



2023

ANNUAL REPORT

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Pastoral Staff

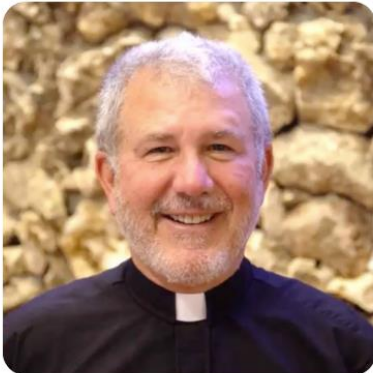


Lead Pastor
Jon-Marc MacLean



Executive Pastor
Rani Abdulmasih

Commissioned Pastors



Associate Pastor
Bruce Dillman



Education Pastor
John LeCain



Pastoral Care
David Butler



Pastoral Care
Laird Duran



Pastoral Care
Pat Bromberek

2023 Annual Report of Pastor MacLean, Lead Pastor

Brothers and sisters in Christ and fellow servants in the vineyard,

As I reflect on the past year, my mind and heart are filled with memories both sweet and sorrow-filled, of gratitude for grace experienced, and witnessed and of prayers for mercy and peace in areas of brokenness and violence. For our congregation, it has felt like a year of preparation; the deep breath when jogging before quickening your stride. Many other reports will cover ministries in more detail, but I want to begin with a word of thanks to our Council for their commitment to open dialogue and laying a foundation for the tasks before us as we grow into our third site.

Speaking of that project, I also want to thank all those who have toiled and given so generously for the expansion of ministries around our sites and the founding of Hope South Campus. Key among those are Bob O'Dell and Dale Feit. Their talent, wisdom, and faith-filled dedication to this congregation and project are inspiring and we are grateful.

With all that has happened, I could not write or speak about this past year without discussing in some way my trip to the Holy Land. I was blessed to go on this trip with a group of 42 other pilgrims, including Mary Jo. We visited many historic sites of the faith; everything from the site of the nativity to the birthplace of other saints to the place of the crucifixion and the burial of Christ. We visited places like the Mount of Transfiguration, the Sea of Galilee, and the hill upon which the beatitudes were preached.

There were many places that were more crowded or ostentatious than I would have ever expected or wanted to see, yet it was apparent that the Spirit was moving in and through many of those people present. There are other places where I experienced a profound sense of the presence of God and a renewal of my calling as a pastor. Places that will forever be sacred to me, where we received communion, remembered our baptism, were anointed, and were sent home as evangelists to our community.

I experienced the love of God in times, places, and experiences that had nothing to do with history. I experienced it in the beautiful skyline of Bethlehem as we sought a traditional meal, breaking bread together and hearing from a native of the town called Shepherds. Their ancestors were among the first to hear the Good News that the Messiah had been born, and that they had the privilege and the joy to continue to share this good news with us throughout the world.

I experienced it in the song sung by the group on the bus. I experienced it in the rejoicing of the group, when two who met us late were welcomed in good health, and with much joy. I experienced it in late night conversations filled with laughter and shared life by those whose feet were sore, but whose hearts were full.

I experienced it with a member of the group pushing another in a wheelchair, carrying another's burden, or waiting for one who was hobbled by weariness.

Some of you are wishing you'd gone or could go, if not for the continued brokenness, bloodshed, and bigotry that continues to be rampant in that part of the world. I'll tell you a secret...you don't have to go there to experience these things. In fact, you should experience this kind of joy and calling and blessing and worship and fullness of the presence of God in our community, within our congregation, and amongst our people. Just a few weeks ago, we heard the scripture story about Samuel's call to ministry, where the Lord spoke to him three times in the darkness of night, and he finally responded at the urging of Eli with "Here I am, Lord."

We want to experience the awesome presence, the transforming power, and the saving grace of God, more fully in our midst and our community. It begins with each of us, making ourselves available to the Lord. I encourage you to do so even now. This past year has been fraught with tensions, losses, and sadness. It's been filled with hard work, long days, and sometimes longer nights, but it's also been filled with the joy of community. The hope of the gospel and the peace of Christ presents often in the presence of those who called him Lord.

As we look at the year to come and to our 25th Anniversary Celebration, I ask you to think back over the years all that God has done in, for, and through us as the people of Hope Lutheran Church in The Villages. We look forward with hopeful anticipation to what God is going to do for and through us, for this community, for the kingdom of God, and for the glory of Christ. Each of us has an important role to play. The body is not complete when any of us don't love and serve as we are able and we stymie the flow of God's blessings and grace that the Spirit desires to work through our congregation.

There are myriad opportunities to serve and grow in our life together. In the coming months, there will be many more which we will hear about through our Ministry Fair and Stewardship Campaign. It is my dearest hope and prayer as your pastor that many people will speak of their experiences of God and the presence of the spirit in our congregation as those who visited the Holy Land did on our pilgrimage.

As we continue to update, strengthen, and find fresh ways to utilize our current Hope campuses, and we look forward with great anticipation to how God will use us at Hope South Campus. Let us remember that the past - with both its triumphs and tribulations - is behind us and look forward to what each of us can do for the sake of the gospel in the future. Even more importantly, let us look forward to what we can do together as the people of God, and hopefully in the year to come.

With gratitude for all you do, I remain affectionately yours...

Lead Pastor Jon-Marc MacLean

2023 Annual Report of Pastor Abdulmasih, Executive Pastor

"Praise the Lord!

Oh give thanks to the Lord, for he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever!"

Psalm 106:1

Hope Family,

Here we are once again, journeying through another year to serve the Lord together and pour our hearts before the Living God! Another chance to be bold in our faith and to proclaim His Gospel. Another opportunity to speak of His glory and tell the story of His love. Another year to rededicate our lives through Him, in Him, and for Him. What an awesome God we serve! His love, mercy, compassion, and grace all keep making of us a New Creation!

This journey of faith must start with a deeper relation with our Lord Jesus! I have invited you to join me in reading the Bible, again, and again, and again. There is just something special when we commit to immersing ourselves in the Living Word. Although there are so many plans out there, I have proposed The Navigator's Bible-Reading Plan as one that you might find encouragement in. Many of you have already responded with your commitment and it is my joy to accompany you on this journey to immerse ourselves in His Word.

Once we are filled with this Gospel, then one cannot help but have the passion and desire to proclaim this gospel to the whole world! The matter is simple really...if we ourselves are not excited about God's Word, and do not feel the joy of having the God of the Universe on our side in and through His Son and our Lord Jesus, then how can others get excited about Jesus?

In recent months, and for the very first time, we established an ***Evangelism Team*** at Hope. This is a group of people who are committed to our mission "to know Christ and to make Christ known." This team invites you to be intentional in inviting others to a deeper relationship with our Lord Jesus. Join us as we live out our mission and our faith. It truly is our duty and joy to praise this Living God and share His gospel of grace with every soul.

Hope has an amazing team of dedicated staff, pastors, leaders, council, volunteers, and members! God has brought us together to be workers in the field for the sake of the kingdom and all for His glory! The blessing that we have in being One church and yet three campuses, is truly a gift to be used for His glory. I cannot hold the excitement over the upcoming plans to break ground in the Southern part of The Villages as we continue to share the love and grace of God. Thank you for your commitment to making this happen because of your generosity, dedication, and commitment to the faith. Many thanks to those who have been sharing their gifts and talents in making this project happen. I have never seen such a dedicated team of leaders who just love to serve the Lord. Thank you.

The Hope for the Future Scholarship has been an amazing outreach to the community. To see these young high school graduates fill our sanctuary with their friends and family members and come to learn why the people of Hope love Jesus so much is just beyond words. Each year we give out 15 scholarships to high school seniors from our neighboring schools. Our ministry is unique in that it provides the opportunity for each scholarship recipient to be paired with a mentor from Hope to accompany them along the journey. Please join us when we gather for this ceremony in 2024 and sign up if you are interested in becoming a mentor.

I am truly blessed to be in fellowship with many of you in small groups that I lead. ***Faith & Fellowship*** has been a gift to me. Whether at Hope Lake Weir Campus, at Hope Central Campus, or at Publix next to the Everglades Center, the conversations around faith and life have been just invaluable. Check out our church calendar and join our conversations on Mondays, available at all three campuses.

Gatherings of Hope are filled with conversations around faith and what it means to move beyond grief. How to mourn the loss of a loved and find support in a community with shared experiences. The love and support this group has for one another is amazing. If you know people who could benefit from such support, invite them to join.

All our ministries at Hope truly reflect God's love and the dedication of this Christian community to their faith journey. The Food Pantry and the Rock have been touching people in the community in a very special way. Our ministries at Hope speak to our mission "to know Christ and to make Christ known." Every ministry we have has been sharing the love of Christ and inviting people to be engaged in the life of the church. What a blessing it is to serve the Lord together right here at Hope! ***Hope is here!***

Thank you for being part of this journey of faith!

To our Lord Jesus we give all praise, blessings, honor, and glory now and forever! Amen!

In Christ,

Pastor Rani Abdulmasih

2023 Annual Report of Pastor Dillman, Associate Pastor

What a gift it was to serve the people of Hope Lutheran Church during the past year! There are so many exciting things happening at our parish that it is difficult to know where to begin. However, since my greatest joy is to serve as presider and preacher at our Sunday Eucharist at each of our three campuses, let me talk about the many joys I have experienced at each of our three thriving campuses—three campuses but one Hope!

At Hope Lake Weir Campus, the growth and vitality of this worship community is clear each Sunday. With a dedicated choir and under the direction of Dennis Kienitz, the music each week reflects the joyful noise you will find each week when this community gathers to worship. Weekly, we find new visitors coming through our doors, and many new members to Hope during 2023 were at Hope Lake Weir Campus. There have been a growing number of people who have moved into the neighborhood who come to “check us out,” and with the growth of housing in the area, we have more opportunity than ever to preach the good news of Jesus’ gospel to new ears. Some people coming to our Sunday worship are clients from our Food Pantry, and we always welcome them with open arms.

Speaking of the Food Pantry, this ministry is without a doubt an expression of the gospel-centered faith of our members at Hope Lake Weir Campus. Although our volunteers come from all three campuses, all the people at Hope Lake Weir campus are proud of this ministry and are excited to hear updates about what is going on. The new director of the Food Pantry, Debbie Schuettler, has done a remarkable job over the past year and you can read her report for more details.

Of course, Hope Central Campus remains the hub of most activities at Hope. Since I usually lead our Wednesday evening prayer service, Anita and I try to be at most of the Wednesday evening social suppers. These social suppers serve as more than an opportunity to feed people—the people who gather here each week include not only parishioners from all three campuses, but many visitors and guests who come and share in this life-giving fellowship. This weekly supper offers yet another opportunity for our members to share the gospel by the way they welcome all people. Debbie Bennett and her crew supply delicious and varied menus, as well as hosting activities provided by different ministries in the church, and even though this is not a worship setting, the gathering is certainly a holy one. Our simple Wednesday evening prayer service has slowly grown in attendees, and more people are enjoying the simple yet powerful Vespers or Compline services that the church has held for centuries.

