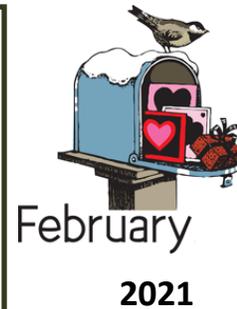


*Hope*  
of Edwardsburg

*Invite. Connect. Grow. Serve.*

*We invite YOU to experience HOPE in Christ. There is a place for you here, to connect with people and God. Together we will grow in faith. Together we will serve as the hands and feet of Christ for the Glory of God!*



Dear Friends of Hope,

February marks the start of our 2<sup>nd</sup> year battling the global pandemic Covid-19. Though many things have changed for me in the last year (i.e. where I live, the church I pastor, the way I greet people, the ways I share God's Word with people), the mindset with which I approach this crisis has not. I/We have been faced with some very difficult circumstances, and with them equally difficult decisions, and through every single moment of it all... God is Good! And that is my strategy too! Every time, choose what is good. It sounds simpler than it is, because we can find God's good gifts in all things. So when we talk about something like gathering for in-person worship, there is good in keeping our distance and not spreading germs and not perpetuating a global pandemic, and there is good in being together in a faithful community, worshipping God, and perpetuating the growth Christ followers in the world. Both are good. God is good. And so when faced with decisions seemingly balanced by God's good on both sides, I have always, and will always, lean toward that which protects the most vulnerable members of our community.

While Hope is now open to regular staff hours, in-person committee meetings, and small group gatherings (as long as mask and distancing protocols are followed), we will continue to share our times of worship, congregational prayer, and preaching online only. We keep our eyes set toward re-opening in the spring, to begin gathering as a congregation again, pending the continued downward trend on positivity rates and the upward trend of vaccine administration. And we do this as our way of saying to the world that we care; the church cares; God cares about the well-being of every single person, and calls us all to assist those more vulnerable than ourselves in ways that don't often align with our wants and desires.

<sup>15</sup>Yes, everything is for your sake, so that grace, as it extends to more and more people, may increase thanksgiving, to the glory of God. <sup>16</sup>So we do not lose heart. Even though our outer nature is wasting away, our inner nature is being renewed day by day. <sup>17</sup>For this slight momentary affliction is preparing us for an eternal weight of glory beyond all measure, <sup>18</sup>because we look not at what can be seen but at what cannot be seen; for what can be seen is temporary, but what cannot be seen is eternal." (2 Corinthians 4:15-18, NRSV)

**Reaching Out-** Hope is continuing to build our team of people dedicated to calling on friends of the church who are feeling especially isolated. If you are able to make a couple phone calls per week, or write a couple letters, please contact the church office, and we will get you connected with some folks who would be blessed to hear from you. Also, if you know someone who would benefit from being added to our call list, please share their info with us.

**Send Your Selfie!**- We are working to update our directory and contact list. Sabrina English is putting together a digital directory that we will be able to share with each other more easily than in the past. We would love to add your picture to your contact info. Please send a picture of yourself to Sabrina at sphinx2299@aol.com, or schedule a time to stop by the church and have your picture taken. Note: No filters or glamour shots required; just everyday people sharing in life.



In the meantime, I encourage you to tend to your spirit and faith in times of personal prayer and searching the scriptures. Be open to hearing and deeply considering the perspectives of those who look, act, and think differently than you. And whatever you might say or do (or post online), run it all past Jesus first!

<sup>9</sup>So let us not grow weary in doing what is right, for we will reap at harvest time, if we do not give up. <sup>10</sup>So then, whenever we have an opportunity, let us work for the good of all, and especially for those of the family of faith." (Galatians 6:9-10, NRSV)

In Christ's Love, *Pastor Nate Starkey*



**Plan for Re-Opening Church** – We will continue with the same on-line format using Facebook and Zoom for Sunday Church services. We will re-evaluate in person services in mid-March based on health guidelines for our area. The health and safety of the congregation remains paramount in determining when in person services can begin again.

**Nurturing Program** – A list of shut ins and those dealing with isolation due to the virus situation will be distributed to the LT. A strategy needs to be further developed and expanded for outreach to this vulnerable group of congregation members. This would be a great outreach opportunity for those looking to nurture our church members that currently have limited contact with friends and family. We need volunteers! If you are interested in helping please contact the church at 269-663-5321 x 9 or email [Hopeumc2@hope-umc.us](mailto:Hopeumc2@hope-umc.us). The format and frequency of the outreach would be yours to develop and could include both cards and /or phone calls.

**Property & Parsonage Maintenance** – A list of building maintenance issues at both the church and parsonage were presented by the pastor and a member of the trustee committee. These will be investigated and volunteers requested at a later date to help with repairs.

**Sanctuary Mortgage** – We remain on track to pay off the church mortgage on March 1<sup>st</sup>! Further discussions will be held on future funding allocations as we near the pay-off date.

