

## Pastor's Newsletter

### Lent: The Season of Healing



When you hear the word Lent what comes to mind? For many Christians Lent suggests the ideas of somberness, quietness, and even sadness. Of course, one can take the season of Lent to be this way, but what if the season of Lent is really all about healing and renewal?

During Lent the church is called to prepare to celebrate the greatest feast of the year, the bodily resurrection of Jesus from the dead at Easter. During this time of preparation, the church is called to engage in the traditional practices of prayer, fasting, and giving. These practices are deeply rooted in both the Old and New Testament, and we famously hear Jesus giving instructions on how to engage in these practices in Matthew chapter 6.

Now maybe prayer, fasting, and giving does not sound exciting and healing at first, but if we look at why God gives us these practices Lent can quickly become a season of healing and renewal. Why do we pray? We pray so that we can deepen our relationship with God, one another, and ourselves. When Jesus claims us as his own brothers and sisters in baptism, he is calling us his own family.

That means Jesus wants so to know what we are feeling, what we are hoping for, what we need healing from, what we want our world to be healed from. This is what prayer is: taking time to talk with God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. You can use traditional prayers like The Lord's Prayer, or just freely speak your mind. How healing it is to know that you can literally talk with God about anything, and he always listens.

Lent also calls us to fasting. Now admittedly giving something up probably does not sound like a lot of fun at first, but what if we reframe it not as solely “I have to give up.....” but as “I can try something new.” One tradition is fasting from meat (except for fish) on Fridays during Lent, or sometimes both Wednesday and Fridays. Now maybe this sounds like a downer because you love bacon (I do too by the way), but if you wanted to engage in this practice instead of focusing completely on what you must give up you can instead focus on the freedom opened for new possibilities.



In giving up meat on Fridays you now can try something new to eat, you could gather with friends / family for lunch or dinner. Now instead of focusing completely on what you’re giving up (whatever that is) you have time to spend with others and suddenly fasting from something becomes a time for gathering. It can even be a fun time to see which restaurant / fast food chain has the best fish sandwich in town!

Lent calls us to giving (traditionally called alms giving). Certainly, we are called to be generous givers all the time in our life of faith, but during Lent we are called to reflect on the healing Christ offers us in our acts of giving. It is so easy to become enslaved to our things. It is so easy to think of ourselves as only having power, dignity, respect, or value based on how much we own. Yet through Jesus we find that in a strange paradox we have more only as we give away. We have more because we learn that our value is not tied to material things but to the eternal identity as sons / daughters of God that we receive in our baptism. We have more because we experience the joy of participating with Jesus in spreading the good news through our acts of giving. We have more because through Jesus we experience what true power is which is having the ability to let go.

As we begin Lent it can be easy to view it as a time of sadness, gloom, and dreariness. While Lent is a penitential season dedicated to renewing our relationship with the Triune God at its heart it is about healing, wholeness, and restoration. It can be a drag if we want it to be, or it can be a chance for us to engage in the traditional practices of prayer, fasting, and giving recognizing the power, healing, freedom, and joy that Jesus offers to us in them.

So, as we move into this season of Lent, I hope that for you it will be a time of fun challenges, trying new things with Jesus, and with excitement preparing for the great and holy feast of Easter.

Bishop’s Newsletter

February 2024



**North/West Lower  
Michigan Synod**

**P.O. Box 517  
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mittensynod.org**

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Continuing to Learn About Racism

In the fall of 2021, I spent time following parts of the Alabama Civil Rights Trail. Arriving in Birmingham, I found myself excited but also a little apprehensive. I was excited to visit places I had never been, but also apprehensive to hear and relive the hard truths about those places. As I prepared to head out for the day, I opened the Alabama Civil Rights Trail app on my phone and planned my route.

My first stop was Bethel Baptist Church, which was the headquarters for the Alabama Christian Movement for Civil Rights from 1956 to 1961. There was a historical marker and some banners outside the church, but no one around. There are no longer any signs of the three different times this African-American Church was bombed during those years. I sat in the car for a moment thinking, “this will be easy,” just drive by and look.

I then headed downtown to Kelly Ingram Park. This was the site of many gatherings for protest marches on City Hall, especially in 1963. Now the park stands as a memorial to those who gave their lives fighting for equality. The park is bordered on one side by 16th Street and right on the corner is the 16<sup>th</sup> Street Baptist Church. On the other corner is the Birmingham Civil Rights Institute. Freedom Walk, the path through the park, is lined with sculptures. As I walked through, I was surrounded by sculptures of policemen with clubs and snarling dogs—close enough to feel what it would have been like to have their breath on my face and their teeth in my skin. I came face to face with water cannons powered by fire trucks that were used to hinder the protesters, children behind bars in jail, a trio of praying pastors, a statue of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., and the “Four Spirits” statue commemorating the four girls who died in the bombing of the 16<sup>th</sup> Street Baptist Church. The statute depicts them playing joyfully, a stark contrast to the way that they died. The park is a powerful place as each sculpture comes alive with the horrors of racism and the bravery of African Americans who stood up to white supremacy and hatred. I sat there for a long time. I prayed for the eradication of the racism that still exists within me. I prayed that someday “we shall overcome.”

