomm.net

Kids Coordinator, Megan Goshorn: (253) 592-5219 kidscoordinatorhope@gmail.com

For more information and to see what else is happening at Hope, visit us at behopeumc.com and our Facebook page, Hope United Methodist Church-Blue Earth, MN.

Prelude

Welcome & Passing of Peace

Announcements

Rev. Godfrey Gakuru

*Call to Worship

One: Celebrate and rejoice, all you people of Christ!
All: For the old is gone, and the Lord our God is doing a new thing!
One: Behold, everything is made new!
All: Illness, disease, crying, and mourning shall all be distant memories.
One: Hatred and war shall cease from the earth.
All: Love, peace, and unity shall reign. Let us rejoice and give thanks! Amen.

*Unison Prayer

Eternal God, you make everything new. Forgive us when we cling to what is familiar, or fear of what change may bring. Help us to see Your hand at work, in the unfolding of our lives and in the renewal of our community. Breathe new life into our worship, Our relationships, and our service. Make us instruments of Your new creation—where love overcomes hatred, peace replaces fear, and joy rises out of sorrow—through Jesus Christ, who makes all things new. Amen.

*Opening Hymn

“Morning Has Broken”

UMH 145

Children’s Message

Scripture Reading

(NRSV) **Isaiah 65:17-25**

New heavens and a new earth

17For I am about to create new heavens and a new earth; the former things shall not be remembered or come to mind.

18But be glad and rejoice forever in what I am creating, for I am about to create Jerusalem as a joy and its people as a delight.

19I will rejoice in Jerusalem and delight in my people; no more shall the sound of weeping be heard in it or the cry of distress.

20No more shall there be in it an infant who lives but a few days, or an old person who does not live out a lifetime, for one who dies at a hundred years will be considered a youth, and one who falls short of a hundred will be considered accursed.

21They shall build houses and inhabit them; they shall plant vineyards and eat their fruit.

22They shall not build and another inhabit; they shall not plant and another eat, for like the days of a tree shall the days of my people be, and my chosen shall long enjoy the work of their hands.

23They shall not labor in vain or bear children for calamity, for they shall be offspring blessed by the LORD- and their descendants as well.

24Before they call, I will answer, while they are speaking I will hear.

25The wolf and the lamb shall feed together; the lion shall eat straw like the ox, but the serpent--its food shall be dust! They shall not hurt or destroy all my holy mountains, says the LORD.

*Preparatory Song

“Father, I Adore You”

TFWS 2038

Sermon Series:

God is Near: Our Present Help in Times of Need

Sermon Title:

“A Fresh Start”

Rev. Godfrey Gakuru

Offering *(please put any written prayer requests in offering plates when they are passed around)*

- *Doxology
- Sharing of Birthdays, Anniversaries, Joys & Concerns
- Pastoral Prayer
- Lord’s Prayer

Benediction

*Closing Hymn

“Marching to Zion”

UMH 462

**Please stand if you are able.*

God Is Near: Our Present Help in Times of Trouble

"A Fresh Start"

It is that time of the year when we begin to embrace a new life — especially for those of us who live in places that experience snow, like here in Minnesota. The falling snow reminds us that a new season has arrived. It is a season that calls us to adjust to embrace a new rhythm. For many of us, that means getting used to snow shoveling and clearing driveways — knowing that if the snow falls overnight, the first thing we must do in the morning is shovel. We have all experienced new starts in one way or another. Each of us likely remembers moments when God gave us a new beginning—maybe through education, a career change, moving to a new home, joining a different church, or adapting to a new community. These transitions remind us that life is ever-changing, and in each one, God offers a chance to begin again.

