



2025 ANNUAL REPORT

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Our Lead Pastors

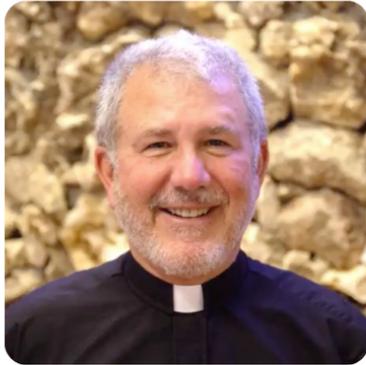


Lead Pastor
Rev. Rani Abdulmasih



Lead Pastor
Rev. Jon-Marc MacLean

Our Ministerial Staff



Rev. Bruce Dillman
Associate Pastor



Rev. John LeCain
Education



Rev. David Butler
Pastoral Care



Rev. Karen House
Deacon, Pastoral Care

2025 Annual Report of Pastor Rani Abdulmasih, Lead Pastor

“Worthy is the Lamb...” Revelation 5:12

What an amazing opportunity God has given us right here at Hope, entrusting us with the ministry of the gospel, to lift the name Jesus above every name! Our church has a dedicated team of staff, lay leaders and members who are eager to serve the living and loving Lord!

This year, we celebrated together a historical moment in the groundbreaking event at our south site, planting the seeds for yet another opportunity to spread the gospel in the southern part of The Villages! What an exciting moment in the life of the church! The people of Hope are amazing! We have been blessed with such talented, generous, and dedicated congregation, always ready to serve. I thank God for each and every one of you coming together to answer the call. Our building team, church council leadership, staff, volunteers and all members of Hope have exemplified what it means to be the “One body of Christ,” and yet “many members” with many gifts and talents, all working together to the glory of God.



To help guide our mission and growth by *“caring for our members and supporting our community,”* Hope’s Good Shepherd Initiative was adopted by the Church Council as a strategic direction. This team has done an incredible job, working with leadership, council, and staff to create a caring and supportive culture within Hope. Through surveys and events, the initiative offered a listening and caring approach to make everyone feel they are being heard. Hope will continue to build on this strategic direction, finding more ways to care for our membership and support our community at large.

It has been my privilege and joy to launch several ministries at Hope that I continue to lead on a regular basis. Such ministries focus on caring for our members as well as reaching out to our community. They continue to give me the opportunity to get to know many on a personal level and to create an environment for participants to grow in faith and relationship with one another. Here is a brief update on some of those ministries, keeping in mind that the invitation is always open to church and community members to join at any time:

Faith & Fellowship at all three campuses: A weekly gathering centered around God’s Word and how to apply this Word to our daily lives. We have been discussing weekly scripture from worship services, looking at the biblical context as well as where we find our own personal lives and experiences being challenged by the Living Word. The conversations are always candid and enriching. This opportunity is available at Hope Central Campus, Hope Lake Weir Campus, and now, with plenty of room, at the Wildwood Community Center.

Gatherings of Hope: This ministry has been creating a community of support to those who have lost loved ones and are seeking a new way to connect with their church family. We have been exploring the book of Psalms together, making David’s prayers our own, seeking shelter under the wings of the Most High, making God our refuge and strength, our help in times of trouble. If you, or someone you know, could benefit from this kind of support, check the church calendar for the next gathering and join us.

Evangelism Team: This team has been looking at what it means to do intentional evangelism in a caring and Christ-Centered way. The word “Evangelism” has so often been misunderstood and its importance underestimated. This year, the team hosted a couple of events such as the “Christian Illusionist” family night and Eirinn Abu’s Jazz Concert. The events always seek to provide a Christ-centered message through personal testimony and witness, as well as a good time and fellowship.

We have invited community members as well as church members providing an opportunity for engagement and the sharing of one's faith.

Hope for the Future Scholarship: This ministry has a team of dedicated individuals with a passion for making a difference in young people's lives. Each year we offer 15 high school students a scholarship to encourage and support their future education. We are often joined by 70 to 80 community members, including their families and friends, who join in worship on the weekend when the scholarships are being awarded. This ministry has expanded the number of schools to include: The Villages Charter High School, and Belleview, Lake Weir, Leesburg, and Wildwood high schools. Each year, students from all five schools get an opportunity to apply for this scholarship and have the option of selecting a mentor from Hope if they choose. Seeing the smiles and the joy on the students' faces, with their proud parents and families by their side, is always priceless!

Freedom Pointe monthly Worship Service: This new ministry was launched on the day of Pentecost, 2025. I have been so excited to offer a worship service to the residents of Freedom Pointe Independent Living! Susan Blomenberg has been an amazing gift offering live music that the residents have appreciated. For many, to be able to attend a worship service and receive communion at their own facility has brought comfort and re-ignited their engagement with their Christian faith. Many of the residents are not of Lutheran tradition, but they feel welcomed and appreciate the ecumenical and Christ-centered nature of this worship.

We have so many wonderful ministries at Hope and Team Leaders who are passionate about what they do. Many opportunities for anyone to find a place where they feel they can belong and be part of a team.

I always feel truly blessed to be part of an amazing team at Hope! Our church staff continues to grow together as a team with one mission. We continue to meet and engage in regular conversations, exploring ways to serve better. Our staff, pastoral care team, deacons, church council, lay leaders, and all our volunteers are committed to their work. They do what they do because they know it makes a difference in people's lives. They work together, support one another, and see their work as a reflection of their own faith and relationship with the Lord.

The words of Paul to the Colossians, chapter 3, come to mind here: *"²³ Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters, ²⁴ since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving."*

Hope family, hear the words of Paul once again: "It is the Lord Christ you are serving." Together we serve an awesome, wonderful, and living Lord! He left the throne of heaven, became incarnate, took on the human flesh, and obeyed a death on the Cross, so that you and I can have the forgiveness of sins and the promise of Eternal Life! How great is our God!

Let us join the angels and all who have encircled the throne of God, as John describes them in his vision in Revelation 5, and shout together:

"Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and praise!"

To our Lord Jesus, be all the praise and the glory, now and forever! Amen!

In Christ,

Rani Abdulmasih

The Reverend Rani Abdulmasih, Lead Pastor

2025 Annual Report of Pastor Jon-Marc MacLean, Lead Pastor

Hope Family,

I had forgotten what it was like to wait for the results of a competition as an athlete or musician. I've experienced it again as a parent of two children who are engaged in music and cheer. The stress is different than when I was competing on my own, yet it remains of a time of tension and hopeful anticipation. Oddly, I remember waiting for the gun announcing a race to feel just as tense. The keyed-up energy, the reflection on all the preparation and work done throughout the season (and off-season) to prepare for the moment, and the joyous release of that tension as we sprang into motion.



Somehow, the beginning felt like an ending.... but you knew that the five kilometers of the course stretched before you. Yes, that keyed-up tension and thought has come to an end, but only as a new beginning.

The author of the Letter to the Hebrews captures this dynamic when he writes in chapter twelve, “let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.” In embracing the ministry placed in our keeping, we are drawn into closer relationship with Christ (Knowing Christ), and in sharing in the ministry together and serving those around us (Making Christ Known) we take part in the admonition to, “see to it that no one fails to obtain the grace of God.”

Where have we run the race over the past year? The first new transition from hopeful anticipation to springing into the race that comes to mind is the work at our south site. There is an immense sense of joy that comes over me from simply seeing mounds of soil brought in and then spread, shaped, and compacted so that a basic form of what is to come is visible. Yes...it's only “dirt” ...but God did amazing things with dirt back in the day. You and I are living proof of what God's spirit can do with simple soil, and there is so much more to come. Please continue to be in prayer, not only for the construction process and the workers on site, but for all the people who will encounter Christ because of what we do in and through that site. And continue to pray for those whose lives are touched at our other campuses through worship, service, and our partnership ministries.

We've also engaged in new partnerships on our journey, passing the baton of faithfulness between us as we chart a course of mission in our community. There are two partnerships that have been truly exciting for me as we grow into them in 2026. The first is TLC Counseling Services, who use an office at Hope Central Campus alongside Angel Wigs of Hope, to provide free licensed counseling to underserved populations in our area. The second is a renewed engagement with the House of Hope in Wildwood. The ministry is different than it was in the past, with God moving in new ways through new people, but the need is still great, and I look forward to engaging with them personally, as I know many of you have also expressed.

With our new focus in caring for our members, we engaged in an intentional process for developing small group gatherings for study, discipleship, and fellowship. Several of these are taking place in homes in the southern region of The Villages, despite our lack of a building. Thank you to those who are teaching and those who are hosting traveling teachers like me into your home.

I would be remiss if I didn't mention our Internship Program over the last year. Thank you for the warmth with which you greeted Vicar Kjell and Macy. The insight and wisdom you offered throughout his time with us will be invaluable to him in the years to come. Our congregation is truly a rich and dynamic setting for learning about many of the facets of pastoral and congregational ministry and I count it a blessing to be surrounded, supported, and enlightened by so many brilliant laypeople. I look forward to how we can continue to engage in the enrichment of future pastors for our denomination as we continue to host Vicars in the future.

