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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.

# JANUARY 2024 NEWSLETTER

HAPPY  
NEW YEAR

## ***Our Core Values***



*faith  
acceptance  
compassion  
gratitude  
love*

**Learn  
how Hope helps  
the Regional  
Food Bank of  
Northeastern NY  
~ see page 10**

**Grief  
Support Group  
held monthly  
at Hope LC  
~ details on page 12**

# Pastor's Page

This new year I want to leave with you two quotes, both by Howard Thurman, with which to begin the year. They may seem as though they express opposite sentiments, but in truth one supports the other. I invite you to reflect upon both as we begin this new year, 2024.

When the song of the angels is stilled,  
When the star in the sky is gone,  
When the kings and princes are home,  
When the shepherds are back with their  
flock,

The work of Christmas begins:

...To find the lost,  
To heal the broken,  
To feed the hungry,  
To release the prisoner,  
To rebuild the nations,  
To bring peace among brothers,  
To make music in the heart.

Howard Thurman

Don't ask what the world needs. Ask what  
makes you come alive and go do it. Because  
what the world needs is more people who have  
come alive.

Howard Thurman

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

Pastor Pamela



### Colossians 1:1-5 (NRSVUE)

<sup>3</sup> In our prayers for you we always thank God, the <sup>(b)</sup>Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, <sup>4</sup> for we have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love that you have for all the saints, <sup>5</sup> because of the hope laid up for you in heaven.

\*\*\*\*\*

St. Paul's greetings in his letters acknowledge his prayers for those congregations as well as their prayers for him and his ministry. He commends them for their faithful spread of the gospel in their own communities and beyond.

So where does prayer fit into the ministry and life of Hope Lutheran Church?

A few months ago, I began to receive prayer requests for the Healing Team's prayer ministry. While I always knew the power and comfort of the prayers of God's people, this ministry put me and the team members in touch with the congregation and community at their most vulnerable. Grateful responses to our prayers were a reminder that the prayers were helpful and appreciated. At the same time, Pastor Pamela and I decided to include a special announcement prayer highlighting the ministries that live out our mission statement.

Acknowledging the way that prayer undergirds Hope's vision and ministry, are there ways we can extend that vision to include those who are part of our gathered community?

In 2024 the Healing Team's Prayer ministry will encourage us to pray for one another as well as pastors, congregations and ministries beyond our doors. Beginning in February each Sunday there will be a list of people and/or ministries for which you are encouraged to pray each day. So, on Monday you may be asked to pray for individual people who are members or friends of Hope. Each day will list a different person. Let our prayers for one another be the foundation of our mission and ministry.

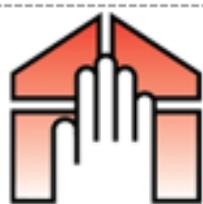
Ephesians 3:20-21 (The Message) <sup>20-21</sup> God can do anything, you know—far more than you could ever imagine or guess or request in your wildest dreams! He does it not by pushing us around but by working within us, his Spirit deeply and gently within us.

*Pastor Elaine Berg for the Hope Healing Team*

This appeared in *City and State Magazine* that I get in the office. Damyn was listed as #50 of the TOP 100 Not for Profit people in New York City. This was no small feat since some of the other agencies were big ones like the YMCA, NY Urban League, and other really huge NFPs! I thought I would share this so that you can see how far-reaching our ELCA work is across the state and the world. We make a difference!

*Mare*





HOME**TOUCH**<sup>®</sup>

# Connections

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"January 1 is the first blank page of a 365-page book. Write a good one." — *Brad Paisley.*

Dear friends in Christ,

In just a few days, we rejoice as we remember the birth of Christ, God incarnate. We no doubt have many things to do, such as last-minute shopping, social and/or professional engagements and holiday planning. It might be easy to lose a sense of the sacredness of this season. So play Christmas music. Listen to the "Hallelujah Chorus." Get to the church's Christmas Eve service. Make Christmas cookies. Give to the poor. Remember the needy. Prepare your heart to receive the Babe of Bethlehem.



