



5625 W. US Hwy. 223  
Mail to: P. O. Box 232  
Adrian, MI 49221  
(517) 263-4317  
www.hopeadrian.org  
E-mail: hopecms@tc3net.com

## The Messenger

December  
2024

### Pastor

The Rev. Paul Herter

### Youth/Family Life

Becky Martinal, D.C.E.

### Worship

Sundays  
9:00 a.m.

### Bible Study

Sundays  
10:30 a.m.

Mondays – 6:30 p.m.

Tuesdays – 9:30 a.m.

## Be Touched by Jesus!

Dear Loved Ones in Christ Jesus,

“Like Sands through the Hourglass, so are the Days of our Lives.” Thus, a long-time running afternoon soap opera theme was introduced. That introduction seems more relatable now than ever! It reminds us also of the Scriptural admonition: LORD, “Teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts to wisdom.” In other words, you aren’t going to be here forever, so, with God’s help, make each day count. Take the focus off yourself and focus on making other people’s lives better and easier. It is indeed a lesson that God teaches us day by day! Since this is a leap year, we got an extra day this year – a Divine Bonus!

Some of you may remember the 1957 motion picture “*The Bridge over the River Kwai*” starring Alec Guinness. It was selected as one of the 100 great films of the 20th century. It is the story of a group of British prisoners of war during World War II held by the Japanese in northern Burma in very difficult circumstances.

Ernest Gordon, at one time chaplain at Yale University, wrote a book called **Through the River of the Kwai**, which shared his experience as a prisoner in that camp. It is a story of utter degradation and desolation.

Gordon says that when the young soldiers in that camp realized that they were going to be there for a while, they began to have Bible studies and to pray diligently that they would be delivered from their circumstances much as Israel prayed for deliverance from Rome. He said that, at first, their praying for deliverance was shallow and superficial. They railed against God for letting them be in that situation. As time went on, however, something happened and their railing against God disappeared. They began to move toward a more mature faith. They began to pray about their relations with one another. No longer was it “Why, God?” but it was “How should we act, God?”

Gordon said the most spiritual moment of that experience was Christmas 1944. Out of deference to the holiday, the men were not given work detail that day and were given a bit more food. He said that as they moved around the prison yard, they sensed that things were somehow different. In one of the barracks (basically a thatched hut with a dirt floor and open sides where the men slept), one soldier began to sing a Christmas carol. It was echoed over the infirmary where men were dying. Then all around the camp, the men began to sing, and those who could, those who were ambulatory, came to the parade field and sat there in a great circle. Gordon said, “God touched us that day.”

He called it the most sacred event that he had ever been involved with. No preaching, nothing of the usual church paraphernalia, just men united by their common misery, singing of God being with them and God’s sovereignty. And he said, “We were touched by God.”

This Christmas, may all of you and I and even the whole world, be touched by God as we celebrate the Birth of our Savior!

Blessed Christmas!  
Pastor Paul

## Stewardship Corner

### Being a Living Sacrifice

What should our response be to God for giving us our physical lives, our new lives in Christ, and life eternal to come? In addition, we know through faith that God is the creator and owner of all things, so what should our appropriate response be to show our gratitude? God commanded Old Testament believers to honor and worship Him through ceremonial laws which included tithing. As New Covenant Christians, we are no longer bound to the laws of the Old Testament. As New Testament Christians, our motivation to express our gratitude comes from Christ Who gave His life for us. Through Jesus, we not only have an abundant life today (John 10:10), but we will spend eternity with Him in heaven.

In determining how we are going to show our thanks, we often get wrapped up in deciding if we are going to give two, five, or ten percent or more of our income to our church. We may also question whether it is important for us to join a committee or become a member of one of the boards in our church. Are we going to participate in various Christian causes or activities? The Apostle Paul went well beyond these questions when he exhorted the Roman believers (and us) to *“present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect”* (Romans 12:1-2). Paul expected that Jesus should be the Lord of every area of our lives. As recipients of God’s grace, love, and mercy, we are to commit our lives to Him.