Also at Hope Central Campus, I have been overjoyed with the opportunity to teach as part of H.O.P.E. University. This year I began a 3-year series on Lutheran Worship which began with a 5-part introductory class series during Fall 2023. I am preparing the classes for the 5-part series that I will teach on Wednesdays at 10:00am during Lent. For all of these classes, I am using the 3-volume companion to our worship book, “Evangelical Lutheran Worship,” affectionately called “the red book.”

Finally, as I focus on the southern campus currently worshipping at Everglades Recreation Center, there is so much going on here that I can't begin to cover it in my report. Thankfully, you will read much more about our newest campus elsewhere in this report. Each week that Anita and I are blessed with worshipping at Hope at Everglades, we come away humbled to be part of this exciting and growing community in the southern Villages. Since residents are rapidly moving into this part of The Villages, we find new people walking through our doors each week. Some are Lutherans looking for a Lutheran church, but many come from various church backgrounds or have no church background at all and like the convenience of worship being offered so close to their homes. Since we worship in borrowed space, our worship space must be set up and torn down each week, and we are beyond thankful for the volunteers who help in this major task. With the help of volunteers, we have not only had people serving as ushers, greeters, and communion ministers, but during the last year we have added a choir, under the direction of Mary Jo Vitale MacLean, a worship assistant, and a reader each week. Those worshipping at Everglades excitedly anticipate having a church building, and we are blessed that the congregation has approved making this dream a reality. It is exciting to imagine the ministry opportunities that will be housed in a new building!

It's early January as I write this, which means that I am now retired. Most retired pastors don't really retire from ministry, and many serve as interim pastors at parishes looking for a new called pastor. I am so very, very blessed that Hope's Council has offered me the opportunity to continue to serve at Hope, which is exactly where I want to be. Although I am giving up an office at Hope, and with that my office hours, I am keeping several of my books and supplies in an office shared by all of Hope's retired pastors. My contract with Hope allows me to do what I most love to do, which is, as my wife Anita puts it, preaching, teaching, and family. I will continue to preach on a rotating basis at our three campuses two weeks each month, teach two class series each year, and lead Wednesday evening prayer most weeks. But I will also have time to travel with Anita and spend time with my family. Most importantly, let me say to you the same thing I said to one of our council members when she asked—yes, I will continue to be your pastor.

I look forward to 2024 and thank God each and every day that He has called me to serve the people of Hope Lutheran Church. May God's choicest blessings be with you this year....

Pr. Bruce Dillman

Pastoral Acts Report

Average Weekly Attendance at Worship Services Per Year:

2000	279	2012	1,183
2001	339	2013	1,250
2002	419	2014	1,309
2003	570	2015	1,367
2004	667	2016	1,361
2005	739	2017	1,312
2006	900	2018	1,347
2007	951	2019	1,374
2008	1,025	2020	Inconclusive (COVID Year)
2009	1,033	2021	760 (COVID Year)
2010	1,038	2022	1,010
2011	1,131	2023	1,113

Membership (includes Charter Members):

2023	1,937	Increase of 39
2022	1,898	

Associate Membership (includes Associate Charter Members):

2023	241
2022	241

Seasonal Membership:

2023	73	Increase of 9
2022	64	

Total Membership:

2023	2,251	Increase of 48
2022	2,203	

Marriages and Affirmation/Renewal of Wedding Vows: 3

Baptisms: 5 Infants, 1 Adult

Total Deaths: 65
Members: 57
Assoc. Members: 7

Members Funeral/Memorial Service: 43
Non-Member Funeral/Memorial Service: 9

Non-Member Interments: 7

2023 Annual Report of Bob Franceski, Church Administrator

Dear family of Hope,

We have journeyed through another year of ministry together, and looking back, I know that there has never been a better time to be part of the Hope family! Our church is active and alive, excited to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ and fellowship together as a loving community. Thank YOU for being part of this awesome church.

2023 was my first full year as your Church Administrator. This year was challenging, but also deeply rewarding and encouraging. We worked hard on our Making Abundant Life Known Capital Campaign (you can read more about that in the next section). We also worked closely with the Disaster Preparedness and Response Committee to create and implement updated emergency response protocols for our church. In addition to our cloud-based church management system, we are in the process of moving important files and documents to cloud-based storage. All of these systems will allow us to continue church operations in the event of an emergency. We are currently in the process of acquiring a new voice-over phone system to keep our staff and pastors connected and aware at all times. You can be sure that as Hope grows and expands, the safety and well-being of our congregation will remain a top priority.

In the office, we saw the addition of two new staff members, Mary Beth Stoner and Pam Slating. We have a great staff working hard every day for Hope Lutheran Church, servicing three busy campuses and our online community. Remember – everything we enjoy at church, from our weekend worship to our special events and activities throughout the week, is a result of the hard work of our staff and volunteers.

We have an excellent team in the Hope office. Our staff and volunteers bring many years of diverse experience and education to their positions. Every staff member considers their position to be their ministry, and they pour their hearts into their work. It's my joy to work with our staff and pastors each day.

As we look ahead to 2024, I'm excited to discover how God will use our staff and our church to advance His kingdom. No matter the obstacles we may face, I know we have the right team for the job. There is nothing we can't accomplish when we work together for the glory of God!

Thank you for your support and continued prayers for the staff and pastors. I look forward to another great year working alongside you all.

Yours in Christ,
Bob Franceski, Church Administrator

Current Staff as of February 4, 2024

Called Pastors: Pastor Jon-Marc MacLean, Lead Pastor
 Pastor Rani Abdulmasih, Executive Pastor

Commissioned Pastors: Pastor Patricia Bromberek, Pastoral Care
 Pastor David Butler, Pastoral Care
 Pastor Bruce Dillman, Associate Pastor
 Pastor Laird Duran, Pastoral Care
 Pastor John LeCain, Pastoral Care/Education

Parish Deacons: Suzanne Kuebler
 Peg Piper Winters
 Kathy Smith

Administration:

Karen Barnes, Bookkeeper
Debbie Bennett, Hospitality (Head Cook) (F/T)
Lenea Carnes, Social Services Advocate
Pam Caudill, Event Coordinator and Software Specialist
Marina Ernst, Communications Director (F/T)
Bob Franceski, Church Administrator (F/T)
Sara Lush, Administrative Assistant Worship (F/T)
Debbie Schuettler, Operations Manager - Hope Lake Weir Campus Food Pantry
Pam Slating – Hospitality Assistant
Mary Beth Stoner – Donations and Membership Specialist

Music Ministry:

Bruce Davis, Assistant Director S.O.S.
Jime Eversole, Technical Director (F/T)
Shade Eversole, Audio Visual Engineer
Jeen Harper, Spirit Ringers Director
Paul Hoffman, Service Accompanist
Dennis Kienitz, Director of VOH – Hope Lake Weir Campus
Mary Jo Vitale MacLean, Director of VOH – Hope South Campus
Michael McConnell, Audio Visual Engineer
Eric Mielke, Audio Visual Engineer
Jane Miller, Volunteer Service Accompanist
Marcia Spear, Service Accompanist
Justin Steger, Drummer

Music Ministry (cont.):

Kathryn Stevens, Audio Visual Engineer and Worship Publications Specialist

Howie Wood, Presentation Specialist

Ken Wood, Director of Music Ministries (F/T)

Building and Maintenance:

Russell Kreager

Susan Mitchell, Custodian (F/T)

Denny Reed

Rick Schaaf, Building Maintenance Manager (F/T)

John Schuettler

Total Staff:

Pastors: Called – 2, Commissioned – 5

Parish Deacons: 3

Lay Staff: Full Time – 8, Part Time – 21, Volunteer – 1

Making Abundant Life Known Capital Campaign

Hope's Making Abundant Life Known Capital Campaign is in full swing! Our dream of constructing the Hope South Campus building in the southern end of The Villages is coming true, thanks to your generous donations and support.

To date, we have received 442 pledges totaling \$2,206,043.00 for Hope South Campus. Our outstanding pledges total approximately \$990,000.

In Fall 2023, Hope was blessed by a Matching Challenge Gift offer of \$200,000 from a congregation member. Our Hope family far exceeded our expectations for the Matching Challenge, raising an additional \$420,963.000 through new pledges, additional pledges, and additional gifts.

A total of \$1.8 million has been contributed towards the Capital Campaign so far.

Congregational Council



Kristina Giffin
President



Richard Gal
Vice President



Gary Hill
Treasurer



Pam Fenn
Secretary



Patrick Sawler
Council Member-at-Large



Raybon Gilbert
Council Member-at-Large



Rolf Moulton
Council Member-at-Large



Kathy Beekman
Council Member-at-Large



Dave Withers
Council Member-at-Large

Greetings From Your Council President

What an eventful and joy-filled year 2023 was for Hope Lutheran Church!

We are meeting the challenges of being a “large church” in every sense of the definition, with more than 2,000 members, three sites, currently two full time and five part time pastors, more than 60 ministries serving both Hope members and surrounding communities, and seven services each weekend as well as a regularly scheduled Wednesday evening Vespers or Compline service.

The growth of Hope Lutheran Church and the commitment to live and minister as *One Church* (though we are three campuses) is bearing fruit for all campuses and for the surrounding communities. Examples include Hope’s Food Pantry, The Rock, Grief Support, Stephen Ministry, My Time Caregiver Respite, Angel Tree...and many, many more, the details of which you can learn about in this Annual Report.

The Council of Hope Lutheran Church met more than 15 times during 2023. This included the regularly scheduled monthly meetings as well as a number of special council meetings required to move forward on work on Hope South Campus and the 2024 Budget. Additionally, the nine lay members of your Church Council are active in many of Hope’s Ministries and they participate as instructors at H.O.P.E. University, work at the Food Pantry, serve as readers, worship assistants, communion servers, Disaster Preparedness leaders, spearhead social gatherings, and other volunteer opportunities. Their hard work and commitment to the life of Hope Lutheran Church is inspirational to witness.

During the spring of 2023, Hope’s Council made the difficult decision to delay ground-breaking on Hope South Campus and re-evaluate the plan forward. It was determined that the wise course would be to begin our building process with the 450 seat Worship Center rather than the smaller Activity Center as was originally planned. Hope’s membership came together behind the Council and voted to back that change.

When a donor came forward in the fall to offer a \$200,000 matching gift challenge, the Congregation again stepped up and contributed more than double the dollars necessary to receive the match. Because of the generosity of Hope members and visitors, a total of more than \$420,00 was raised in an eight-week period for a final total of more than \$620,000, proving again that there is strong commitment to the project. This generosity has enabled Hope to set our Groundbreaking for Spring 2024. What a joyful celebration this will be, as Hope continues to spread the Good News across The Villages and local communities.

Though much has been done, more remains to be done, and the love and enthusiasm for serving the LORD is evident among Hope’s members. Your Council looks forward to working with you throughout the coming year, and we can’t wait to see what 2024 brings.

Kristina Giffin, President, Hope Lutheran Church

2023 Annual Meeting Minutes

February 5, 2023

A light lunch was served prior to the meeting, members received their ballots. Dennis Kienitz led the congregation in the Doxology and hymns that warmed our hearts. Pastor John LeCain recognized Education leadership and participants and teased us with upcoming Hope U offerings.

Gloria Johnson recognized the Hospitality Teams

Meeting was called to order by President Kent Hamdorf at 12:03 p.m.

