

Hope United Methodist Church
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Blue Earth, MN 56013

APRIL

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Hope United Methodist Church NEWSLETTER

April

APRIL 2026

Faith and Ministry Across Cultures

Last month in the newsletter, I shared a little about my first appointment in ministry in the Methodist Church in Kenya and how those mission experiences have shaped my ministry here in Blue Earth, Minnesota. I became a full-time pastor in July 2014, first serving as a youth pastor at Maziwa Methodist Church in Nairobi, the capital of Kenya. This church had more than a thousand members and a large number of youths. The experience was unique because I had just graduated from seminary, and living in the busiest city in Kenya was not something I had anticipated, having grown up in rural Kenya.

On January 1, 2015, I was appointed to serve four other churches in the western part of the country, ministering in both rural and urban congregations. Before coming to the United States in January 2021, the Methodist Church in Kenya Conference appointed me as superintendent minister of sixteen local churches. In our context, this position often means serving several churches within a circuit. I worked alongside another pastor and many lay preachers and leaders who faithfully led worship and cared for the congregations as we moved from one church to another. Once a month, the sixteen churches gather together in one location for a communion service. Before that appointment in 2020, I served as a chaplain at a Methodist Church – sponsored school. Earlier in my ministry, from 2016 to 2018, I served an urban church with more than 2,000 members. In 2019, I was appointed to another circuit with four churches, serving a combined congregation of about 2,500 members. In that role, I worked with children, youth, and adults while also fulfilling both pastoral and administrative responsibilities.

During this season, I was also discerning God's call for my life. Since completing my undergraduate degree in Theology and Religious Studies at a Kenyan Methodist university, I have developed a deep longing to pursue further theological education. Having served in different regions—among tribes and communities who spoke languages different from my own—I desired to continue learning and to be immersed in another cultural context. I therefore applied to several universities in Europe, Asia, and the United States for master's programs.

In January 2021, I was admitted to the Candler School of Theology at Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia, and I began my studies in the fall of 2021, marking my first time in the United States. After one semester there, I transferred to another school in Ohio for a year. In 2023, while in Ohio, my father passed away. As I struggled with grief and loneliness in the United States, I decided to seek a new community and therefore moved to Washington, DC. I was grateful to be near members of my Kenyan community, including a close family member who supported me during that transition and throughout my time there.

In my final year at Wesley Theological Seminary in Washington, D.C., I served as a student pastor at Good Shepherd United Methodist Church in Maryland as part of my parish ministry training. After completing my Master of Divinity at Wesley Theological Seminary, I sensed that God was leading me to serve in a new and very different context. Coming to Blue Earth, Minnesota, felt like an answered prayer. When I first arrived, everything looked familiar. I saw the farms, the open land, the people, and the rhythm of life, and I said to myself, "It feels like home." In that moment, I knew I was beginning a new mission and felt confident that God had truly called me here. Even when moments of fear surfaced, I was reminded of God's words to Joshua: "Be strong and very courageous" (Joshua 1:9). Throughout my life, I have seen God's guidance, and every step of my journey has taught me to be grateful and to trust in Him. As Scripture reminds us, "Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight" (Proverbs 3:5-6). As we celebrate this Easter season, I share this story of my journey with deep gratitude. Whenever I reflect on my experiences here, your love and support refresh my heart. Your acts of kindness and generosity encourage us in our service and give us hope for what God is doing in our church and community. We are called with one calling, and that calling comes from Christ—to love one another.

Rev. Godfrey Gakuru

Hope UMC, a faith community growing in Christian love, through discipleship, the inclusion of all, and fellowship.



OPEN HEARTS. OPEN MINDS. OPEN DOORS.

SUNDAY SERVICES: 10:00AM WORSHIP

A pre-recorded message airs at 9:30am on
KBEW 1560 AM. Visit behopeumc.com to stay updated
with current events, bulletins & newsletters.

Staff:

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

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

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

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Office hours are Mondays 8:15am-12:15pm and Wednesdays 8:15am-4:15pm.

Newsletter items are due by the 17th of the month.

Please send announcements for the bulletin and the newsletter to the above email address or call the church office. Also, please notify the church office of any changes in names, addresses, incorrect birthdays or anniversaries, or if you'd like to receive this newsletter via email.

Mission Committee

First, a big THANK YOU to all who contributed to our Lenten Offering for BUCC-Y Bags! We will let you know in the May newsletter what our total coin collection was!



And, again THANKS to all who were a part of Lord's Acre. The 2026 Sign Up Poster will appear in the Narthex soon.