Being a living sacrifice for God does not mean that we spend all day on our knees repenting, praying, or reading the Bible. It means that wherever we are or whatever we are doing, we belong to God and are in His service. It is an inner attitude of having a heart and mind for God. He is in control of our lives. In the Old Testament, God’s people brought animal sacrifices to God. By God’s grace, as New Covenant Christians, we are encouraged to present ourselves to Him as a sacrifice of praise, worship, and service. Because of Who God is and what He has done for us through Jesus’ life, death, and resurrection, He deserves nothing less than our whole selves. By God’s grace, we can be living sacrifices because we are *“strengthened with all power according to His glorious might...”* (Colossians 1:11).

Have a blessed Christmas!

## Prayer for Christmas Day

Dear Heavenly Father, today all of Christendom sings with jubilation, “Joy to the world, the Lord is come!” How incomprehensible the love You have for us that would cause You to send Your only Son to earth to bring us joy! Yet we confess that we often are mired in discouragement and grief. While looking at our present circumstances, we forget that You have gone before us on the roads we travel, and You are with us to take us through all the difficult passages of life. Suffering with our various losses, we forget that You, in the Person of Your beloved Son, have come and are still with us today to bring us abundant joy. Forgive us for our lack of trust in You. Help us to keep in our hearts every day the joy of this holy day and to share that joy with all we meet. Through Christ we pray. Amen.

## More Blessed to Give

Have you ever become really excited about giving a gift to someone? For a birthday or at Christmas you were so excited that you could hardly wait for the person receiving the present to open it. Do you remember how proud you felt when the recipient opened the gift and was so happy and thankful to receive it? Then, when you saw that person use or wear your present, you beamed with pleasure because you had given it.

Giving gifts can be fun, and it is an activity that as Christians we are called to do. Jesus said in Acts 20:35, *“It is more blessed to give than to receive.”* If you have had the experience related above, you know what Jesus meant.

Giving is part of life. Parents constantly give to their children. Teachers give care, attention, wisdom, and information. God created things in nature for your use and enjoyment that keep on giving: the sun gives energy, the clouds rain down moisture, cornfields share their nutrients, and apple trees bear their fruit.

God Who loves you receives more joy in giving to you than you can imagine. He knows you by name. He gives you food to eat, clothes to wear, and a warm place to sleep. It is God Who has given you life and the world to live in.

The prophet Jeremiah wrote that God also has a plan for you—a plan to prosper you, to give you hope and a future (Jeremiah 29:11).

God uses us to help provide for the needs of others so that we, too, may experience the joy of giving. As His stewards, we are merely His conduits through which He feeds the hungry, shelters the homeless, and provides clothes for the naked. Through His grace, He will give us all that we need so that we *“will abound in every good work”* (2 Corinthians 9:8).

## Worship the Savior

The Lord invites you to join with your fellow believers in worshipping the promised Savior. He loves us dearly and loves to hear our praises and our prayers.

There are many opportunities to sing His praises throughout December. Join us!

Sunday Mornings –  
December 1, 8, 15, 22, 29  
Worship at 9:00 a.m.  
Bible Study at 10:30 a.m.



The Church Season of Advent begins this year on Sunday, December 1.

Join us for Advent  
Worship on Wednesdays,  
December 4, 11 and 18  
at 6:30 p.m.

(Communion celebrated on December 11)  
Join us at 5:30 p.m. for a light meal.

The theme for our Advent worship is  
“We Three Kings.”

### Angel Tree

The **Angel Tree** with names of children and some parents provided by the Salvation Army will soon be up in the lobby. We have the names of 33 children and 8 parents. If you chose to participate in this activity and have questions, address them to Mary Martinal.

It is important that you sign the chart located in the lobby when you take a child's name.

The due date to get your **unwrapped** gifts back to the church is **Tuesday, December 10th**. Place gifts with the card with the child's name and number attached in the corner where Angel Tree sits. OR you can take your gift directly to the Salvation Army on Church St. in Adrian.

We thank Phyllis Johnson for getting us the names from the Salvation Army.  
Thank you, Hope Youth, for putting up and decorating the tree.

