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We are a community empowered by the Holy Spirit, called to bring God's comfort, to work for God's justice, and to share the hope and love of Jesus with all.

FEBRUARY 2024 NEWSLETTER



Our Core Values



faith
acceptance
compassion
gratitude
love



Pastor's Message

On February 14th, we celebrate Ash Wednesday. Now some might find themselves in a bit of a quandary this Ash Wednesday as it's also Valentine's Day. To which will you give priority? I hazard a guess many will opt to go with Valentine's Day; after all that wonderful marketing machine will be super active during this time to help bring in the profits from the sale of Valentine candy, cards, flowers, jewelry, and expensive perfumes. Red hearts will be everywhere, and the virtues of romantic love extolled to the masses—you and me. Over the years, Valentine's Day has become quite the national holiday and an opportunity to make a buck for manufacturers. Now before you go thinking I'm some kind of curmudgeon, I have nothing against Valentine's Day. In many ways it can be a small light in all the dreariness of these winter months. A reminder to ourselves of the gift of love—not a bad thing at all. But if we look a bit deeper, perhaps you'll see the light that Ash Wednesday brings as well. It has been said by quite a few wise women and men—that to truly appreciate life, we have to come to terms with death. Ash Wednesday is a celebration of life, while at the same time recognizing the inevitability of death. Through the life, death, and resurrection of Christ Jesus, we begin to see that death is but a doorway to something vastly greater than anything we could have ever imagined—new life abundant. Where the love shown through valentines is not just an extension of our egos, but now of the love and grace we have received through our faith in Christ Jesus. The story that begins on Ash Wednesday with a recognition of the inevitability of our own deaths, we now see is just the beginning of that five-week journey through lent leading us to resurrection life.

Such good news is worth a celebration of a few valentines wouldn't you say?
Yes indeed!

Happy Valentine's Day!

In Christ,

Pastor Pamela

**A Study Curriculum on Civic Life and Faith
Session 3: What are Lutheran views on civic life?**

The resources cited are:

1. The Book of Concord
2. The teachings of Martin Luther
3. The Augsburg Confessions of 1530
4. The reflections and actions of Dietrich Bonhoffer, and
5. The collective wisdom of Christians from all walks of life.

We are reminded that good order cannot happen if people of faith do not engage the political arena either as leaders or as well-informed people who advocate for justice and equity for all through such means as voting, being law-abiding citizens, contributing to agencies which serve the poor and needy, writing letters to government officials, participating in peaceful marches, and signing petitions (to name a few). It is noted that, sometimes, the government is so contrary to God's intention of justice and good order, that actions of resistance, like those of Deitrich Bonhoffer under the Third Reich, are necessary.

The Lutheran tradition gives us the chance to confess our mistakes and try again. We are called to a sense of balance as we seek to improve political conditions. There are no directives on how we arrange our political, church, and personal situations. The great diversity and variety among all people of the earth remind us of how far and wide God's care continues to reach all according to their needs and situations.

We do not have all the answers for the complexities of God's and our actions. We embody a spirit of shared deliberation and authority -- a shared work of instruction, correction, and reflection -- as we sort out what needs to be upheld and what should be set aside. We are called to allow the power of God's love to embolden us to be the political creatures that we are, a people wrapped God's Grace.

The showing of all videos and the ensuing discussions have been completed. However, ongoing reflections and conversations are encouraged and welcome. All six videos can be accessed and viewed at:

<https://www.elca.org/civicsandfaithstudy> .

HEALING MINISTRY AND PRAYER

James 5:13-17 Prayer to Be Reckoned With

Are you hurting? Pray. Do you feel great? Sing. Are you sick? Call the church leaders together to pray and anoint you with oil in the name of the Master. Believing-prayer will heal you, and Jesus will put you on your feet. And if you've sinned, you'll be forgiven—healed inside and out.



Make this your common practice: Confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you can live together whole and healed. The prayer of a person living right with God is something powerful to be reckoned with.