One of the many great things about our membership as United Methodists is UMCOR. The United Methodist Committee on Relief began about 75 years ago and is thriving today. As the name implies, teams and supplies are sent into areas that have, or about to have disasters from weather, war and tend to the needs of those affected. UMCOR also drill wells where water is scarce, feeds the hungry and the list goes on and on. Bottom line is, it shows the love of Christ through action! And it is worldwide!



An interesting structure, UMCOR has ONE Sunday each year (usually the fourth Sunday in Lent) to ask United Methodists to give to cover all the administrative costs. Formerly known as "One Great Hour of Sharing", it has recently been re-named "UMCOR Sunday". This year, that day WAS March 15.

After that ONE Sunday, every dollar that UMCOR receives goes directly to disaster and humanitarian relief – dollar for dollar, the rest of the year, 364 days. The interesting part is that it has been working great. Over the years, almost all "One Great Hour of Sharing" Sundays are left with an EXCESS beyond its annual administrative costs. The excess is used toward relief. UMCOR receives no funding from our annual apportionments. So, while our Hope congregation is GENEROUS when it comes to local mission needs, this UMCOR is our sharing our gifts in a worldwide way. Whenever you hear of a tragic tornado, hurricane, earthquake or even a war, you can know UMCOR is there, showing our FAITH IN ACTION!

By the way, those mats that are woven here and sent to Jefferson, Iowa? Those are UMCOR supplies. If you'd like to give an offering, just note in the memo of your check (or designate in your online giving) "UMCOR SUNDAY" or just "UMCOR". Anytime is a great time to give to UMCOR!



Thanks to everyone who participated in the Garden Survey. There is definitely interest in continuing the garden project this year. Special thanks to the six (6) people volunteering to deliver vegetables on Sunday.

First priority task is to deal with the water system that is located inside the church garage. We have three (3) people volunteering to take on this task: Al Roesler, Jay Ankeny and Bob Toland. If this is resolved, we will have a fully operational drip system, Then we will be able to finish determining what we will plant this year. In order to make the most of our space, we will focus on higher yield produce like lettuce, green beans, carrots, cherry tomatoes, etc... We will also plant some early crop items like radishes since they were a hit last year, which will allow a second crop space.

Last year we spent \$2,966.68 of the \$3,000 that came from the Winnebago Fund. We were able to build the four boxes, surrounding fence, ground cover, netting, seeds and plants. We secured the fertilizer/soil enrichment which was delivered by our Advisor Team: Backyard Farms. Our soil was donated by Weerts Sod and Seed. Bomgaars donated the mulch and gave us a 20% discount on products.

Since we do not have any money at this point allotted/ budgeted for garden expenses this year, we will not consider any expansion. We will instead encourage those of you who are planting gardens this summer to partner with us by planting a bit more to share with our neighbors this year. If you have room for extra onions, beets, cabbage, cucumbers, zucchinis, herbs, a tomato plant or two, please do! Let me know if we can help you water, weed, or harvest your garden space this summer on behalf of our community. Together we will plant Seeds of Hope to help meet the food needs of some of our neighbors.

Seeds of Hope Coordinator: Melissa Anne, partnerships4peace@gmail.com

April Birthdays

April Anniversaries

2- Laura Becker	10- Courtney Dutton-Chien	22- Cale Borris	2- Timothy & Jodie Murray
3- Timothy Nesheim	Pat Richards	Chase Brandt	9- Brandon & Melanie Farnham
Bob Berndt	Melissa Storbeck	Karsyn Brandt	15- Kent & Sara Roper
4- Berkley Wielenga	Terry Goodwin	23- Sherry Abel	16- Bucky & Melissa King
Mary Toland	Judy Whitney	Bailey Hanson	17- Skip & Nicole Meyers
Gavin Storbeck	Addison Dusing	Jordan Moen	23- Lester & Jane Brooks
Ryon Steele	11- Susan Reynolds	Nancy Thompson	24- Bruce & Bonnie Ankeny
5- Florin Jordahl	15- Rachel Thompson	24- Amanda Steele	
Caleb Goshorn	Bill Whitney	Jean Millmann	
6- Ray Wigern	16- Jacob Murray	Marilyn Schaefer	
7- Brody Eckmann	Amanda Steinke	25- Rachel Wilson	
Sarah Murray	Gary Olsen	Stanley Christ	
John Roper	18- Alicia Murphy	26- Mara Olson	
Millicent Steele	Jaxton Dusing	Abigail Uecker	
8- Jane Brooks	19- Bonnie Ankeny	29- Dan Poetter	
Kimberly Fenske	Shirley King	30- Bonnie Martinez	
Kinsley Steele	20- Nolan Millmann		
Khloe Zabel	21- Jeff Campbell		
9- Scott Peterson	Tim Perrizo		
Jeff Schaefer	Ryan Borris		
Gavin Millmann			



We will be holding our Confirmation Sunday on April 26, 2025 at 10am.