**If you would like to get a name without the crowds on Sunday, contact the Church Office.**

Invite your friends and neighbors to come with you to:

**our Candlelight  
Christmas Eve Worship  
on Tuesday, December 24,  
at 6:30 p.m.**

AND

**Our Christmas Day Worship  
on Wednesday, December 25,  
at 10:30 a.m.**

We'll celebrate Holy Communion.



We'll celebrate Holy Communion.

Our New  
Year's Eve  
Worship  
on **Tuesday,  
December 31,  
at 6:30 p.m.**



## Christmas Celebration

1. Enjoy seeing all the special Christmas lights? Invite some friends and join us on a tour of the lights at MIS! We will leave from church after our Advent service on Wednesday, December 4. Contact Becky or the Church Office if you're interested! (Let us know also if you are willing to drive a group around.)
2. Invite a friend or two and enjoy lunch and a Christmas movie! We'll enjoy soup, salad, and bread, and watch "Christmas in Connecticut" on Thursday, December 12, at 11:30 a.m. - Kindly bring a dessert to share. - Contact Becky or the Church Office if you're coming.

## Church Decorations

The sanctuary will be decorated for Christmas! If you are willing to help out, contact Dale Martinal. We will decorate **Saturday, December 7, at 4:30p.m.** We thank them for their work in making God's house beautiful for the Advent and Christmas seasons.



## Women's Christmas Party

We invite the ladies of Hope to come to our annual Christmas Party at Hope on Saturday, December 7, beginning at 4:30 p.m.

We are again asking participants to bring a food item that can be eaten with our fingers. Bring your gift for your Secret Sister (if you have one) to let her know who has been praying for her this year. Bring an unwrapped ornament for our annual game.

**If you will decorate a table for our party, please talk to Becky Martinal.**

We will pick names for Secret Sisters 2025 at the party. We will just draw names at the party. Forms will be available at the party, but we will not fill them out during the party.

Remember that this year Secret Sisters run through December 31, 2024 and the 2025 Sisters will begin January 1, 2025.

**All women are welcome!**

## Remember to Save Mites

During this Advent/Christmas Season, we tend to do a lot of shopping. We can end the day with a lot of loose change. Why not let your mite container take the weight of that loose change out of your purse?

The Michigan District Lutheran Women's Missionary League has set a Mite Goal of \$386,000. The "mites" we give to our Michigan District funds our Mission Grants and also helps National fund their grants. Let us prayerfully support and help National and District fund all the grants selected!

Ask God to provide more workers in the mission field. Serve the needy people around you, too.

*You are the Face of LWML!*



*The Gift that Changed the World*

## Voters Meeting Results

Elected to serve in 2025 are Maturity Chair Jane Stevens and Outreach Chair Darlene Fink. Continuing to serve in 2025 are Congregational Chairman Mike Vergiels, Treasurer Dee Weisenfelder, Fellowship Chair Tricia Moyer-Fowler, Ministry/Inreach Chair Jennifer Sande, Worship Chair James P. Sheridan, Stewardship Chair Sharron Sheridan, Property Chair Jim Gulliksen.

We also thank Mary Martinal for agreeing to serve as our Financial Secretary, an appointed position.

**Sharron Sheridan expressed the need to retire from the appointed Recording Secretary position. Please talk to Mike Vergiels or Sharron to volunteer to serve.**

These members try hard to be responsible for what we as a church need to be doing both to maintain the building and serve the members and community in a Christian manner. Remember them in your prayers and encourage them as you can. **Offer to help them fulfill their responsibilities as "many hands make light the work."**

In addition to these, your officers, Pastor and Becky hold advisory positions on the board and remain faithful in monthly attendance at the meetings.

A budget of \$217,481.00 was approved for 2025.



A big thank you to those who came and helped give our building a special cleaning on Saturday, November 23! A lot of tasks were completed. We appreciate all the time and effort.

