

## **This Week**

### **TODAY:**

**9:15AM:** Fellowship

**10AM:** Worship Service

**Liturgist:** Doug Storbeck

**Ushers:** JR & Barbara Hanson

**Greeters:** Jake Shope

**Accompanist:** Gail Keck

**NO SCHOOL: 12/22/25-1/2/26**

### **Wednesday, December 31:**

**NEW  
YEAR'S  
EVE**

### **Thursday, January 1:**

**HAPPY  
New Year  
2026**

### **Sunday, January 4:**

**9:15AM:** Fellowship

**10AM:** Worship & Covenant Service

**11AM:** Sunday School  
Bible Study

**Liturgist:** Pat Richards

**Ushers:** Kory & Carolyn Kaiser

**Greeters:** Caleb & Nicole Hasbargen

**Accompanist:** David & Sandra Murray

**NO Bible Studies, NO Early Release,  
NO Confirmation between Monday,  
12/22/25, through Saturday, 1/3/26!**

**Carolyn's Office Hours for the week  
of New Year's Day:**

*Monday & Tuesday 8:15AM-4:15PM*

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

### **Current Church Officers / Committee Members Recognition Service**

On January 11, 2026, there will be a Recognition and Installation of church officers and committee members during the 10AM worship service. If you are newly elected to a position, or are currently serving as a leader, officer, or committee member, please plan to attend worship on January 11. The Hope congregation greatly appreciates your willingness to serve in these very important roles.

### **Youth Ski Trip Coming on January 18!**

Blue Earth Area Churches are sponsoring a ski trip for all youth in Grades 6-12 to attend Sunday, January 18<sup>th</sup> from 11:30am-8pm. Parent chaperones will be needed and get to ski free! Please see Pastor Godfrey for sign-up forms which has the cost on it (*also available in the Narthex*). Students **MUST** be signed up AND fees paid **no later than Wed, January 7<sup>th</sup>**!

### **Movie Night also on January 18!**

We will be meeting on Sunday, January 18<sup>th</sup> at 4pm at the church for a movie and popcorn for this family friendly event! Bring a comfy blanket or pillows, a favorite snack (optional), and your friends. All are welcome!

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



**ESCAPE TO  
EGYPT &  
REFUGE IN  
NAZARETH**

*Matthew 2:13-23*



Sunday, December 28, 2025

First Sunday after Christmas Day

# Hope United Methodist Church

[www.behopeumc.com](http://www.behopeumc.com) | (507) 526-2144 | [hopeumc@bevcomm.net](mailto:hopeumc@bevcomm.net)

**Church office hours: Monday & Tuesday this week 8:15am-4:15pm**

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

**Pastor Godfrey's Office Hours: Tuesdays and Wednesdays 9AM-4:30PM**

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

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

*For more information and to see what else is happening at Hope, visit us at  
[behopeumc.com](http://behopeumc.com) and our Facebook page, Hope United Methodist Church-Blue Earth, MN.*

**Prelude**  
**Song** Joy to the World Praise Band  
**Welcome** Rev. Godfrey Gakuru  
**Announcements**

**\*Call to Worship**  
One: Beloved, on this night we gather to enliven the story of God,  
who came to dwell among us.  
**ALL: We rejoice and give thanks for God’s presence with us.**  
One: We come as people called to be the light, to share Christ’s light with the  
world, and to bear witness to the true light—Emmanuel, God with us.  
**ALL: Arise and shine, for the light has come; this is what all the earth has  
been waiting for.**  
One: Come, let us share in songs of joy and praise as witnesses to God’s glory.  
**ALL: We gather today as people of God’s promise, witnesses to God’s  
glorious presence among us— in the vulnerable, the forgotten, and  
the tucked-away places of the world.**

**\*Unison Prayer**  
Gracious and loving God, your light shines in this world— in the Christ  
child, born to guide us from darkness, and in the star that leads us to love.  
We praise you for Emmanuel, the child who teaches hope, peace, and joy,  
and long to welcome him with worship, care, and love. Yet, merciful God, we  
confess our failings— when we cling to control or privilege, ignore others’  
needs, or allow harm to prevail. We glorify you for your mercy, faithfulness,  
and presence. In Christ’s holy name, Amen.