One such memory of a fresh start was my first day in high school. I had been admitted to a boarding school in a beautiful town in eastern Kenya, about 150 miles from home. I was privileged to join a highly ranked and high-performing school in Kenya, and I had longed for that opportunity to be in a boarding school for years. My brother, who was my guardian, had once promised to take me to a boarding elementary school — a dream that never came true. However, when I finally joined a boarding high school, I knew that God had fulfilled that desire in His own time. **Everything was unfamiliar: new faces, new routines, new expectations, yet it was also an opportunity to start a new journey that would later shape my life and ministry.**

As I reflect on that experience today, I am reminded that God invites us to step into new seasons — to leave behind what was and to embrace what God is creating. God says in **Isaiah 43:19 (NRSV):** **"See, I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert."** While fresh starts may signify hope and possibility, they can also mean adjusting to new challenges, a new struggle such as learning to live with a medical condition or navigating how to deal with a court case or the new life after losing a job or a loved one. **However, whether joyful or challenging, each new beginning is God's way of saying: "I am still at work."** When my family and I moved to the United States, and to Blue Earth, we too had to embrace a new beginning a new community and a new life in ministry. **God calls us from the known to the unknown,** and we must be ready to embrace new beginnings because there is always a fear that comes with it. Change is inevitable, and it is challenging to step away from what is familiar — from the routines we are used to, and the beliefs we hold as

right, our comfort zones. It is easy to resist and hold on to what we believe works best for us, but accepting change is the first step towards growth. When we resist change, we risk limiting God's ability to shape us and to bring about the newness and freshness. It is okay to bend a little if we are not broken. It is okay to open ourselves to new ideas if they are meant to build us, not break us.

- **In the Isaiah reading, we see God's promises of a new creation, a place of peace and restoration.** In Isaiah, God spoke to the people of **Judah**—the southern kingdom of Israel—after the exile, when they were returning home to rebuild Jerusalem and restart their communal life. The northern kingdom of Israel had already been destroyed by the Assyrians. These people, who had carried the deep pain of loss and displacement, heard God's comforting promise: **"Be glad and rejoice forever in what I am creating, for I am about to create Jerusalem as a joy and its people as a delight..."** (Isaiah 65:18)
- **Further God promises Joy and Peace,** Isaiah says "God will rejoice in His people; there will be no more weeping or distress (v.19)." God **Promises a Fulfilled Life and Blessing** — People will live long, enjoy the fruits of their labor, and their descendants will be blessed (vv.20–23), **Divine Presence and Harmony, Isaiah says** God will answer before His people call, and creation will live together in peace and unity (vv.24–25).
- **A time will come when "The wolf and the lamb shall feed together..."** This image means that in God's new creation, all people will sit at the same table as one nation and one family. **Whatever season you are in — whether beginning anew, adjusting to change, or seeking direction — hear God's promise again today: God is doing something new in you, in us, and in this community.**

A fresh start does not always mean going back to what it was. Sometimes it means allowing God to build something new right where you are—a simple decision to begin again with love, prayer, and forgiveness. Imagine this: what if, in this new season, God says, "Start with prayer"? Be more kind, generous, or gracious. What if just as we prepare each morning to face the snow, we also began each day by clearing the space of our hearts through prayer, making room for God to work in us and through us? As the snow begins to fall and a new rhythm takes shape, we can consider a new rhythm of prayer and Grace, or a new life in Christ. Let us embrace the new beginnings and a fresh start, even from where we are right now. **Amen.**

Operation Christmas Child Shoeboxes **DUE TODAY!!**

Please see the bulletin board in the Narthex for more information!

Hope UMC will be collecting both donated items and monetary donations for the Operation Christmas Child shoeboxes.



Operation Christmas Child is a project of Samaritan's Purse, an international relief organization. Our mission is to provide local partners around the world with shoeboxes filled with small toys, hygiene items, and school supplies as a means of reaching out to children in their own communities with the Good News of Jesus Christ. We ship these simple gifts outside the United States to children affected by war, poverty, natural disaster, famine, and disease.

The bulletin board has a list of do's & do not's to include in your shoebox. We are looking to fill 10 shoeboxes and each box costs Samaritan's Purse \$10 for processing/shipping costs.