In closing, I want to echo Paul's words to the faithful in Philippi: "I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine for you all making my prayer with joy, because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now. And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion."

For who you are as a community, for all that you have done, and for all that you strive to do, I offer thanks and praise to almighty God and to you all. Throughout 2026 and for all the years to come, may we forever remain....

In Christ's peace,

Jon-Marc MacLean

The Reverend Jon-Marc MacLean, Lead Pastor

Pastoral Acts Report

Average Weekly Attendance at Worship Services Per Year

2000	279	2013	1,250
2001	339	2014	1,309
2002	419	2015	1,367
2003	570	2016	1,361
2004	667	2017	1,312
2005	739	2018	1,347
2006	900	2019	1,374
2007	951	2020	Inconclusive (COVID Year)
2008	1,025	2021	760 (COVID Year)
2009	1,033	2022	1,010
2010	1,038	2023	1,113
2011	1,131	2024	1,140
2012	1,183	2025	1,080

Membership at end of 2024		2242
Members received during 2025		
<i>Members (Includes Charter Members)</i>	76	
<i>Seasonal Members</i>	5	
<i>Associate Members</i>	10	
<i>Total Members Received This Year</i>	+	91
Members removed during 2025		
<i>By death</i>	48	
<i>By transfer</i>	1	
<i>Relocation</i>	49	
<i>Other (not attending/inactive)</i>	4	
<i>Statistical adjustment</i>	1	
	-	103
Membership at end of 2025		2230

Charter Members – 54

Members – 1,872

Associate Charter Members – 5

Associate Members – 227

Seasonal Members – 84

*Statistical adjustment is members who we have been notified or found to have passed away prior to 2024. We mark their date inactive on the date of death, not the day we learned of their passing.

Baptisms: 5 infants/children

Marriages & Affirmation/Renewal of Wedding Vows: 2

Total Deaths: 48

- Members: 44
- Charter Members: 1
- Associate Members: 1
- Non-Members: 6

Member Funerals/Memorial Services: 20

Non-Member Funerals/Memorial Services: 3

2025 Annual Report of Bob Franceski, Church Administrator

Family of Hope,

As I reflect on our past year of ministry together, I realize there has not been a better time to be part of the Hope Lutheran Church family. This year provided some challenges, but was also deeply rewarding and encouraging. No matter the changes and obstacles we encountered, Hope has remained active and excited to share fellowship together as a loving, caring community.

As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another.
Proverbs 27:17



I chose the above verse from Proverbs because I feel it represents our excellent staff here at Hope. Every team member pours their heart into their work and is willing to help and support one another as needed to accomplish our shared goals. It is important to remember that everything we enjoy at church – from special events and activities to worship and weekly meetings – is a result of the hard work of Hope’s staff and volunteers. It is my joy to work with our staff, volunteers, and pastors every day.

In the church office, Karen Barnes retired after many years as a faithful employee. Karen’s dedication level shined as she was a tremendous help in guiding the transition and working with our new bookkeeper, Kathy Beekman, who started in November. Pam Slating made the transition from the Hospitality Team to the Office Staff by assuming the role of Events Coordinator, working with outside groups on concerts and members of our congregation managing the church calendar.

As we look ahead to 2026, I’m excited to discover how God will use our staff and our church to advance His kingdom, not only as we begin the construction of our Hope South Campus but at the Hope Central and Hope Lake Weir Campuses as well.

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

Yours in Christ,
Bob Franceski, Church Administrator

Current Staff as of February 1, 2026

- Called Pastors: Pastor Jon-Marc MacLean, Lead Pastor
Pastor Rani Abdulmasih, Lead Pastor
- Commissioned Pastors: Pastor David Butler, Pastoral Care
Pastor Bruce Dillman, Associate Pastor
Pastor John LeCain, Education Pastor
Deacon Karen House, Pastoral Care
- Parish Deacons: Linda Murphy
Kathy Smith
Peg Winters
- Administration:
Kathy Beekman, Bookkeeper
Ann Bergandi, Hospitality Assistant
Michael DiBuono, Head Cook (F/T)
Marina Ernst, Communications Director (F/T)
Bob Franceski, Church Administrator (F/T)
Sara Lush, Administrative Assistant Worship (F/T)
Chris Reed, Administrative Assistant
Debbie Schuettler, Operations Manager - Hope Lake Weir Campus Food
Pantry
Pam Slating, Events Coordinator
Mary Beth Stoner, Donations and Membership Specialist
- Music Ministry:
Ann Blake, Choral Accompanist - Hope Central Campus
Frederick Blanchard, Campus Director – Hope Lake Weir Campus
Bruce Davis, SOS Director – Hope Central Campus
Jime Eversole, Technical Director (F/T)
Shade Eversole, Audio Visual Engineer
Jeen Harper, Spirit Ringers Director– Hope Central Campus
Paul Hoffman, Service Accompanist – Hope Central Campus (Saturday)
and Hope Lake Weir Campus (Sunday)
Lyle Johnson – Traditional Music Director – Hope South Campus
Mary Jo Vitale MacLean, SOS Director – Hope South Campus
Carole Makus – Service Accompanist – Hope South Campus
Michael McConnell, Audio Visual Engineer
Eric Mielke, Audio Visual Engineer
Marcia Spear, Service Accompanist – Hope Central Campus (Sunday)
- Music Ministry (cont.): Kathryn Stevens, Audio Visual Engineer and Worship Publications
Assistant
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 – 4

Parish Deacons: 3

Lay Staff:

Full Time – 8
Part Time – 23

Congregational Council



Kristina Giffin
President



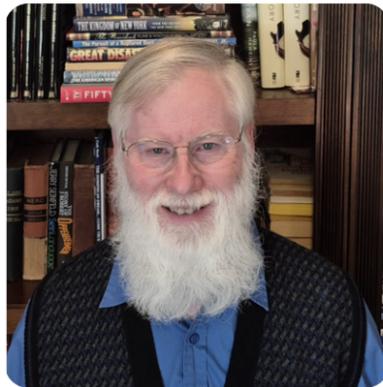
Pam Bixler
Vice President



Michael Brown
Treasurer



Pam Fenn
Secretary



Patrick Sawler
Council Member-at-Large



Sean Gormley
Council Member-at-Large



Jim Castanien
Council Member-at-Large



Bonnie Schallmo
Council Member-at-Large



Mary Kay Schroeter
Council Member-at-Large

2025 President's Report from Kristina Giffin

2025 was a year of both “highs” and “lows” for Hope Lutheran Church. We are blessed to be able to say that, while Hope began the year on a “low,” it ended on a beautiful and hopeful “high” through the support of so many generous members and the gracious hand of God.

Early in the year, Hope was faced with the news that the Hope South Campus Worship Center plan previously approved by the congregation was going to be too expensive to build. At the request of many members in an information and feedback meeting, the decision was made to undertake cost-reduction steps to make the Worship Center affordable and to move ahead with undertaking construction.

In the fall, a generous group of donors offered a Matching Gift Challenge which enabled Hope to raise more than \$1,500,000 in just over a month's time. At that same time, Hope learned that Mission Investment Fund had approved our building loan, the Congregation voted to approve the new Worship Center budget, and the year culminated in a joyful and long-awaited worship and groundbreaking ceremony on December 3, 2025, with more than 400 members and guests in attendance. Work on the project began within about three weeks, and watching the progress on Hope South Campus has become a favorite pastime of many.

Hope members continue to participate in and support more than 60 ministries, which offer outreach and support not only to church members but to the local community. These ministries include such things as The Rock at Lake Weir Middle School, the Hope Lake Weir Campus Food Pantry, support for the newly revived House of Hope, and My Time for Free Time, which assists caregivers, along with scores of other ministries. This would not be possible without the engagement of so many dedicated volunteers, who are truly the hands and feet of Jesus as they minister to those in need.

I encourage all to find a ministry with which to become engaged and help Hope Lutheran Church demonstrate love and caring to both members and the surrounding community.

May God continue to bless you and your families throughout the new year.

Kristina Giffin, President, Hope Lutheran Church



2025 Annual Meeting Minutes

February 2, 2025

President Kristina Giffin welcomed the congregation. The meeting was streamed at all three sites.

Pastor Laird Duran offered the opening prayer from Everglades Rec Center via live stream.

Meeting was called to order by President Kristina Giffin at 11:31 am

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) members. For 2025, a minimum of 101 voting members constitutes a quorum. There were 272 voting members attending the meeting. The breakdown was 153 at Central campus, 46 at Lake Weir campus, 73 at Everglades Rec Center.

Agenda:

The meeting agenda was projected on the screens. Kristina asked if there were any objections to adopting the agenda. There were no objections, the agenda was adopted.

Review of the 2024 Annual Meeting Minutes:

The congregation approved minutes of Congregational meetings. Draft minutes are printed in the Annual Reports and presented in the digital News in the Pews newsletter; the approved/official copies reside on file in the Church office.

Kristina asked the congregants if there were any corrections to the minutes of the February 4, 2024 Annual Congregational Meeting. There were no corrections, the minutes stand approved.