**Send Us Your Selfie** – We are updating the directory and would like to attach pictures to connect names with faces. If you have a smartphone and can take a “selfie” please upload and send to Sabrina English (email – [sphinx2299@aol.com](mailto:sphinx2299@aol.com)). Also include any updates you have to your address, phone number or email if you would like to share with the congregation. This is a new project and will take some time to compile the information into our directory.

**Leadership Team Organization** – Jim Weingart will begin this year as LT Chair. We welcome Makenzie Morgan and Chris Edgerton as new members to the LT. Jackie Boone, Jim Ralph, Cory Sheets and Marti (Bartel) Kurzhal are stepping off after many years of service which we deeply appreciate.





TOM REA	2/01
JOYCE WARD	2/02
LYDIA GOULD	2/03
JUSTIN ROSS	2/03
NANCY LOOTENS	2/04
BREENA MAPLES	2/05
KELLY MORTIMER	2/05
FLORENCE GORDON	2/05
CHUCK ORTH	2/05
JENNIFER SCHMUCKER	2/05
MARY CATHLEEN JONES	2/06
BENTLEY CARLYLE	2/07
PATTY JOHNSON	2/09
NORMA BOONE	2/10
SAMUEL DeYOUNG	2/10
JASON UDELL	2/10
KELLY DUIS	2/13
BETTY BRADY	2/13
JILL GARDNER KAYNER	2/15
SUE BURKS	2/17
CAITLIN WYANT	2/17
CLIANA MANFRED	2/18
CHASE MANFRED	2/18
JOHN BLOUGH	2/18
BERNICE PELMEAR	2/20
LEXI-RAE HOWELL	2/21
SANDY RYDER	2/23
ERIC TROSPER	2/24
BRONWYN TAFUNAI	2/25
HEAVEN GRISSINGER	2/26



DELLA & DENNIS HOLDREAD	2/04
SHARYN & JAMES SNYDER	2/21
MARJE & TOM REA	2/23
SUSIE & DAVID HENDRICKS	2/28



Hope's online Prayer Chain has faithfully continued during the pandemic. To have a prayer concern added call **Melissa at Hope, 269-663-5321**, and leave your request on her answering machine. Or email your request to Marti Bartels, **mbbartels@aol.com**.

**SHUT-IN PRAYERS**

Those Hope members listed below are restricted to home or nursing facility. The term shut-in reflects that their condition warrants "shut inside" or not able to leave the home on a regular basis. Should you have additional people to add to the list please call the church at 269-663-5321 Ext. 2.



Please remember these people in prayer: Bob Fuller, Ardith & Carl Higley, Verlaine Hoffman, Sherry Leininger, Beth Mann, Bev Torgeson and Grace Werner.

**FEBRUARY 17**

**ASH WEDNESDAY**





## CURRENT HOPE FINANCIAL INFORMATION

### Month of December Ministry Fund Summary

Ministry Fund Donations:	\$ 27,357
Ministry Fund Expenses:	\$-15,477
Surplus for the Month:	\$ 11,880

2020 Surplus \$ 23,683

All December bills have been paid. Our Ministry Fund is \$55,187. Thank you for your continued support!

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### Church Mortgage Update:

December M&M Allocation: \$7,563.60 from M&M Giving  
 Total paid in January = \$7,563.60  
 Current Mortgage Balance = \$17,853 after the January 2020 Payment.

**We are planning on paying off the church mortgage when the balloon payment is due 3/1/2021!** We will continue to use 90% of giving to the Mortgage & Mission fund for the required regular church mortgage payments in the meantime. Our LT is planning on how best to utilize these Mortgage Allocated funds for the remainder of 2021. Thank your giving to Project Hope and the Mortgage & Missions Funds which will make this possible.

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### Parsonage Mortgage Update:

Regular Mortgage Payment is \$998.58 from the Ministry Fund.  
 Current Parsonage Mortgage Balance = \$161,757 after the January 2021 Payment.  
 Our projected payoff date is May 2040.

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### Finance Questions ???:

If you have a question about the how the church finances work, please contact Dawn Weingart at extension 6 or Pastor Nate at extension 8 at 269-663-5321. We also have summaries of the information that has been published in prior newsletters in the office.

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## HOME

Every evening I walk through the door into my home.  
 A place to relax, sit back and renew my life's strength.  
 Safety comes within these walls I call my home.  
 Nightly sleep will hopefully refresh my body and my Spirit,

When I venture out of my home I enter into the world.  
 Sometimes filled with pain, troubles, trials and despair.  
 Other times it holds comfort, joy and feelings of love.  
 Uncertainty will often be the course of each new day.

Outside of my home the world can change my life's path.  
 I can give in to the fears and false messages I encounter.  
 Or I could embrace the gifts of love this day will offer.  
 Either one I Have the choice to choose which path I take.

My question should be--What kind of home will I build?  
 I insure the house, vehicles, and property for security.  
 Warmth in winter and cool in summer should exist here.  
 Comfort should be the physical foundation of a home.