The ministry team might check if their homebound members need help taking down a Christmas tree or removing and packing ornaments. The homebound might need assistance getting everything back to normal. Conversation topics include the weather (is it snowing?); the coming year 2024 and whether the homebound person is looking forward to something in particular (the birth of a grandchild, a graduation or a confirmation); and New Year's resolutions (if any). The team might also contact homebound or elderly people (even if they are not homebound) about whether they need help shoveling sidewalks if they live in a climate where snow is commonplace in January.

May God richly bless you as you enter a new year of ministry with the homebound.

In Christ,

Timothy Merrill  
Editor  
*HomeTouch*

## UPDATED BATHROOM

Next time you are in the big classroom, take a look at the beautiful new bathroom completed recently through the work of Debbie Favro (stripping wallpaper, scraping, sanding, patching and painting!) and the lovely new decor and to Wayne Mizerak for installing the new handicap height toilet. It's just lovely and will be a real asset to those who need to use an accessible bathroom!

P.S. The baby changing table was also re-installed and is ready to go!

*Mare*

## Christmas Food Baskets

Fifteen families had a merrier Christmas this year, thanks to the generosity of our Hope family. These families are "graduates" of the St. Paul's Center, now living on their own but still receiving help and guidance from the Center. Each family received two shopping bags filled with food for a festive holiday meal, along with a Price Chopper gift card. The food was all donated by our congregation and the gift cards were purchased with church funds and member contributions. Many thanks to everyone who contributed!

And special thanks to those who helped pack the food. Left to right: Nora Guido, Cindy Winter, Pam Dodson, Tonya Humphrey, Anna-Lisa Hafgren-Willis, and Donna St. John. (Not pictured: Dickie Dodson, photographer.)



**A VERY Merry Christmas for St. Paul's Families -Thanks to YOU!**

As you will see from the photo of Jason (left) and Andrew (right), the St. Paul's Santa Truck was filled to overflowing with packages for 12 families that they were delivering to on December 21<sup>st</sup>! Jason is our Housing Stability Coordinator and Andrew is the shelter's Director of Resource Development. These hard working and dedicated young men have made SUCH a difference in the lives of our shelter guests and beyond! Over 40 families were assisted this holiday! Thank you to our Hope Family and all the other wonderful folks who participated!



## WHAT A RELIEF!!

The past few weeks have been one crazy rush after another. First Thanksgiving -- cook and feed the family. Then the mad dash of shopping and wrapping gifts. Decorations -- all up and the lights are all working. Again, all the family for Christmas dinner. Take a deep breath ... It's not over yet! Can't forget New Year's Eve! Resolutions ... maybe another family dinner, or partying all over town. No wonder you're exhausted!

Other families face a rush that perhaps you're not aware of. First Thanksgiving -- sign up for a free dinner at CoNSERNS-U -- can't miss that deadline! Thank God for all the people who donate to the food pantry. Then Christmas shopping -- will Doors of Hope have the warm winter coats and hats we'll need for the coming cold days? After New Year's things might not be so bright for us -- donations drop off after the holidays.

Hope Lutheran Church has a long history of commitment to those in need. This article is an appeal to first-time donators and those who have helped out in the past. During January, please add a few items to your shopping list and bring them to church on Sunday.

Hunger doesn't take a holiday. Thanks for all you have done in the past. Let's help out even more in 2024.

## **GOODIE BRIGADE Helpers!**

We could use a few more bakers for the Sunday Coffee Hour Goodie Brigade. We've lost a few due to health reasons and some of our folks are away for the winter. If you would like to join in providing a treat for Sunday morning coffee hour, please contact Marilyn Dyer, Coordinator, at [dyermm48@gmail.com](mailto:dyermm48@gmail.com).

Many bakers makes light work! Thank you all.