Kristina asked the congregants if there were any corrections to the minutes to the November 17, 2024 Special Congregational Meeting minutes. There being no corrections, the minutes stand approved.

Nomination Committee:

Kristina thanked the members of the nominating committee for their work. Jim Castanien explained the committee spent many hours and meetings to ensure the nomination process was followed in accordance with our constitution. The committee members were Jim Castanien (chair) Cathy Daley, and Bob Bentz. Jim announced the open positions and candidates for each position.

The open positions for Council are as follows: Council Vice President, Council Treasurer and Three (3) Members At Large.

The following members were nominated by the Nominating Committee and affirmed by Council to run as officers and members-at-large of Hope Lutheran Church:

Pam Bixler, Council Vice President

Michael Brown, Council Treasurer

Fred Conger, Member-at-Large

Sean Gormley, Member-at-Large

Bonnie Kaye Schallmo, Member-at-Large

Mary Kay Schroeter, Member-at-Large

Ellen Welsh, Member-at-Large

Kristina declared the nominations closed. (According to our bylaws, no further nominations could be made.) The candidates were given the opportunity to give their remarks to the congregation.

Pastor Bruce Dillman, in attendance at Hope Lake Weir Campus, offered a prayer for the candidates via live stream.

Election of Congregation and Council Officers and Council Members-at-Large were conducted by written ballot.

Kristina announced that there is only one nominee for Vice President and Treasurer positions. Therefore, in accordance with C12.02.02.g of Hope's Constitution, **the nominees for council are unopposed and elected by acclamation.**

The election results for the Members-at-Large are as follows:

Fred Conger 81

Sean Gormley 223

Bonnie Kaye Schallmo 186

Mary Kay Schroeter 192

Ellen Welsh 94

The Vice President is Pam Bixler. The Treasurer is Michael Brown. The Members-at-Large are Sean Gormley, Bonnie Kaye Schallmo, and Mary Kay Schroeter.

The five (5) voting members for the 2025 Synod Assembly were announced:

The following members have been selected to serve as voting members to the 2025 Synod Assembly: Jim Castanien, Kristina Giffin, Cindy Hanauer, Greg Inwood, Marlene (Laney) Waller.

Installation of the 2025 Church Council Officers and Members at Large and the Synod Assembly delegates

Pastor Jon-Marc MacLean congratulated the newly elected council members and the 2025 Synod Assembly delegates. He prayed for guidance for the new council as they conduct the business of Hope Lutheran Church. He charged them with the oath of office and offered God's blessing. There were outgoing and current Council members at Lake Weir campus and Everglades Rec Center and they came forward and prayed over by the pastor at each site.

Hope South Campus Update:

Bob O'Dell, Strategic Planning Committee Chair gave a brief overview of the building plans. He reviewed what the Congregation previously approved. In 2023 the Congregation approved the funding and financing for the building of the Hope South Campus Worship Center of approximately 18,372 sf with an approved budget of approximately \$8,000,000.

He reviewed each step that has been taken and explained where we are now and what the next steps are:

- Present status of the bidding process which is not yet complete: all bids have not been received, and bids have been slow in coming in. Bid requests have been sent to over 75 subcontractors. Unfortunately, about 1/3 of these subcontractors have not yet responded and several indicated no interest in the project or were too busy to become involved. Finally, for a few of the scopes of work, there have been no responses to date.
- Some bids for major scopes of work (concrete, mechanical, electrical, plumbing) have

come in much higher than expected.

- Mark Cook Builders and our architect Judd Dickerson are surprised with this preliminary bid status and the amounts quoted in the bids received to date but are working to complete review and identify cost savings. However, we anticipate that the final total figure will be beyond the approved budget.
- The immediate plan of action, which already has been implemented, includes the following: contact subcontractors who have not responded to ascertain level of interest or concern; seek bids from additional subcontractors; review bids received for scope compliance, overages, inflated values and extras; and engage in value engineering to look for cost savings. It will take approximately a month to evaluate current bids, seek new bids and do cost savings evaluations.

As this review and analysis of the bids continue, Mark Cook Builders will move forward to finalize a building permit from Sumter County.

We will continue to move forward. Mark Cook Builders applied for a building permit from Sumter County; preliminary comments have been received from Sumter County. A plan of action is in place and has already been implemented after our meeting with the contractor and architect. We are anticipating it will take approximately a month to evaluate current bids, seek new bids and do cost savings evaluations.

Recognitions and Reports:

Pastor Jon-Marc MacLean thanked the outgoing Council Treasurer Gary Hill, and Council members Kathy Beekman, Raybon Gilbert, and Kent Hamdorf. He also thanked Pastor Pat Bromberek for her service as Pastor Care. Pastor Jon-Marc reviewed the past year and his excitement for our future.

Pastor Rani Abdulmasih praised the work and dedication of our wonderful staff members. He also recognized Debbie Bennett, head cook and Pam Caudill Event Coordinator/Software Specialist who left their positions in 2024. He also reviewed his vision for 2025.

Both pastors acknowledged how special the 25th anniversary celebrations were. They also referenced the 2024 Annual Report that is on our website. The 2024 Annual Report details not only their report but all the ministry team reports.

Kristina Giffin gave the President's Report on 2024 Council accomplishments. She thanked the congregation, Pastors, Staff, and ministry team volunteers for a great 2024. She laid the groundwork for the 2025 goals.

Kristina Giffin declared there was no further business.

Pastor David Butler offered a closing prayer from Hope Central Campus.

Motion to Adjourn:

- **At 1:12 pm a Motion was made and seconded to adjourn the meeting. Motion Passed**

Respectfully submitted,

Pam Fenn

Congregation Council Secretary

Will be offered to the Congregation for approval on February 1, 2026

Following the meeting the floor was open for questions – there were none.

2025 Special Congregational Meeting Minutes

November 9, 2025

A light lunch was served prior to the meeting,

Meeting Called to Order at 12:00 pm by Kristina Giffin, President

- Welcomed congregation. Made introductions.
- Pam Fenn, Council Secretary, confirmed that we had a quorum. (We needed 100 members in attendance.) There were **321 members in attendance**.
- A motion was made and seconded to approve the full agenda that was displayed on the screens. Motion APPROVED. Two items will be presented to the congregation for approval:
 - To approve the 2026 Operating Budget
 - To approve the Hope South Worship Center Budget

Opening Prayer: Pastor Jon-Marc MacLean

Matching Challenge

- Pat O'Dell, Lead Gifts Coordinator, reviewed the Matching Fund Challenge and with the help of Council shared the results. We raised **\$1,500,759**.
- Pastors Rani and Jon-Marc offered prayers of thanks and brief remarks.
- Kristina offered thanks to Pastors, Past Presidents, staff, the many volunteers, and Council.

2026 Budget Presentation

- Michael Brown, Treasurer, gave a brief overview of the proposed 2026 Operating Budget. Questions were answered.
- Pastor John LeCain led us in prayer before the vote.
 - Vote was by show of hands. **The 2026 Budget was Approved.**

Hope South Worship Center Budget

- Bob O'Dell gave a brief update and overview of the Hope South Campus Building Project. This included history, status, and financials. (The entire ballot including MIF resolution is attached to these minutes.) Questions were answered.
- Dale Fiet was available for questions on design. There were no questions.
- Pastor Bruce Dillman led us in prayer before paper ballots were cast.
- Ken Wood, Director of Music Ministries, led us in song while the ballots were being counted.
 - The results were:
318 ballots cast: 306 yes votes, 12 no votes
The Hope South Campus Building Project Budget was APPROVED.

Closing Prayer by Pastor Rani Abdulmasih

Motion to Adjourn: At 1:37 pm a motion was made and seconded to adjourn the meeting. **MOTION APPROVED.**

Respectfully Submitted:
Pam Fenn
Council Secretary

Approved By:
Congregation Council
February 1, 2026

2025 Financial Highlights

The Current and Benevolence offerings decreased by \$13,000 from 2024 and we were \$276,000 short of the amount we budgeted for 2025. An increase in Loose plate and other General Fund income brought the amount of total General Fund income shortfall from budget down to \$195,000. The total General Fund expenses were held at 93% of the budgeted amount or \$196,000 under budget, resulting in a surplus to the General Fund of \$10,000 for the year.

The donations to the Donor Restricted Funds (Food Pantry, The Rock, Scholarships, etc.) were up \$21,000 from 2024, enabling these funds to contribute over \$260,000 to the needs of the community.

The Building Fund received approximately \$2,510,000 in donations this year with \$1,779,000 being for the building project on the South Site. Interest in the amount of \$96,000 was earned on the cash balance in the Building Fund. There were over \$176,000 in capital expenditures from the Building Fund including architectural fees, permits, surveys, consulting fees, etc. The balance of the Building Fund donations were for Debt Service. \$77,000 was paid in interest on the Mortgage Loan and \$218,000 paid on the principal balance. The current Loan balance is now down to \$1,192,000.

With the activity in progress on the South Site and a hopeful completion before Christmas, we are looking forward to an exciting year in 2026.