Also I must ask--Will there be peace or turmoil here?  
 I have the choice to bind together or tare apart this home.  
 Inside this home should display my heart and my Spirit.  
 Hopefully all will see love, compassion and faith here.

There is a home being built for all believers today.  
 A home where comfort, joy and love abounds forever.  
 A table will be set offering bread and wine each day.  
 This new life gives free travel about in a new world.

A book has been given with these promises guaranteed.  
 Read this book daily and build a earthly love filled home.  
 It will lead all who choose it's calling to this eternal home.  
 This eternity to be spent with Jesus Christ our Lord.

May you choose an earthly home that has a driveway  
 leading to your eternal home for you and all who  
 enter. Peace and Love, Deb and Tony Lang



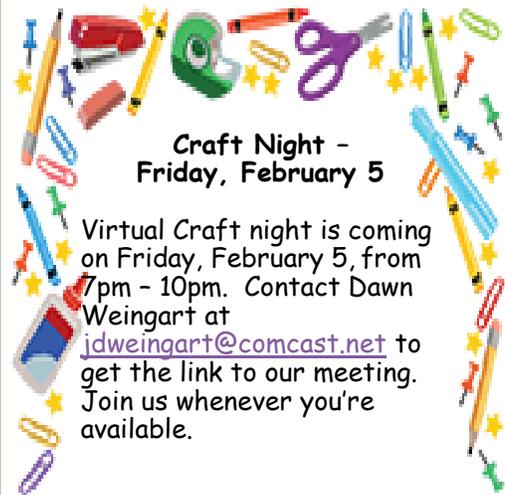
## Keep our Service People in Prayer



Joshua Adams, Charles Berry,  
 Andre Brower, Phil Bryden,  
 Sam Chaput, Jonathan Ditson,  
 James Galloway, Justin  
 Gerou, Dakota Kizer, Andrea  
 Long, Alyssa Malott, Josh

Mamer, Jay Moore, Brandon Morgan, Jessica Ramus,  
 Jason Salter, Dylan Smallwood, Jeff Starr, and Tyler  
 Wilson.

**To keep the list of service people accurate, would you please notify Melissa in the Hope office or Shirley Andrews if your listed loved one is no longer serving. OR if a name should be added, let us know. Thanks.**



### Craft Night - Friday, February 5

Virtual Craft night is coming on Friday, February 5, from 7pm - 10pm. Contact Dawn Weingart at [jdweingart@comcast.net](mailto:jdweingart@comcast.net) to get the link to our meeting. Join us whenever you're available.

### Amazon Smile

If you are already shopping on Amazon, you can support Hope. Using Amazon Smile will donate a portion of your purchase to our church! All you need to do is go to [smile.amazon.com](https://smile.amazon.com) and select that you are supporting Hope United Methodist Church of Edwardsburg.



## **CARING CALLERS NEEDED!**

With all the self-isolation and social distancing happening due to the on-going COVID-19 crisis, it is no surprise that many are feeling sad, alone, abandoned, in other words, depressed. In fact, because of our isolation due to the pandemic, mental health services have been struggling with increased demand for services. It is no different for our own church community. The church has heard from several people in our own congregation who feel alone or abandoned by their church, in other words, depressed.

### **WE NEED YOU!!!**

Because of these needs, we are creating the **Caring Caller Ministry**. Caring Callers will be tasked with calling church members and regular attendees who we haven't heard from in a while.

The purpose is to just check in and see how they are doing. To give people a little human contact when they may need some. If they have needs, you can send them to Pastor Nate or the church office.

No special skills are needed, just a caring heart and the ability to have a conversation over the phone. You can help even if YOU are the person feeling depressed. People just need contact with other people.

If you can help out, please let us know. Want to know more?

Call or email Jim Weingart at 574-266-6410 or email at [jdweingart@comcast.net](mailto:jdweingart@comcast.net).

## **Send Us Your Selfie!**

We have had **MANY** requests for an updated photo directory for the church. For one reason or another we have not been able to get it done (...can you say COVID). So, we decided to KEEP IT SIMPLE! We are going to take our list of church members and attendees and simply attach digital photos. The resulting list can be sent (via email) or snail mailed to anyone who wants it.



**THIS IS WHERE YOU COME IN!** We need a photo of you and everyone in your family! **You can:**

Take a selfie with your phone (or other digital camera); **or**

If you don't have a digital camera, send the church a photo of you. We'll scan it and send it back to you!

### **Things to remember:**

- Photos can include the whole family or each member individually (just let us know who is who).
- Digital photos should be either a PDF or JPG file. You can email them to the church office at: [hopeumc2@hope-umc.us](mailto:hopeumc2@hope-umc.us) **OR**

send them to Sabrina English at [sphinx2299@aol.com](mailto:sphinx2299@aol.com)

- Keep your photos simple! Just a "head and shoulders" shot would be fine. Save the vacation photos for family gatherings!

- The current church directory includes home addresses and phone numbers.

**IF YOU DON'T WANT THAT INFORMATION TO BE MADE PUBLIC, PLEASE LET US KNOW!**

We will remove it prior to issuance.