**\*Opening Hymn** “Sing Praise to God Who Reigns Above” UMH 126

**Children’s Message**

**Scripture Reading** Matthew 2:13-23  
13When they had gone, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a  
dream. “Get up,” he said, “take the child and his mother and escape to Egypt.  
Stay there until I tell you, for Herod is going to search for the child to kill him.”  
14So he got up, took the child and his mother during the night and left for  
Egypt, 15where he stayed until the death of Herod. And so was fulfilled what the

Lord had said through the prophet: “Out of Egypt I called my son.”  
16When Herod realized that he had been outwitted by the Magi, he was  
furious, and he gave orders to kill all the boys in Bethlehem and its vicinity who  
were two years old and under, in accordance with the time he had learned from  
the Magi. 17Then what was said through the prophet Jeremiah was fulfilled:  
18“A voice is heard in Ramah,  
weeping and great mourning,  
Rachel weeping for her children  
and refusing to be comforted,  
because they are no more.”  
19After Herod died, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in  
Egypt 20and said, “Get up, take the child and his mother and go to the land of  
Israel, for those who were trying to take the child’s life are dead.”  
21So he got up, took the child and his mother and went to the land of Israel.  
22But when he heard that Archelaus was reigning in Judea in place of his father  
Herod, he was afraid to go there. Having been warned in a dream, he withdrew to  
the district of Galilee, 23and he went and lived in a town called Nazareth. So was  
fulfilled what was said through the prophets, that he would be called a Nazarene.

**Sermon Series:** Be A Star  
**Sermon Title:** Humble Places, Humbles Lives Rev. Godfrey Gakuru

**Offering** (please put any written prayer requests & offerings in offering plates as they are passed)  
**\*Doxology** UMH 94  
**Offertory Prayer**  
**Sharing of Birthdays, Anniversaries, Joys & Concerns**  
**Pastoral Prayer**  
**Lord’s Prayer**

**Benediction**

**\*Closing Song** Go Tell it on the Mountain Praise Band

**\*Please stand if you are able.**

## Humble Places, Humble Lives (Sermon Series: Be a Star)

As we gather on this last Sunday of the year, we might expect a story of celebration, reflection, or victory. Instead, Scripture gives us a story of vulnerability. Not fireworks—but a family running for their lives. We meet a newly born baby—Jesus—born as a king yet not recognized as one. He was born in a lowly place, a manger in Bethlehem. The Old Testament describes Bethlehem as “small among the clans of Judah.” At the time of Jesus’ birth, Bethlehem may have had a population of around 300 people, and its livelihood depended on farming and shepherding. Not exactly the place you would choose for the birth of a king—but God did. More than that, Jesus was laid in a manger—the most unlikely nursery. This was not a sign of neglect; it was a sign of accessibility. Jesus’ first bed was a feeding trough so that everyone could approach him.

From the very beginning, Jesus was accessible to all. Why not the inn? The word translated as “inn” (*kataluma*) likely meant a guest room, not a hotel. Maybe a family house where the guest room would have been upstairs, while the living space—where animals were kept at night—was downstairs. Thus, when the guest room was full, Mary and Joseph stayed downstairs with the animals. Even there, God was present.

Once baby Jesus was born, the king of the time felt threatened. King Herod hears about this child and does not send a welcome card, but a message of fear and violence. Even babies can be dangerous when they threaten power. Jesus becomes a threat not because he raises an army, but because he represents a different kind of power—heavenly power. So, Joseph and Mary do what no new parents want to do. To protect their child, they flee in the middle of the night. Following the message of the angel, they do not escape to a safe resort, but flee to Egypt, where they still need shelter—likely a simple room—where they stay until Herod dies.

They stay in a place known for exile, foreign language, and culture, and burdened with the painful history of the people of Israel. And yet, it is about this place that the prophet declares: “*Out of Egypt I have called my son.*” God works in unexpected places, and God calls from anywhere to everywhere. Only after Herod dies does the family return—not to a place of power, but to another humble town: Nazareth. A place where people later ask, “Can anything good come out of Nazareth?” Nazareth had a population of around 200 people.

Jesus’ journey unfolded through humility: from Nazareth to Bethlehem, from Bethlehem to Egypt, and from Egypt back to Nazareth. These were not places of privilege or ease, but ordinary and often uncertain places. Yet it was precisely in these humble spaces that God chose to dwell, reminding us that God’s presence is often found not in power or comfort, but in the quiet faithfulness of everyday life.

