



**January**  
**2026**



**Hope**  
**Lutheran**  
**Church**

# Pastor Letter

## **New Year Expectation**

*Philippians 1:18-21 Yes, and I will rejoice, 19 for I know that through your prayers and the help of the Spirit of Jesus Christ this will turn out for my deliverance, 20 as it is my eager expectation and hope that I will not be at all ashamed, but that with full courage now as always Christ will be honored in my body, whether by life or by death. 21 For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.-ESV*

It is always a wonder to sit with Paul in his prison cell, reflecting on his numerous sufferings, and to hear him say with such joy the great expectation and hope he had in Christ. From the outside, Paul had every reason to be pessimistic, doubtful, and anxious about the future. There were many times his mission was opposed, he was the target of anger and resentment from many, and Paul often faced rejection even from those you would expect to support him.

Still, Paul knew something I think we often forget. With Jesus as the source of our life and power, there is nothing that can truly harm us. The closer we trend to Jesus and his word, the more certain we can be that the future, whatever it may yet hold, will be one where Christ is honored.

This focus on Christ must now and always remain the focus for us at Hope Lutheran Church. Grand plans for ministry, service, care and love we might have, we must first make certain our eyes are firmly set on Jesus. Every other thing we need, mission, vision, resources, and the hard work that goes with that, every good thing we need will be provided according to the mercy and supply of our God. As James admonishes us, let us be quick to first seek his will and blessing for any of our plans.

I am eager for the days ahead. Excited that the Lord will bring our call process to a good end, hopeful for the ministry and evangelism we will do as his church, thrilled to see what God might yet do here with us at Hope and in Wake Forest.

I can't wait to see what the Lord has in store for us this year. God's blessings upon you and your family.

Hope in Christ with you,  
Pastor Devin Murphy

# Volunteer News



## Volunteer Heroes Nominations

We invite the Hope family to help recognize the many volunteers who serve faithfully across our ministries by submitting nominations for Volunteer Heroes. Nominations may be submitted for different volunteer areas, including worship service volunteers, outreach opportunities, and ministry volunteers.

Please nominate one individual per volunteer area to help us celebrate the many ways people share their gifts at Hope. Nominations close on 1/21, voting will begin in February, and winners will be recognized at the Volunteer Dinner.



## Volunteer Dinner

All adult volunteers are invited to a Volunteer Dinner on 2/21 from 6:30–8:30 PM in the Children’s Center. This evening is a time to celebrate and thank everyone who helps make Hope what it is, from worship support and community outreach to events for kids, youth, and adults. We are grateful for the many ways you share the light of Jesus through your service, and we look forward to honoring you together. Please register early so we can plan accordingly.



## More Information

Questions? [dmurphy@hopelutheranwf.org](mailto:dmurphy@hopelutheranwf.org)

# News

## Nursery Workers Needed

Hope Lutheran Church is hiring nursery workers ages 16 and older to help care for children ages birth to 4 years old. Sunday morning positions are currently fully staffed, but we are looking for additional workers to help reopen nursery care for Saturday services, special events, Bible studies, and Wednesday Night Alive. Applicants should enjoy caring for young children, be able to lift and play with them, and help create a safe and welcoming environment. Questions? [nursery@hopelutheranwf.org](mailto:nursery@hopelutheranwf.org)

## 2026 Altar Flowers

Altar Flower Sponsorships for 2026 are now open and offer a meaningful way to honor or remember loved ones while enhancing our worship space. These flowers serve as a visible expression of gratitude, remembrance, and celebration during weekend worship. Sponsoring altar flowers is a simple yet powerful way to connect your story with the life of our church. Questions? [office@hopelutheranwf.org](mailto:office@hopelutheranwf.org)



## Call Service Reminder

Members are reminded of the Call Service taking place on Sunday, 1/11 at 2 PM. This service is an important moment in the life of our congregation as we come together in prayer and discernment. Please review recent emails for additional details and pastoral biographies ahead of the service. If you will need childcare, please be sure to register your children in advance so we can plan accordingly. Questions? [office@hopelutheranwf.org](mailto:office@hopelutheranwf.org)





# & Reminders

## **Congregational Assembly**

The congregation is invited to attend the Congregational Assembly on Sunday, 1/25 from 1–2 PM in the Sanctuary. During this meeting, members will hear important updates, review and vote on the 2026 budget, and receive information on additional matters impacting the life and ministry of Hope. This is an important opportunity to stay informed and participate in the decision-making process of our church.