After gathering my thoughts and prayers, I walked across the street and found that the Alabama Civil Rights Institute was just opening. The Institute is part of the Birmingham Civil Rights National Monument and an affiliate of the Smithsonian Museums. It offers a self-guided experience through six galleries, each of which offers a unique experience in the history of civil rights. The last gallery champions civil rights movements around the world. As I moved through the Institute, I was overwhelmed with the information, the method of presentation, and the feelings it roused in me. Leaving the Institute, I walked back across the street to the park thinking about the civil rights events that happened in my lifetime. I remembered the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., the protests shown on the TV news, and my own experience of segregation in the city schools I attended in Columbus, Ohio.

Continued from page 1

Crossing the street, I headed to the 16<sup>th</sup> Street Baptist Church. The congregation was founded in 1873 and the present church building was completed in 1911. It has been the center of Black community life in Birmingham for more than a century. It was a gathering place for protests, worship services, and prayer vigils for an end to racism. It is also known for the bombing that happened on September 15, 1963 when four young girls were killed and many more injured. I walked around the building to get a sense of the place and found no sign of the damage done in the bombing. Each stop on the Alabama Civil Rights Trail invoked a wealth of feelings, but I found the feeling at the 16<sup>th</sup> Street Baptist Church to be very powerful.

A man appeared from the building and greeted me. I told him I did not have a reservation for the tour but was studying the history of civil rights. He invited me in and directed me to a group of ladies who were the welcoming committee. I found out later that this kind man who welcomed me in was Senior Pastor Arthur Price, Jr. The ladies welcomed me and directed me to the picture gallery that told the story of the church. They said that a group of high school students was due to arrive and I would be welcome to tag along in the back for their orientation and tour. Their presentation was powerful as they described the depth of the hatred and violence that they and their ancestors had experienced in the history of the church. I vividly remember coming home from church that Sunday, September 15<sup>th</sup>, and listening to the news and seeing the pictures of the devastation of the church building. Even at the age of eight, I pondered where the depth of this kind of hatred could come from. I reflect even more on that as I get older.

After the tour, I visited the Birmingham Jail memorial plaque, which commemorates the place where Dr. King wrote “Letter from Birmingham Jail.” One of the most important documents in the civil rights movement, Dr. King’s letter challenged local churches to take action against “unjust laws” and not sit idly by waiting for justice to come. I finished my day with an inspiring visit to Rickwood Field, America’s oldest professional ballpark still in operation. There was a maintenance man there and he gave me an incredible private tour. Rickwood Field was the home of the Birmingham Black Barons of the Negro Baseball League and hosted famous players like Babe Ruth, Dizzy Dean, Mickey Mantle, Joe DiMaggio, Ted Williams, Satchel Paige, Willie Mays, and Hank Aaron. It was a powerful day filled with grace, grief, and hope.

Reflecting on my time in Birmingham reminds me how important it is for us to continue studying and celebrating Black History, especially as this month is Black History Month. Studying Black History makes us aware of the history of our country and the way racism has influenced our society. It also shows us that racism still exists in our world. As a church and as a synod, we continue our work of countering racism with the study of history and work to reform the ways we treat people who are different than us. We strive to work together to counter the effects of racism in our church and in the world.

As part of our continuing anti-racism work, our synod is looking at offering trips to learn more about the history of racism both in Michigan and across the country. This would include traveling to historic sites in our state and a portion of the U.S. Civil Rights Trail in Nashville and Birmingham. More information will be available in the coming months, but if this is something that interests you, please let us know here: <https://forms.gle/2XJe8R4J18DcaABb8>.

The Rev. David E. Sprang

Assistant to the Bishop and Director for Evangelical Mission

## BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Every February, the U.S. honors the contributions and sacrifices of Black Americans who have helped shape the nation. Black History Month celebrates the rich cultural heritage, triumphs and adversities that are an indelible part of our country's history.

African Descent Ministries of the ELCA celebrates Black History Month with “Talks at the Desk,” a four-part video series that explores diverse expressions of the church. A new video premieres each Wednesday in February at 8:30pm ET. Watch at <https://ELCA.org/ADM>

# Salt, Light, and Leaven: 2024 Synod Assembly



Jesus names us “the salt of the earth” and “the light of the world,” and compares the kingdom of heaven or reign of God to “leaven” (Matthew 5:13–16; 13:33).

At the 2024 Synod Assembly, the North/West Lower Michigan Synod will celebrate ways our congregations are “salt of the earth,” “light of the world,” and “leaven” of the kingdom in ways large and small as we prayerfully participate in Jesus’s own work of reconciling the world to God’s very self.

The 2024 Synod Assembly will be held virtually via Zoom on May 11, 2024. Only voting members will be able to register for and participate in the Zoom meeting. All non-voting members and visitors are invited to watch the Synod Assembly via livestream on YouTube.

All information pertaining to the 2024 Synod Assembly will be posted on the Assembly page of the Synod’s website (<http://bit.ly/3E6VYzP>). Please check the website regularly as information will be updated and added in the coming months. If you have additional questions, please email [assembly@mittensynod.org](mailto:assembly@mittensynod.org).

## Registration

Registration is now open! Given the nature of this year’s Synod Assembly, only voting members will be able to register. All non-voting members and visitors are invited to watch the Synod Assembly via livestream on YouTube. **Registration forms must be completed online and submitted by April 8, 2024.** There will be no late registration.

Given the technological nature of this Synod Assembly, voting members should be comfortable using computers, mobile devices, and/or tablets, learning and using applications, and accessing information from websites. **Additionally, each voting member will need their own email address and voting device (smartphone or tablet).** They will also need access to a computer to participate in the Zoom meeting. It is recommended that voting members use a computer to host the Zoom meeting and use a smartphone or tablet as their voting device.