HOPE LUTHERAN TREASURER'S REPORT 2025			
	2024	2025	Budget 2025
GENERAL FUND			
INCOME			
Current & Benevolence	\$2,087,030.92	\$2,074,182.37	\$2,350,000.00
Loose Plate	\$101,641.26	\$90,409.05	\$110,000.00
Hospitality Income	\$82,827.20	\$94,264.77	\$98,000.00
Other Income	\$166,388.78	\$226,803.77	\$123,250.00
TOTAL GENERAL FUND INCOME	\$2,437,888.16	\$2,485,659.96	\$2,681,250.00
EXPENSES			
Pastors Salary/Benefits	\$534,600.09	\$541,672.78	\$592,365.00
Worship and Music	\$482,367.88	\$507,305.04	\$581,989.00
Maintenance	\$294,660.54	\$330,832.01	\$356,063.00
Other Ministries	\$187,325.15	\$160,207.14	\$169,290.00
Mission & Outreach	\$23,536.49	\$23,729.04	\$33,865.00
Office Expense	\$448,659.71	\$485,740.54	\$488,563.00
Hospitality	\$156,302.63	\$196,038.80	\$203,156.00
Utility Expense	\$85,070.70	\$99,570.60	\$92,646.00
Benevolence	\$123,993.34	\$130,063.50	\$152,826.00
TOTAL GENERAL FUND EXPENSES	\$2,336,516.53	\$2,475,159.45	\$2,670,763.00
General Fund Income <u>less</u> Expense	\$101,371.63	\$10,500.51	\$10,487.00

DONOR RESRTICTED FUNDS			
INCOME			
Food Pantry	\$161,218.28	\$143,038.44	\$140,000.00
The Rock at Lake Weir Middle School	\$49,854.77	\$80,360.55	\$20,000.00
Scholarships	\$6,618.00	\$19,430.00	\$20,000.00
Pennies from Heaven	\$4,739.95	\$6,281.50	\$1,000.00
Pastors Discretionary	\$6,310.23	\$260.00	\$10,000.00
ELCA World Relief, World Hunger, Disaster	\$68,064.70	\$68,515.23	\$68,000.00
Response	\$296,805.93	\$317,885.72	\$259,000.00
TOTAL DONOR RESTRICTCTED INCOME			
EXPENSE			
Food Pantry	\$112,344.61	\$132,924.45	\$163,037.00
The Rock at Lake Weir Middle School	\$28,772.73	\$41,397.19	\$20,000.00
Scholarships	\$13,000.00	\$15,500.00	\$20,000.00
Pennies from Heaven	\$2,070.84	\$5,512.00	\$1,000.00
Pastors Discretionary	\$7,695.11	\$4,879.36	\$10,000.00
ELCA World Relief, World Hunger, Disaster	\$66,599.70	\$59,436.10	\$68,000.00
Response	\$230,482.99	\$259,649.10	\$282,037.00
TOTAL DONOR RESTRICTED EXPENSE			
Donor Restricted Income <u>less</u> Expense	\$66,322.94	\$58,236.62	-\$23,037.00

BUILDING FUND	2024	2025	Budget 2025
INCOME			

1

Interest Income	\$0.00	\$95,803.40	\$0.00
Debt Reduction	\$240,008.61	\$263,769.66	\$300,000.00
South site Income	\$0.00	\$833,097.71	\$500,000.00
Match Gift Income	\$0.00	\$945,937.75	\$0.00
Pool Match Gift Income	\$0.00	\$371,540.00	\$0.00
Loan Proceeds			
TOTAL BUILDING FUND INCOME	\$240,008.61	\$2,510,148.52	\$800,000.00
EXPENSE			
Mortgage Interest	\$97,977.56	\$77,102.03	\$180,000.00
Principal Loan Payment allocation	\$159,735.36		\$120,000.00
Third Site Capital Expenditures	\$237,470.69	\$175,692.35	\$10,000.00
TOTAL BUILDING FUND EXPENDITURE	\$495,183.61	\$252,794.38	\$310,000.00
Building Fund Income Less Expenditures	-\$255,175.00	\$2,257,354.14	\$490,000.00
ENDOWMENT FUNDS			
Contributions	\$51,089.00	\$50,552.00	\$5,000.00
Earnings	\$48,460.33	\$28,095.39	\$8,000.00
TOTAL ENDOWMENT FUND INCOME	\$99,549.33	\$78,647.39	\$13,000.00
Endowment Committee Grants	\$500.00	\$1,000.00	\$8,000.00
Endowment Fund Income Less Expense	\$99,049.33	\$77,647.39	\$5,000.00

Hope Ministries

WORSHIP & OPERATIONS

Altar Angels
Archives Team
Assisting Ministers
Audio Visual
Clerical Volunteers
Communion Servers
Disaster Preparedness Committee
Endowment Fund Team
First Time Guest Calling
Funeral/Memorial Service Reception
Greeters
Hospitality Team
Inactive Caller Team
Lay Communion Visitation
Narthex Servers
New Member Orientation Class
Newcomer Worship Welcome Team
Parking Team
Pew Rack Replenishment
Prayer Team
Stewardship
Usher Teams
Worship Assistants

MUSIC

Brotherhood of Harmony
Combined Choirs (Special Occasions)
Hope Lake Weir Campus Chimes
Hope Lake Weir Campus Choir
Sisters in Song
Solo & Small Music Group Opportunities
Other Special Choirs
SonShine Celebration Band
Spirit Ringers (Handbells)
Summer Session Singers
Voices of Hope - Central
Voices of Hope - Lake Weir
Voices of Hope - South

CRAFTS

Baby Quilt Ministry
Crafters (Women of Hope)
Prayer Shawl (Women of Hope)
Quilters

FELLOWSHIP

Book Groups
Bridge - Ladies Group
CIA (Christians in Action)
Dining Out
Monthly Golf Scramble
Men of Hope
Hope South Nine and Dine
On Our Own
Strong Bones
Walk Away the Pounds
Wednesday Social Suppers
Women of Hope (WELCA)

SPECIAL EVENTS

Annual Picnic
Blessing of the Animals
Fish Fry
90+ Birthday Party

SEASONAL

Angel Tree
Seasonal Decor

EDUCATION & BIBLE STUDY

Circles - Women's Bible Study
Faith & Fellowship
Gatherings of Hope
H.O.P.E. University
Vacation Bible School
Walk to Emmaus
Bible Studies

OUTREACH

Blessing Bags
Hope for the Future Student Scholarship
Global Mission
Mission Outreach
The Rock - Lake Weir Middle School
Love INC (partnership)
Journey INC (partnership)

SUPPORT

Diabetes Support Group
Grief Support Group
Hope Lake Weir Campus Food Pantry
My Time Caregiver Respite
Respite Care
Stephen Ministry

Staff Ministry Reports

Audio/Visual

Overview

The AV Department at Hope Lutheran Church has had a year marked by significant accomplishments, including maintenance, upgrades, and new initiatives to enhance our worship experience and connectivity across all campuses. Here are the key highlights from the past year.

Campus Maintenance and Upgrades

Our team carried out routine maintenance and repairs across all three campuses to ensure the reliability of our AV systems. Additionally, we made slight upgrades to improve the overall functionality and quality of the audiovisual experience for both in-person and online audiences.

Hope Lake Weir Campus Enhancements

A major highlight of the year was the installation of a new video system at Hope Lake Weir Campus. This upgrade enabled us to begin live streaming services from this location, extending our reach and providing greater access for those unable to attend in person.

Online Audience Growth

We are excited to report a 10% growth in our online audience this year. This expansion underscores the importance of our digital ministry in reaching a wider community with the message of hope and faith.

Churchwide Connection Across Campuses

One of our most significant achievements this year was successfully connecting all three campuses for a churchwide meeting. This milestone showcased our ability to use technology to foster unity and collaboration within our church community.

Looking Ahead

As we reflect on this year's successes, we remain committed to maintaining and improving our AV systems, expanding our online reach, and strengthening connections across our campuses. These efforts will continue to support our mission of sharing God's message with both local and global audiences.

Conclusion

We are grateful for the opportunity to serve our congregation through technology and look forward to another year of innovation, growth, and service in God's name. Thank you for your ongoing support and trust in our work.

Communications & Marketing

What a tremendous honor it is to continue serving Hope Lutheran Church and our Lord Jesus Christ as Hope's Communications Director!

The Communications Department is responsible for all print and digital content produced by the church, as well as all marketing and branding. The department manages the church website, social media, News in the Pews newsletter, annual reports (like the one you're reading!),

church emails, brochures, signs, mailings, newspaper and digital ads, press releases, banners, welcome gifts, and so much more! The Communications Department also works closely with all pastors and staff to craft messaging to keep our congregation informed and encouraged.

2025 was a year of challenges and growth for our department. In this age of increasingly aggressive Artificial Intelligence (AI), your Communications Department has been working closely with the pastoral staff and the Creative Team to protect our congregation and our church assets from robot-generated content. Development continues on the new Hope website and the upcoming church app, both of which will be released soon. This year, we also doubled our advertising in local media and reached out to the newest areas of The Villages and Summerfield to let the community know Hope is here for them!