## Hope Helps the RFB

On the first Saturday of each month, a small band of volunteers from Hope LC travels across the river to the Regional Food Bank in Latham. They work for 90 minutes, inspecting, sorting and packing food and other items. Why? See the statistics below, and you'll get an idea of how much good the RFB does in our community and in a large part of New York State. They are a truly remarkable organization, but they need the help of volunteers like our group. Please consider joining us! See Pam Dodson for details.



THANK YOU for your support of the Regional Food Bank this year.  
Your contributions have helped us accomplish so much!

## 2023 in Numbers

<b>40 MILLION</b> meals made their way to hundreds of thousands of neighbors in need across our service area	<b>2,301</b> low-income seniors enjoyed pop-up pantries each month at <b>39</b> senior housing sites	<b>1,400,000</b> meals were provided to <b>10,200</b> children through our Backpack and School Pantry Programs
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and **20,153** volunteers contributed more than **54,000** hours of service

A Study Curriculum on Civic Life and Faith  
Session 2: How Do Christians Address Controversial Civic Issues?  
(in healthy and constructive ways)

1. We are called to seek justice and to look after the well-being of the most vulnerable members of society – the poor, widows, orphans, foreigners, and outcasts.
2. Christ's command to love our neighbors is often fulfilled through politics and citizenship.
3. Issues are controversial because:
  - a. They are important.
  - b. They are not easy to figure out.
4. Sometimes members of the same congregation will come to different conclusions about how they are called to act.
5. We must not take refuge in the thought that the other side is stupid or evil. We must understand, listen, pray, discern, act, and confess, realizing that we know in part, and see in part, and that another's differing, thoughtful conclusion deserves our respect and consideration.
6. Prayer and searching the scriptures must be part of the process and is often best done as part of a community.
7. The church has a long history of dealing with controversial civic and political issues from its origins. Some are:
  - a. Reformers pushed that schools be open for boys and girls regardless of social status or economic means.
  - b. Women of Liberia Mass Action for Peace called for peace among their violent men, through fasting that included abstaining from sexual intimacy. Soon there was peace.
  - c. And Many, Many more.
8. In summary, we seek understanding, we pray, we discern, and we act boldly with faith, love, and hope. We confess and ask God's forgiveness for the ways in which we inadvertently participate in the same injustices we are trying to remedy. Everything depends on grace. Thanks be to God.

The next and final video and discussion will be after the worship service on January 14, 2024. All six videos can be accessed and view at:

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

~ submitted by WDM ~



## **Grief Support Group at Hope Lutheran Church**

The Grief Support Group is changing in 2024.

Starting with the January 25<sup>th</sup> meeting, the meetings will start at 6:30 pm in the sanctuary. Then meetings will be held every fourth Thursday at 6:30 pm. Please feel free to just show up when you are ready. We look forward to meeting you.

This monthly group is a safe, welcoming, and judgment-free place where people who have recently experienced a loss (death of loved one, loss of job, pet, friendship, marriage, or home, children who left for college, to name a few) can come together to share their struggles and learn some coping skills. This group will provide emotional support, validation, and education about grief, helping you feel less alone.

Camie Engel holds a master's degree in Grief Counseling from Regent University of Virginia Beach, VA. Her monthly column in "Our Towne" magazine, "Good Grief with Camie", is written to be a window into the often confusing and painful topics of grief and loss. Having experienced life-altering losses of her own, she had a passion to get more educated and trained to help others.