The following students will be confirmed:

- | | |
|---------------|----------------|
| Avery Asmus | Koby Ihle |
| Karsyn Brandt | Gavin Millmann |
| Caleb Goshorn | Rylee Olson |



"Happy" Hour has returned! Thursdays at 5:00 pm

****ODD DATES – Pete's Bar and Grill** 115 E 6th St, Blue Earth, MN 56013 (formerly Average Jo's)**

****EVEN DATES – Lost Saint Brewing** 317 S Grove St, Blue Earth, MN 56013**

Order your beverage-of-choice and enjoy a casual group conversation about life, struggles, celebrations... and how faith, church family, and community fits in. No RSVP required!

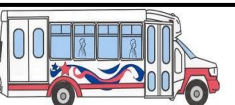
To be added to the text group for reminders, please contact Mark or Megan Hanson-Haase.

UW Faith continued from Page 3...

PRAYER: Gracious and Almighty God, from you we have the gift of celebrating the resurrection of Jesus. May we also celebrate the joy of a life spent in serving you, and the promise of eternal life through our Lord, Jesus Christ! Amen.

Happy Easter, and please don't forget our next UW Faith meeting on **Tuesday, April 7th, at 2pm!** All are welcome!
Be Blessed! Your sister in Christ, *Nancy*

Please contact the church and leave a message if you know someone who needs a ride to church or call Al Roesler at 507-525-0630. Let's fill the bus!



KIDS KORNER

With spring quickly approaching, we find ourselves eager to be outdoors and enjoying fresh air. May this be a great time to LOOK for God in nature and to be thankful for this world God created. As you take walks outside, I encourage you (and your family) to pray for those who live in each house that you pass! What an impact we can have within our own community!



Our last week of Wednesday Release for this year is April 29th. Thank you for all those that helped make this ministry a success!

~Megan Goshorn, Kids Coordinator

Summer Adventure...CAMP!



Dive into a world of fun, learning, and adventure while meeting new friends, learning new skills and sharing the joy of Jesus and community. Camps are for everyone and all ages.

Church Camp

A lot of different types of camp are available as well as dates and locations.

To learn more, Hope UMC will be celebrating "Camp Sunday" on April 12. Camp Scholarships are available of \$400 per child that would like to attend a camp. For more information, please contact the church office.

Attention: 2026 High School Graduates!

For those that are graduating high school this year and who are planning on continuing their education and have previously participated in either Hope's Youth or Confirmation program, you may be eligible!

In order to receive **a total of \$2,000 over 2 years**, participants must submit an application to Hope's Scholarship Program. After being reviewed and accepted, they will be required to submit their transcript to us (after completing each year or each semester) and provided they have performed sufficiently, we will send them a check! Please see Daryl Murray or Carolyn Kaiser for an application or for more details.



Music Notes

Hope Choir has regular Sunday morning rehearsals at 9am. Come join us to have some fun while preparing anthems to sing for worship. All are welcome! ~Pat Richards

Please lift up in prayer....



• Members and Friends in Health Care Centers and those at their homes including:

- | | | |
|----------------|---------------|-------------------|
| Mae Hove | Mike Rubatt | Terry Hassing |
| Jean Nelson | Mary Ochs | Muriel Hanna |
| Cindy Steinke | Scott Steinke | Lillian Kohlmeyer |
| Fran Fenske | Todd Olson | Damian Prescher |
| Layne McCleary | Mary Toland | Ryan Foster |

• Armed Services personnel and their families including: Eric Becker, Hunter Spencer & Cole Steinke.

• All those that have a lost a loved one recently: *families of Joe Ferraro, Shirley Hilpipre & Elsie Olson*

Please help us update this list if you have names to be added or omitted.

Need Prayer?

We have created a form on our website so that you can submit your prayer requests. You can choose to be anonymous or not, and you can even choose how your prayer is shared. Whether you want just Pastor Godfrey to know or the entire church is up to you! So go to our website: behopeumc.com and click at the top on the tab that says "prayer request."

United Women in Faith (UWF)

Tuesday, April 7, 2026 at 2pm

Circle Meetings:

Joy Circle: Thursday, April 9 at 2pm

Faith Circle: Thursday, April 16 at 9:30am



United Women in Faith

When we were baptized, we were buried with Christ and shared his death. So, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the wonderful power of the Father, we also can live a new life. Romans 6:4 NCV

In 1933, Alfred H. Ackley, a preacher and musician, was asked by a student why he should worship a dead Jew. In response to that question, he wrote the beloved Easter anthem "He Lives," to share his belief in a risen Lord.