Determination of a Quorum:

Pam Fenn, Council Secretary confirmed that we had a quorum. The constitution states that a quorum for all Congregational Meetings shall be five (5%) percent of the voting members based on the church roll at the end of the prior fiscal year, but not less than fifty (50) voting members. For 2023, a minimum of 99 voting members constitutes a quorum.

The meeting will follow Roberts Rules of Order and Pastor Wayne Kofink was the Parliamentarian.

Agenda:

We will follow the agenda which is on the screens. **Motion to approve the agenda was made, seconded. Motion Approved.**

Review of the 2022 Annual Meeting Minutes:

(Minutes of Congregational meetings are approved by the congregation. Draft minutes are printed in the Annual Reports, the approved/official copies reside on file in the Church office.)

1. **Motion was made and seconded to approve the 2022 Annual Meeting minutes. Motion Approved.**

2. **Motion was made and seconded to approve the Special Congregational Meeting minutes held on October 7, 2022.** There was discussion. It was brought to the congregations' attention that the word "not" was omitted from the motion.

Motion Below is the corrected motion:

Approve constructing the Activity Center Phase and obtaining design/engineering contracts for the Main Building Complex (design phase), as presented with a projected budget **not** to exceed \$1,650,000 and approve the \$1,000,000 Line of Credit First Mortgage Loan from Mission Investment Fund in accordance with the attached Resolution from Mission Investment Fund

Motion was made and seconded to approve the revised Minutes. Motion Approved.

Nomination Committee :

Kent took time to thank the members of the nominating committee for their work. The committee spent many hours and meetings to ensure the nomination process was followed in accordance with our constitution. The committee members were Rolf Moulton, Marsha Lamadrid, Suzanne Kuebler. We will be electing two congregation council officers and one council at-large member.

Election of Congregation and Council Officers and Member-at-Large:

The following members were nominated by the Nominating Committee and affirmed by Council to serve as officers and member-at-large of Hope Lutheran Church for the following terms (According to our bylaws, no further nominations could be made) :

Katherine (Kathy) Beekman, President (3-year term)

Kristina Giffin, President (3-year term)

Richard Gal, Vice President (3-year term)

The nominee for council officer of Vice President is unopposed and elected by acclamation.

Patrick Sawler, Member-at-Large (3-year term)

The nominee for Member-at-large is unopposed and elected by acclamation.

The two candidates for President were given 5 minutes to speak to the congregation.

President Kent Hamdorf then asked members to cast their paper vote for one of the two candidates.

Kristina Giffin won the election by a majority vote.

Kathy Beekman will retain her Member-at-Large position.

While the vote counting took place the following leaders gave us the good news of ministries here at Hope

- Bob Janson, My Time Team Leader spoke to the congregation and described the needs of the ministry and told those in attendance how they could become involved. He thanked the volunteers.
- Fred O'Brien, Mission Outreach Team Leader described the many subgroups of Mission Outreach. Gave several examples of how this ministry team has touched the lives of community that surrounds The Villages.
- Pastor Rani – described the important role of groups within our growing church.

Installation of 2023 Church Council Members:

Pastor Jon-Marc congratulated the newly elected council members. Prayed for guidance for the new council as they conduct the business of Hope. He charged them with oath of office and offered God's blessing.

Election of four (4) voting members to 2023 Synod Assembly

The following members have been nominated to serve as voting members to the 2023 Synod Assembly: Pam Fenn, Don Maronde, Peg Piper, Patrick Sawler. **Motion was made and seconded to approve these members. Motion Passed.**

Outgoing Council Members Cathy Daley (Member at large), and Kent Hamdorf (President) gave reflection of their time on Council.

Pastor Bruce gave outgoing thanks to Cathy Daley, David Redding (Vice-President), and Kent Hamdorf.

Kent Hamdorf declared there was no further business.

Motion to Adjourn:

- **At 1:24 p.m. a Motion was made and seconded to adjourn the meeting. Motion Passed**

Closing Prayer: Pastor Jon-Marc with Pastors Rani and Bruce by his side gave a closing prayer and benediction.

Respectfully submitted,

Pam Fenn

Congregation Council Secretary

Offered for Approval to the Congregation February 4, 2024

Following the meeting:

- Pat O'Dell explained the 2023 Stewardship Campaign.
- Len Robertson spoke about the Capital Campaign.

2023 Special Congregational Meeting Minutes

December 17, 2023

Meeting Called to Order at 12:03 p.m. by Kristina Giffin, President

- Welcomed congregation. Made introductions.
- A quorum was established. (We needed 101 members in attendance.) There were **286 members in attendance.**

Opening Prayer: Pastor Jon-Marc MacLean

Agenda:

- To approve the 2024 Operating Budget
- To approve the Hope South Campus Building Project

2024 Operating Budget:

Gary Hill, Treasurer gave a brief overview of the proposed 2024 Operating Budget. Questions were answered. Pastor Rani Abdulmasih lead us in prayer before ballots were cast. Paper ballots were collected.

- The results were:
286 ballot cast: 272 yes votes, 14 no votes
The 2024 Budget was Approved

Hope South Campus Building Project:

Kristina gave brief overview of the Hope South Campus Building Project (see entire ballot including MIF resolution below). Bob O'Dell gave a brief explanation of the three components of the ballot. Questions were answered. Pastor Bruce Dillman lead us in prayer before paper ballots were cast.

- The results were:
285 ballots cast: 270 yes votes, 15 no votes, one blank ballot
The Hope South Campus Building Project was Approved

Closing Prayer by Pastor Jon-Marc MacLean

The meeting adjourned at 1:03 pm

Respectfully Submitted:
Pam Fenn
Council Secretary

Approved By:
Congregation Council

Sample Ballot
Congregational Resolution

Hope South Campus Building Project - Worship Center Phase 1 of the Hope South Campus Building Project:

1. Approve constructing the Worship Center Phase 1 and associated site development, with a projected cost of \$7,850,000, not to exceed \$8,00,000, and approve the anticipated \$4,700,000 construction loan, not to exceed \$4,900,000, as specified in the following resolution.

**MISSION INVESTMENT FUND OF THE
EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA
8765 West Higgins Road Chicago,
Illinois 60631**

"WHEREAS Hope Lutheran Church in The Villages, Inc. ("Ministry") proposes to borrow the anticipated amount of \$4,700,000, not to exceed \$4,900,000, through a Loan from the Mission Investment Fund of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America under the following conditions:

- (a) The loan proceeds are to be used for the purpose of the Loan, the building and furnishing of the Worship Center and all related site improvements for the Worship Center, Phase 1 of the Hope South Building Project.
- (b) The loan is to be secured by a first mortgage, or first lien deed of trust or other security instrument, on the real property of the Ministry.
- (c) The loan will be until the end of the construction period at a rate of 6.375 % to be converted to a permanent mortgage loan at that time.

RESOLVED that (a) the Ministry is authorized to borrow the anticipated amount of \$4,700,000, not to exceed \$4,900,000, from the Mission Investment Fund of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, to be used for the foregoing purposes and to be secured by real property of the Ministry as set forth above.

The loan proceeds are to be used for the purpose of the Loan for the Ministry to help fund the construction of a new Worship Center and related site improvements,

- a. The Lead Pastor and Officers of the Ministry are authorized to execute the promissory note and mortgage, or deed of trust or other security instrument, to evidence said borrowing, with such changes in those documents as such officers of the Ministry may approve,
- b. Those officers are also authorized to take all further actions and execute all such further documents as may be necessary to carry out the foregoing borrowing; and
- c. Those officers are also authorized to agree to any extensions to the payment dates or due dates.

2. Authorize the Church Council and its officers to take such actions and to sign such documents as are necessary to carry out the purposes and intent of this Congregation Resolution.

3. Rescind the approval of constructing the Activity Center Phase of the Hope South Campus Building Project given at the Special Congregation Meeting on October 7, 2022.

_____ I vote YES _____ I vote NO

2023 Financial Highlights

The Current and Benevolence offerings increased by \$23,500 from 2022 but were \$150,000 under what was budgeted. The total General Fund expenses were 100% of the budgeted amount, including an unplanned \$130,000 to paint the Worship Center at Hope Central Campus, resulting in a deficit to the General Fund of \$125,000 for the year. Because of this deficit we returned the \$100,000 transferred to the Building Fund in 2022 back to the General Fund.

The donations to the Donor Restricted Funds (Food Pantry, The Rock, Scholarships, etc) were up over \$100,000 from 2022, enabling them to contribute over \$285,000 to the needs of people in the community.

The Building Fund received approximately \$1,800,000 in donations this year with \$1,500,000 being for capital projects including Hope South Campus and the Hope Lake Weir Campus pavilion. There were over \$170,000 worth of capital expenditures from the Fund including architectural fees for Hope South Campus and the pavilion cost at Hope Lake Weir Campus. The balance was contributed to the Debt Service Fund with \$82,000 being paid for interest on the Mortgage Loan and \$186,000 being paid on the principal balance. \$50,000 in interest was earned on the cash balance in the Building Fund. The current Loan balance is now down to \$1,569,734.

With continued growth, along with the excitement from activity on Hope South Campus, we are looking forward to a positive year in 2024.

	MORTGAGE LOAN/BUILDING FUNDS			
	Mortgage Loan 2023	Debt Service Fund 2023	South Site Fund 2023	South Site - Life of the Fund
Beginning Balance				\$0
Balance January 1, 2023	\$1,755,874	\$124,153	\$362,216	
Interest Income			\$50,049	\$50,049
Contributions		\$265,430	\$1,482,696	\$1,787,142
Transfer to/from General Fund			-\$100,000	
Principal Payments	-\$186,140	-\$186,140		
Capital Expenditures			-\$171,219	-\$213,449
Interest Payments		-\$81,670		
Balance December 31, 2023	\$1,569,734	\$121,773	\$1,623,742	\$1,623,742

HOPE LUTHERAN CHURCH — BALANCE SHEET	Balance Sheet as of December 31	Balance Sheet as of December 31
	2022	2023
ASSETS		
Cash and Cash Equivalents	\$836,567.11	\$2,555,454.98
Investments	\$812,687.78	\$710,091.91
Total Current Assets	\$1,649,254.89	\$3,265,546.89
Land Buildings and Equipment	\$8,555,624.00	\$8,722,697.84
TOTAL ASSETS	\$10,204,878.89	\$11,988,244.73
LIABILITIES		
Prepaid Pledges	\$24,275.62	\$18,300.00
Accounts Payable	\$821.10	\$131,123.10
Total Current Liabilities	\$25,096.72	\$149,423.10
Mortgage Loan Payable	\$1,755,873.93	\$1,569,733.71
TOTAL LIABILITIES	\$1,780,970.65	\$1,719,156.81
FUND BALANCES		
GENERAL FUND		
Operating Fund	\$299,071.71	\$200,015.37
Undesignated Memorials	\$72,495.26	\$127,300.26
Total Undesignated Funds	\$371,566.97	\$327,315.63
Designated Special Gifts	\$7,946.95	\$11,721.95
Memorial Gardem	\$81,804.05	\$97,398.07
My Time	\$9,593.12	\$12,189.40
Equipment Replacement	\$100,000.00	\$100,000.00
Women Of Hope	\$4,512.24	\$3,011.69
Total Designated Funds	\$203,856.36	\$224,321.11
TOTAL GENERAL FUND	\$575,423.33	\$551,636.74
DONOR RESTRICTED FUNDS		
Lake Weir Food Pantry	\$196,245.39	\$214,649.92
The Rock at Lake Weir Middle School	\$49,681.75	\$57,804.54
Scholarship	\$36,343.13	\$53,950.13
Pastors Discretionary	\$26,876.43	\$32,061.77
Pennies from Heaven	\$6,678.51	\$7,762.23
ELCA World Hunger, Disaster Response, World Relief		\$167.00
TOTAL DONOR RESTRICTED FUNDS	\$315,825.21	\$366,395.59
BUILDING FUND		
Building Third Site	\$358,071.00	\$1,623,742.08
Debt Service	\$125,902.93	\$121,772.81
Net Fixed Assets	\$6,799,750.07	\$7,152,964.13
TOTAL BUILDING FUND	\$7,283,724.00	\$8,898,479.02
ENDOWMENT FUNDS		
St Johns/Hope Fund	\$228,935.70	\$391,288.04
Theological Education Fund	\$20,000.00	\$61,288.53
TOTAL ENDOWMENT FUNDS	\$248,935.70	\$452,576.57
TOTAL ALL FUNDS	\$8,423,908.24	\$10,269,087.92
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND FUND BALANCES	\$10,204,878.89	\$11,988,244.73