Managing communications for three diverse campuses is not an easy feat. The Communications Department is thankful for the leadership of Bob Franceski, and for the continued assistance of the entire office staff and many talented volunteers. We especially appreciate Bonnie Irvine and Darlene Goodwin, who provide in-depth proofreading on request—and do a fantastic job!

We look forward to another successful and formative year of ministry. Thank you for your continued support of Hope!

In Christ,
Marina Ernst, Communications Director

H.O.P.E. University

2025 was a busy and productive year for our education program. Highlights include:

G.I.F.T. Groups-- The Education team undertook the work to support the newly formed groups and 2025 including developing a mission and vision for the new small groups; preparing a training manual for group leaders; holding a leader training session; and rolling out the small group program for the church. There are over 75 people involved in the groups with another 60 trying to determine which group they would like to join. Ten new small groups were formed under this initiative in the last quarter of 2025.

VBS-- Our VBS programs grew this year as we added a Lenten one-day VBS held at our central campus. We attempted to work with The Villages to secure additional registrants. We received some media coverage, but that was the extent of their participation. We had six students and some old and new VBS volunteers taking part. The program will be held again next year but at our Lake Weir campus. Our summer VBS program grew again as we had a total of 40 children participate. We continued to provide a meal and snack for each student for each session.

CLASSES—An intentional restructuring of how we offer courses was implemented. For each course offered this year, a workbook was created that helped in the process of discipleship for those who took the courses. In 2025 we added some additional equipment that allows us to provide better service to those who are attending and those who participate through our own individual live stream channel or our zoom connection.

CONNECTION U.L.S. CLASSES-- For the first time, we worked in conjunction with United Lutheran Seminary to offer a series of lectures throughout the course of the year. More than 25 people were involved.

SOCIAL MEDIA-- The offerings prepared by pastor Keith and pastor John touched more than 50,000 views on our Facebook platform.

ED ROOM-- In addition to the equipment that was purchased throughout the year to provide a better classroom environment for all, we were blessed by a group of individuals, 5 in number, who became trained and who ran all the equipment for our classes.

VOLUNTEERS-- I personally want to thank each person who is involved with our program this year and that includes: volunteers; our daily devotional readers for the devotions that are posted on the church website; the members of the education team who freely give of their time to help our program grow; to our new audio visual team; and to the staff of the church that it supports our efforts every step of the way.

In the name of the One who loved us first,
Pastor John LeCain

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 2025 there were thirty-nine sales at Hope Central Campus, consisting of four for scattering of cremains, fifteen for in-ground burial, and twenty for columbarium niches. Twenty-six of the sales were to Hope members and thirteen to non-members. There was 1 sale at Hope Lake Weir Campus.

In the spring of 2025, two new columbariums were added at Hope's Central Campus.

Department of Music Ministries

Hope South Campus Happenings -

This past year at Hope South Campus has been a year of growth, gratitude, and deepening worship. Each week, the SOS service offered a space where people of all ages could encounter God through modern worship music, preaching, and prayer. Joined by my sister Patty on guitar most weeks, we work hard to create an environment that is both excellent and welcoming and continue introducing new songs that support the message, as well as refreshed arrangements of familiar favorites.

This year marks twenty years of service for me within the music ministry at Hope, and it has been one of my greatest joys to help build the program at Hope South Campus over the last five. From the earliest services to the growing ministry we see today, I have been grateful to serve consistently each week and to witness firsthand how God has shaped this community through worship. Being part of this ministry from the ground up has been a privilege, and I am thankful for the volunteers and worshipers who continue to bring their hearts and gifts each Sunday.

As we look ahead, especially now that we have raised the funds needed to break ground on our new campus, I am filled with hope and excitement for what God will continue to do.

Mary Jo MacLean
SOS Director – Hope South Campus

This has certainly been an unexpected year of musical opportunities. In late January 2025, Ken offered me my first “real opportunity” to direct a church choir on an ongoing basis. I learned so much in a very short time. The members at both campuses were very patient with me, culminating in making some great music together!

As I enthusiastically transitioned from a temporary fill-in to the Campus Traditional Music Director at South, the VOH-S (Voices of Hope-South Campus) led weekly at 8:00am with 10 loyal choir members, along with our accompanist emerita, Jane Miller. Without an alternate location close to the Everglades Rec Center, we began rehearsing at my house, and immediately became a very happy family! Overtime, we have grown to twenty-four singers and have never sounded better. Last Fall, Jane became a permanent member of the alto section, and we adopted our current accompanist, Carole.

Thank you to our 'extremely' faithful choir members, who show up ready to sing, laugh, snack, and sing some more. Thank you to our congregation for supporting us as you do. Most of all, thanks be to God for loving us and giving us the reason and the ability to sing in the first place.

Praise God From Whom All Blessings Flow!

Lyle Johnson
Campus Traditional Director – Hope South Campus

Hope Lake Weir Campus Happenings -

This first half of the 2025-2026 season has been very exciting, fun, and a blessing. As someone hired from outside of Hope's expansive umbrella, I have benefitted greatly from the volunteer assistance of Jan Keller. She has been very helpful and supportive as we have established a new rhythm around weekly rehearsals and service leadership by the choir. The VOH-LW (Voices of Hope-Lake Weir Campus) has been truly welcoming, excited to learn, and open-minded. I am enjoying my time with them.

As we build on firm musical foundations and an ever-strengthening community, I am excited to look ahead toward the rest of this new year. Not only will we continue striving for excellence in musical artistry and ministry, but I look forward to implementing some new offerings, to further build and diversify Hope's Department of Music Ministries.

I am truly thankful for the opportunity to lead within the Hope family, and I hope to continue for years to come.

Musically Yours in Christ,

Frederick Blanchard
Campus Director – Hope Lake Weir Campus

Hope Central Campus Happenings –

I must begin by stating my sincere appreciation for the planning and execution of each SOS service at Hope Central Campus...from preparation of AV presentations, audio management, and lighting, to the maintaining of electronic equipment, be it microphones, drums, keyboards, wiring, etc. I find it a very pleasant environment to work with and in, because of the utmost professionalism and attention to detail, including, but not limited to, starting on time.

As I have grown in my level of comfort and awareness of this unique, Saturday 4:00pm service structure, Ken Wood has been able to step further back from direct oversight over the past twelve months. Though there are always occasional “flare-ups” (speaking technologically) when putting together a presentation such as this, they are always quickly and quietly resolved by Kathryn and Jime's expertise. Ken has always been very available and willing to provide the necessary resources needed to fulfill the needs of each service, including personnel absences and rotations. Further, I am very much enjoying the lessons and sermon messages delivered every week. Often, the presentation of great details and scriptural insights brings fresh awareness of who and why we worship our Lord.

I continue to be pleased and honored to be a part of the Hope family of believers.

In Christ,

Bruce R. Davis
SOS Director – Hope Central Campus

The year of 2025 ended my 10th consecutive season at Hope and began my 11th. Early on, it also ushered in an unexpected personal obstacle in the form of back surgery in February. Plans were quickly scuttled and alternative personnel presented themselves from within the ranks of capable congregants and volunteers. Due to many capable individuals, the entire department continued to flourish while I stood (or sat) by and watched from home. That experience further outlined the recipe for the continued success of Hope's Department of Music Ministries: unwavering teamwork. I have tremendous respect and admiration for the many people who contribute of their time, talent, and even testimonials, to build and enhance ministries here. God has richly blessed me (and all of us) with an abundance of willing and adept people regularly doing all manner of tasks. Many of those are behind the scenes. Many more are simply volunteering their skillset as a way of giving back from the abundance of gifting they have come to know from God's overflow. As participants grow more deeply as disciples of Christ, they go from becoming just receivers of ministry to ministers themselves. As we all seek to be further transitioned into greater Christlikeness, we are each called to offer back the first-fruits of what God first gave, whether in the form of income or excellence. This community of combined Spiritual gifts is what allows music to continue to emanate forth each week, and what makes a space for God to minister in outreach through the relational witness of every person who sings, plays, conducts, emails, calls, files, or even just offers a hand to shake.

As you have already read, the ministry of music is expanding and flourishing over Hope's three campus locations. We have a staff of solid, skilled leaders, and continue to develop our ranks from within the willing pool of congregants. We offer various opportunities, with different levels of commitment, to entice the curious and entreat the congregation. We are servants first, not because we have to be, but because we GET to be. God continues to keep his hand on us and the direction in which we travel, therefore it He and He alone who deserves the credit, as well as the accolades.

We intend to continue in lock step with His direction, particularly as change and growth inevitably require adjustments along the way. But regardless of where things go in the near (or far) future, know there will always be an open seat available for YOU, in case you've ever considered stepping up to serve and stepping out of your comfort zone.

Peace and continued blessings,

Ken Wood
Director 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

Ministry Team Reports

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 over 124 members that were 90+ years old in 2025. 85 invitations were sent to the members that live in the area.