Mike Griffith, Custodian  
Jim Gulliksen, Property Chair

## Caroling

We will gather to bring Christmas cheer and the joy of our Savior to members of our congregation (and perhaps are friends of our congregation) who are home-bound sometime during December. Watch and listen for the announcement of when.

# December Celebrations

## Happy Birthday

Arleen Jacobsson	4
Heidi Fowler-Henzi	5
Danielle Hofbauer	13
Becky Martinal	14
DeWight Moyer	14
Cambria Stevens	15
Hilda Cortez	16
Paul Martinal	21
Les Howard	25
Fonda Bozeman	27
Hans Jacobsson	28
Dan Baumgartner	30
Mike Broge	31

## Baptismal Anniversaries

Kevin Giroux	2
Sophia Holmes	6
Amelia Martinal	6
Gail Saylor	10
Carole Pahl	15
Jennifer Sande	16
Jay Butler	18
Marnella Lafferty	21
Danielle Hofbauer	23
Ruth Lamley	24
James Logan	25
Heidi Fowler-Henzi	28

## Baptismal Ann., cont.

James P. Sheridan	31
Arleen Jacobsson	31

## Wedding Anniversaries

Jim & Vikki Ritzert	10
Dan & Fonda Baumgartner	14
William & Judith Kohn	27
Bob & Joann Wachter	31

A very Mary's Christmas to you! God bless you, everyone!

## We Pray This Month:

For the Nations of the world for peace, healing from their troubles, the spread of the Gospel  
For Our Nation –

that God would guide and protect all our elected leaders and our military  
that God would provide comfort and recovery to those experiencing losses

For His Church –

that God would strengthen and protect all His people who are experiencing trials, testings  
and/or persecution and all who are serving His Church as missionaries

For Hope –

that God would guide our Administrative Board as they do their work and would raise godly  
leaders to assist us in fulfilling our mission for God

that God would bless and grow our Sunday School, our congregation, Children/Youth Min.

For those who grieve: families of:

For those who struggle with illness or injuries –

Kevin Giroux	Mike & Patti Vergiels	Bob & Joann Wachter
Vikki Ritzert	Danielle Hofbauer	Ruth Lamley
Margaret Parker	Sherrell Hofbauer	Mike & Patsy Broge
Mike Griffith (eyes)	Les Howard	Dene Minnema
Hans & Arleen Jacobsson	Mary Jane Hull	Tricia Moyer-Fowler
Marcia Albain (eyes/balance)	Stephanie Butler	Ryan Liske
Sharon Neal (broken hip)	Thomas Groh	Mary Ellen Moyer
Ralph & Wanda Saylor	Jon & Carol Davis	Ralph Wetzal
Rich Klann	Kay Blair (brain bleed)	Diane Allwardt
Donna Bell (heart)	Zachary Young (epilepsy)	Sharron Nossie
Shannon Zeller (foot)	Keith Richardson	Rev. Daryl Etheridge
Marti Hudelston	Steve & Mike Weisenfelder	Jeff Moyer (stroke)
Jamie Murphy (cirrhosis)	Kari Gulliksen (osteoporosis)	Gary Allen (cancer)
William Crego (cancer)	Kelsie Elling (cancer)	Barb Hauch (cancer)
Marcy Palmiter (cancer)	Heidi Kennedy (cancer)	Doug Thumm (cancer)
Sherri Falzone (cancer)	Tami McKenney (cancer)	Michael Palmiter (cancer)
Rev. Ron Farah (cancer)	Jerry Pierce (cancer)	Mike Snyder (cancer)
Gordon Zender (cancer)	Ed Burch (cancer)	Dan Smith (cancer)
Mary Caroline (cancer)	Lisa Cable (cancer)	Denver Parker (cancer)

We give thanks to God for our many blessings.