HOPE LUTHERAN TREASURER'S REPORT 2023			
	2022	2023	Budget 2024
GENERAL FUND			
INCOME			
Current & Benevolence	\$2,023,044.66	\$2,046,582.23	\$2,350,000.00
Loose Plate	\$45,684.00	\$67,608.87	\$80,000.00
Hospitality Income	\$62,763.14	\$80,781.14	\$90,000.00
Other Income	\$89,322.70	\$148,016.93	\$112,450.00
TOTAL GENERAL FUND INCOME	\$2,220,814.50	\$2,342,989.17	\$2,632,450.00
EXPENSES			
Pastors Salary/Benefits	\$538,143.87	\$543,483.86	\$629,108.00
Benevolence	\$145,733.69	\$119,744.87	\$142,200.00
Office Expense	\$471,094.96	\$481,690.98	\$479,926.00
Worship and Music	\$432,402.36	\$429,457.09	\$586,130.00
Utility Expense	\$73,001.53	\$81,796.62	\$95,600.00
Hospitality	\$142,509.97	\$175,554.51	\$173,500.00
Maintenance	\$287,267.39	\$419,870.97	\$347,800.00
Mission & Outreach	\$25,422.60	\$23,533.96	\$34,000.00
Other Expenses	\$93,584.56	\$193,367.90	\$143,770.00
TOTAL GENERAL FUND EXPENSES	\$2,209,160.93	\$2,468,500.76	\$2,632,034.00
General Fund Income less Expense	\$11,653.57	-\$125,511.59	\$416.00
DONOR RESRTICTED FUNDS			
INCOME			
Food Pantry	\$145,161.57	\$142,665.01	\$140,000.00
The Rock at Lake Weir Middle School	\$18,923.27	\$44,203.12	\$20,000.00
Scholarships	\$9,927.63	\$30,127.00	\$17,000.00
Pennies from Heaven	\$888.55	\$1,083.72	\$1,000.00
Pastors Discretionary	\$6,980.00	\$8,438.02	\$10,000.00
ELCA World Relief, World Hunger, Disaster Response		\$59,100.42	\$68,000.00
TOTAL DONOR RESTRICTCTED INCOME	\$181,881.02	\$285,617.29	\$256,000.00
EXPENSE			
Food Pantry	\$151,001.55	\$124,260.48	\$140,000.00
The Rock at Lake Weir Middle School	\$27,547.33	\$36,080.33	\$20,000.00
Scholarships	\$15,000.00	\$12,520.00	\$17,000.00
Pennies from Heaven	\$941.34	\$0.00	\$1,000.00
Pastors Discretionary	\$11,128.04	\$3,252.68	\$10,000.00
ELCA World Relief, World Hunger, Disaster Response		\$58,933.42	\$68,000.00
TOTAL DONOR RESTRICTED EXPENSE	\$205,618.26	\$235,046.91	\$256,000.00
Donor Restricted Income less Expense	-\$23,737.24	\$50,570.38	\$0.00

BUILDING FUND	2022	2023	Budget 2024
INCOME			
Debt Reduction	\$272,221.00	\$265,429.93	\$300,000.00
Third Site	\$241,811.15	\$1,532,744.92	\$500,000.00
Loan Proceeds			\$3,000,000.00
TOTAL BUILDING FUND INCOME	\$514,032.15	\$1,798,174.85	\$3,800,000.00
EXPENSE			
Mortgage Interest	\$72,372.08	\$81,669.83	\$180,000.00
Principal Loan Payment allocation	\$199,848.92	\$186,140.22	\$120,000.00
Third Site Capital Expenditures		\$167,073.84	\$4,500,000.00
TOTAL BUILDING FUND EXPENDITURE	\$272,221.00	\$434,883.89	\$4,800,000.00
Building Fund Income Less Expense	\$241,811.15	\$1,363,290.96	-\$1,000,000.00
ENDOWMENT FUNDS			
Contributions	\$23,763.50	\$191,682.00	\$5,000.00
Earnings	-\$3,131.94	\$11,848.87	\$8,000.00
TOTAL ENDOWMENT FUND INCOME	\$20,631.56	\$203,530.87	\$13,000.00
Endowment Committee Grants	\$16,500.00	\$0.00	\$8,000.00
Endowment Fund Income Less Expense	\$4,131.56	\$203,530.87	\$5,000.00
TOTAL INCOME LESS TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$233,859.04	\$1,491,880.62	-\$994,584.00

Ministry Opportunities

Music Opportunities (Worship & Music)

Brotherhood of Harmony
Hope South Campus Chorale
Sisters in Song
SonShine Celebration Band
Spirit Ringers

Voices of Hope
Combined Choirs of Hope (holidays)
Hope Lake Weir Campus Chimes
Hope Lake Weir Campus Choir
Song Leaders & Anthem Soloists

Study/Fellowship (Education)

H.O.P.E. University Leadership Team
Men's Small Group Bible Study
Book Group Ministries

Walk to Emmaus
Women of Hope Circles

Generosity Development (Administration)

Endowment
Hope for the Future Student Scholarship

Stewardship

Hope Helpers (Outreach/Local & Global)

Baby Quilt Ministry (Sweet Dreams)
Blessing Bags
Fish Frys
Hope Lake Weir Campus Food Pantry
Handyman
Hands of Hope
Hospitality

Mission Outreach
Prayer Shawl
Quilters
The Rock
Seasonal Decorating
Women of Hope Crafters

Wellness (Group)

Diabetes Support Group
Strong Bones

Walk Away the Pounds

Worship (Worship & Music)

Altar Angels
Audio Visual (Clickers & Video)
Communion & Worship Assistants
Greeters
Narthex Servers

Newcomer Welcome to Worship
Parking
Readers
Ushers

Outreach & Fellowship (Group, Outreach Global & Local)

C.I.A (Christians in Action)
Bridge Ladies – Fellowship (Participation)
Dining Out – Fellowship (Participation)
Gatherings of Hope
Golf (Monthly) – Fellowship (Participation)

Southern Neighbors Social Group
On Our Own
Women of Hope
Men of Hope – Fellowship (Participation)

Member Care (Outreach, Shepherding)

First Visit Calling
Funeral Reception
Gatherings of Hope
Grief Support
Inactive Calling

Lay Communion Visitation
My Time Caregiver Respite
New Member Prep
Prayer Team
Stephen Ministers

Service Projects (Admin., Buildings & Grounds)

Archivist – Scrapbook
Clerical Volunteers
Facilities
Grounds

Hope South Campus Building Teams
Memorial Garden Sales Attendant
Pew Rack Replenishment
Hand Sanitizer Maintenance

Large Event Teams

90+ Birthday Party
Angel Tree
Annual Picnic
Blessing of the Animals
Hospitality Special Events

Parking – Special Events
Special Occasions & Holidays (Concerts,
Christmas, Easter, Large Funerals) –
includes ushers, greeters, communion
workers

Opportunities for expanding Faith & Church Support

Faith and Fellowship
H.O.P.E. University
Love INC
Small Groups

Social Services Advocacy
Thrivent
Wednesday Evening Meals & Worship

Staff Ministry Reports

Audio/Visual

The AV department concludes the year with commendable achievements and ongoing initiatives. Our Weekly Live Stream maintained a solid viewership of 368, and we're proud of the growth in our online campus. Although no major changes occurred this year, we face the need for additional volunteers in crucial areas.

Highlights:

1. ****Steadfast Viewer Engagement:**** The Weekly Live Stream consistently attracted 368 viewers, underscoring the connection and community our Weekly Live Stream provides.
2. ****Operational Stability:**** This year saw the AV department operating smoothly, maintaining the status quo without major alterations, ensuring continued excellence in content delivery.

Challenges:

1. ****Volunteer Recruitment:**** To support our endeavors, we are in need of volunteer camera operators for our Live Stream at Hope Central Campus and volunteers for AV setup and tear down at Hope at Everglades. We encourage church members to contribute their skills and time.

Success Stories:

1. ****Service Reliability:**** Across our three campuses and seven services, we are proud to report minimal to no major issues. This success is a testament to the dedication and professionalism of our AV team.

Looking Ahead:

In the upcoming year, our focus extends beyond maintaining stability to fostering community engagement through volunteer recruitment. We seek enthusiastic individuals for camera operations at Hope Central Campus, and AV setup, and tear down at Hope at the Everglades Rec Center.

We express gratitude for the hard work of our AV team and the continued support of our community. As we look forward to the next year, we anticipate even greater accomplishments and strengthened collaboration.

Jime Eversole, Audio Visual Engineer

Communications & Marketing

As Hope Lutheran Church continues to grow and expand in both scope and impact, so too does our Communications department. It is a blessing to share the Gospel message and the activities of our active church with both our siblings in Christ and our local community.

The Communications department is responsible for all print and digital communications on behalf of Hope Lutheran Church, as well as all marketing strategy and church branding. The department also handles the church website, the digital News in the Pews newsletter, all print and digital marketing materials, brochures, welcome gifts, signs, mass mailers, newspaper ads, press releases, etc.

Currently, we actively utilize the Communications platforms listed below. New platforms (established in 2023) are indicated with an asterisk*:

- Constant Contact for multiple direct email campaigns per week (at least two) including the News in the Pews newsletter
- Our church website hope4all.church
- Monthly Living Abundantly publication*
- The Awesome God Squad Children's Newsletter*
- Our pre-worship slides
- Our REACH digital platform
- Weekly advertising in The Daily Sun
- Specialty seasonal advertising in The Daily Sun
- Advertising of special events on Z88.3 radio*
- Print and digital material for the Evangelism Team*
- Mass mailings (once to twice yearly)
- Focused Social Media marketing campaigns through Facebook and Google Ads

This year also saw a reinvention of our Social Media community, with two new offerings entering our regular rotation – Pastor John's weekly video series *Mustard Seeds*, and Pastor Keith's Friday Podcast *Looking Ahead at the Weekly Word*. Thereafter, we saw a surge in our Social Media community.