The party was held on October 12th after the 10:00am service. We had 38 members and their families and friends come to enjoy the festivities. We continued with the chicken salad sandwiches and fruit cups for lunch before we celebrate with cake & ice cream.

This year Vicki Mortenson, who was 96 years old, got to blow out the candle!

We gave special recognition to the 7 couples that have been married 70 or more years. We took our, now annual, group picture with all 38 guests. This picture is a big hit with the participants.

All the guests went 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, along with the group picture, and 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 15 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.

Archive Team



During 2025 the Archive Team continued its work of chronicling the life of Hope Lutheran Church in word and picture. Annual archives are printed and collected in 3-inch binders and stored at Hope Central Campus. The year 2025 was particularly notable for the hard work, prayers, time and donations of our Pastors, Staff and Congregants, as Hope worked to make our 3rd Campus a reality. There is a special section toward the end of the Archive devoted to that subject.

In addition to the printed copy, each year's archive is also stored in pdf format on the Public drive of the Hope server. Adobe Acrobat makes it easy to search for a key word or phrase across all the archives, from 1995 to 2025, in a matter of minutes. Simple instructions for conducting such a global search can be found at the beginning of the 2024 & 2025

archives: briefly, using the advanced search function, type in a word or phrase; choose **All pdf documents in**; select either the **Archive** or **Archive St John** folder from the drop-down list; and hit the **Search** button.

As of June 2025, after ten years of devoted service, Carole Rasmussen has resigned her position on the Archive Team. We would like to thank Carole for her assistance in recording the history of Hope, for the countless hours she spent preparing for the 20th and 25th anniversary displays, and for her tireless efforts on behalf of the Archive Team. She will be sorely missed!

Angel Tree Project



Team Mission:

Work with designated local organizations to provide Christmas gifts for needy Children and Seniors in our community. The program is completely dependent upon the generosity of the Hope congregation to provide the gifts and gift cards distributed.

Recent Accomplishments:

Through the overwhelming support of the Hope congregation, the Angel Tree Project provided significant gift packages for 450 Children and Seniors. That represents a consistent number of those Hope served with Christmas blessings through the Angel Tree project for the last several years.

Organizations with counts served included:

- Hope Lake Weir Campus Food Pantry Children - 202
- Hope Lake Weir Campus Food Pantry Seniors - 26
- Fruitland Park Elementary School - 52
- Lady Lake Specialty Care – 108
- Buffalo Crossings Assisted Care – 59

Additionally, the congregation provided over \$4,600 in 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. Many of these gift cards and cash donations were also used to purchase bikes and helmets for children at the Food Pantry. The balance was turned over to the Pastors to be used where needs arise in the future.

The Team of Gloria Johnson, Jenny Dunn, Nancy Forrest, and Martha McDermott 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 Team Leaders are already working on recommendations for 2026 and are looking forward to serving as Angel Tree Project Leaders again.

Blessing of the Animals



Mission Statement:

The Bible emphasizes God's care for animals and encourages humans to treat them with kindness and respect, reflecting the divine blessing upon all creatures. Our mission is to recognize and assist all of GOD's creatures. Secondly, to attract new members to Hope Lutheran Church and provide funds to help support the Hope food pantry for the purchase of dog and cat food.

On Saturday, October 4, 2025, we held our annual Blessing of the Animals at our beautiful Hope Lake Weir Campus. This location proved to be an excellent choice as we were able to reach out to many people who live in the surrounding area. The covered pavilion helped to keep us dry from the rain that fell during the event. Also,

Lake Weir made a beautiful backdrop for the owner and pet photos. Over 30 volunteers worked at the event to help with setup, parking, greet attendees, register pets, take photos, and hand out refreshments, pet scarves and tags. Pastor Jon-Marc provided an inspiring message, while Ken Wood enriched the service with music. We had several dogs, two goats, and a black African parrot in attendance. All were very well behaved!

In addition to our new location, we also had two veterinarians on site providing owners with general pet care information. Attendees also enjoyed the Dynamic Dog Club, the Sumter County Humane Society who brought a couple dogs available for adoption, and a vendor that provided home-made nutritional dog treats. We also had a retired professional photographer who provided great pictures of all the animals and their owners which were mailed to the attendees after the event. At the end of the event, a luncheon was provided to all the volunteers as a thank you for all their hard work.

The Blessing of the Animals was well received by the local community, volunteers, attendees, vendors, and animals alike. Next year we look forward to adding more vendors for a more enriching experience.

CIA (Christian 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.
Hebrews 1-:25

Throughout this year Christians in Action Ministry has continued to be involved and to support many of the outreach ministries of Hope Lutheran Church and our community. Through your participation and generosity, the following ministries listed at these events can further their outreach and extend their mission to help those in need. In addition CIA participated in the “Cruise In and Be Lifted Up” event on September 17th and the Groundbreaking of Hope South Campus on December 3rd.

I would like to acknowledge the CIA members who continually support these events in many ways. Thank you to the Hospitality Team and the many volunteers who have assisted and made this possible throughout the year.

June 13th CIA sponsored Family Feud Evening to support the Wildwood Middle High School Booster Program.

October 17th a Low Country Boil was held at Hope Lake Weir Campus. This event benefited the House of Hope located in Wildwood.

October 22nd a Spaghetti Dinner Social Supper at Hope Central Campus benefited Camp E-Nini-Hassee, a girl’s camp located in Floral City.

November 24 a Family Feud Evening was brought back by popular demand and this time On Our Own was the recipient for this evening.

Throughout all these events it was the intention to share fellowship, enjoy a wonderful meal together, and most importantly bring folks from all three campuses and the community together for an exciting time.

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. You do not need to be a member of Hope to participate. 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 your gifts in the information hallway or you can drop them off at the reception desk at Hope Central Campus.

In 2025 we spent 14,741 hours making and distributing the following items:

- 1599 Sojourn bears
- 544 baby bears
- 362 crosses for the welcome center
- 197 children’s sweaters donated to “knit for Kids”
- 718 knitted hats
- 242 scrubbies, wash cloths/Dawn sets
- 77 hat scarf sets
- 34 lap robes

- 758 cotton rolled bandages
- 25 children’s blankets
- 95 Christmas cards to “Operation Quiet Comfort” – hospitalized military overseas at Christmas

For more information, contact the church at 352-750-2321.

Disaster Preparedness and Response Committee



FEMA

The Committee changed to meeting quarterly during 2025. During this past year, we welcomed Pastor Rani Abdulmasih and Council Member-at-Large Sean Gormley to our meetings.

The committee initiates monthly checks on the AED units and First Aid bags at Hope Central and Hope Lake Weir Campus. Quarterly checks of all facilities have been initiated to confirm emergency exits are clear, protective systems follow inspection requirements, emergency equipment is available, etc.

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:

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



As we move into 2026, the Disaster Preparedness and Response Committee has allocated funds to include the installation/upgrade of security systems. Additionally, the committee will be working on updating and revising the Disaster Preparedness and Response manual.

Endowment Committee



The Constitution of Hope Lutheran Church mandates an Endowment Committee. Its purpose is to administer the *earnings* of the funds entrusted in perpetuity to the Hope/St. John Endowment Funds.

The work of this committee is accomplished by making grants awarded for religious, charitable, benevolent, and educational purposes of Hope Lutheran Church including capital improvements.

As of December 31, 2025, the Endowment Fund balances were \$449,814.79. This includes \$180,688.33 for the Theological Education Fund established in 2022 for grants to individuals seeking theological training. The Theological Education Fund is now fully funded, and the earnings are available for granting.

This year the Committee awarded the following grants:

- Vicar Kjell Bakken was given a \$1,000 grant to attend a Homiletics Festival in Atlanta
- A conditional \$7,500 grant was awarded to the Hope Scholarship Committee with the stipulation that they raise an equal amount. The campaign seeking matching funds was to begin in early 2026.

Pastor Ana Lugo, Gift Planner, from the ELCA Foundation visited Hope in the fall of 2025. She was able to answer members' questions about their legacy giving. Please note that all of the Endowment Committee members are knowledgeable and willing to assist anyone contemplating legacy giving.

Since the number of members sitting on the Endowment Committee is set at seven by the constitution, the Hope Congregational Council approved Gary Hill, the outgoing congregational treasurer, to be an ex-officio member of the Committee.

The Committee members are Michael Brown (congregation Treasurer), Pastor Marc MacLean, Pat O'Dell, Ron Durian, Gary Forrester, Peg Piper Winters, and Steve German. Gary Hill is an ex-officio member.

Please contact any one of us for answers to questions you may have.

Peg Piper Winters

Hand Sanitizer Ministry



The Hand Sanitizer Ministry members are responsible for filling the hand sanitizer bottles in the pews and narthex on an as needed basis.

We want to ensure that all individuals attending church services, various hosted events, and meetings feel comfortable in that their hands are sanitized and germ free.

The Team Leader works with the Hospitality Department for ordering the hand sanitizer liquid for the three campuses.

The Team Leader also works with the Event Coordinator for scheduling the narthex and the required table and chair work area set up for Hope Central Campus.