At the heart of Hope Lutheran's Healing Ministry is the call to prayer. There are scripture passages reminding us that a foundation of prayer supports and guides the church's mission and ministry. James in the quoted passage concludes his guidance to faithful community ministry with the words above. As we begin 2024, there are new opportunities for each of us to be prayerful in our care for one another and our commitment to continuing our journey together in North Greenbush and the world.

Below is information not only about our prayer ministry, but also about the ways we live out the directive to care for one another.

Pastor Elaine Berg, Convenor, HealingTeam

Prayers of Hope: This group coordinates prayer requests sent by e-mail, prayer requests cards and phone to **Pastor Elaine Berg** (meb312@aol.com or 315.8823732). This group meets in person the first Sunday of the month after worship to pray for specific issues, such as the war in Ukraine and Gaza. Our weekly prayer opportunities include an announcement prayer which focuses on not only gratitude for our own ministries but also for those throughout the Church. This month we will pray for our companion ministries in the growing church across the Upstate NY Synod

A new opportunity begins in February 2024. As we gather in this Hope worshipping community, we recognize that each member of our congregation carries the Spirit of God into daily life. Each Sunday there will be a list of someone or some group of people for whom you are asked to pray. Your prayers might simply ask that God be present with this person as they walk through their daily lives.

Parish Nurse: **Sue Anthony** continues to address personal needs of the congregation. She coordinates regular Red Cross blood drives. If you would like input from her on personal issues or more information about the Red Cross Blood Drives, contact her via email (santhony@nycap.rr.com).

(continued on next page)

Hope's Hands (formerly the prayer shawl and quilting groups): **Donna Littlejohn** (518-321-5917 or balsamchick@icloud.com). This group meets on the third Tuesday of each month at 10:00 am. to share skills that prayerfully create items that given to those experiencing grief, health, or other difficult issues. Items also are sent abroad as part of Hope's commitment to Lutheran World Relief and Lutheran Disaster Response to communities in crisis.

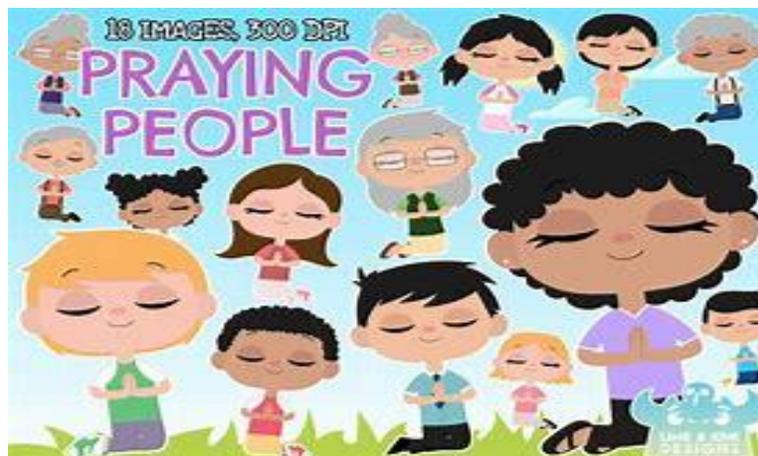
HOPE Cares Card Ministry: coordinated and led by **Maureen Hoffman** (mhoffman9350@gmail.com or 518.221.1848) Cards are available near the media desk for signatures and messages. They are sent to those on the prayer chain when appropriate as well as to others identified by the team or the pastor.

Spiritual Disciplines: Hope's Healing Team offers two opportunities for members and friends to experience spiritual disciplines that offer opportunities for spiritual renewal. Led by **Pam Dodson** (pamd@fastmail.com) folks are able to experience two disciplines: **Qigong** can be described as a mind-body-spirit practice that improves one's mental and physical health by integrating posture, movement, breathing technique, self-massage, sound, and focused intent. Tai chi, with its slow and gentle movements, has shown to have health benefits. It may improve balance, strength, endurance, aerobic capacity, and self-confidence. It has also been found that it reduces stress. **Pastor Pamela Hoh** is available for appointments for personal Spiritual Director.