When completing the registration form, make sure to complete the country code field of the address section. For addresses in the United States, the country code is US. **If you are registering multiple people who want to attend pre-assembly sessions on different dates, you will need to complete their registrations separately.** If you have issues completing the form using Google Chrome, please try accessing it in a different internet browser (Safari, Microsoft Edge, Firefox, etc.).

Register Now: <https://tithe.ly/event-registration/#/8449284>

## Pre-Assembly Sessions

We will be offering Pre-Assembly Discussion Sessions and Technology Orientations via Zoom in advance of Synod Assembly. Registration for these sessions is included in the Synod Assembly Registration Form. When registering, voting members should select which sessions they would like to attend.

The optional two-hour Pre-Assembly Discussion Sessions will be focused on Resolutions/Memorials and Budget/ Compensation Guidelines. We strongly encourage voting members to attend!

- Pre-Assembly Discussion on Resolutions/Memorials - April 30, 6:00-8:00pm ET
- Pre-Assembly Discussion on Budget/Compensation Guidelines - May 2, 6:00-8:00pm ET

All voting members are **required** to attend a one-hour Technology Orientation. These sessions will provide an overview of Zoom basics along with training on the voting process. **Voting members must attend an orientation in order to receive their voting credentials.**

- Technology Orientations - May 7, 8, 9, 6:00-7:00pm ET

## Nominations

The Nominating Committee is seeking nominations for six Synod Council positions and seven Churchwide Assembly Voting Members. **All nominations and completed bio forms must be submitted by 5pm on March 22, 2024 to Sandy Schlesinger ([sandvshlesinger@gmail.com](mailto:sandvshlesinger@gmail.com)).** Additional information and blank bio forms are available on the website.

## Assembly Book

The “Assembly Book” will again be a series of pdf documents published on the Synod website. **All materials for the Assembly Book must be submitted to Rebecca Bossenbroek ([finance@mittensynod.org](mailto:finance@mittensynod.org)) by 5pm on March 22, 2024.** Submission guidelines and requirements are available on the website.

## Resolutions and Memorials

To be considered for the 2024 Synod Assembly, all proposed resolutions and memorials must be submitted to the North/West Lower Michigan Synod Resolutions Committee in advance of the Synod Assembly. **All resolutions and memorials must be submitted by 5pm on March 22, 2024 to Ann Stavros ([annstavros@mittensynod.org](mailto:annstavros@mittensynod.org)).** Guidelines and requirements for submitting a resolution or memorial are available on the website.



## Synod Ministries Video Submissions

Synod ministries, synod tables, and synod committees are welcome to submit a short video to be considered for the Synod Assembly. Each group may submit one video that is one-two minutes in length. Videos should feature the work of the ministry, table, or committee. Given the business focus and time considerations of this year's Synod Assembly, submitted videos are not guaranteed to be shown during Assembly. All videos will be released via social media after Synod Assembly. Submission guidelines are available on the website. **To be considered, all videos must be submitted by April 3, 2024.**

## Salt, Light, and Leaven Congregation Videos

In order to celebrate and share the ways our congregations are "salt of the earth," "light of the world," and "leaven" of the kingdom, congregations or groups of congregations will have the opportunity to produce and submit a video showcasing one way they are salt, light, and leaven. We will select four videos to be shown during the 2024 Synod Assembly. Congregations who submit a video will receive a \$100 donation to their ministry and congregations whose videos are selected to be shown at the 2024 Synod Assembly will receive a \$500 donation to their ministry. All videos will be shared on the Synod's social media after the 2024 Synod Assembly. Submission guidelines are available on the website. **To be considered, all videos must be submitted by April 3, 2024.**

## Offering for Synod Assembly

As the 2024 Synod Assembly is a one-day, business-only, virtual event with no worship service, and therefore no designated offering. At congregations's request, we offer a few giving suggestions for those who desire to make a contribution in lieu of the traditional Synod Assembly offering:

- **Living Stones Initiative** - The recently renewed Living Stone initiatives for the period of 2023-2025 continues to provide a way for those committed to, and appreciative of, synodical ministry to give directly to the synod.
- **Synod Disaster Relief Fund** - This fund is instrumental in providing assistance to those affected by natural disasters both in our synod and across the country.

More information about these funds and how to give is available on the website.

## Black History Month

February is Black History Month! We honor the contributions of Black Lutherans who helped shape our church by featuring some of the Black Lutherans whose lives and work had an incredible impact on both the individuals directly worked with and the wider church.