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# December 2024

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	
1 1 <sup>st</sup> Sunday in Advent <b>9:00am Worship [C]</b> <b>10:30am SS &amp; ABC Class &amp; Confirmation</b> 6:30-8pm Hope Youth	2 <b>6:30pm Ladies Bible Study</b>	3	4 5:30pm Meal <b>6:30pm Advent Worship</b> 7:30pm MIS Light Trip	5	6	7 4:30pm Ladies Christmas Party & Tree Decorating	
8 2 <sup>nd</sup> Sunday in Advent <b>9:00am Worship [C]</b> <b>10:30am SS &amp; ABC Class &amp; Confirmation</b> 6:30-8pm Hope Youth	9 <b>6:30pm Ladies Bible Study</b> 6:30pm Elders	10 <b>Newsletter Deadline</b>	11 5:30pm Meal <b>6:30pm Advent Worship [C]</b>	12 11:30am Lunch & Movie	16	14	
15 3 <sup>rd</sup> Sunday in Advent <b>9:00am Worship [C]</b> <b>10:30am SS &amp; ABC Class &amp; Confirmation</b> 6:30-8pm Hope Youth	16 <b>6:30pm Ladies Bible Study</b>	17	18 5:30pm Meal <b>6:30pm Advent Worship</b>	19	20	21	
22 4 <sup>th</sup> Sunday in Advent <b>9:00am Worship [C]</b> <b>10:30am SS &amp; ABC Class &amp; Confirmation</b> 6:30-8pm Hope Youth	23	24 Christmas Eve <b>6:30pm Candlelight Worship</b>	25 Christmas Day <b>10:30am Christmas Worship [C]</b>	26	27	28	
29 1 <sup>st</sup> Sunday after Christmas <b>9:00am Worship [C]</b> <b>10:30am SS &amp; ABC Class &amp; Confirmation</b>	30	31 New Year's Eve <b>6:30pm NYE Worship [C]</b>	<i>Merry Christmas and Happy New Year</i>				[C] = Communion

## December 2024 Servant Schedule

<b>Dec. 1</b>	9:00 a.m.	<b>ELDER:</b> Bill Kohn; <b>READERS:</b> Sue Muck, B. Kohn; <b>USHERS:</b> Tom & Jacob Sande; <b>COMMUNION:</b> Hilda Cortez;
<b>Dec. 4</b>	<b>6:30 p.m.</b>	<b>ELDER/READER:</b> John Butler
<b>Dec. 8</b>	9:00 a.m.	<b>ELDER:</b> Ron Gentz; <b>READERS:</b> Jennifer Sande, R. Gentz; <b>USHERS:</b> James P. Sheridan; <b>COMMUNION:</b> Sandes
<b>Dec. 11</b>	<b>6:30 p.m.</b>	<b>ELDER/READER:</b> Ron Gentz; <b>COMMUNION:</b>
<b>Dec. 15</b>	9:00 a.m.	<b>ELDER:</b> Jim Logan; <b>READERS:</b> Carol Herter, Jim Logan; <b>USHERS:</b> James P. Sheridan; <b>COMMUNION:</b> Sue Muck, Sara Hackney;
<b>Dec. 18</b>	<b>6:30 p.m.</b>	<b>ELDER/READER:</b> Jim Logan
<b>Dec. 22</b>	9:00 a.m.	<b>ELDER:</b> John Butler; <b>READERS:</b> Reicherts, J. Butler; <b>USHERS:</b> Tom & Jacob Sande; <b>COMMUNION:</b> Finks
<b>Dec. 24</b>	<b>6:30 p.m.</b>	<b>ELDER/READER:</b> Rick Wetzel
<b>Dec. 25</b>	<b>10:30 a.m.</b>	<b>ELDER:</b> Bill Kohn; <b>READERS:</b> Carol Herter, Bill Kohn; <b>USHERS:</b> Tom & Jacob Sande; <b>COMMUNION:</b> Finks;
<b>Dec. 29</b>	<b>9:00 a.m.</b>	<b>ELDER:</b> Rick Wetzel; <b>READERS:</b> Mike Duncan, R. Wetzel; <b>USHERS:</b> James P. Sheridan; <b>COMMUNION:</b> Logans
<b>Dec. 31</b>	<b>6:30 p.m.</b>	<b>ELDER/READER:</b> Rick Wetzel; <b>COMMUNION:</b> Martinals