Healing Worship: We hope to begin a regular schedule offering anointing and prayer at Sunday Worship in the near future.

Hope on Wheels: Often members and friends face health issues that require decisions to either stay at home or to need assistance for appointments. Also, a homemade meal is welcome in times of special needs. **Donna Littlejohn** (518-321-5917 or balsamchick@icloud.com) coordinates this service opportunity. She needs cooks and drivers. Drivers might be asked to drive someone to a doctor's appointment or to deliver prepared meals to friends recovering from surgery or other health issues.

Healing Team Members: Pr Pamela Hoh, Pr Elaine Berg, Liz and Jim Macris, Sue Anthony, Susan Clemente, Catherine Jura, Pam Dodson, Ray and Donna Littlejohn, Maureen Hoffman





LUTHERAN WORLD RELIEF

Dear Friend in Christ,

Greetings to you from the Quilt & Kit Ministry at Lutheran World Relief!

I thank God for you and all quilters and kit makers who make this ministry so special. The warmth of your love through Christ is felt in every beautiful quilt or useful kit you create for a neighbor in need.

Enclosed is a map that reflects how far and wide your love reached in 2023. You put so much prayer, dedication and generosity into your ministry — it is truly incredible to see it represented in one place! Thank you for loving your neighbors so faithfully.

A flyer about [National Quilting Day](#) — March 16, 2024 — has been sent to your church. Talk to your group leader about planning activities or events to uplift your church's quilt ministry.

I also wanted to let you know we have a new [Quilt & Kit Ministry Guide](#) for 2024 with some updates to assembly and shipping guidelines, new tips and tricks, and more. It also includes fresh, heartwarming stories about your fellow quilters and kit makers from across the U.S., plus highlights from the impact of your gifts around the globe. Please see the 2024 Guide sent to your church or visit lwr.org/qkguide to download your copy.

As always, if you have questions or need assistance with your quilt and kit ministry, please contact us at 800.597.5972 or lwr@lwr.org.