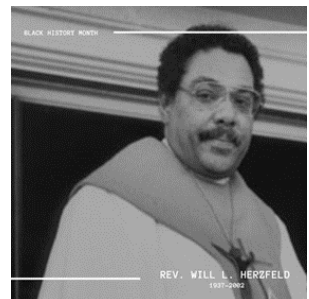


### Rev. Nelson W. Trout

Nelson W. Trout, an ordained pastor, became the first African American U.S. Lutheran bishop. Trout was a graduate of Capital University and Trinity Lutheran Seminary. He was also awarded a doctor of divinity degree from Wartburg College. Following all of Trout's education, he served as a pastor for several congregations in Wisconsin, Alabama and California. He was passionate, intelligent, and powerful in his preaching and teaching and in 1991, Trinity Seminary established the Nelson W. Trout Lectureship in Preaching in honor of him. Learn More: <https://bit.ly/49tuhyi>

### Rev. Will L. Herzfeld

Will Herzfeld, an ordained pastor, played a large role in creating the international presence the Lutheran church has today. Herzfeld received an associate of arts degree from Immanuel Lutheran College and a master of divinity degree from Immanuel Lutheran Seminary. Herzfeld served congregations in Alabama and California and held many other positions before he became the associate executive director of ELCA Global Mission. In this position, he created new relationships and partnerships with 70 church bodies and 25 other institutions. He also placed around 300 ELCA missionaries and volunteers throughout the world. Learn More: <https://bit.ly/49tuhyi>



### Rev. Rudolph Featherstone

Rudolph Featherstone, an ordained pastor, has followed his life-calling in leading the African American Lutheran community. Featherstone was the first African American to graduate from Gettysburg College and is also a graduate of the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg and Harvard Divinity School. Featherstone served as a pastor in New York City and Detroit and as a professor at Trinity Lutheran Seminary where he taught cross-cultural theological studies and mission. A powerful preacher and teacher, Featherstone dedicated his career to advocating for African American Lutherans. Learn More: <https://bit.ly/49tuhyi>



## Rosa Young

Rosa Young's drive and determination enabled her to spearhead the development of Black Lutheranism in the South. In 1912, Young, then a 22-year-old Methodist, started a school for Black children in Wilcox County, Alabama. Bad economic conditions threatened its survival and Young sought assistance from the Lutheran Synodical Conference. They responded positively, supporting her school and sending pastors to the area to start Lutheran congregations. Young embraced Lutheranism with a passion and became the driving force behind new Black Lutheran congregations and parish schools across the county. By 1927 there were 29 Black Lutheran congregations and preaching points in the area, and 27 day schools. During this period Wilcox County was the fastest-growing area of Lutheranism in the United States. Learn more: <https://bit.ly/4bzeVKK>



### **Stewardship Message**

Ash Wednesday and the beginning of Lent was last week. As I have asked in the past, would you be willing to fast one meal per week during the six weeks of Lent and donate the money you would have spent to Hope?

### **Council Meeting**

This month there is a council meeting on Tuesday, February 20th at 6:00 p.m. at Hope.

### **EARTH TIPS**

From the Washington Post: "A slim majority of Americans think their individual actions can reduce the effects of climate change." The article goes on to say that most of us also do not know which actions can have the greatest effect. It's not that switching to an electric stove, or recycling, or driving more conscientiously is bad. Those efforts add up in the long run, and have other benefits, both financially and environmentally.

But the changes that would make the most difference? Flying less and eating fewer meat and dairy products. As to the first, even a few flights a

year can result in being the greatest part of your carbon footprint. But most do not think of the environment when planning meals and grocery shopping.

Tied closely to decreasing your intake of meat and dairy products is generating less food waste. Even the MI state legislature, when putting together their ground-breaking environmental goal package, included studying how Michiganders can waste less food.

Cutting down on red meat is a healthy dietary change. It need not mean depriving yourself of your favorite steak or burger – just eat fewer of them and replace the meals with plant-based foods, and not necessarily “fake” meat products. These are often high in fat and salt, which is not good for your heart! Instead, look for recipes such as the black-bean chili cornbread pie that was recently in the Kzoo Gazette, navy bean soup, split pea soup, whole-grains high in protein such as quinoa.

And, at the risk of repeating what has been said here before, plan meals, keep an eye on your fridge leftovers and use them up, and make a game of trying to reduce food waste. Rotate the food in the fridge so that the oldest is in plain sight. One study found that you reduce your waste by half if you simply eat up your leftovers. And note that this will save on the grocery bills!

The tops of celery and carrots can be washed and used to make broth. One chef maintains that there is no part of a vegetable that cannot be used somehow. Be creative and see how much you can save!

**BETTER LATE THAN NEVER!**



We recently received this letter from the ELCA Region 6 Archives. These are located at Columbus Seminary in Ohio:

“I am writing to acknowledge the receipt of the Hope Lutheran church history that was sent back in 2018. I have only recently assumed the position of Archivist at the Region 6 Archives and am doing my best to catch up on matters long overdue.

Thank you ever so much for sending a copy of the congregational history for Hope Lutheran. You will be pleased to know that it is now a part of our Congregational History collection and is available for research.

With gratitude and best wishes,

Joel Wildermuth”

## Sunday School Giving

The Sunday school children have been faithfully giving an offering during opening time at the beginning of Sunday school each week. As the basket is passed, we sing “God Is So Good” or “Thank You.” After several years of not using the offering money, due mostly to the pandemic, the children decided to give to ELCA Good Gifts. The children were so excited to choose the gifts. They selected the following:

- 2 Piglets
- Honeybees
- 1 Water filter
- School fees and uniform for one girl
- Seeds and gardening tools
- Mosquito nets for a family
- Clinic visit for a child
- Vaccinations for a child
- Sunday school start-up kit
- Stock a backpack with food
- Feed 20 people at a soup kitchen

*2 Corinthians 9:7*

*Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.*

## **Help us Worship at Hope**

We are looking for readers, greeters, communion assistants, acolytes, and altar guild to help us celebrate and worship God on Sundays. Please consider signing up by speaking to Marne Seiber or Pr. Nicole. All ages are welcome and no experience is needed and Pr. Nicole & Judi Gage are delighted to meet with you to discuss how to serve in these roles. Thank you so much for serving!