Below are some encouraging analytics:

- Total reach in 2023 – 26,800 individuals (increase of 9%)
- Total interactions in 2023 – 14,900 (increase of 88.2%)

In 2023, we established our staff Creative Team. This talented team meets regularly to direct our creative efforts, create cross-department content, plan campaigns and seasonal themes, and support one another.

Looking ahead, we have big plans for advancing communications in 2024 and beyond. Stay tuned!

In Christ,
Marina Ernst, Communications Director

H.O.P.E. University

We've had an incredibly blessed year past. That includes the completion and dedication of a labyrinth at Hope Lake Weir Campus; the establishment of a Vacation Bible School; and efforts to provide daily devotions, daily Bible reading challenge, recorded mustard seeds, Looking Forward, maintenance of Prayer Group, and a gam of classes, taught by both laity and clergy. All of this was possible because of the commitment of the educational team that includes Karen Albrecht, Carole Rasmussen, Jo Stewart, Al Christensen, Linda Foley, Suzanne Kuebler, Kathy Smith, and David Withers; a team of devotional, reader, and volunteers at VBS and the aid and assistance offered by the staff of the church.

Use of zoom meetings to allow more people to attend classes, and our social media presents have greatly influenced our reach to our community and family whether they are in the villages or in states in the north and west from Florida. We continue to honor our founding principal of Honoring Our Priority to Education as know Christ and make Christ known.

Respectfully submitted,
Pastor John LeCain

Hospitality / Head Cook – Chef

The Hope Lutheran Church Hospitality Team plans, coordinates and prepares all food related events at Hope, including Hope Central Campus, Hope Lake Weir Campus, and certain hospitality supplies and refreshments for Hope at the Everglades Rec Center. Hope Lake Weir Campus has a regular Sunday refreshment time after service with the first Sunday of the month being Ice Cream Sundae Sunday. Many of the refreshments are supplied from Hope Central Campus to add to the amazing home-made items brought in by the members there. Hope at Everglades now has regular refreshments of fresh baked cookies after each service on Sunday.

Our events include simple coffee and Danish for certain bible study groups up to and including feeding nearly 500 folks at the yearly picnic in October. The weekly social suppers average 110 to 190 fed with approximately 18 to 24 volunteers assisting with preparation, cooking, serving, and cleanup. This year was a record-breaking traditional Thanksgiving meal serving 280 members. This team also is responsible for the monthly Men of Hope breakfast, Women of Hope breakfast, preparation of sandwiches for all funerals, pastor installation receptions, group ministry retreats, choir breakfast/lunch events for many of their weekend special performances, and quarterly STS breakfast meetings, plus Newcomer Appetizers and dinner support each quarter. The Hospitality team provides hot food and beverages all Christmas Eve afternoon during the numerous performances for staff, volunteers, traffic police officers, and parking team. We also provide Easter morning enhanced refreshments for the choir, staff, and volunteers. The team also provides cookies and hot beverage after each Cantata performance in December. We continue to support Gatherings of Hope with beverages and light snacks plus preparing breakfasts and lunches for several training events.

In 2023, the Hospitality Team added the following new events:

- Scholarship program reception

- 90th Birthday Party sandwiches and fruit
- diakonia retreat and reception
- Specialty dinners and lunches for Hope South Campus Building Project awareness
- Cuban reception for Global Mission Weekend
- Numerous fundraising dinners/socials for various church ministries

Hospitality had another record-breaking year directly serving nearly 17,500 Hope members, family, and friends at Hope Central Campus. Indirectly supporting Hope Lake Weir Campus and Hope at Everglades by supplying setups and some of the food items adds another approximately 10,500 folks.

As you can see, Hospitality has been quite busy as we offer various food events to foster fellowship, friendship and spread the love of Christ. We are looking forward to an even busier 2024 at all three of our locations with dedication of the Hope Lake Weir Campus Pavilion and Groundbreaking Events for Hope South Campus, in addition to various celebratory events to commemorate the 25th anniversary of Hope Lutheran Church!

We gratefully added 12 new regular team members again this year.

As I have always said in the nearly 6 years with the Hope Hospitality Team, the strength of the Hospitality Team lies in the many dedicated and hard-working volunteers who weekly come in to cook, prep, clean, clear tables, decorate, serve, wash dishes, and do whatever is necessary to make the food events successful. We are truly blessed in the talents of those who have owned their own restaurants in the past and have had other extensive cooking experiences. No words can ever thank them properly for what they do in a very hectic and hot environment in the kitchen. With only a Head Cook on full-time staff, they are the backbone of this team. We consider ourselves one big family as we work together, laugh and cry together, and support each other daily.

We are always ready to welcome new members to the team as we continue to grow this ministry and add new events.

God's blessings,
Debbie Bennett, Head Cook / Chef

Department of Music Ministries

The music department has always seemed to me to be a good bellwether for the health and vitality of the church as a whole. That said, our campus ensembles continue to grow and diversify both in number and in the amount and types of musical offerings we continue to prepare over the course of the season.

The Voices of Hope-Lake Weir, under the leadership of Dennis Keinitz, has expanded its ranks to the point where we are considering options for safe expansion of the performance space. In addition to VOH-LW, VOH-South, under the direction of Mary Jo MacLean, has expanded its anthems, as well as utilizing the talents of various volunteer instrumentalists from the congregation.

Also at Hope South Campus, the SOS service now periodically uses live piano and guitar, along with MJ's vocals.

2023 brought the return of Ken Wood to the direction of the Hope Central Campus 4:00pm service. With a fresh rebrand and an updated band, the SOS service on Saturday afternoons has shown much promise for offering an engaging alternative style for worship, and one in which we hope to encourage depth, personal commitment, and community interaction.

The department of music ministries continues to have the largest number of volunteers of any Hope ministry, keeping the gears moving. Our 10+ part- and full-time staff could never undertake such a vast course of objectives without the constant involvement of so many committed people. We look forward to continuing as the church and her ministries are steered by Christ toward evermore outreach, devotion, and robustness.

To God be the Glory,
Ken Wood, Dir. of Music Ministries

Prayers for Hope

This ministry was begun in 2021 as a natural outgrowth of the Prayer Chain maintained by the church. The Prayer team was being furnished with an email to update current need for prayers. Each member prayed individually for the needs.

Prayers for Hope began in order to have members of the Prayer team join together in person and by Zoom to pray over the joys and concerns of Hope, to study prayer, and to have a time of meditative silence.

If you are interested in joining Prayers for Hope, contact PastorJohn@hope4all.church

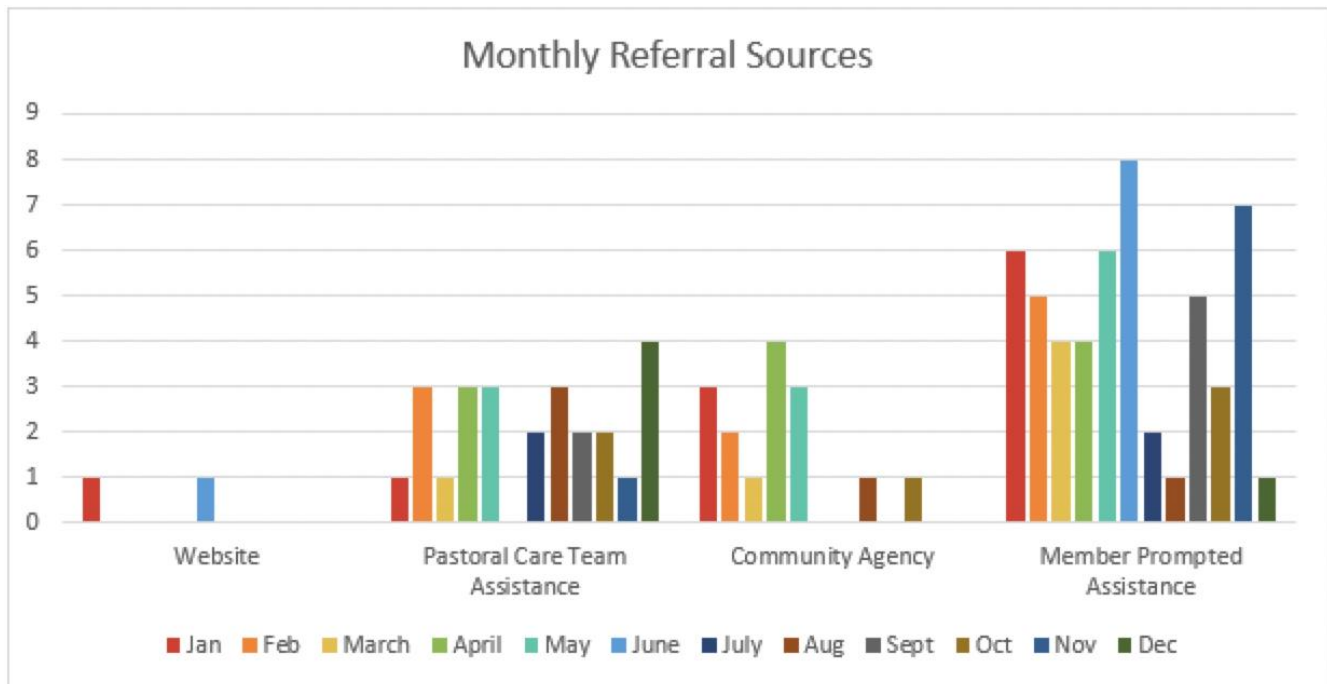
Respectfully submitted,
Pastor John LeCain

Social Services Advocate

Referrals Outcomes for this Year

- Long-Term Planning: 43
- Elder Affairs Attorney: 4
- Placement: 22
- Financial Assistance/Goods: 98
- Visitation: 68
- Events Attended: 0
- Presentation of Services: 0

- Referrals to Hope Ministry: 39
- Telehealth: 18



Lenea Carnes, BA
 Social Services Advocate

Ministry Team Reports (alphabetical order)

90+ Birthday Party

In 2014, we had our first 90+ Birthday Party at church. This is a once-a-year event that is planned for Hope Members that are 90+ years old. This year, we had 88 members that were 90+ years old in 2023 that receive an invitation to the yearly party. Some members live out of town. They receive a note telling them we know they won't be able to attend but we are thinking of them on their birthday.



The party was held on October 15 after the 10:30am service. We had 24 members and their families come to enjoy the festivities. We also have a number of Hope members that attend to share the excitement. We continued with the chicken sandwiches and fruit cups we started last year and was well received. Then, as always, cake & ice cream for the celebration. The oldest member, Lorraine Crotteau, got to blow out the candle!

All the guests go home with a smile on their faces and a balloon to commemorate the day. They have their picture taken during the event and a print is mailed to them with a thank you card for attending the party.

We thank God for these wonderful people and their willingness to share their stories with us. Hope Lutheran Church is blessed to have 16 members of the 90+ Birthday Party Team that volunteer to plan for this event and spread the cheer!

If you would like to join the 90+ Birthday Party Team email Karen O'Brien at fredandkaren@mpinet.net.

Altar Angels

This has been another challenging year for the Altar Angels Team. We need some younger gals and guys (married couples would be good). As we are aging, we are facing problems walking while carrying something in both hands (it's a balance problem). Shaky hands pose a problem while pouring liquids (wine and white grape juice) into the vessels, then carrying them from the sacristy to the Credence table and back to the sacristy.