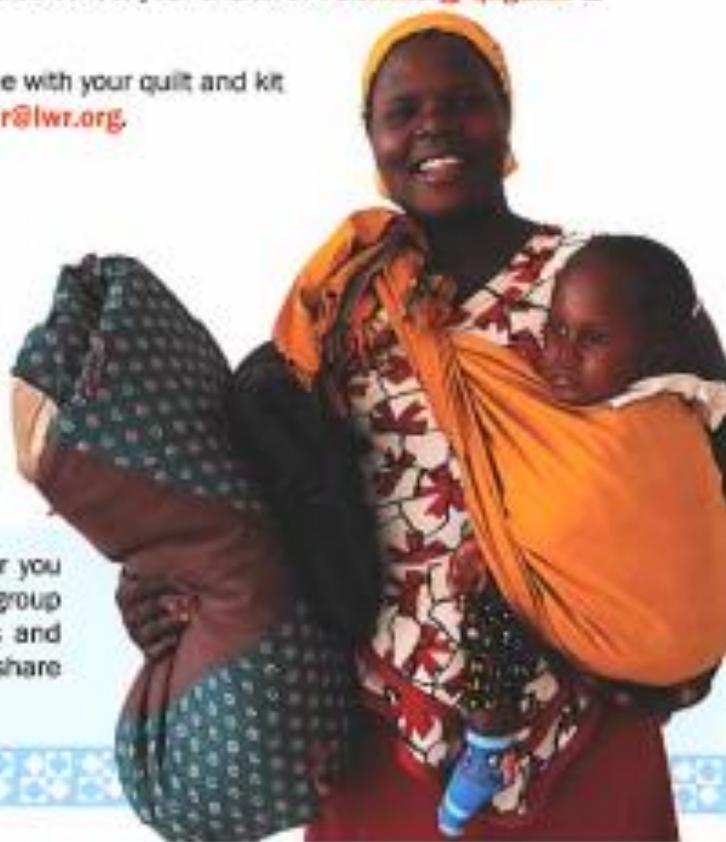
Joy & Blessings,



Martha Piedrasanta

MARTHA PIEDRASANTA
Quilt & Kit Ministry
Senior Manager

P.S. — Do you know a special quilter or kit maker you think we should write about? Does your church or group have a unique approach to your ministry, or tips and tricks to share? Please call or email me so we can share your story in a future publication!





facebook.com/LuthWorldRelief
instagram.com/LuthWorldRelief
youtube.com/LutheranWorldRelief

WHERE DID LWR QUILTS & KITS GO IN 2023?



551,700

QUILTS & KITS

IN 14 COUNTRIES



194,983
QUILTS



190,043
SCHOOL KITS



123,920
PERSONAL CARE KITS



35,490
BABY CARE KITS



7,264
TBSC KITS

COUNTRY	SHIPPING WAREHOUSE	QUILTS	SCHOOL KITS	PERSONAL CARE KITS	BABY CARE KITS	TBSC KITS
NICARAGUA	Minnesota	24,148	7,250	18,906	4,838	1,880
DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO	Maryland	22,275	13,890	11,678		
DOMINICAN REPUBLIC	Minnesota		18,231	32,558	14,700	
ECUADOR	Maryland		13,690			
GEORGIA	Minnesota	33,000				
GUATEMALA	Minnesota	5,529	27,848			
HONDURAS	Maryland		13,488			
LIBERIA	Maryland		27,300			
	Minnesota		13,282			
MALI	Minnesota	48,798	14,588	5,380	4,208	1,800
SRI LANKA	Minnesota		14,326			
TANZANIA	Maryland	26,400	1,380	6,000	1,808	1,484
	Minnesota	2,940	9,660	6,200	4,290	180
THE GAMBIA	Minnesota		13,920			
TÜRKİYE	Maryland	11,880		14,480	5,760	
UKRAINE	Maryland	24,750	5,408	25,280		
TOTAL		194,983	190,043	123,920	35,490	7,264

This shipping information is from LWR's 2023 fiscal year (Oct 2022 - Sept 2023).



I hope you'll take a moment to read the letter we received from St. Pauly Textiles. You'll see that our sponsorship of the clothing shed is a 'WIN - WIN - WIN' situation! 1. The people who receive the clothing win -- and there are a lot of them! 2. The people in our community win -- they are able to get rid of unwanted clothing without putting it in a landfill. 3. Hope Lutheran Church wins -- we collect a surprising amount of money from St. Pauly.

Of course, the money doesn't come for free. People from our congregation are needed to straighten out the shed every day or two, arranging the bags so they don't block the chutes and bagging up loose clothing. The work isn't for everyone -- it takes a little strength, and unfortunately the shed isn't heated or air conditioned. If you'd like to join us, Mike Daus or Dickie Dodson can arrange a short training session.



Thank You



SISTER BETSY VAN DEUSEN, CSJ
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

JENN HYDE
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

CoNSERNS-U

Date: December 27, 2023

Dear Hope Lutheran Church,

CoNSERNS-U, a program of Catholic Charities Tri-County Services, is most grateful for our friends, benefactors, sponsors and patrons who support our mission of helping individual families meet their basic fundamental needs.

We thank you very much for your most generous donation of

Food and Toys

Your kindness in these difficult times assists us in our commitment to help people meet the challenges of day to day living. Your thoughtfulness will enable us to continue our mission of serving those who come to our doors seeking help.

On behalf of the staff and clients of CoNSERNS-U, I again thank you for your gift to the food pantry.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Michael Doyle'.