Acolyte: Helps the congregation worship by lighting the altar candles (baptism candle when seasonally appropriate) at the beginning of service and putting the candles out at the conclusion of worship. This role is one for everyone from 2nd grade through adult. Needed at the primary Sunday worship service and select special services only.

Reader: Helps the congregation worship by reading the Old Testament, leader parts of the Psalm, and Second Reading. This role is one for everyone who feels comfortable with reading Scripture; approximately 3rd grade through adult. Readings are provided several days in advance via email and can be provided earlier if requested. Needed at all worship services.

Assisting Minister: Help the congregation worship by leading the prayers, carrying the Common Cup during Communion, reading the announcements and the final dismissal. This role is one for everyone who feels comfortable reading the prayers and announcements; probably best for teens through adults. Needed at all worship services.

Communion Assistant: Helps the congregation worship by carrying the tray of individual cups during Communion. Needed at the primary Sunday worship service and select special services only.

Cantor: Helps the congregation worship by singing the leader parts as noted in the liturgy. This role is one for singers from teen through adult. Needed at the primary

Sunday worship service and select special services only where the liturgy setting in use requires a cantor.

Choir: Helps the congregation worship by occasionally providing anthems and introits as part of the service. Rehearsals are typically held after the 10:30 service and/or on Wednesday evenings with additional times scheduled as needed. The choir does not typically sing every week and only sings at the primary Sunday worship and select special services. While reading music and choral experience is a definite plus, it is not required. The choir at Hope simply works to “make a joyful noise” and bring music to the service which glorifies God. This role is one for everyone of all ages who wishes to join in our noise--making!

Greeter: Helps the congregation, especially visitors, feel welcomed as they enter the building. Provides directions and answers questions regarding church layout and necessary items for worship. Needed at primary Sunday worship service and select special services. This role is one for individuals, couples, and families of all ages.

#### **OPPORTUNITIES FOR PRAYER AT HOPE**

**Prayer Chain** - this Prayer List is for Urgent or Special requests for prayer. This list is confidential. **In Our Prayers List** - this list is for general or on-going needs for prayer. It is published in the eBlasts, worship bulletins, and the Together Newsletter. They are also read out loud during worship. **Tuesday Bible Study Prayer List** - The Tuesday Bible Study Group meets at Hope at 9:30 am and prays for various prayer requests.

Prayer requests are coordinated by Judi Gage.

## Giving to Hope Lutheran Church

At Hope we seek to grow in our faith in Jesus Christ and to share the good news of Jesus Christ in our community and world. Thank you for your generosity in helping support our missions and outreach!

#### **Give by Check**

Checks made out to Hope Lutheran may be safely sent to:

**Hope Lutheran Church**

**290 12th Street, Plainwell, MI 49080**

## Need Giving Envelopes? Contact Keith Gage

### Give Online

Give safe and securely with PayPal! Simply scan the QR Code below and you will be directed through making an online donation to Hope. You can also schedule recurring giving!



## ***Christian Neighbors***

### Items We Always Need Are:

- Oatmeal
- Jelly
- Pancake Mix
- Pancake Syrup
- Instant Mashed Potatoes
- Applesauce
- Canned Fruit
- Snack Items (chips, pretzels, granola bars, etc.)
- Canned Ravioli
- Women's Deodorant



**FEED THE  
HUNGRY**

# January Financial Report

## THE MONTHLY REPORT OF THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY

JANUARY 2024

GENERAL FUND	THIS MONTH	YEAR TO DATE	LAST YEAR TO DATE	CHANGE
GENERAL FUND	\$5,231.00	\$5,231.00	\$5,715.00	-\$484.00
LOOSE OFFERING	\$20.00	\$20.00	\$71.00	-\$51.00
<b>GENERAL FUND TOTALS</b>	<b>\$5,251.00</b>	<b>\$5,251.00</b>	<b>\$5,786.00</b>	<b>-\$535.00</b>

DESIGNATED GIVING	THIS MONTH	YEAR TO DATE	LAST YEAR TO DATE	CHANGE
BUILDING IMPROVEMENTS	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
COMMUNION WINE	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
FLOWER FUND	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
FUNERAL FUND	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$60.00	-\$60.00
LEAF BLOWER	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
MEMORIAL	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$520.00	-\$520.00
OFFICE SUPPLIES	\$35.00	\$35.00	\$0.00	\$35.00
RETREAT	\$175.00	\$175.00	\$0.00	\$175.00
SUNDAY SCHOOL/CHRISTIAN EDUCATIO	\$2.00	\$2.00	\$8.68	-\$6.68
STAFF GIFTS	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$270.00	-\$270.00
<b>DESIGNATED GIVING TOTAL</b>	<b>\$212.00</b>	<b>\$212.00</b>	<b>\$858.68</b>	<b>-\$646.68</b>