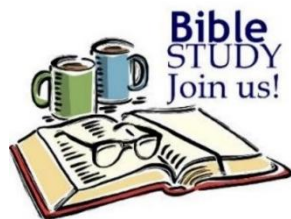
Our Sunday School kids will color/fill out an informational page about themselves to include in each box, and help pray over each box too, as they help pack the shoeboxes up on Sunday, 11/16/25.

If you have any questions, please see Nancy Steinke or Megan Goshorn.

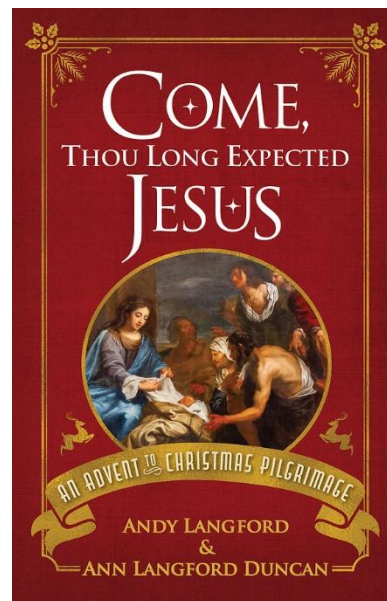
ANNOUNCEMENTS CONTINUED...

Don't forget to join in on one of our other bible studies!

- Tuesdays at 6pm: Sermon Scriptures Bible Study on ZOOM (*virtually!*)
Meeting ID: 957 2121 9470
Passcode: 078432
- Wednesdays 7-7:30am: Youth Bible Study at Cabin Coffee
- Thursdays at 10am: Sermon Scriptures Bible Study (in-person) at the church
- ~~Sundays at 11am — after worship: Seeking His Presence Bible Study (books of the bible) in the church library.~~ This will be put on hold until January 2026 and replaced with the Advent Bible Study from 11/30-12/21. NO Bible Study after worship on 12/28.

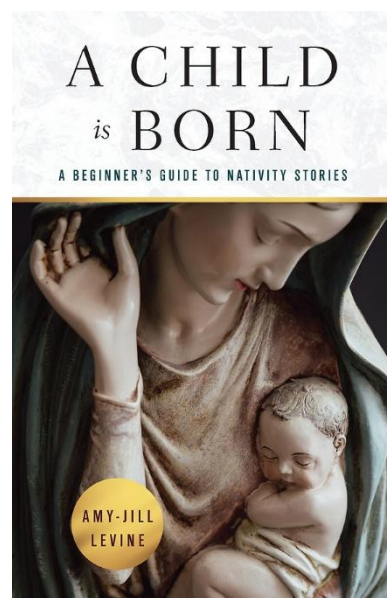


UPCOMING ADVENT BIBLE STUDIES!



IN PERSON: Pastor Godfrey will be leading Hope UMC's Advent Bible Study with this book, *Come Thou Long Expected Jesus* by Andy Langford & Ann Langford Duncan. It will start on Sunday, 11/30/25, right after worship and will end Sunday, 12/21/25.

Books are \$15-17 a piece and if you need help with online ordering, just let us know! They are available on Amazon or on www.cokesbury.com/Come-Thou-Long-Expected-Jesus.



VIRTUAL: If a virtual bible study works better for your schedule/preference, you're invited to participate in the 2025 Advent Study led by Bishop Lanette Plambeck. In this study, United Methodists across the Dakotas and Minnesota are invited to read "A Child is Born" by Amy-Jill Levine. Dive into the narratives of Isaac, Ishmael, Moses, and Samuel to reveal how they foreshadow and enrich the timeless Christmas story. Levine shows readers how Scripture's earlier birth stories anticipate the story of Jesus's birth and how His birth resonates and gives new meaning to those earlier stories.

All are welcome! Hundreds of people participate in this study every year, and it is a wonderful time of connection and

conversation as we prepare our hearts and minds for Christmas. Mark your calendar and encourage others to join you.

www.minnesotamc.org/2025-advent for Zoom details, dates & times for the Bishop's bible study meetings. To order your book, please visit www.cokesbury.com/A-Child-Is-Born (also available on Amazon).