Michael Doyle
Program Assistant
CoNSERNS-U
P.O. Box 28
201 Academy St.
Rensselaer, New York 12144
mdoyle@catholiccharities.org



When the following article appeared in the Times-Union last fall, it gave us an idea -- Why not dedicate a month to collecting much-needed items for our local food pantries? The items? "Period products" - tampons and sanitary pads. As any woman will tell you, these products are monthly essentials for many women. They cannot be purchased with SNAP benefits (food stamps).

We will be collecting "period products" during the month of February. Let's help our local food pantries make these necessary items available to our neighbors in need!

[OPINION](#)

Jo Page: For struggling women, a monthly dilemma

Even our social services providers can be guilty of overlooking this basic need: period products.

By [Jo Page](#) Nov 12, 2023

TMI alert.  I know you'll keep reading....)

But don't worry. It's not that interesting.

Dealing with periods is something we just tend not to think about. Unless we have them. Because then one does and has to.

You can't buy tampons or pads with your SNAP card (what used to be called food stamps). And most food pantries don't offer period products. Maybe you get some free diapers, in addition to the Kraft Mac 'n Cheese mix. Maybe you get a few jars of off-brand baby food. Or the always-reliable peanut butter. Everyone likes a PB & J, right?

But the monthlies come, well, monthly. And generally, you are on your own rag, baby. Monkey Ward catalog wrapped in ripped-up toweling? That's what our grandmas made do with. Maybe now is the time to get with the program.

You'd think.

(continued on next page)

The Port of Albany has a chaplaincy ministry that offers services to the seamen who dock there. Visa permitting, they get to visit the wild, wild west of Best Buy and Walmart. And eat Big Macs.

A colleague who runs the port chaplaincy told a group of us pastors that there are, indeed, some women on these ships, if you can believe it. (Sometimes they are even in charge. ... happens, man. Just deal.)

She showed us a monster pack of tampons in a gigundo freezer bag. She waved some pads around. She held up a package of diva cups, these little cute things that catch one's flow. She keeps these essentials on hand for women who need them.

I looked around at my colleagues, largely men. They were looking at their hands. Really, guys? Women exist, and periods happen. Just deal.

Women — you know, the 51-ish percent of us — get periods. That's part of the Elton John "Circle of Life" song. If we didn't bleed, there would be no babies. And everybody likes babies. (Or the thought of them, anyway. But this is not a column, today at least, about reproductive rights.)

When Abigail Adams wrote to her husband, John Adams, "Remember the ladies," she wasn't talking about lace-edged souvenir hankies. She was talking about suffrage (well, *well* ahead of her time). Our country's fathers may have erased women from our founding documents, but that's no excuse for the rest of us.

Period products are not optional, and they're not cheap. So if a woman needs some, give her a diva cup. Or bring on a brigade of tampons and pads if that works. Whatever. I'm not here to judge.

But stock them. For Pete's sake, send them to food pantries. Because women actually exist. Which means that periods exist, too.

Women need food, and shelter, and love. And they bleed. Everyone deserves to have what they need to get by. Makes basic common sense, yes?

You know it does.

Jo Page is a writer and Lutheran minister. Reach her at jopage34@yahoo.com.



Thank You

Thank You, Communion Assistants!

It is a very moving experience to have the privilege of serving communion to your fellow congregants. The Communion Assistant follows the Pastor around the communion rail, serving the wine cup with the words, "The blood of Christ, shed for you." When all have been served, the Communion Assistant serves communion to the Pastor.

Our Communion Assistants are:

Athena Batsios
Lois Batsios
Luis Clemente
Mike Daus
Pam Dodson
Marilyn Dyer
Debbie Favro
Bonny Munteer
Chris Nash
Susan Radzyninski

If you'd like more information about becoming a Communion Assistant, see Pam Dodson.

THANK YOU!

Thank You, Snack Set-Up People!

Our Snack Setter-Uppers put out yummy snacks, plates, napkins, etc. to satisfy our hungry congregants after the Sunday service. The snacks are provided by Marilyn's Snack Brigade, and coffee is taken care of by the coffee drinkers. Clean-up is done by those partaking of the snacks, so you don't have to wait around for people to finish talking!