EXTERNAL MINISTRIES	THIS MONTH	YEAR TO DATE	LAST YEAR TO DATE	CHANGE
CHRISTIAN NEIGHBORS	\$180.00	\$180.00	\$35.00	\$145.00
ELCA FUND LEADERS	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$10.00	-\$10.00
GOOD HANDS PLAINWELL	\$20.00	\$20.00	\$100.00	-\$80.00
LUTHERAN WORLD RELIEF	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
NOISY OFFERING	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$2.14	-\$2.14
PROJECT HOPE XICHIUAN (GSF)	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
SEMINARY FUND	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
SYLVIA'S PLACE	\$20.00	\$20.00	\$25.00	-\$5.00
SYNOD DEBT ASSISTANCE	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
WINGS OF HOPE	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
<b>EXTERNAL MINISTRIES TOTAL</b>	<b>\$220.00</b>	<b>\$220.00</b>	<b>\$172.14</b>	<b>\$47.86</b>

3.74%

PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL GIVING DESIGNATED FOR EXTERNAL MINISTRIES

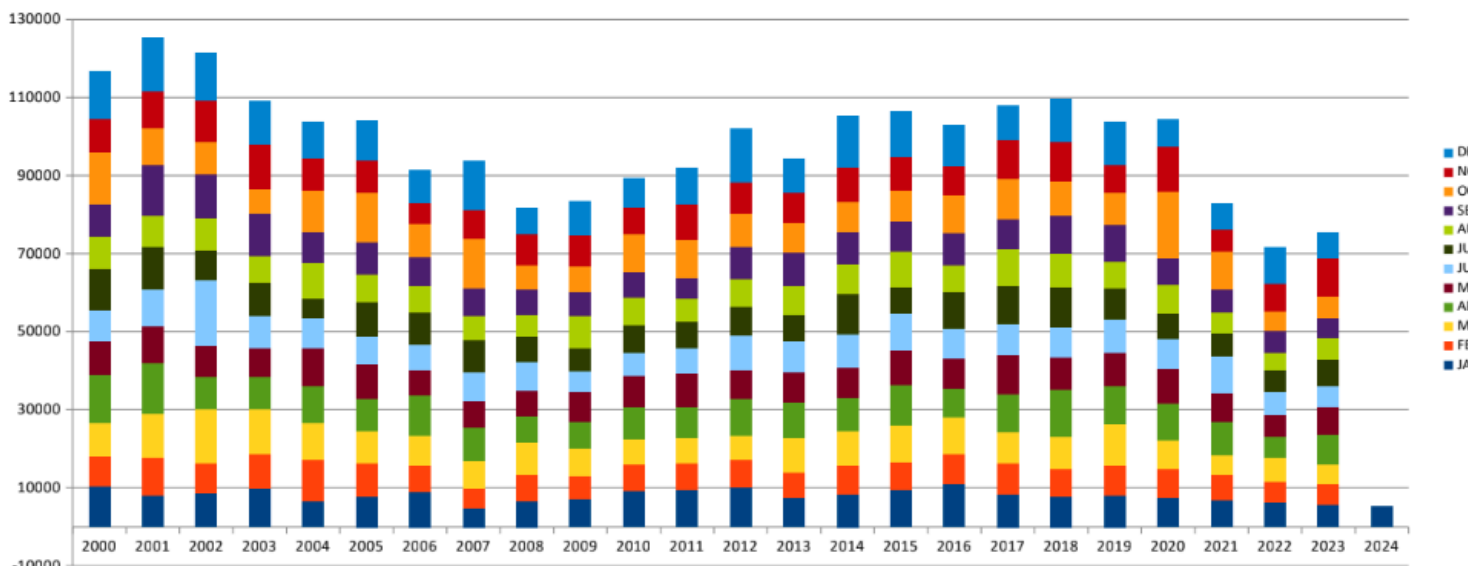
OTHER REVENUE	THIS MONTH	YEAR TO DATE	LAST YEAR TO DATE	CHANGE
REFUND	\$0.00	\$203.29	\$0.00	\$203.29
THRIVENT	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
<b>NON GIVING TOTAL</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>	<b>\$203.29</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>	<b>\$203.29</b>

<b>GRAND TOTALS</b>	<b>\$5,683.00</b>	<b>\$5,886.29</b>	<b>\$6,816.82</b>	<b>-\$930.53</b>
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General Fund Giving Past 12 Months:	Monthly Average	Weekly Average
\$74,941.55	\$6,245.13	\$1,441.18