Submitted by: Bonnie Irvine, Team Leader

Hope Lake Weir Campus Food Pantry



Hope Lake Weir Campus Food Pantry is a thriving ministry serving Marion County residents. In 2025, the Pantry served 7,750 households, 26,048 individuals, giving out 12,164 bags of food, meat and produce. The ages of the neighbors are:

0-17 - 29%
18-64 - 54%
65+ - 17%

Without the generous support of the congregation, clubs, organizations and neighborhood parties, the Pantry could not help so many people. The Pantry is extremely grateful for all the volunteers who work selflessly, logging 9,597 hours in 2025.

Debbie Schuettler, the Pantry's Operation Manager is dedicated to watching food costs and has worked with Second Harvest in obtaining discounted prices on groceries, meats and donated produce. The pantry continues to provide pet food, diapers, toiletries, incontinence, and hygiene items. The Southern Trace Publix continues to donate bread and pastries. Shared Harvest, a local farm, donates freshly picked items.

The Pantry is now a TEFAP (The Emergency Food Assistance Program) food source. Monthly, the pantry will distribute TEFAP food to qualifying neighbors. All TEFAP items are at "no cost" to the pantry. The Pantry is also now a Mobile Food Drop location. One Saturday a month from October to April, 30+ volunteers help distribute over 6,000 pounds of food at the Hope LW parking lot. This is open to anyone who needs food. All this food is at "no cost" to the pantry.

During the Shoe & Backpack Drive, we gave away shoes and backpacks filled with school supplies. For Thanksgiving and Christmas, special meals of hams, turkeys, ribs, etc. were distributed to the neighbors. For Christmas, 210 food pantry children and 26 seniors received gifts from the Angel Tree Program.

The Pantry is grateful for your continued support.

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.

This year we served 12 luncheons for members in the Fellowship Hall. Our Chef, Michael DiBuono and his Hospitality Team prepare the sandwiches and the Funeral Reception Team members provided salads, veggie trays, cheese 38

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 5 team coordinators, 4 for food and 1 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

Journey (from Love in the Name of Christ)



Love INC Journey Program

Love In the Name of Christ (Love INC) is a Christian nonprofit that was born out of six local churches coming together to meet the holistic needs of our neighbors in 2006. We are deeply grateful that Hope Lutheran Church was one of those original six.

In the past 20 years Love INC has grown, with the support of Hope Lutheran Church, to include various Gap Ministries, and most recently

Transformational Ministry, called Journey INC. For the past three years (July 2023) Journey INC has met on the campus of Hope Lutheran Church Central Campus.

Journey INC is a weekly program. Meeting every Tuesday night and currently serving more than 25 consistent families each week. As a wholistic program, together we are serving adults who learn life skills such as financial literacy and healthy boundaries, while the children experience God's Word and find a place where they belong.

Together, families are discovering hope, purpose, and a path forward.

Many Journey participants come from backgrounds marked by generational poverty, abuse, broken systems, or difficult past decisions. Journey isn't just about tools—it's about walking alongside people as they pursue real life change and real heart change. Some weeks are hard. Different stories, cultures, and perspectives don't always blend easily. Sometimes participants aren't sure they even want change yet.

But God.

What goes right—every time—are the relationships. We walk at our clients' pace, listen to their stories, learn their children's names, celebrate their wins, and dream with them about what's possible. We remind them of their worth and help them set goals they never thought they could reach—because we know who they are and *whose* they are.

One Journey participant shared it best: *"I look forward to class every week. You're not just my friends—you've become my family."* These moments—big and small—are why Journey matters. No matter where the road leads, Love INC remains committed to walking this Journey alongside every family, made possible through your support as the hands and feet of Christ.

Men of Hope



Our first meeting was held on September 11, 2025 and will run through May 14, 2026. We average 27 to 31 regular members throughout the year. Our guest speakers included Pastor Rani Abdulmassih, Pastor Jon-Marc MacLean, Lon Buss of LMM, and will also include Pastor John LeCain.

The Men of Hope have established their primary tenets to be service which establishes fellowship for both members and non-member guests. This is achieved via the guest speaker program, sharing among members their life experience, growing participant faith, and seeking wisdom and support for one another.

Men of Hope also supported the two V2A projects with member time, money and talent. These programs are typically manpower dependent, and many members volunteered to help in these very important programs. Further, the Group maintained their tradition of having joint breakfast with the Women of Hope Christmas Music program as well.

Efforts are ongoing to establish a permanent relationship with The Lutheran Men in Mission, the largest National men's group in the U.S. Their ambassador, Lon Buss, has visited Hope Lutheran Church several times and we are looking forward to expanding that relationship in 2026.

Men of Hope have 38 men on the roster and email contact list. We meet the second Thursday of every month except January, at 8:00am for one hour. Breakfast is \$10 and must be paid by credit card on the Hope website. Information on upcoming meetings are available in the News in the Pews and on the Hope Calendar.

Raybon Gilbert, Team Leader, Men of Hope 2026

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 2025 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. In 2025 team member Marlene Waller our liaison and Board Member of the ELCA Global Mission Table helped to start a Lay Leaders Training Program in Guyana.

ELCA World Hunger and Disaster Response are to agencies that are effective in aiding during a period of need for others around the globe. The team distributes, sorts, and counts the Lenten boxes.

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 Church has volunteers working in many areas of their ministry to the local community.

Journey INC (Journey In the Name of Christ) In partnership with Love INC, we provide space and volunteers for a Tuesday night weekly event that provides a meal, mentoring, adult, and children's classes designed to break the cycle of generational poverty and bring the unchurched to Christ.

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 in the school and their families.

World Mission Prayer League (WMPL) which provides financial and spiritual support for missionaries. Hope has also had a special, ongoing relationship with the Ekkas ever since we provided funds to build their Seminary and school in 1999

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

Fred O'Brien
Mission Outreach Team

My Time for Free Time

Submitted by Volunteer Director: Cindy Hanauer

Mission & Purpose

MY TIME exists to create a joyful, dignified, and welcoming space for individuals living with Alzheimer's and other neurocognitive diseases—and for those who care for them. Through music, movement, laughter, creativity, and connection, we affirm that every person still matters, still belongs, and still has something to celebrate. FREE TIME supports this mission by building a caring community of

volunteers who serve with consistency, compassion, and joy. Every week, our organization's 70 volunteers serve 64 neurologically challenged citizens and their caregivers.

Recent Accomplishments

This year, MY TIME provided weekly, no-cost programming that included music therapy, dance and movement, interactive games, art, and meaningful social engagement. FREE TIME volunteers faithfully served behind the scenes—setting up, serving snacks, leading activities, welcoming guests, and ensuring each gathering felt safe and celebratory. Special weekly events such as themed parties, birthdays, and seasonal celebrations brought energy and anticipation, with attendance and volunteer involvement continuing to grow.

Notable Stories & Highlights

One of the year's most powerful moments was celebrating a 100th birthday with singing, crowns, and dancing—reminding us all that joy has no expiration date. Each week is filled with participants and demonstrations from the local community: Safety classes from the Villages emergency crews, local ice cream trucks, area entertainers and more.

Weekly dance and sing-alongs consistently sparked smiles, clapping, and spontaneous moments of clarity, reinforcing the power of rhythm and music for those with neurological disease. Our Candy Cane Carnival and other themed gatherings transformed ordinary afternoons into unforgettable experiences, filled with laughter, participation, and connection across generations.

Perhaps most meaningful is the steady presence of our volunteers, caregivers and local organizations, who show up week after week, forming relationships that go far beyond an activity schedule. Together, MY TIME and FREE TIME is not just filling hours—we are restoring dignity, creating memories, and building a community where love and joy remain stronger than disease.

Narthex Servers



The Narthex Servers ministry is at all of Hope's campuses. They are the attenders of the phones in the narthex that take attendance, and they are also greeters of worshipers as they enter the sanctuaries. This ministry was founded at the time of the pandemic as a way to control the number of people attending any one service. It has continued, not as mandatory for entering worship, but as a replacement to passing the attendance pads, as we did before the pandemic.

Although it is not an accurate count of attendance, neither were the pads. What it does do is cut down on the time the office spends entering names and addresses from the old passed pads.

The team members set up and take them down the phones for each of the seven services on Saturdays and Sundays. They are a visible person in the narthex that are often sought out by newcomers and regular worshipers who have questions about where to find or locate a person, place or time of an activity that will be held in the church.

These team members get to know attendees at the service they cover relaying important information unto pastor or office persons. My thanks to all team members.

Bev Castanien

Newcomer Worship Welcome Team (NWWT)



The Newcomer Worship Welcome Team (NWWT) has been functioning at Hope Central Campus this past year, 2025 under the leadership of Ingrid Severson, leader of the team. We continue to conduct our team with the intent to know Christ and to make Christ known while serving at the Welcome Center at Hope Lutheran Church. We will continue to function regularly on Saturdays and Sundays throughout the year 2026. Our main goal is to welcome newcomers to the church family as they enter our doors of Hope Lutheran Church for the worship service.