## **Ash Wednesday & Lenten Services**

As we move from Christmas toward Easter, we invite you to join us for Ash Wednesday and Lenten Midweek Services beginning Wednesday, 2/18 at 6:30 PM. This season offers a meaningful time for reflection, repentance, and spiritual growth as we prepare our hearts for the celebration of Easter. Additional opportunities for fellowship will be shared, including a Shrove Tuesday Pancake Dinner on 2/17 and simple meals before Lenten services in the weeks that follow. Be on the lookout for more details as Lent approaches.

## **Coffee & Fellowship**

Coffee and Fellowship Sponsorships for 2026 provide a welcoming way to honor loved ones and support community life at Hope. This sponsorship is a wonderful option for those who wish to recognize additional people or moments beyond an altar flower weekend. By sponsoring Coffee and Fellowship, you help create space for connection, conversation, and hospitality each Sunday. Questions?  
[office@hopelutheranwf.org](mailto:office@hopelutheranwf.org)



# WNA is Back!!

## Food • Fellowship • Faith

January 7 – February 11 on Wednesdays at 5:30–7:30 PM

Wednesday Night Alive is back! Join us for a welcoming midweek evening where all ages come together to share a meal, connect in faith, and grow in community. Whether you come on your own or with your family, there's a place for you at the table.

### Dinner Together (5:30–6:15 PM)

#### Dinner Cost:

- \$6 – Adults & Youth
- \$3 – Children (ages 5–10)
- Free – Children 5 & under
- Family Max: \$22

#### Dinner Menu:

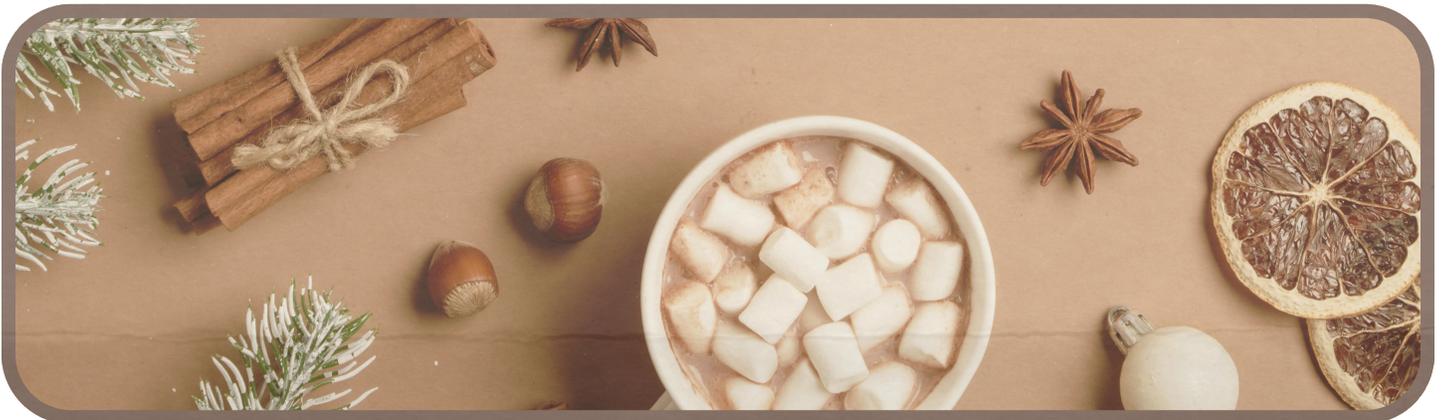
- 1/7 – Cookout (burgers & hot dogs)
- 1/14 – Fried chicken
- 1/21 – Tacos
- 1/28 – Spaghetti & meatballs
- 2/4 – Pulled pork
- 2/11 – Brats & mac & cheese

### Congregational Activity

Each evening includes a brief, themed congregational activity woven into the dinner hour. These moments invite us to connect across generations through conversation, reflection, and shared experiences that strengthen our church family.