The story of humble places reminds us how God calls us to live humble lives and about making room for others. To be available to others when they need us, being open and welcoming. But most importantly we need to make a room for God. Today the Lord is calling us, saying: “*Listen! I am standing at the door, knocking; if you hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to you and eat with you, and you with me.*” Revelation 3:20

Making a room may not always be comfortable. We may need to stretch. We may not feel powerful. We may feel tired or unnoticed. But the story of Jesus reminds us that God does some of God’s best work in humble places. These places may look like a manger, yet they are where God is working out something better—for us and for others. The best way to center ourselves is to trust God’s process, because God’s ways are not our ways, and God’s plans are not our plans. As we look toward 2026, how prepared are we—not only to make room for others, but also to make room for ourselves?

- Maybe finding time for ourselves or with our families.
- Maybe we need more outdoor activities.
- Maybe baking doesn’t have to be only a holiday thing.
- Maybe making space for art, fishing, hiking, or watching our favorite movies.
- Maybe making a phone call to reconnect with someone we trust.
- Maybe coming to church for fellowship or a mission.

And what if we choose to make room for others—spending time with those who are neglected or unnoticed, visiting the homebound, those in nursing homes, or even those in prison? When we do this, we become like stars, bearing light that shines into the lives of others—a light they can follow, just as the star once guided the Magi to the child Jesus. **We can begin right here, right where we live—because God is already at work among us, even in the humblest places and among the humblest people. Amen.**

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS CONTINUED...**

### **Pictorial Directory**

Due to conflicts in December, additional times for pictures will be taken on Sunday, January 4<sup>th</sup> and Sunday, January 11<sup>th</sup> from 9-10AM and 11AM-12PM each day. If you would like to have some 'off-site' photos taken, you can make those arrangements with photographer, Jessica Eckmann, for an additional fee.



Photos to be placed in the book will be selected immediately following your setting. You may purchase a USB memory stick of your digital prints if you wish to make additional copies for your personal use. Each printed directory will have a small fee.

If you cannot come to the church, other arrangements have been made, or if you do not live in the area, you are invited to submit a formal photo and some candid shots for us to choose from. Those can be submitted to either contact, Marilyn or Carolyn, by no later than 1/15/26:

Marilyn Schaefer  
[edgewood@bevcomm.net](mailto:edgewood@bevcomm.net)  
1242 S Galbraith St  
Blue Earth, MN 56013

Carolyn Kaiser / Hope UMC  
[hopeumc@bevcomm.net](mailto:hopeumc@bevcomm.net)  
12080 – 380<sup>th</sup> Ave / PO Box 125  
Blue Earth, MN 56013

### **Worship Committee is looking for one more member to join!**

If you are interested in helping to shape our worship service, please contact Joni Jenkins or Pastor Godfrey.

### **Fellowship Time: Sundays at 9:15AM**

Hope Church has a calendar hung in the kitchen for folks to sign up to provide snacks/treats and/or to serve & cleanup for fellowship time held from 9:15AM until 10AM each Sunday before worship.

As there have been a very limited number of volunteers, if there is no one signed up by the Wednesday prior for any particular Sunday, there will NOT be a snack available at fellowship time—only coffee.

### **2026 Radio Broadcast Sponsorship Info**

The **2026** Radio Broadcast sign-up list is posted in the Narthex! If you would like to sponsor/sign up for a particular Sunday, please fill out your name, message, and the sponsorship fee is \$28 per Sunday.



Since starting our new software called **Realm** in late 2024 and having learned quite a bit over the past 12 months, we are ready to have our Hope UMC members and friends start using this software as well as the staff!

Everyone in our church gets a unique profile. Your profile contains everything you want people in our church to know about you. Your profile also enables you to track your giving, update your contact information, change family details, set notification preferences, or replace that outdated family photo (which goes along with the new pictorial directory pictures being taken in January).

By keeping your information current, you are helping our staff, group leaders, and our church community. Privacy settings will be gone over in more detail once you create your profile.



Prior to meeting with me or creating your profile on your own, you will need to have a **valid email address on file with the church office** (with Carolyn). Once I have an email address for you, I

can send an emailed invitation to join our Realm world (*please reach out to me if you do NOT have an email*). Also, you can start thinking of a password for your profile. I will work with those that need assistance to get their profile set up correctly.

***Current online contributors***, I will help you migrate your current online giving to the new system.

#### **Password Requirements**

- Between 8 and 15 characters
- Includes no part of your email address
- Includes no repeating characters such as **aaa**
- Includes none of the following: **< > & ^ \ ; % ` ' /**
- Includes no numeric or alphabetical sequences such as **12345** or **abcde**
- Also, no keyboard sequences such as **asdfgh**

Please stay tuned to the January bulletins as there will be time after the worship services to get more information and to ask questions!