

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!



*“Enter his gates with thanksgiving, and his courts with praise! Give thanks to him; bless his name!”
(Psalm 100:4)*

Greetings to You, Siblings in Christ,

We are excited to announce that we will resume in-person worship this month! Starting March 28 (Palm Sunday), Sunday worship services will be held in Reese Hall at **8:30am and 10:30am**. Please note the times as they are slightly different than before. While in the building we will continue to follow the strictest guidelines for stopping the spread of Covid-19 by always wearing masks over mouth and nose, keeping physical distance, and all the others we’ve come to know and love.

We are excited to be together again, and especially glad to celebrate Easter together, but we do not want to play a part in perpetuating the problem. We will continue to closely monitor our area’s infection rates, and will offer indoor worship unless numbers start to tick upward. Once again, we will need a full slate of volunteers to help with the flow of people and the service (i.e. attendance, hosts, handouts, clean-up, operating the screen, sound, etc.) We are confident in the Congregation of Hope UMC being a shining example of how to do church well in such a time as this!



**Blessed is he
who comes in
the name of
the LORD!**
Psalm 118:26, ESV

Though our Sunday ZOOM Worship sessions will end on March 21, we will continue to offer alternative ways for people to connect with God and our church through relevant weekly video messages.

As always, please don’t hesitate to reach out to Pastor Nate with any comments, questions, concerns, or ways you can help at 586.229.5767 or pastornatestarkey@gmail.com

“Ascribe to the Lord the glory due his name; bring an offering and come before him. Worship the Lord in the splendor of his holiness” (1 Chronicles 16:29).



Notes from the Leadership Team Chair....



The Leadership Team is PLEASED to announce that as of March 1, 2021, the **mortgage on Reese Hall is PAID OFF!** THANK YOU for your generous gifts that have allowed us to make that happen!

That leaves only the mortgage on the church parsonage. During our February meeting, the LT decided to keep our "Mortgage and Missions" (M&M) budget designation so that we can continue to collect donations towards the payoff of the mortgage on the parsonage.

Our hope is to be able to make double payments towards that mortgage that will reduce the length of the mortgage from 20 years down to less than 9 and save the church approximately \$41,000 in interest payments! This payment schedule should also allow us to put aside over \$1,000 a month towards major projects (i.e. roof repair/replacement, HVAC replacement).

Your continued contributions towards the "M&M" budget will make this happen!

Nurturing Programs –We are still looking for volunteers to reach out to our shut ins and those having limited contact with other church and family members. This would be a great outreach opportunity by either making phone calls or sending cards. We need volunteers! If you are interested in helping please contact the church at 269-663-5321 x 9, email Hopeumc2@hope-umc.us or call / email Chris Edgerton at_chrisaka1976@gmail.com (phone 269 -689-8287).

Church Directory-We are updating our directory and are looking for "selfie" photos. If you could submit a selfie of you and your family to Sabrina English (sphinx2299@aol.com). Please also include any address or contact information changes.

Property Maintenance – The trustees presented a proposal for replacement of florescent lighting with LEDs in both Reese Hall and the Sanctuary. This would significantly reduce our monthly electric charges with an estimated return on investment in about 8 months. Total cost should be below \$1,300. Other outstanding property issues are on hold til warmer weather.

Financials – Due to the pandemic the church was able to secure a Payroll Protection Program (PPP) Loan last year to pay staff salaries. We utilized \$27,000 and are currently waiting for the forgiveness paperwork to cancel the loan!

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 and select that you are supporting Hope United Methodist Church of Edwardsburg.

MARCH

Birthdays

DEB LANG	3/01
STEVE LEIST	3/02
SPENCER BEEHLER	3/02
MIRANDA ANDERSON	3/02
SHARON MORGAN	3/02
PEGGY JENSEN	3/03
ERIC FRIES	3/03
NANCY BOWMAN	3/04
LILA BLOUGH	3/05
JACK GOULD	3/05
CHANDLER SHEETS	3/07
AJ FROST	3/07
RICHARD LAWSON	3/08
LANA OLEJNIK	3/08
EVAN STRONG	3/09
LAURYN KORP	3/10
DAVID MORTIMER	3/10
DONELDA LOHR	3/11
TIM PELMEAR	3/12
MACKENZIE FLICK	3/13
NANCY MEAD	3/14
JENA BERLIN	3/16
BOB MORGAN	3/16
DIANE ENDRES	3/22
TOM BLUNIER	3/23
RONDA FAHEY	3/24
PAULA RALPH	3/24
MILLIE GRISSINGER	3/25
DEVON TRUEX JR.	3/25
MATT WEILER	3/26
ALLISON KOONTZ	3/27
SHAWNA LAPORTE	3/27
BRAD STRYCKER	3/28
SUSIE HENDRICKS	3/29
AARON DITSON	3/30
KEITH MILLER	3/30
STEVE PURVIS	3/30

MARCH

Anniversaries

CHARLENA & BRETT MAPLES	3/09
HEIDI & RYAN BENTZER	3/21
KAY & BILL McNIFF	3/30



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 Leining, Beth Mann, Bev Torgeson and Grace Werner.