### Age-Based Groups

After dinner, children, youth, and adults each gather in age-based groups to support faith growth and build relationships at every stage of life.



### Join US!

Come grow in community and enjoy midweek moments that matter.

Questions? [office@hopelutheranwf.org](mailto:office@hopelutheranwf.org)

# Music Ministry

## Spring 2026

Hope's Music Ministry invites you to explore the joy of music through singing, ringing, and instrumental playing as we begin a new season together. Whether you are a new family or a familiar face, our music ministry offers meaningful opportunities to glorify God through music and fellowship.

Questions? [rvarner@hopelutheranwf.org](mailto:rvarner@hopelutheranwf.org)

### Vocal Choirs

#### Adult Choir

The Adult Choir enriches worship throughout the church year by sharing a variety of sacred musical styles. Through song, we enhance worship and proclaim God's Word together. Rehearsals are held Wednesday evenings from 7:30–9:15 PM in the balcony.

#### Children's Choir

Children's Choir provides a opportunity for children to learn how to use their voices, explore musical notation, and share songs of praise in worship. We are excited to welcome Mrs. Abby Kandt to Hope's Music Ministry. Abby brings a background in music education and a special connection to Hope, having once been a member of the Children's Choir herself

### Adult Praise Team

Hope's Saturday Night Praise Team leads worship during our 5:30 PM Saturday services. vocalists and instrumentalists lead contemporary worship and help guide congregational singing.

To learn more, contact Ty Perry at [tperry@hopelutherwf.org](mailto:tperry@hopelutherwf.org) or Rob Varner.

### Handbell Choir

#### Adult Handbell Choir

Using Malmark English Handbells and Choir Hand Chimes, the Adult Handbell Choir shares joyful music throughout the church year with anthems and hymn descants that enhance worship. This group is open to adults with ringing experience or those interested in learning. Rehearsals are Wednesdays from 6:15–7:30 PM in the sanctuary.

#### Children's Handbell Choir (Grades 2–7)

Children are invited to explore the art of handbell ringing while learning musical fundamentals in a fun and supportive environment. Rehearsals begin January 14, meeting Wednesdays from 5:35–6:10 PM in the sanctuary.

### Instrumentalists

High school students and adults who play an instrument are encouraged to share their musical gifts in worship. Instrumentalists participate throughout the church year, accompanying choirs and congregational singing during festive services. If you are interested, please contact Rob Varner or speak with him on Sunday mornings

# Staff Letter

## **Blessings For Sabbatical**

Dear Hope Family,

As many of you know, I will soon be stepping into a sabbatical season, and I wanted to share a bit about what this time means to me and why I am so deeply grateful for it.

I have served as a Director of Christian Education for 20 years this year, and this will be my first sabbatical. I approach this time with humility, gratitude, and a clear sense of purpose. A sabbatical is not simply time away, it is intentional time set aside for renewal, reflection, and restoration so that ministry may continue in healthy and life-giving ways.

One of my primary goals during this sabbatical is ministry rest. After many years of faithful service, this season allows space to rest in the Lord, to step back from constant responsibility, and to be renewed so I may return with fresh energy and clarity for the work God has placed before me.

A second and very important goal is reconnecting with my family. The past few years at Hope have included many late nights, meetings, and responsibilities that have sometimes meant my family received what was left of my time and energy. During this sabbatical, I hope to be more present with them, to strengthen our relationships, and to reset healthy boundaries so that my family life and ministry life can both flourish as God intends. As a fun note our family is going on a once in a lifetime trip to Australia in March, nothing says reconnecting like 26 hours of travel with 3 children.

Finally, this sabbatical will give me space to organize and prepare my public speaking ministry related to the loss of my sister, Lauren. Over the years, I have been invited to speak to a wide range of audiences; law students, homicide support organizations, domestic violence groups, women's gatherings, Youth gatherings and college students. Requests continue to come, and my desire is to steward these opportunities well. During this time, I hope to thoughtfully organize my speaking materials so that when opportunities arise, I am prepared to share in a way that brings hope, healing, and points clearly to God's light in the midst of tragedy.