Handcrafted crosses in various colors are offered to newcomers, as well as Hope Lutheran Church pens as welcome gifts. These gifts are meant as a token of love and friendship to make each person feel welcome and a part of the church family. Through generous donations, NWWT has been able to offer small books, coloring book/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 8 members in the NWWT who volunteered in 2025 and hope to expand our volunteer list for each service in 2026.

Ingrid Severson, Team Leader, Newcomer Worship Welcome Team (NWWT)

On Our Own



On Our Own's mission is to provide fun, friendship and fellowship to anyone who is single, widowed, divorced or a caregiver whose spouse is unable to be socially active. We meet on the second Wednesday of the month in Room 205 at Hope Central Campus from 10:30am to noon. We have a short business meeting, plan future activities, have a speaker or entertainer, or play a fun game. We try to get together as well for outside events, concerts and bus trips, and in 2025 twelve of us enjoyed a Caribbean cruise on the Carnival Mardi Gras.

Our major service project is to provide 100 to 120 "snack packs" each month to a local school, Stanton-Weirsdale Elementary School. We pack 11-12 individual items into a gallon size storage bag (e.g. peanut butter, jelly, pudding, Vienna sausages, etc.) which the school distributes to needy children at the end of the week so they have food to hold them over the weekend. We do this packing at 9:00am in the narthex at Hope Central Campus prior to our business meeting.

There is a bin in the information hallway if you would like to donate to this project. We can use most items, as long as they are individual portions and nothing in glass containers. If you have any questions, or would like to join our group, please feel free to contact me: We'd love to see you. 43

Ginny Wilson, Team Leader - randy572@msn.com or 352-430-3326

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.

The Rock is a school-church partnership where the school provides space on its campus for Hope to operate our Rock Room.

The Rock provides shoes, food, clothing, school supplies, hygiene products, emotional support and most important, the love of Christ to children in need. Some students come from broken homes. Some are dealing with family drug problems.

Some live in the forest. Many do not know Christ. There are 1200 students and the best attended parent / teacher night in 2025 had 5 parents attend!

Hope Lutheran Church Volunteers operate The Rock at Lake Weir Middle School from 12 noon until 1:30pm on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays. School staff open The Rock for the children whenever there is a need.

The Rock provides so much more than food, clothing, shoes, hygiene products, and school supplies. Hope volunteers are positive role models that encourage and share the love of Christ with children in need. Every day one of the volunteers shares a Love Story with the other volunteers. Below is a report that was submitted to Church Council, It will give you an idea of a day at The Rock.

We helped 144 students this week. We have amazing volunteers that show up and love on these students 3 times a week. When we did a ride along with the bus drivers the first of the school year we learned that students are picked up as far away as east of Umatilla. Some students walk up to 1/2 an hour thru woods and dirt roads to get to the paved bus stop (In the dark).

We deal with much 3rd generation poverty. Many students do not realize that there is opportunity outside the forest. When The Rock paid for some of the students to go on the 8th grade class trip to Universal last year, One student said, "Thank you for letting me see the world." It was her first trip out of Marion county.

*Drugs and prostitution are common. In past years we have dealt with girls that are cutters. Thank God we have not had any this year. A recent Love story is Naomi. On a Friday she told us that her mother was gone last Tuesday when they came home from school. Mom left after a new boyfriend had moved in the Friday before. She told us like it was a common thing. Mom has come back for a day or two and left again twice since then. Naomi has an Uncle that works nights at Denny's that comes and checks in on her and her sister. Naomi asked for Hothands chemical hand warmers when the temperature went down. They have no heat, no refrigerator and no stove. Pastor Jon Marc suggested that we give them a hotplate, but I was told that if the house burned down we would be liable. When I reported Naomi's situation to a councilor the reply was, "Don't you wish it wasn't so common." 44
"If we report it they will be spit up and go into foster care which could be worse."*

What can we do for these children? We can help with physical needs, act as role models, pray with them, talk to them and share God's love. Thank you to the Council and the members of Hope that provide the resources and volunteers to be Hope to these children.

Hope also supports the Journey INC program that is braking the cycle of poverty one family at a time.

Thank you all! We are leaving a legacy of Hope that will be remembered long after we are gone. You are truly people of Hope! You give hope, support, and encouragement to over 100 children every week!

Fred O'Brien Mission Outreach team member

Seasonal Decorating



The Seasonal Decorating Team is responsible for decorating the churches for the Advent and Christmas Season and the Lenten and Easter Season.

I have a dedicated team and volunteers and maintenance staff that help each season, for which I am most grateful.

A highlight of the year was rewiring and putting new lights in the angels in the choir loft. We have Denny Reed to thank for this task. He did a wonderful job of restoring the angels. We will keep maintaining our existing decorations. Last, want to

thank the members who donated Christmas trees. We will be needing more trees as we look forward to getting in the new site for Christmas next year.

Submitted by Nancy Shephard, team leader.

Hope Stephen Ministers

“Christ Caring for People through People”



Stephen Ministers (SMs) are trained members of our congregation that help hurting individuals deal with difficult feelings and work through complicated situations. The hurt can be anything -- a terminal diagnosis, grief, upcoming surgery, financial difficulties, family challenges, transitions, loneliness, or questions of faith. A SM offers a listening ear, a caring heart, and creates a safe, confidential, and non-judgmental space to provide one-to-one emotional and spiritual support.

Hope Lutheran Church hosted the initial training for new SMs, bringing together participants from nine local churches within the network. The

Stephen Leaders taught the required 50 hours meeting every Saturday for 10 weeks.

A total of ten SMs received training, with seven from Hope officially commissioned in November. These new ministers brought our total active to twenty-two. In 2025 more than 30 individuals benefitted formally from our distinctively Christian care. Countless others informally received the attention and love of Christ from a SM during a time of need.

The series of four booklets, Journeying through Grief, is a wonderful resource sent on a specific cycle to aid the grieving process. In the past year, 168 booklets were mailed to members and friends who lost loved ones. Currently there are twenty-seven people receiving booklets.

Additionally, the SMs supplied more than fifty-five Cancer, Now What? books to the congregation and community. The cancer book is an outstanding resource that contains practical, down-to-earth information to help deal with the diagnosis of cancer or other life-altering medical situations. Cancer books are available at all three campuses for a suggested \$10 donation placed in the church offering.

The Blue Christmas Worship Service was sponsored by Hope SMs, providing greeters, ushers, communion assistants, prayer and healing leaders, readers, worship assistants and even had a former SM deliver the sermon. We look forward to continuing this as an annual worship opportunity.

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, Parish Deacon
Stephen Leader and Coordinator
deaconkathy@hope4all.church

Women of Hope



Our **Purpose and Mission** of Women of Hope is to encourage women to help spread God's Word and Love through G.R.A.C.E. (Growing in Faith, Reaching out with love, Aiding the Congregation, Caring in the Community and World, Encouraging each other). We follow the guidelines of WELCA (Women of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America), the Florida-Bahamas Synodical Women's Organization and the Pinelands Conference.

The Women of Hope meet once a month from September through May for a monthly breakfast meeting sharing spiritually enlightening programs as well as fun and fellowship. Our December breakfast is always special as we join with the Men of Hope for a special Christmas Program. During the months of June, July and August we meet at a named restaurant strictly for fellowship and fun. We call this time "Out To Lunch Bunch."

We accomplish our Mission and Outreach in a variety of ways through ongoing support:

Shepherds LightHouse – a residential mission for homeless single mothers and children, encouraging them to become self-sufficient, located in Belleview.

E-Nini-Hassee – an outdoor residential camp located in Floral City for troubled teenage girls, where they reside, attend school, and are encouraged to work on reunification with family members.

Infant and Toddler Pantry – provides supplies, clothing, diapers and essentials to families in crisis, located at the Congregational Church in Summerfield.

Hope's Heroes – this ministry reaches out to welcome young children by sharing age-related bibles and religious books for a variety of ages which are in the Narthex at Hope Central Campus and Hope Lake Weir Campus. There are activity bags for children to use during worship service at both locations in the church proper.

Many of our active Mission Service Projects are dedicated Crafters, Quilters, Prayer Shawl Ministries, Sojourn Bears, Baby Bears, Ribbon Crosses, and other projects which are listed in the Annual Report.

Spiritual Growth:

In March we participated in the Pinelands Conference, which was held at Rock Of Ages Lutheran Church, Wildwood on March 8. The theme was "Joy, Hope and Endurance." The WELCA Fall Gathering was held at Warren Willis Camp & Conference Center on November 8-10. The theme was "All God's Children."

Retreats - This past year we held two retreats. Our first was on March 25-27, which was a three-day retreat at Luther Springs Conference Center. The theme was "Colors of Kindness." On October 25th, our third annual retreat was at Hope Lake Weir Campus. The theme was "Amazing Grace, Hymns that Changed the World". These retreats give women time to relax with friends, meet new friends, share laughter, fellowship and stories, and of course enjoy the beautiful surroundings at both locations.

Respectfully submitted, Virginia Robertson, President, Women of Hope

Three Campuses... One HOPE

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

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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.