The 4:00pm Saturday service seems to operate more efficiently than the others, due to more volunteers and younger angels. They are responsible for setting out the flowers, also.

The 6:00pm Saturday service still only has one couple, serving as they are able.

The most challenging service seems to be 8:00am on Sunday at Hope Central Campus. This year, we lost 2 couples due to health problems. Several of the ladies had to drop out of the team due to age and physical problems. We have been very fortunate recently as Charlotte Morse has recruited her husband Glen and sister Janis Fong, along with Kathy McIntyre. She will be training them all in February. Carol Bryan has recruited her husband Skip and Patricia Krebs. She will be working with them in April. Many thanks to them for answering our prayers.

Recently, Lynn attended a large meeting where the members were discussing trying to recruit volunteers for various groups at Hope. Lynn took the opportunity to remind the group that we are always looking for Altar Angels, and that "without Altar Angels, there would be no communion." The message seemed to touch some people, as one couple came up immediately after the meeting and volunteers to be 10:00am Angels. They went to the sacristy with Lynn and familiarized themselves with the service. They will shadow the Altar Angels serving this weekend and officially sign up for a month or more.

On the downside, we had fewer Angel volunteers for the Christmas Eve services. We finally decided to come in Christmas Eve morning and set up for the entire day. After the final Advent service in the morning, Nancy changed the paraments while Lynn was setting up three vessels and wafers for the six Christmas services at Hope Central Campus. We explained to the Angels that all they needed to do was to top off the wine and wafers and put everything out on the Altar and Credence table.

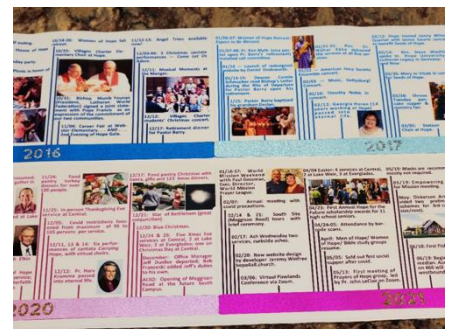
Lynn came in the next morning and cleaned up, set up for the Christmas Day service, and cleaned up after attending that service, too.

We are grateful for any help we can get. God bless us all.

Lynn Voelkle and Nancy Metcalf

Archive Team

During 2023, the Archive Team continued its work of chronicling the life of Hope Lutheran Church in word and picture. Yearly archives are printed and collected in 3-inch binders and stored in the office at Hope Central Campus. Each year's archive (from 1995 to the current year) is also stored in pdf format on the Hope server. Adobe Acrobat makes it easy to search across all the archives in a matter of minutes: simple instructions for conducting such a global search can be found on the first page of the 2022 and 2023 archives.



In addition to the month-by-month account of Hope's activities, and the special sections devoted to the Council Corner, H.O.P.E. University, and Hope South Campus, we have created a set of leather scrolls to celebrate this, Hope's 25th Anniversary year. These scrolls are each 8 feet long unrolled, and together depict a timeline, in words and pictures, of the highlights of our first quarter century. So far, three scrolls have been completed: 1995-2005, 2006-2013, and 2014-2021. Present plans call for the

fourth scroll to cover the years 2022 to 2029 - but if the current rate of expansion continues, we may be creating a fifth scroll soon!

Kathryn Clement, Team Leader

Angel Tree Project

Teams Mission:

Work with designated local organizations to provide Christmas gifts for needy Children and Seniors in our community.

Recent Accomplishments:

Through the overwhelming support of the Hope congregation, the Angel Tree Project provided significant gift packages for nearly 600 Children and Seniors. That represents a 34% increase of those Hope served with Christmas blessings over the Angel Tree project of 2022.

Organizations with counts served included:

- Hope Lake Weir Food Pantry Children – 139
- Stanton Weirsdale Elementary School – 184
- Lady Lake Specialty Care – 119
- Buffalo Crossings Assisted Care – 62
- The Villages Rehabilitation Center – 5

Additionally, the congregation provided 85 gift cards (not assigned to specific individuals) that were utilized to augment gifts if needed and to provide for gifts not returned by the date to be distributed to the organizations. The balance as noted below was turned over to the Pastors to be used where needs arise in the future.

In August, Lenea Carnes asked for leadership support to manage the Angels Project. The team of Gloria Johnson, Jenny Dunn, Nancy Forrest, and Elayne Gooding stepped in and lead the project. The team worked with designated leads from the organizations, coordinated volunteer meetings, scheduled coverage for Angels distribution and returns at all three campuses, worked with Hope Staff for communications to Hope members and to schedule facility needs, and tracked all Angels to assure complete coverage of all commitments Hope had made to the groups served.

A special acknowledgment also is due to the team of nearly 50 volunteers from all campuses who assisted throughout the project.

The Gift Card and Cash statistics....

- Total \$5,480.00 donated gift cards. \$1,125.00 cash donations
- Repurposed gift cards for augmentation: \$2,175.00
- Misc. small gifts: \$198.53
- Net delivered to Hope – Gift Cards: \$3,305.00, Cash: \$926.47

The 4 Leaders are already working on recommendations for 2024 and are looking forward to serving as Angel Tree Project Leaders again.

Blessing of the Animals

The team's mission is to provide a pleasant and meaningful experience for members of the community that wish to have their pets (no snakes) blessed. The event is in recognition of the feast day of St. Francis of Assisi, the Roman Catholic Church's patron saint of animals.

The 2023 Blessing of the Animals was held on Saturday, October 7, 2023. Pastor Marc presided over the event. More than 125 pet owners and 77 registered pets were in attendance. In addition, five vendors and their teams provided merchandise for purchase along with several bringing pets that represented their organizations.

Over 30 volunteers worked at the event greeting attendees, registering the pets, handing out pet scarves, blessing collar tags, cookies donated by Hope members, and water and soft drinks donated by the Hospitality Department. Pet photos were taken and sent to the pet owners. Music was provided by the Music Department along with a slide show presentation from last year's event.

Our prize wheel collected \$145 in donations for YOUR Humane Society SPCA and the Columbiana Humane Society in Salem, OH. In addition, a Hope member contributed \$200 to the shared donations.

Many positive comments were received from attendees, vendors, and staff members about the volunteers, the blessing ceremony, and the fun, fair-like atmosphere.

Bonnie Irvine, Team Leader

CIA (Christians in Action)

MISSION STATEMENT

We are a group known as CIA, "Christians In Action". Men and women whose goals and objectives are to encourage, motivate, and increase the action and activity of all three Hope Lutheran Church Campuses.

Hope will be a place where faith and community come together to reach beyond the walls of the church and into the community.

Let us not give up meeting together as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another. Hebrew 10:25

The CIA continues with this mission statement to help involve members and nonmembers in the different activities CIA promotes. The year began with the Second Annual Chili Cook Off at Hope

Central Campus. This was a joint venture with CIA and Hospitality. The outreach ministry that was supported by this Cook Off was Camp E-Nini-Hassee, a young girls outdoor camp in Floral City, Florida. Girls from the camp attended and shared their stories with those attending this event.

In February, the Social Supper was a pizza night. The Rock was the ministry designated for this event with proceeds going to the Rock at Lake Weir Middle School. Fred O'Brien shared with those attending the needs of the students, such as school supplies, shoes, hygiene products, etc.

As we continued with different events, April hosted a Game Night for all ages. A light meal was shared, prizes were offered, and the answers were unexpected and entertaining.

CIA and Hospitality joined together once again for a Social Supper in May. The ministry for this event was On Our Own. This ministry packs food items for children/students who attend the Stanton Weirsdale Elementary School.

To include one of our other campuses, we were able to hold two events at Hope at the Everglades Rec Center. In June, we hosted a "Night of Comedy" with Juanita Lolita, which was sold out completely. In July, there was a Trivia Night. It was a completely different venue than the one earlier in the year. A light supper and prizes were shared.

Since Social Suppers are attended by members and nonmembers, we again had Camp E-Nini-Hassee as the designated outreach ministry in November. Once again different girls shared their stories with those in attendance.

Over the past year, CIA has worked with Pastor John LeCain and his committee members to enhance the Hope Lake Weir Campus. We encourage you to visit this campus – the pavilion is now completed, as are the walking paths, crosses, etc. Together we have made a difference for the benefit of our church and the surrounding community.

Each ministry that we supported over this past year was very grateful for being allowed to be a part of these Social Suppers and different events; to include both members and nonmembers to attend these functions. This gave many the opportunity to learn about some of the many ministries that are involved in all three campuses at Hope Lutheran Church. A wonderful time of fellowship and evangelism to everyone.

Respectfully submitted, Len Robertson

Crafters

Hope Crafters has the mission "to give hope and love to others on life's journey". We meet every Tuesday from 9:00am to 11:00am in Room 205 at Hope Central Campus. All women are welcome. Bring your friends. Even if you have no sewing experience, we can use your talents. We accept donations of yarn, cotton material and money all year long. You may leave these items in the information hallway at Hope Central Campus.

In 2023 we spent 10,500 hours making and distributing the following items:

- 1069 Sojourn bears to cancer treatment patients
- 445 baby bears to children
- 250 ribbon crosses
- 1065 hats
- 278 sweaters
- 71 scarves
- 579 rolled bandages
- 157 blankets of various types
- 186 baby ball toys for children
- 99 Dawn/washcloth combinations

For more information, you may contact Donna Walker at (352) 753-8618 or Eileen Hintzen at (352) 753-0777.

Disaster Preparedness and Response Committee

Disaster Preparedness Committee

The Committee meets regularly and records the following accomplishments for 2023.

1. The first ever “Hope Lutheran Church Disaster Preparedness and Response Plan” was approved. Numerous details to implement the plan have been completed including door lock and alarm procedures, preparation of Lead Usher Guidelines, updating contents of First Responder Bags, and installation of signs for emergency equipment.
2. Quarterly checks of all facilities have been initiated to confirm emergency exits are clear, protective systems follow inspection requirements, emergency equipment is available, etc. AEDs and First Responder Bags are checked monthly.
3. Training was conducted for worship volunteers covering medical emergencies, emergency evacuation, and shelter-in-place protocols. AED/CPR training was also conducted at both campuses.
4. Established a prioritized budget and managed to approved budget.

A key objective of this committee is to make sure Hope Lutheran Church is fully compliant with safety and security guides and regulations. The following agencies guide our decisions:

- National Fire Protection Agency
- Federal Emergency Management Agency
- Occupational Health and Safety Administration
- American Heart Association



The Committee completed new sections of the Plan (Infection Control and Key Systems). They installed a TV monitor in the Hope Central Campus Narthex for the Security Officer and have begun

work on monitoring systems updates for Hope Lake Weir Campus. A 2024 version of the Plan was approved in December.

Planned for 2024 is improvement of monitoring systems, training for additional ministries teams and staff, additional security officer staffing at Hope Lake Weir Campus, and continuous reviews and after-action reports of incidents. The Coordinator wants to commend every member of this Committee. They not only contribute their experience and knowledge of security and disaster response, but they willingly step up to implementing the improvements. We particularly acknowledge the extensive contributions of staff members, Bob Franceski and Rick Schaaf.