I am deeply thankful to Hope for supporting this sabbatical and for recognizing the importance of caring for called workers and their families. My prayer is that this time will be a blessing not only to me and my family, but also to this congregation as I return renewed and ready to continue serving alongside you.

Thank you for your prayers, encouragement, and grace.

With gratitude,  
Beth Agner



# Child Care Programs

## **Little Blessings 2026–2027 Registration Dates**

Registration for the 2026–2027 Little Blessings program will open on Monday, 2/16/2026 at 8 AM. This registration period is for current Little Blessings families, preschool siblings, and Hope Lutheran Church members. Registration is completed online through Procure. If your child needs to be added to your Procure account or if you need help creating an account, please contact Tracy Zwickis for assistance.

Questions? [littleblessings@hopelutheranwf.org](mailto:littleblessings@hopelutheranwf.org)

## **Preschool Registration 2026–2027 – Members**

Registration for the 2026–2027 Preschool year opens on 1/12/2026 for Hope Lutheran Church members. If you are interested in enrolling your child, please email the Preschool Leadership Team at [preschool@hopelutheranwf.org](mailto:preschool@hopelutheranwf.org) to share your contact information. This allows us to send you the registration link when enrollment opens. Preschool registration for members is coordinated through the Preschool team rather than directly through Procure. Questions? [preschool@hopelutheranwf.org](mailto:preschool@hopelutheranwf.org)

## **Preschool Registration 2026–2027 – Community**

Registration for the 2026–2027 Preschool year opens to the community on 1/29/2026. Families interested in enrolling should visit Hope's Preschool page to access the registration link when it becomes available. Community registration will be completed through Procure. We look forward to welcoming new families into our preschool community. Questions? [preschool@hopelutheranwf.org](mailto:preschool@hopelutheranwf.org)

## **Xplore Track Out Camp – Winter Theme Week**

Winter Track Out is open at Xplore with a full lineup of fun, themed weeks designed to keep kids engaged, active, and learning during their time off from school. Families can choose from flexible options including single-day, half-day, full-day, or full-week care. Weekly themes include Winter Blessings, Weird Science, Baking Boot Camp, Snow Much Fun, Valentine's Week, Pokémon Go, Animal Planet, St. Patrick's Week, and Easter Week. Each week features games, activities, creative projects, and a caring, faith-centered environment. Questions? [xplore@hopelutheranwf.org](mailto:xplore@hopelutheranwf.org)

# Kids & Youth

## **Kids Sunday School**

Kids Sunday School continues in January with engaging, age-appropriate lessons designed to help children grow in faith and understanding. Preschool and K1 Crew will focus on Talking With God, learning how prayer connects us to Jesus. Level 23 will explore the Books of the Bible, navigating God's true Word, while Club 45 dives into Wise Up! Discovering God's Wisdom. Each group meets children right where they are and helps make God's Word meaningful and accessible.

## **Family Movie Night**

Join us for Family Movie Night on 1/10 from 6-8 PM. This fun and faith-filled evening is designed for families to enjoy time together while building community with others from Hope. Concessions will be available at our Hope Snack Shack, offering popcorn, candy, soda, and more. Cost: \$5 per family member or \$25 family max. Questions? [mnicotera@hopelutheranwf.org](mailto:mnicotera@hopelutheranwf.org)



## **2026 Father Daughter Dance**

Join us on 2/7 from 6-8:30 PM, a special evening designed to celebrate family, connection, and joy. A fairytale atmosphere where guests can enjoy dancing, photo opportunities, and hors d'oeuvres. Whether attending as a father, grandfather, or special father figure, this event creates memories that last a lifetime.

Cost: \$15 per person with a \$45 family max. Questions? [mnicotera@hopelutheranwf.org](mailto:mnicotera@hopelutheranwf.org)



## **First Communion Class**

First Communion is an important milestone in a child's faith journey, and this class is designed for students in 5th grade and older who have not yet received Holy Communion. Over three Sundays, students will learn what Scripture teaches about the Lord's Supper and why this gift from Jesus is so meaningful for

His people. Attendance at all three classes is required, and students who complete the class will be invited to receive First Communion during the 11 AM worship service on 2/1.