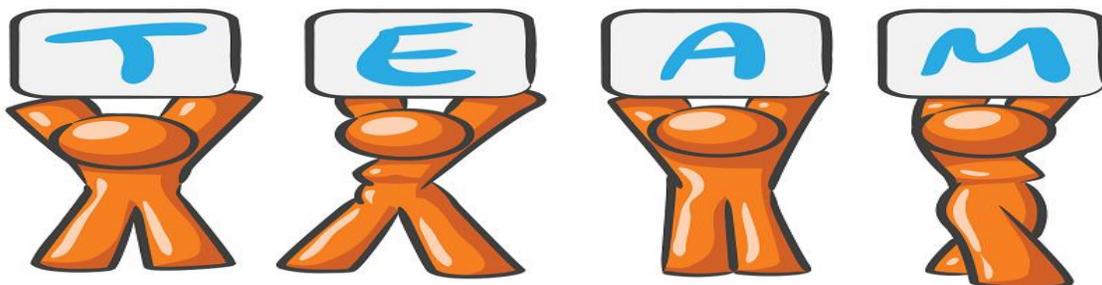
Join us when you are ready, **the next meeting will be on Thursday, Jan. 25<sup>th</sup>.**

Feel free to reach out to Lois with any questions – [Lois.Batsios@Gmail.com](mailto:Lois.Batsios@Gmail.com)

# Worship Volunteer Duties for January of 2024

Please find your own replacement if you cannot be available on date of assignment.

	7-Jan	14-Jan	21-Jan	28-Jan
	<b>Worship 10:00am</b>	<b>Worship 10:00am</b>	<b>Worship 10:00am</b>	<b>Worship 10:00am</b>
<b>Altar Guild/ Comm. Asst. 2</b>	Charlie H	Bonny M	Debbie F	Marilyn D
<b>Greeter</b>	Elaine B	Ja'net M	Cindy W	Nancy D
<b>Usher</b>	Cindy W	Debbie F	Donna L	Marion D
<b>Assisting Minister</b>	Sandra G	Pam D	Luis C	Mike D
<b>Communion Assistant</b>	Chris N (Chris, please light/extinguish candles too)	Pam D	Marilyn D	Mike D
<b>Snack Set-Up / Clean-Up</b>	Charlie H	Donna L	Susan C	Marilyn D
<b>Offering Counters</b>	Pam D & Cindy W	Pam D & Bonny M	Donna L & Marilyn D	Marion D & Bonny M



# Upcoming Events for January 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>1<sup>st</sup></u></p> 	<p><u>4<sup>th</sup></u></p> <p>Hope's Kitchen Free Community Dinner at Cornerstone Church in Lansingburgh (for those who RSVP'd)</p>	<p><u>6<sup>th</sup></u></p> <p>Regional Food Bank Packing 10:30 AM – Noon Meet at RFB</p>	<p><u>7<sup>th</sup></u></p> <p>Hope's Prayer Team 15-minutes after Worship Service in small classroom</p>
<p><u>9<sup>th</sup></u></p> <p>Book Club @ 7 PM at Marilyn's home</p>	<p><u>10<sup>th</sup></u></p> <p>Worship &amp; Music Committee Meeting @ 6:30 PM in large classroom</p>	<p><u>12<sup>th</sup></u></p> <p>Dine-Out Dinner Group @ 6 PM Melvin Roads American Legion in Rensselaer</p>	<p><u>14<sup>th</sup></u></p> <p>Civic Life &amp; Faith with Pastor Pamela Following Worship Service in the sanctuary</p>
<p><u>16<sup>th</sup></u></p> <p>Hope's Hands @ 10 AM in small classroom</p>	<p><u>17<sup>th</sup></u></p> <p>Council Meeting @ 6:30 PM in large classroom &amp; via Zoom</p>	<p><u>18<sup>th</sup></u></p> <p>St. Paul's Board Meeting @ 6 PM in large classroom</p>	<p><u>25<sup>th</sup></u></p> <p>Grief Support Group @ 6:30 PM in the sanctuary</p>



## The Lord's Prayer

Our Father who art in Heaven  
hallowed be Thy name.

Thy kingdom come,

Thy will be done,

on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread

and forgive us our trespasses,

as we forgive those

who trespass against us.

Lead us not into temptation

but deliver us from evil.

For Thine is the kingdom,

and the power, and the glory,

for ever and ever. Amen.