Dave Withers
Emergency Preparedness Coordinator

Endowment

The Endowment Committee is mandated by the Constitution of Hope Lutheran Church. Its purpose is to administer the *earnings* of the funds entrusted in perpetuity to the Hope/St. John Endowment Funds. This is accomplished through grants awarded for religious, charitable, benevolent, and educational purposes of Hope Lutheran Church including capital improvements.

This year saw a significant increase in the fund balance due to the bequest of one of the founding members of Hope. As one can imagine, the educational work of the committee cannot be measured until a bequest is received. Members of the Committee pray that members of Hope will continue to consider the on-going mission of Hope through a legacy gift.

Through the dream of one of the Committee members, the Seminary Educational Fund was established in 2022 within the Hope/St. John Endowment fund to further the seminary education of future leaders of the church. It was established with a \$15,000 gift with no grants being awarded until the fund reached a balance of \$25,000. The congregation was challenged to increase the fund balance so that awards could be made. During 2023, over \$40,000 was added to that fund allowing the committee to make grants.

The Committee members are Gary Hill (Council Treasurer), Pastor Jon Marc MacLean, Pat O'Dell, Ron Durian, Gary Forrester, Peg Piper Winters, and Steve German. Please contact any one of us for questions you may have.

Peg Piper Winters

Hope Lake Weir Campus Food Pantry

The Hope Lake Weir Campus Food Pantry is a thriving ministry serving residents of Marion County every Thursday from 10:00am to 12:00pm. In 2023, the Pantry served 8,273 households, giving out 11,597 bags of shelf-stable food, meat, and produce.

This ministry is thankful for the generosity of the Hope congregation, area clubs, organizations, and neighbor gatherings. Without all this support throughout the year, the Pantry could not help so many people. The Pantry is also grateful for all the volunteers who work selflessly in so many different areas, logging 8,570.50 hours.



Debbie Schuettler, the Pantry's Operation Manager, is dedicated to making sure donations are used wisely to purchase quality food at reasonable prices. She has worked with Second Harvest in obtaining discounted prices on shelf-stable items, a variety of meats, and donated produce. This alone has saved the Pantry a significant amount of money. Every week we also receive donated breads and pastries from Panera Bread in Lake Sumter Landing and the Southern Trace Publix. The Villages Grown also donates produce when in season.

The Pantry also provided holiday meals for Easter, Thanksgiving, and Christmas. In July, during the Shoe & Sock Drive, we gave away 123 pairs of shoes and socks, along with donated school supplies. For Christmas, 154 food pantry children received gifts from the Angel Tree Program. Through donations, we also provide hot dogs & buns, pet food, diapers, incontinence underwear, and hygiene products.

The Pantry has been blessed to help two other Hope ministries this year. After a successful shoe drive, the Pantry donated over \$300 in shoes to The Rock. We were also able to donate 18 cases of cereal. The Pantry is also helping the On My Own program donating approximately \$645 of apple sauce, juice boxes, fruit cups, and similar items. We hope to continue working with these ministries going forward. The Pantry is grateful for your continued support.

Debbie Schuettler, Hope Lake Weir Campus Food Pantry Operation Manager

First Visit & Inactive Calling

This past year, I have been successful in keeping up to date with members we have not seen in a while, typically 6 weeks or so. I have contacted 260, left messages on 213 and was unable to reach 13 family units. Many I have called have appreciated the fact that we were concerned about them. I also learned of some health issues that we as a congregation were unaware of and made referrals as needed.

The number of phone calls to first time visitors was down due to the fact that Pastor Rani was reaching out to those who had visited Hope at Everglades Rec Center until recently, when I again took those over. I have made 75 calls to individuals that I was able to reach and left messages of welcome on 35.

I continue to enjoy being a part of this ministry, only surprised by how many find it not important to attend church regularly.

Dawn Deinert, Team Leader

Funeral Reception Team

The Funeral Reception Team provides food and beverages for a luncheon after a funeral/memorial service. We provide this service at the church. Our goal is to relieve the family during a memorial service of the worry of serving their guests a lunch following a service.

We serve 20 luncheons for members in the Fellowship Hall. Debbie Bennett and her team prepare the sandwiches and the Funeral Reception Team members provided salads, veggie trays, cheese trays, and cookies. There is a special team that provides the workers to setup, serve the food, and cleanup.

We are a group of 100+ members with five team coordinators, four for food and one for Setup. Each member is asked to bring in food for a luncheon or help with setup 4-5 times a year. Please call the church office if you would like to join this team. If you have questions about the team, you may phone Karen at 352-250-3809.

Karen O'Brien

Hand Sanitizer Team

The Hand Sanitizer committee members meet as required to ensure the sanitizer bottles are filled in the Hope Central Campus sanctuary. We want to ensure that all individuals attending the church services, various hosted events, and meetings feel comfortable that their hands are sanitized and germ-free. The Team Leader works with the Hospitality Department for ordering the sanitizer liquid and the Event Coordinator for scheduling of the narthex and required table and chair work area set up.

The News in The Pews ran an article requesting volunteer members for Hope Lake Weir Campus. A couple has responded, and we now have a team that will be up and running in 2024.

Bonnie Irvine

Memorial Gardens

The Hope Lutheran Church Memorial Gardens at Hope Central Campus and Hope Lake Weir Campus continue to be important ministries for the members of Hope Lutheran Church, as well as the surrounding community.

The gardens were designed and developed to provide a place of peace, comfort, and serenity for family members and friends to inter and memorialize their loved ones. The gardens are open 24 hours a day for visitation. They are beautifully landscaped with benches in place for family and friends to spend time reflecting and remembering.

The options for interment include scattering of cremains in a designated area, in-ground burial, and placement in a columbarium niche.



In 2023 there were twenty sales at Hope Central Campus, consisting of three for scattering of cremains, eight for in-ground burial, and nine for columbarium niches. Sixteen of the sales were to Hope members and four to non-members. There was 1 sale at Hope Lake Weir Campus. There were twenty-two interments at Hope Central Campus and 2 at Hope Lake Weir Campus.

In the fall of 2023, it was determined that some of the walkway coating in the Hope Central Campus Garden was deteriorating. The old material was removed, the walkways smoothed, and stained with an attractive design and color to coordinate with the color of the church building.

At this time, we are looking ahead to a plan for the placement of additional columbariums at Hope Central Campus, which will be needed in less than two years. It is likely that the garden will have to be expanded. There is adequate space for in-ground burial for several decades.

Memorial Garden Team
Andrea & Gary Jacklin

Men of Hope

The first meeting was held on September 14, 2023 and was attended by 32 men. We had many existing members, and they were joined by 12 new members. The first meeting re-established the purpose, goals, and direction of the Men of Hope for the 2023-24 ministry period. A new group leader, Raybon Gilbert, was installed by the members and approved by the Hope Council.

The Men of Hope established the primary tenets to be service which accomplishes Bible Study, Prayer, Fellowship, and Discussion. This is primarily done through use of guest speakers, involving member's life experiences, growing participant faith, and seeking wisdom and encouragement from one another.

The primary study vehicle for this year is Adam Hamilton's, "The Walk". A compendium of 5 practices for essential Christian living; this book is easy to digest and very powerful in its message. We have had Pastor Jon Marc, Pastor Rani, and Pastor John as guest speakers during this study. Primary emphasis has been on the five principal forms of prayer. The sequence of study was prayers of praise, thanksgiving, confession, petition, and yielding.

The Men of Hope have also attended sessions with the Women of Hope this year. This has been a very warm and successful fellowship opportunity.

Last count, the group has grown to 43 members. Our last meeting will take place on May 9, 2024. We meet the second Thursday of the month at 8:00am, and Debbie and the kitchen crew serve a working breakfast for the group. All men are welcome. Church membership is not required. Breakfast attendees are required to register for the breakfast event through the Hope Lutheran Church website.

Respectfully submitted,
Raybon Gilbert, Group Leader - Men of Hope

Mission Outreach

The main function of the mission outreach team is to support projects that enhance Hope's mission statement which is "to know Christ and to make Christ known" globally, nationally, and locally.

You may give without loving but you cannot love without giving.

The projects this team supported through our congregation in 2023 are:

The ELCA Florida-Bahama Synod which provides information, support, and financial assistance to companion synod programs in Guyana, Haiti, Cuba, Suriname, and Jamaica. Pastors that are serving in Haiti and Suriname have developed a close relationship with Hope.

ELCA World Hunger and **Disaster Response** are two agencies that are effective in providing assistance during a period of need for others around the globe.

Hopes Lake Weir Campus Food Pantry helps those in need of food and other necessities of life who reside in the area of Hope Lake Weir Campus.

Global Health Ministries (GHM), which is an agent to provide financial assistance in materials to Lutheran health care programs throughout the world.

Love INC (Love In the Name of Christ) is a partnership between many local churches. This organization is a clearing house for those in need and will assist to find the correct service agencies. Love INC provides a faith-based environment for all those that are helped. Hope Lutheran has volunteers working in many areas of their ministry to the local community.

The Rock at Lake Weir Middle School. The Rock is a Hope Lutheran Church / School partnership that provides a food, clothing, hygiene products, and school supply pantry in the school to share the Love of Christ with needy children and their families.

World Mission Prayer League (WMPL) which provides financial and spiritual support for missionaries

We liaison with the **Christians in Action (CIA)** to support and promote social and outreach activities.

Fred O'Brien - Mission Outreach Team

Monthly Golf Scramble

There are 52 People on the List.

Each month, there are less players playing. I think that the church group is getting older and playing golf less. Will evaluate it after this year. It may be time to abandon the Monthly Golf Scramble.

The mission and purpose are to socialize, since we have multiple services. We play October through May each year.

Les Broeker, Team Leader - broeker.les@gmail.com

My Time for Free Time

According to the World Alzheimer Report 2020, an estimated 50 million people around the world are living with Alzheimer's disease and other forms of dementia. This number is expected to double to nearly 115 million by 2050. In the United States alone, 5.8 million people were living with Alzheimer's in 2020, and an estimated 16 million people will have the condition by 2050.



Our Mission

My Time for Free Time is a ministry that supports the caregivers of individuals suffering from Alzheimer's and other forms of cognitive impairment as result of illness, injury, or disease. Caring for impaired adults is a full-time, 24/7 responsibility for caregivers, and the My Time for Free Time

program provides weekly respite care for the caregivers who need well-deserved rest. This respite program is available for Hope Lutheran Church members, as well as all other caregivers within the community.

About the Organization

My Time for Free Time meets weekly on Thursday's from 1:00pm-4:00pm. It includes a variety of activities including exercise, arts & crafts, games, singing, snacks, and entertainment provided by numerous groups from The Villages.

Recent Accomplishments

This very successful program, now in its 10th year, can be attributed to over 50 volunteers who have made the program an overwhelming success by providing one-on-one care to participants.

Did we mention dancing?

Dancing activities for people with Alzheimer's can help improve flexibility, balance, coordination, and physical strength. Additionally, it can improve their mood and energy levels. Every Thursday, our dance floor is packed with rhythmic dancing to every genre of music- all in a fun and safe environment.

Contact Information

Effective January 1, 2024, Cindy Hanauer has accepted the leadership role of My Time for Free Time, with founder Bob Janson continuing as pro tem advisor. Applications for participants and volunteers are available in the church office.