Questions? [bagner@hopelutheranwf.org](mailto:bagner@hopelutheranwf.org)





### **Middle School Ice Skating**

Middle school students are invited to hit the ice for a fun afternoon of ice skating on January 17 at 12:00 PM at Polar Ice House. The cost of \$25 includes ice skating admission, skate rentals, pizza, and ice cream. This is a great opportunity for students to spend time together, enjoy winter fun, and build friendships in a relaxed and exciting setting. Questions?

[mnicotera@hopelutheranwf.org](mailto:mnicotera@hopelutheranwf.org)

### **Middle School Parent Trips Meeting**

Parents of middle school students are invited to attend a Middle School Parent Trips Meeting on Sunday, 1/25 at 12:15 PM in the Adult Center. This meeting will cover important information about upcoming opportunities, including the Middle School District Youth Gathering and the Middle School Summer Trip. This is a helpful time to learn more about what's ahead, ask questions, and stay informed. Questions?

[mnicotera@hopelutheranwf.org](mailto:mnicotera@hopelutheranwf.org)



### **Middle School District Youth Gathering**

Middle school students are invited to attend the District Youth Gathering in Williamsburg, VA, hosted at King of Glory Lutheran Church. This multi-day gathering brings together students from across the district for worship, learning, fellowship, and fun. The cost includes lodging, meals, and admission to the Southeastern District event. Register by February 28 to receive the early rate of \$250. After that date, the cost increases to \$275. This is a meaningful opportunity for students to grow in faith, build friendships, and experience the wider church community. Questions?

[mnicotera@hopelutheranwf.org](mailto:mnicotera@hopelutheranwf.org)

### **High School Amazing Race Event**

High school students are invited to take part in the Amazing Race Event on Saturday, 1/31 from 2–5 PM. This fast-paced afternoon is all about teamwork, problem-solving, and having fun together as students race through challenges and activities. We'll meet in the Youth Center and head out from there for an unforgettable experience. Questions?

[wspottiswood@hopelutheranwf.org](mailto:wspottiswood@hopelutheranwf.org)



# Adult Ministries

## **New BREW Bible Study Dates**

BREW Bible Study is back with new dates this January. College-age young adults are invited to join us on Saturday, January 17 and January 31 at 6:45 PM in the Youth Center. Come to Saturday evening worship at 5:30 PM and head over afterward, or join us directly at 6:45 PM for Bible study. This is a relaxed and welcoming time to grow in faith, connect with others, and share life together. Participants are encouraged to bring an appetizer to share. Questions? [mnicotera@hopelutheranwf.org](mailto:mnicotera@hopelutheranwf.org)



## **Men's Gathering- Save the Date**

Men of Hope, save the date for the annual Men's Gathering at Camp Cheerio, happening 3/13-3/15. This weekend is set aside for connection, encouragement, and time together away from the busyness of daily life. More details will be shared as the event approaches, including registration information and what to expect for the weekend. Questions? [wspottiswood@hopelutheranwf.org](mailto:wspottiswood@hopelutheranwf.org)

## **Women's Dish It Out and Pray It In**

Women are invited to gather for Dish It Out and Pray It In on Friday, 1/9 from 6:30-9 PM in the Youth Center. This cozy evening will center on fellowship, shared food, and prayer as we step into the new year together. Participants are encouraged to bring a favorite dish to share along with the recipe so others can take it home, and we'll also create personal prayer boards to help keep our prayer lives intentional in the year ahead. You can find registration on Realm or Hope's Website. Questions? [bagner@hopelutheranwf.org](mailto:bagner@hopelutheranwf.org)



# Small Groups

## **Chronicles Small Group**

Men and women are invited to continue the Chronicles Small Group, a monthly gathering focused on diving deeply into Scripture together. This group meets on the first Sunday of each month from 4:30–6 PM in Room 300 and offers meaningful discussion, learning, and connection centered on the books of Chronicles. Whether you are returning or joining for the first time, all are welcome. Questions? [bird4@mindspring.com](mailto:bird4@mindspring.com)

## **New Small Group for Grandparents**

A new small group is forming for grandparents, soon-to-be grandparents, and those who serve in a grandparent role in the lives of others. This group will meet monthly offsite for devotions, discussion, prayer, mentorship, and mutual support as we navigate this meaningful season of life together. The first gathering will be held on 1/22 at 6 PM and will include conversation around the best days and times to meet moving forward. Questions? [hopegp@gmail.com](mailto:hopegp@gmail.com)