We really could use a few more people willing to help out here. Currently, the list includes:

Susan Clemente
Marilyn Dyer
Charlie Huff
Donna Littlejohn

If you'd like to be a Snack Set-Up Person, talk with Pam Dodson.



THANK YOU!

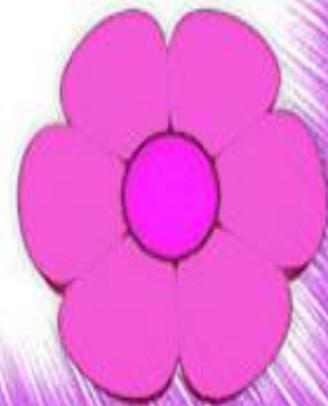
Thank You, Offering Counters!

Up for a little math? Don't worry -- it's only addition, not trigonometry! Our Offering Counters count up the money that is received during the service, record it, and make out a bank deposit. There are a few details to learn, but newbies are always paired with an experienced Counter.

Our current Offering Counters are:

Nancy Clarkson
Marion Daus
Pam Dodson
Marilyn Dyer
Maureen Hoffman
Charlie Huff
Donna Littlejohn
Bonny Munteer
Susan Radzyninski
Cindy Winter

If you're not afraid of a few numbers, contact Sandra Governor or Pam Dodson for more information.





**Join Us for Service
In-Person or Online on:
Wednesday, February 14th
at 12 PM or 7 PM
in Reflection of**



470 Winter Street Ext. in Troy or www.HOPELC.ORG

Worship Volunteer Duties for February of 2024

	4-Feb	11-Feb	14-Feb	18-Feb	25-Feb
	Worship 10:00am	Worship 10:00am	Ash Weds. 12 & 7	Worship 10:00am	Worship 10:00am
Altar Guild/ Comm. Asst. 2	Maureen H	Bonny M	One assistant needed for each service	Susan R	Debbie F
Greeter	Marlies P	Pam D	Noon service: Chris N	Charlie H	Mike D
Usher	Debbie F	Pam D	7:00 service: Marilyn D	Lois B	Marion D
Assisting Minister	Marilyn D	Athena B	X	Catherine J	Chris N
Communion Assistant	Marilyn D	Athena B	X	Pam D	Chris N
Snack Set-Up / Clean-Up	Susan C	Donna L	X	Charlie H	Marilyn D
Offering Counters	Cindy W & Marilyn D	Pam D & Donna L	X	Charlie H & Pam D	Marion D & Marilyn D



Upcoming Events for February of 2024

We will have 'In-Person' Sunday Worship Services at 10:00 AM. We will also continue to stream our services on our website, YouTube page, and Facebook page.

Sharing the hope and love of Jesus with all

<p><u>1st</u> Hope's Kitchen Free Community Dinner at Cornerstone Church in Lansingburgh (for those who RSVP'd)</p>	<p><u>3rd</u> Regional Food Bank Packing 10:30 AM – Noon Meet at RFB</p>	<p><u>4th</u> Hope's Prayer Team 15-minutes after Worship Service in small classroom</p>	<p><u>7th</u> Worship & Music Committee Meeting @ 6:30 PM in large classroom</p>
<p><u>9th</u> Dine-Out Dinner Group @ 6:00 PM (Restaurant TBD)</p>	<p><u>13th</u> Book Club @ 7 PM at Marilyn's home</p>	<p><u>14th</u> Ash Wednesday Services @ 12 PM & 7 PM ~ In-Person & Online ~</p>	<p><u>20th</u> Hope's Hands @ 10 AM in small classroom</p>
<p><u>21st</u> Council Meeting @ 6:30 PM in large classroom & via Zoom</p>	<p><u>22nd</u> Grief Support Group @ 6:30 PM in the sanctuary</p>		