TOTAL NUMBER OF DONATIONS	40	40	61	-21
NUMBER OF DIFFERENT DONORS	21	21	24	-3

General Fund Giving By Year and Month





General Giving (Non Designated) By Month													
	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	TOTAL
2000	\$10,537.00	\$7,422.00	\$8,843.00	\$12,217.00	\$8,516.00	\$8,056.00	\$10,577.00	\$8,272.00	\$8,306.00	\$13,283.00	\$8,453.00	\$12,306.99	\$116,788.99
2001	\$8,109.00	\$9,615.00	\$11,418.00	\$12,982.00	\$9,471.90	\$9,176.04	\$11,092.00	\$7,790.00	\$13,072.50	\$9,414.00	\$9,288.00	\$13,868.25	\$125,296.69
2002	\$8,658.09	\$7,701.00	\$13,860.00	\$8,212.00	\$7,778.00	\$17,104.80	\$7,502.24	\$8,303.00	\$11,111.88	\$8,517.37	\$10,384.52	\$12,208.04	\$121,340.94
2003	\$9,886.86	\$8,653.00	\$11,717.13	\$8,365.38	\$7,113.00	\$8,459.72	\$8,585.00	\$6,621.54	\$11,001.75	\$6,124.01	\$11,519.96	\$11,042.91	\$109,090.26
2004	\$6,570.00	\$10,745.88	\$9,339.00	\$9,435.48	\$9,729.87	\$7,721.40	\$4,913.63	\$9,397.69	\$7,715.00	\$10,642.78	\$8,307.00	\$9,213.00	\$103,730.73
2005	\$7,712.00	\$8,417.34	\$8,503.34	\$8,055.00	\$9,042.30	\$7,173.48	\$8,622.48	\$7,210.06	\$8,106.34	\$12,860.00	\$8,343.92	\$10,031.46	\$104,077.72
2006	\$8,877.80	\$6,916.00	\$7,670.00	\$10,177.92	\$6,610.00	\$6,340.00	\$8,366.83	\$6,829.00	\$7,360.65	\$8,424.24	\$5,595.00	\$8,343.00	\$91,510.44
2007	\$4,721.29	\$5,130.58	\$7,139.36	\$8,335.00	\$7,072.71	\$7,230.00	\$8,308.50	\$6,005.40	\$7,260.00	\$12,508.50	\$7,374.19	\$12,610.00	\$93,695.53
2008	\$6,518.00	\$6,858.64	\$8,077.50	\$7,010.38	\$6,334.00	\$7,347.00	\$6,621.26	\$5,680.00	\$6,569.86	\$6,009.80	\$8,136.90	\$6,559.00	\$81,722.34
2009	\$7,142.80	\$5,880.00	\$7,129.00	\$6,739.00	\$7,659.00	\$5,547.00	\$5,678.00	\$8,151.30	\$6,422.89	\$6,343.88	\$8,075.72	\$8,700.34	\$83,468.93
2010	\$9,244.00	\$6,615.05	\$6,673.00	\$8,255.30	\$7,844.00	\$6,103.13	\$6,975.00	\$7,170.00	\$6,524.25	\$9,793.00	\$6,541.00	\$7,395.00	\$89,132.73
2011	\$9,537.00	\$6,696.00	\$6,461.00	\$8,243.00	\$8,335.00	\$6,562.00	\$6,802.42	\$6,026.00	\$5,139.00	\$9,686.00	\$9,196.00	\$9,161.00	\$91,844.42
2012	\$10,257.00	\$6,828.00	\$6,413.44	\$9,210.00	\$7,589.46	\$8,881.00	\$7,216.00	\$7,258.82	\$8,049.00	\$8,695.00	\$7,885.00	\$13,790.00	\$102,072.72
2013	\$7,561.28	\$6,374.00	\$8,962.00	\$9,060.00	\$7,626.35	\$8,076.00	\$6,788.00	\$7,407.00	\$8,634.00	\$7,383.00	\$7,811.42	\$8,842.00	\$94,525.05
2014	\$8,301.00	\$7,489.50	\$8,714.00	\$8,571.00	\$7,816.00	\$8,350.00	\$10,324.00	\$7,913.56	\$8,135.00	\$7,617.00	\$8,986.00	\$13,055.20	\$105,272.26
2015	\$9,593.22	\$7,186.00	\$9,200.25	\$10,580.00	\$8,603.00	\$9,334.00	\$6,990.00	\$9,112.00	\$7,586.00	\$7,926.00	\$8,737.00	\$11,534.00	\$106,381.47
2016	\$10,974.00	\$7,751.00	\$9,350.00	\$7,310.87	\$7,884.52	\$7,477.28	\$9,593.77	\$6,811.00	\$8,221.24	\$9,746.43	\$7,360.00	\$10,529.00	\$103,009.11
2017	\$8,295.19	\$7,953.21	\$8,012.00	\$9,961.15	\$9,776.44	\$8,175.12	\$9,727.78	\$9,211.28	\$7,799.00	\$10,425.00	\$9,773.00	\$8,781.17	\$107,890.34
2018	\$7,669.00	\$7,122.00	\$8,117.00	\$12,354.05	\$8,122.00	\$7,916.82	\$10,077.00	\$8,499.19	\$9,987.00	\$8,624.00	\$10,165.36	\$11,078.44	\$109,731.86
2019	\$7,980.00	\$7,712.00	\$10,669.00	\$9,865.00	\$8,370.00	\$8,505.00	\$8,101.89	\$6,715.00	\$9,355.00	\$6,501.00	\$6,886.10	\$10,980.00	\$103,639.99
2020	\$7,610.00	\$7,173.00	\$7,395.00	\$9,393.34	\$9,065.00	\$7,725.00	\$6,490.00	\$7,100.00	\$6,784.40	\$17,264.90	\$11,545.60	\$6,904.00	\$104,450.24
2021	\$6,750.00	\$6,715.00	\$4,950.00	\$8,553.70	\$7,461.00	\$9,278.00	\$5,931.00	\$5,415.00	\$5,740.91	\$9,820.00	\$5,691.37	\$6,495.00	\$82,800.98
2022	\$6,171.19	\$5,399.00	\$6,290.00	\$5,270.00	\$5,741.54	\$5,658.00	\$5,775.00	\$4,395.00	\$5,485.00	\$5,160.00	\$6,901.63	\$9,270.00	\$71,516.36
2023	\$5,715.00	\$5,229.00	\$4,987.00	\$7,893.15	\$6,826.40	\$5,575.00	\$6,647.00	\$5,679.00	\$4,940.00	\$5,570.00	\$9,603.00	\$6,761.00	\$75,425.55
2024	\$5,231.00												