## **Hope's Bridge Group**

Hope's Bridge Group meets on the second Monday of each month from 1:00–3:30 PM in Room 301. This group is open to all adults who enjoy playing bridge and offers a relaxed, welcoming space for fellowship, fun, and friendly competition. A \$1 donation helps support the group. All bridge players are welcome, whether you are a regular or joining for the first time. Questions? [pjay0826@gmail.com](mailto:pjay0826@gmail.com)

## **Interested in Joining a Small Group?**

Are you looking to connect with others, grow in your faith, and find your place in community? Hope offers a variety of small groups for adults of all ages and stages, and we would love to help you get connected. Whether you're brand new to Hope or have been here for years, we can work with you to find a group that fits your schedule, interests, and season of life.

Questions? [wspottiswood@hopelutheranwf.org](mailto:wspottiswood@hopelutheranwf.org)

# Outreach

# At Hope

## **Brown Bag Ministry**

Brown Bag Ministry invites the Hope church family to join us on January 17 from 11:00 AM–1:00 PM as we continue serving our community through fellowship and outreach. Brown Bag is also hosting an informational meeting on February 12 at 6:30 PM in Room 300 for anyone interested in learning more, sharing ideas, or getting involved in 2026. Everyone is welcome, whether you are new to the ministry or have served before. Questions? [kapernan@gmail.com](mailto:kapernan@gmail.com)



## **Habitat for Humanity – Upcoming 2026 Opportunities**

Hope's Habitat for Humanity team is preparing for new serving opportunities in 2026. Be on the lookout for an upcoming Wake Forest preservation project in March 2026 and new home build dates as we continue partnering with Habitat to support families in our local community. Join our Habitat group on Realm to receive updates, registration links, and project information as soon as they become available. Serving together allows us to reflect Christ's love in practical and meaningful ways, building homes, hope, and lasting community. Questions? [rogermadariaga@aol.com](mailto:rogermadariaga@aol.com)

## **Mobile Food Ministry – Wake Forest Boys & Girls Club**

Come serve with Hope's Mobile Food Ministry as we provide dinner at the Wake Forest Boys & Girls Club on Thursday, 1/15/2026 at 1:00 PM. This outreach opportunity allows us to share God's love in a tangible way with youth in our community. Volunteers are needed in a variety of roles, including planning, transportation, food preparation, cooking, serving, and cleanup. Whether you can help behind the scenes or on-site, your participation makes a meaningful impact. Registration is available through Realm or Hope's website. Questions? [gismay@afcurgentcare.com](mailto:gismay@afcurgentcare.com)



# Night to Shine

## February 13

### **A Night of Joy, Celebration, and God's Love**

Night to Shine is an unforgettable prom-night experience celebrating people with special needs, ages 14 and up.

Sponsored by the Tim Tebow Foundation, this incredible evening brings together guests, families, and volunteers for a night filled with dignity, joy, and community.

### **Guest Registration Now Open**

Guest registration is now open for Night to Shine! This special evening is designed for individuals ages 14+ with special needs, creating a safe, joyful, and inclusive celebration. Families and community members are encouraged to share this opportunity with anyone who would be blessed by attending.

### **Volunteers Needed**

This night is only possible with the help of our volunteers—and we need over 200 volunteers to make Night to Shine a success.

Volunteer opportunities are available before the event (decorating, crafting, and set-up) and the night of the event, serving in a variety of roles that help every guest feel welcomed and celebrated.

### **More Information**

Find guest details, volunteer opportunities, and registration links all in one place.



Questions? [nighttoshine@hopelutheranwf.org](mailto:nighttoshine@hopelutheranwf.org)



# QR Codes for Easy Access

**Hope Website:**



**Office Email:**



**Giving Form:**



**Events Page:**



**Service Times:**



**Sermons:**



## **QR Codes for Easy Access**

To help make registration and event information easier to access, we have added QR codes throughout this month's highlights. Simply scan them with your phone to go directly to event details, sign-ups, or additional information. We hope this makes connecting with the ministries and opportunities at Hope even more convenient.