** For more information, please contact:

Cindy Hanauer; cindy@grandcentralfloral.com; (904) 327-1951

Bob Janson; rjanson1939@gmail.com; (352) 391-0373

New Member Prep Team 2023

The New Member Prep Team welcomed 141 new members to Hope Lutheran Church. That total consists of 121 voting members, 9 associate members, and 11 seasonal members. Through the course of the year, 3 orientations were held with two sessions each to provide prospective members an opportunity to become familiar with the activities and ministries available in the church. The committee strives to provide a warm, welcoming presence for new and prospective members.

Newcomer Worship Welcome Team

The NWWT (Newcomer Worship Welcome Team) have been functioning this past year under the leadership of the Team Leader, Ingrid Severson. We continue to conduct our team with the intent to "know Christ and make Christ known" while serving at the Welcome Center at Hope Lutheran Church,

We will continue to function regularly for all services on Saturdays and Sundays throughout the year 2023. Our main goal is to welcome newcomers to our church family as they enter the doors of Hope Lutheran Church for the worship service. The person serving at the Welcome Center answers any questions/concerns posed to them by newcomers. If we are unable to provide an answer, we direct them to a staff member at the desk in the narthex of the church or to the minister officiating at that particular service.

Handcrafted crosses in various colors are offered to newcomers, as well as a Hope Lutheran Church pen as welcome gifts. The crosses are handmade by a group of volunteers who are a part of the Hope Crafters group who meet at the church on Tuesday mornings from 9:00am to 11:00am. These gifts are meant as a token of love and friendship to make each person feel welcome and a part of the church family. The cross is taped to a nametag and worn on the newcomers lapel to indicate to the pew in front and the pew in back of the newcomer that he/she is a first time visitor. In this way, we are all encouraged to welcome newcomers to our church and make them feel a part of the church family. Through generous donations, NWWT has been able to offer small books, coloring books, and crayons and Hope Lutheran Church bears to visiting children. We hope to continue this tradition for many years to come.

We had a total of 7 members in the NWWT who volunteered in 2023 and hope to expand our volunteer list for each service in 2024.

Ingrid Severson, Team Leader, NWWT - Hope Lutheran Church

New Member Classes

New Membership continued to thrive at Hope Lutheran Church in 2023 with an addition of one hundred and twenty-six new members. As we continue to grow into three campuses, with a "One Hope" philosophy, our Church Mission, "To Know Christ and Make Christ Known" is being shared throughout our community.

On Our Own

We are a group of individuals who are "On Our Own", including single, widowed, or divorced, and we also welcome caregivers with spouses who are not able to be socially active. Our purpose is to provide friendship, support, and fellowship through our monthly meetings, events, local trips, and social activities.

Our major service project has been providing 80 snack packs per month to Stanton-Weirsdale Elementary School in Lake Weir. We recently increased the quantity to 100 packs per month when we learned that the school had a waiting list of children who were in need of help. We pack 11 to 12 individual items (for example peanut butter, jelly, drink, pudding, tuna,



crackers, etc.) into a gallon size storage bag. The school distributes these to needy children at the end of the week so that they have food for the weekend.

We also prepare 30 gift bags annually, which are distributed by our pastors to shut-ins at Christmas.

Our meetings are held the second Wednesday of the month, with assembling of the snack packs at 9:00am, followed by our meeting at 10:30am.

New attendees are always welcome...we'd love to have you join us. Please free to contact me at randy572@msn.com.

The Rock

Who will go? Here I am Lord, send me.

The Rock at Lake Weir Middle School is sponsored and staffed by Hope Lutheran Church with the support of Love INC.

At Lake Weir Middle School, The Rock provides shoes, food, clothing, school supplies, hygiene products, emotional support and most important, the love of Christ to children in need. About 120 students are helped each week. Some of the children come from broken homes and do not have adequate food, clothing, hygiene products, or emotional support. Others are dealing with family drug problems. Some live in the forest. Some live in cars. Many do not know Christ.

The Rock is a school-church partnership where the school provides space on its campus for Hope to operate our Rock Room. Hope Lutheran Church volunteers operate The Rock at Lake Weir Middle School from 11:00am until 1:30pm on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays. School staff open The Rock for the children whenever there is a need.

The volunteers share a report with a love story every day that The Rock is open. Here is a sample of the children we encounter:

Maliki offered to lead the prayer today! We had 40 visitors including some new students brought by the counselors and social worker. The HOT item today was warm clothing. Many students were looking for coats and long pants. Patty is going to see what Love INC can provide in the way of coats and bring them in. We gave away many quilts from our quilters also.

There were many love stories we could share. I could tell you about the girl with a list from her mom. Or the girl who we noticed could not see items on the shelf. I talked to Ms. Joseph and told her that if she would get us the information, we would see that she got an eye exam and glasses.



But the story of the day had to be Eli. He just wanted food, but when Colleen suggested that we may have shoes in his size, his eyes lit up. He said his shoes were hand me downs. When he took off his shoe to try on new ones, we were shocked. It looked like he had been wearing the same shoes and wet socks day and night for a week! The socks went straight to the trash. His new shoes were 2 sizes bigger than what he took off. I have attached a picture of the soles of his shoes. He left with all new clothing and 5 pairs of socks. We talked to Ms. Haynes, the Social Worker, and she came by and picked up more clothing for him.

Thank you for all the lives you are impacting with the love of Christ.
Fred O'Brien, Mission Outreach team member, 352-250-3814.

Seasonal Decorating

The Seasonal Decorating Team is responsible for decorating the churches in the Easter and Christmas seasons. The team relies on volunteers to help on the "big" decorating days.

This year we maintained the decorations. Pew poinsettias were added at Hope Lake Weir Campus.

Submitted by Nancy Shephard



Stephen Ministry

"Christ Caring for People through People"

Stephen Ministers are trained members of our congregation that help a hurting individual to unburden, deal with difficult feelings, and work through complicated situations. The hurt can be anything: a terminal diagnosis, grief over a loss, upcoming surgery, financial difficulties, family challenges, loneliness, or a questioning of faith. The Stephen Minister offers a listening ear, a caring heart, and creates a safe, confidential, and non-judgmental space to provide emotional and spiritual help.

Hope Lutheran Church hosted the initial training (ten consecutive Saturdays, 9:00am-1:30pm) and graduated 13 new Stephen Ministers. Three were from Hope and the others from five local congregations that participate in our network coalition. The newly commissioned ministers brought our total up to 18. Throughout the year, twenty-seven individuals benefitted from our distinctively Christian care.



Journeying through Grief booklets (series of four) were mailed out to approximately 66 households who lost a family member. The grief books are sent on a specific cycle to assist the grieving process.

Additionally, the Stephen Ministers made Cancer, Now What? books available at a reduced cost to more than 70 members and friends this past year. The cancer book is an outstanding resource that contains practical, down-to-earth information to help deal with the diagnosis of cancer or another life-altering medical situation. Cancer books are available at all three campuses for a suggested \$10 donation placed in the church offering.

As part of our outreach, we have Stephen Ministers available at the Hope Lake Weir Campus Food Pantry to provide spiritual care, listen and pray with the clients. We also have assisted in administering home communion and visiting shut-ins. A heartfelt thanks to our team for their faithful service. Providing Christian Care is a unique and rewarding ministry. Christ cares for people through us. What a wonderful way "To Make Christ Known". Please contact me if you feel called to learn more about our Stephen Ministry.

Submitted by:

Kathy Smith, Stephen Leader and Coordinator - smithkath@aol.com

Walk Away the Pounds

Walk Away the Pounds (WATP) meets Monday-Wednesday-Friday from 8:00am to 9:00am at Hope Central Campus. We use various walking videos to increase our heart rate and strengthen our bodies. Contrary to our name, we do not use a scale, so you can relax!

We have a mix of church members and non-members, male and female, and ages ranging from mid-50's to late 80's. The benefits to our walkers are different for each of us, and you can do 1 mile, 2 miles, or 3 miles--it's up to you. If you have trouble standing, you're welcome to try the exercises sitting in a chair. Stretch bands and weights are sometimes used, but these are optional. But don't forget to bring your water! We would love to have you come and check us out. We have plenty of room...ALL ARE WELCOME! Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions.

Ginny Wilson, Team Leader

randy572@msn.com or 352-430-3326

Women of Hope

Our mission to encourage women to act boldly on their faith in Jesus Christ is accomplished in many ways.

Our church unit here at Hope supports and follows the guidelines of WELCA, Women of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, the Florida-Bahamas Synodical Women's Organization (SWO) and the Pinelands Conference. These organizations all provide



resources for leadership skills, Bible Studies, and fellowship through the conferences in which our Women of Hope participate.

For our Breakfast Meetings held on the third Thursday of each month at 9:00am at Hope Central Campus, our Program and Hospitality Teams plan and provide informative, inspiring and entertaining programs intended to interest both our own members at Hope and friends and neighbors in surrounding communities as well.

Although our church is expanding into many geographical locations, it is still a blessing to provide meaningful activities that can be reached in a reasonable time from one campus to another. Over the course of the year, our Hospitality Coordinator reports over 600 attendees, not including our three summer Out to Lunch Bunch events. Our Mission Ministry is divided into several Outreach Teams, each supporting different worthy causes, both locally and world-wide. Some of our most active outreach groups are the talented and dedicated Crafters, Quilters, and Prayer Shawl Ministries.

On a designated Sunday, hundreds of Sojourn Bears, Care Bears, and all other handcrafted items will be displayed and blessed at the altar at all three campuses for distribution and delivery to those in need locally and around the world through Lutheran World Relief School Kits and Quilters Programs.

This year, the Prayer Shawl Ministry, for example, reports providing over 50 shawls and lap ropes at all three campuses, also to those attending the Blue Christmas Service and 250 prayer patches for the Angel Tree Project and Welcome Table.

The Mission Team provides support to such local charities as the Infant & Toddler Pantry, Shepherd's LightHouse, for women and children needing shelter, E-Ninni-Hassee, a great young women outdoor camp and rehabilitation center, and Forward Paths housing program for youth.

This year, a special corner was set aside for Hope's Heroes, supplying children's Bibles, coloring books and other seasonal religious items to be used by our youngsters attending services.

Besides our participation in WELCA conferences, we hold our own annual 3-day retreat at Luther Springs where attendees have the opportunity for spiritual renewal, comradery, and relaxation in beautiful woodland surroundings.

This fall, on our own Hope Lake Weir Campus, we held a one-day retreat where the schedule included an inspirational guest-speaker, small-group discussions, a lovely lunch at the outdoor pavilion, and a walk through the newly-created labyrinth.

As our membership increases, so does our need to develop closer relationships. Circles/Bible Studies are continually being created. The Women of Hope welcome you to join our journey of spiritual growth in whichever ways the Lord is leading you.

Love and blessings,

Respectfully submitted by Annie Schaedel, President - Women of Hope

Three Campuses... One HOPE

Hope Central Campus
250 Avenida Los Angeles
The Villages, FL 32162

.....

Hope Lake Weir Campus
10495 SE Sunset Harbor Road
Summerfield, FL 34491

.....

Hope at the Everglades Rec Center
5497 Marsh Bend Trail
The Villages, FL 32163



**Evangelical Lutheran
Church in America**

God's work. Our hands.