Craft Night - Friday, March 5

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



CURRENT HOPE FINANCIAL INFORMATION



FINANCIAL
NOTES

Month of January Ministry Fund Summary

Ministry Fund Donations:	\$ 10,357
Ministry Fund Expenses:	<u>\$-16,505</u>
Shortfall for the Month:	\$ -6,148

All January bills have been paid. Our Ministry Fund balance is \$49,038. Thank you for your continued support!

Church Mortgage Update:

January M&M Allocation	\$3,037.50	from M&M Giving
Pastoral Transition Fund	1,526.95	Utilized remaining balance
February Mortgage Expense	<u>441.77</u>	From Ministry Fund
Total paid in February	\$5,006.22	

Current Mortgage Balance = \$12,887 after the February 2020 Payment.

We are paying off the church mortgage on March 1, 2021! We are utilizing the 90% allocation from February M&M donations and Ministry Fund to make this final payment. Thank you for your sacrificial giving to Project Hope and the Mortgage & Missions Funds, which has made this possible! See the LT article for more information on how the Mortgage & Mission donations will be utilized going forward.

Parsonage Mortgage Update:

Regular Mortgage Payment is \$998.58 from the Ministry Fund.
Current Parsonage Mortgage Balance = \$161,301 after the February 2021 Payment.
Our projected payoff date is May 2040.

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.

When God giggles



Before dinner, our family was preparing to pray, which we do by holding hands. Upon discovering that one child hadn't washed his hands, my husband struck a contorted pose to avoid physical contact. The mealtime blessing quickly dissolved into laughter as we each peeked at him.

Afterward, as we passed around the food, I asked, "What do you imagine God thought about us laughing during prayer?" One child quickly replied, "I think he was laughing right along with us."

Yes! Although prayer is reverent, God invites us to converse with words, emotions — and even giggles!

—Janna Firestone

PICK/SHARE BOOK CLUB

We are observing safety guidelines for COVID, so please wear a mask and practice social distancing when you use the library at church. Call the office at 269-663-5321 to be sure someone is in the office to let you in.

Beef O'Brady's in Granger was our choice for lunch since they are open and have large tables where we could spread out, observe social distancing and share the books we had read. It had been three months since we were able to meet and we had lots to talk about.

Sherry read Where Willows Grow, by Kim Vogel Sawyer. A serious drought prompted Harley find work some distance away from his family. He only planned to be gone for the duration of the job. Harley asked Jack Berkeley, a lifelong neighbor, to look after the needs of his wife and daughters while he was gone. Jack, smitten with Anna Mae since childhood, wasted no time trying to take over when Harley left. A good percentage of this story was committed to Jack's attempts to take over Harley's family. There were a lot of different emotions in this book!

Sherry donated a "garage sale find" Hope's library. It's a biography of Janette written by her daughter, Laurel Oke Logan. It is an "in-sider's view" of her life complete with fourteen pages of family photos. The Curate's Awakening by George MacDonald is another book she donated. It tells about Thomas Wingfold, Curate, who comes merely as a profession and honestly doesn't know what he believes. The story weaves together a series of dramatic events which bring Thomas to genuine faith.



Bonnie shared a Jan Karan book, Shepherd's Abiding. Father Tim tackles the huge task of restoring an antique dilapidated nativity set, complete with a one-winged angel, 20 sheep, camels, shepherds, wise men and the holy family. This is the eighth book set in the sleepy town of Mitford, N.C. Koran's warm spirituality makes this book a respite from the hustle and bustle of Christmas. She shows how all things are possible with ingenuity, hard work and a little faith.

Shirley brought a book from the Edwardsburg library, The Night Portrait, by Laura Morelli. It's a novel about one of Leonardo da Vinci's most famous paintings from 1492, Portrait of a lady with an Ermine, and the woman who fought to save it from Nazi destruction during World War II. The dual timeline includes two women: Cecelia, the 16-year old mistress of the Duke of Milan and model for the painting; and Edith, the art restorer who worked with the Monuments Men team, risking her life to retrieve the valuable painting from the Nazis. It is a well-researched and vivid novel that history buffs and art lovers will enjoy.