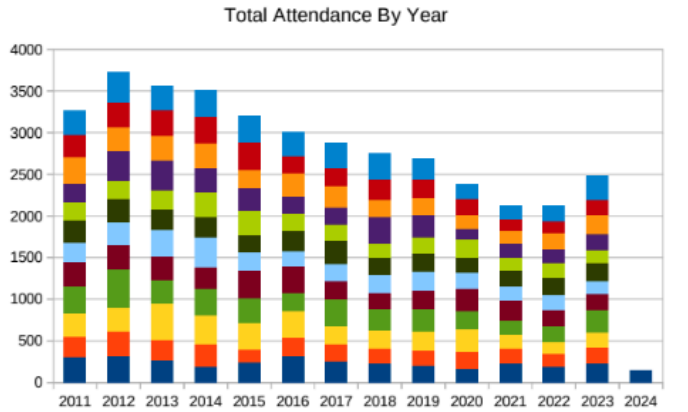
Highest Month: \$17,264.90 October 2020  
Lowest Month: \$4,395.00 January 2007 & August 2022

2000's GENERAL GIVING BY YEAR		
	Change from Previous Year	
2000	\$116,788.99	
2001	\$125,296.69	7.28%
2002	\$121,340.95	-3.16%
2003	\$109,090.26	-10.10%
2004	\$103,730.73	-4.91%
2005	\$104,077.72	0.33%
2006	\$91,510.44	-12.07%
2007	\$93,695.53	2.39%
2008	\$81,722.34	-12.78%
2009	\$83,468.93	2.14%
2010	\$89,132.73	6.79%
2011	\$91,844.42	3.04%
2012	\$102,072.72	11.14%
2013	\$94,525.05	-7.39%
2014	\$105,272.26	11.37%
2015	\$106,381.47	1.05%
2016	\$103,009.11	-3.17%
2017	\$107,890.34	4.74%
2018	\$109,731.86	1.71%
2019	\$103,639.99	-5.55%
2020	\$104,450.24	0.78%
2021	\$82,800.98	-20.73%
2022	\$71,516.36	-13.63%
2023	\$75,425.55	5.47%
2024	\$5,231.00	-92.69%

Current Pace For This Year (General Giving):  
\$62,772.00

Last Month's Attendance			
January 7, 2024	48	Last Month's Total Attendance:	147
January 14, 2024		Last Year Same Month:	230
January 21, 2024	46	Year To Date Attendance:	147
January 28, 2024	53	Last Year to Date Attendance:	230
		Change From Last Year:	-83

Average Per Week:			
Last Month:	49.0	Year To Date:	49.0
Last Year-Same Month:	46.0	Last Year To Date:	46.0
		2023 Year Average	46.8



## Newsletter Information

Published 12 times per year  
Do you want information in the next monthly newsletter?

- Email [media.hopeplainwell@gmail.com](mailto:media.hopeplainwell@gmail.com)
- Deadline: March 8, 2024

Feel free to email pictures, announcements, or any other information you would like to share with the congregation in next month's newsletter!

# **HOPE LUTHERAN CHURCH**

- Sunday School (all ages) 9:15 A.M.

- Worship 10:30 A.M.

290 12th Street

Plainwell, MI 49080

Phone: 269-685-1348

Office email: [office.hopeplainwell@gmail.com](mailto:office.hopeplainwell@gmail.com)

Pastor Email: [hoperlutheranpastor@gmail.com](mailto:hoperlutheranpastor@gmail.com)

Webpage: [hopeplainwell.org](http://hopeplainwell.org)

Hope's Facebook page: Hope Lutheran, Plainwell, MI

Hope's YouTube channel: Hope Lutheran Church, Plainwell, MI

Office Hours: Tuesday 10-noon; Wednesday & Thursday 9-noon

## **February and March Calendars**

### *February 2024*

Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
				1	2 Office Closed	3
4 9:30am - Worship	5 Office Closed	6 9:00am - Coffee with Vets 9:30am - Tuesday Morning Bible Study 3:00pm - Men's Bible Study	7	8	9 Office Closed	10
11 9:30am - Worship	12 Office Closed	13 Shrove Tuesday/Mardi Gras 9:30am - Tuesday Morning Bible Study	14 Ash Wednesday Valentines Day 	15	16 Office Closed Rick & Victoria File Anniversary	17
18 9:30am - Worship	19 Office Closed	20 9:30am - Tuesday Morning Bible Study 6:00pm - Council Meeting	21	22	23 Office Closed	24
25 9:30am - Worship	26 Office Closed	27 9:30am - Tuesday Morning Bible Study	28			

March 2024						
Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
					1 Office Closed	2
3 9:30am - Worship	4 Office Closed	5 9:00am - Coffee with Vets 9:30am - Tuesday Morning Bible Study	6	7	8 Office Closed	9
10 9:30am - Worship	11 Office Closed	12 9:30am - Tuesday Morning Bible Study	13	14	15 Office Closed	16
17 9:30am - Worship	18 Office Closed	19 9:30am - Tuesday Morning Bible Study 6:00pm - Council Meeting	20	21	22 Office Closed	23
24 9:30am - Worship	24 Office Closed	26 9:30am - Tuesday Morning Bible Study	27	28 Maundy Thursday 7:00 - Maundy Thursday Worship	29 Good Friday 3:00 - Good Friday Worship	30 Holy Saturday
31 Easter Sunday 9:30am - Worship						