Refrain:

*He lives, He lives,
Christ Jesus lives today!
He walks with me and talks with me
Along life's narrow way.
He lives, He lives,
Salvation to impart!
You ask me how I know He lives?
He lives within my heart.*

*I serve a risen Savior, He's in the world today;
I know that He is living whatever men may say;
I see His hand of mercy, I hear His voice of cheer,
And just the time I need Him, He's always near.*

This song is a treasure to remind us of what the Gospel is about and what we should want to share with the world! We don't worship a dead Jew, we "serve a risen Savior," who lives within our hearts! The evidence that he lives is inside each of us! May we find courage and strength in this knowledge and live our lives to show all those around us that Jesus is alive in us!



HOPE UMC ~ APRIL 2026

"New month, new goals, new mindset, new focus, new intentions, new results."



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p>Season of Lent: Wednesday, February 18 to Sunday, April 5—shaded in purple!</p>			<p>1</p> <p>NO EARLY RELEASE! NO CONFIRMATION!</p> <p>APRIL FOOLS DAY</p>	<p>2 NO SCHOOL</p> <p>NO BIBLE STUDY! NO MAT WEAVING!</p> <p>5:30PM: Maundy Thurs Service</p>	<p>3 NO SCHOOL</p> <p>5:30PM: Good Friday Service</p>	<p>4</p>
<p>5 <i>EASTER Sunday</i></p> <p>9:00AM: Choir Practice 9:15AM: Fellowship 10AM: Worship & Communion Service</p>	<p>6 NO SCHOOL</p> <p>Meals on Wheels</p>	<p>7</p> <p>2PM: St. Luke's Communion 2PM: UWF Meeting</p>	<p>8</p> <p>2:30-4:15PM: Early Release 7-8PM: Confirmation</p>	<p>9</p> <p>10AM: Sermon Scriptures Bible Study</p> <p>2PM: Joy Circle</p> <p>5PM: Happy Hour w/Jesus</p>	<p>10</p>	<p>11</p>
<p>12 <i>2nd Sunday in Easter</i></p> <p>9:00AM: Choir Practice 9:15AM: Fellowship 10AM: Worship Service 11AM: Sunday School Bible Study / Lord's Acre Mtg</p> <p>CAMP SUNDAY</p>	<p>13</p> <p>12-6PM: Blood Drive</p>	<p>14</p> <p>2PM: Membership/History Mtg</p>	<p>15</p> <p>2:30-4:15PM: Early Release 7-8PM: Confirmation</p>	<p>16</p> <p>9:30AM: Faith Circle 10AM: Sermon Scriptures Bible Study</p> <p>1-3PM: Mat Weaving</p> <p>5PM: Happy Hour w/Jesus</p>	<p>17</p> <p>2PM: Parker Oaks Communion</p>	<p>18</p> <p>8:30AM-3PM Prairie Winds District Spring Gathering for UWFaith (Cornerstone UMC in Marshall)</p>
<p>19 <i>3rd Sunday in Easter</i></p> <p>9:00AM: Choir Practice 9:15AM: Fellowship 10AM: Worship Service 11AM: Sunday School Bible Study</p> <p>NATIVE AMERICAN MINISTRIES SUNDAY</p>	<p>20</p> <p>1-3 PM: Interfaith Caregivers BINGO</p>	<p>21</p>	<p>22</p> <p>2:30-4:15PM: Early Release 7-8PM: Confirmation</p>	<p>23</p> <p>10AM: Sermon Scriptures Bible Study</p> <p>5PM: Happy Hour w/Jesus</p>	<p>24</p>	<p>25</p>
<p>26 <i>4th Sunday of Easter</i></p> <p>9:00AM: Choir Practice 9:15AM: Coffee Only 10AM: Worship, Confirmation & Communion Service NO Sunday School & NO Bible Study</p> <p>CONFIRMATION SUNDAY</p>	<p>27</p>	<p>28</p>	<p>29</p> <p>2PM: St. Luke's BINGO</p> <p>2:30-4:15PM: LAST DAY OF EARLY RELEASE!</p> <p>6PM: Ad Council Meeting</p>	<p>30</p> <p>10AM: Sermon Scriptures Bible Study</p> <p>5PM: Happy Hour w/Jesus</p>		

This is the day the LORD has made; we will rejoice and be glad in it. Psalm 118:24 NKJV