Sue shared the book Love and Gilato by Jenna Evans Welch. It's a New York Times bestseller about 16 year old Lina, who is spending the summer in Tuscany in an attempt to get to know a father she had never met. The easy to read novel is filled with romance, mystery and adventure as Lina reads her dying mother's journal for clues. It's a cute story with believable characters set in Italy, rich with history, gorgeous old buildings and art.

Marti shared a book written by Elinor Gray Humphrey, Count It All Joy: a Love Story to Glorify God. It is now a classic book that sells on Amazon from \$920.45 new to \$3.99 used. Elinor wrote many memorable thoughts. "No one gets through life without pain. What matters is how we deal with it – whether it defeats us or whether with faith we travel on, undaunted, wherever the road may lead." Especially inspiring are the personal prose at the end of each chapter. One example:

respite from the hustle and bustle of Christmas. She
In darkest days
Our God is there;
We call His name
In fervent prayer.

She also read Gloriana's Torch, an English historical thriller by Patricia Finney. The year was 1587, the Spanish Armada was approaching England and Queen Elizabeth sent David Becket to discover who was selling English gunpowder and guns to Spain. Patricia reworked the legend making it a very involved and intriguing tale. The book was cumbersome to read with several subplots and numerous English terms that needed to be "Googled" to understand.

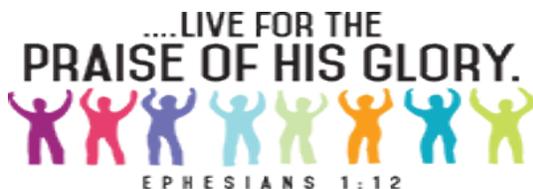
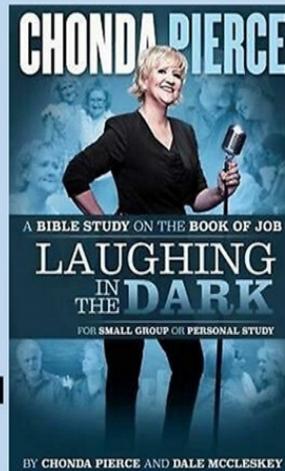
Recommended reading for Lent: Women of Easter by Liz Curtis Higgs.

Our "On your honor" check out system continues: choosing a book, reading it, and returning it to the book drop box in the Community Room. We will reshelv it. You may also donate books there. The **next meeting** for the Pick/Share a Book club will be the **SECOND THURSDAY, March 11, 2021**. Join us at 11:30 a.m. at Hope to decide what or where to eat. You may pick a book of your own or just come to share fellowship and interesting conversation. **Hope to see you then!**

Women's Bible Study

On Monday March 1st, the Women's Monday night bible study group will watch "Laughing in the Dark" by Chonda Pierce. They will begin the 6 week bible study series.

If you would like to join, please contact Donna Mansell @ 574-214-7521 for a book.



OH, THE GLORY

Oh that day that will come when all will be seen in Glory.
Victory in Heaven with singing, praising, peace and joy.
Loving one another where hugging and laughter engulf.
Glory will glow as we sit at the table and share a meal.

When greeted at Heaven's door, Angels await to welcome.

To walk through that door into the Glorious Heaven light.
Knowing forever this place is always filled with love & joy.
Happiness will rule our eternal life each and every day.

New friends and old; we'll sing and share our stories.
All our crowns we'll have laid at the feet of Jesus.
He gives us a new crown filled with His Glory and Love.
Will walk in His eternal light and share His Love forever.

Our new jobs will surpass all our hopes and dreams.
We'll live our eternal lives with renewed vigor and joy.
Enthusiasm will fill each day with worship and songs.
Voices will blend and beautiful music will be shared.

The beauty of Heaven will give off this Glorious light.
As Saints and Angels join together to share the joys.
New Love in our hearts will produce loving relationships.
Lasting forever as we join hands and share His Glory.

As we meet and greet the many characters in the Bible.
And join those earthly Saints who have labored for Jesus.
Heavenly Glory will fill every day with great anticipation
For eternity we'll use to form new memories of the Glory.

A glimpse; open the curtain and peek on the other side.
Imagine what you will see through Heaven's open door.
Let your heart be filled with this vision of what's to come.
And then know that it will be greater and more glorious.

To all believers---Heaven's GLORY is ours!!!!!!!
---Deb and Tony Lang