

in touch with Hope

monthly newsletter of Hope Church, Spencer, IA

November, 2017

by Pastor Russell Muilenburg

500 Years of Reformation

The Reformation turns 500 years old this year. It was on October 31, 1517 that a German monk named Martin Luther nailed 95 theses to the church door in Wittenberg. The "posting of concerns" was not meant by Luther to be an act of defiance, let alone a split in the church. It was more of an invitation to have a public discussion about some issues which had been simmering for quite some time. But the response to Luther's posting, and the violent efforts of the Catholic church to silence him, led to a re-shaping of the Christian Church that had profound effects on the map of Europe and the settlement of North America.

There was only one Christian church at the time of Luther—the Roman Catholic Church—and it was an unhealthy institution. Nearly everyone born in Europe at the time was baptized into the Catholic Church. Those at the top of the Catholic hierarchy were wealthy and influential, and used their positions to increase their personal fortunes. Most of the priesthood were undereducated and saw their profession as an escape from military service and manual labor. Immorality and corruption were common within the church. Meanwhile, most of the common folk were completely uneducated and participated in the life of the church through a combination of tradition, superstition, and religious ritual. Theologically, the church had grown fond of addition: it added works to faith; tradition to scripture; and priests to Jesus. The gospel story had been obscured by obedience to the church and empty ceremony.

In the midst of all this, Luther entered the priesthood out of a sincere desire to grow closer to God. As he learned the ways of the church he was overwhelmed by a sense of his own sinfulness. No matter how often he practiced the acts of penance—and he practiced them relentlessly—he did not see how they could ever make up for his ongoing guilt. It was in the midst of one such guilt-racked struggle to find peace that Luther read Romans 1:17: "For in the gospel the righteousness of God is revealed—a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: 'The righteous will live by faith.'" It was this verse that helped Luther to realize that Christ had already paid for his sins, and led him to look more closely at the teachings of the church. It was his dawning realization that we could not earn our forgiveness before God that led him to nail those 95 theses to the church door.

The heart of the Reformation was to bring the church back to the Bible and therefore back to the center of the Bible: the good news of Jesus Christ. The best way to summarize the work of the Reformation is through the Five Solas: Sola Scriptura (Scripture Alone), Sola Gratia (Grace Alone), Sola Fide (Faith Alone), Solus Christus (Christ Alone), Soli Deo Gloria (To The Glory of God Alone). The Roman Catholic Church had, either directly or functionally, denied each of these doctrines and therefore the work of the reformers was to bring the church back to these all-simple, yet all-important doctrines. If Martin Luther had not begun this movement 500 years ago, someone else would have had to, or it is likely that Christianity would have died altogether. The Catholic Church at the time had strayed too far from the teaching of the Apostles and trust in Jesus Christ. Today, I believe the Catholic Church is a healthier institution because of the Reformation.

A great deal of tragedy arose from the Reformation. A great many wars were fought over religious loyalty; a number of people were put to death for honest differences of opinion; and today there are tens of thousands different Christian denominations because of the door that was opened when Luther dared to question Rome. And yet, the legacy of the Reformation is a respect for the Bible and a love for Jesus that continues in many churches and many Christians right down to today. The Reformation helped to turn people back to the saving grace of Jesus and the gift of salvation earned at the cross. Those of us who have confidence in the righteousness of God that comes by faith can thank Luther for the stand he took.





Jay Van Gelder

Youth News

HOPE YOUTH AUCTION

Hope Youth Auction*

Come join the fun! The annual Youth Fundraiser Auction is Sunday, November 5 at 5:00 p.m. in the Harbor. A catered meal of a chicken breast and pot roast will be served during the auction for a free-will donation and childcare will be provided. You will not want to miss the fun at this annual fundraiser to benefit our youth programs. Donations are needed and welcomed; Sign up at the kiosk in the lobby. *All auction items (or printed paper certificates indicating your auction items) need to be to the Harbor by 2:00 p.m. Sunday, November 5. Thank you very much!*

If you are unable to make it to the auction and would still like to donate to the youth work project, checks can be made payable to Hope Church and given to Pastor Jay.

High School & Middle School Traveling Lock-in Mall of America, November 18/19



COME JOIN THE FUN

Check In Sat: 4:15-4:45 PM

Return Sun: 6:00-6:30 AM

THINGS THAT ARE HAPPENING!!

Mystery stop along the way, Pizza, Rides, Games and A Lot of **FUN** People!

COST

You & a Friend: \$40 + \$40
Hope Youth Alone: \$65

BRING ALONG

Money for snacks & other games,
Sweatshirt or Jacket, Pillow and/or blanket (for bus ride)

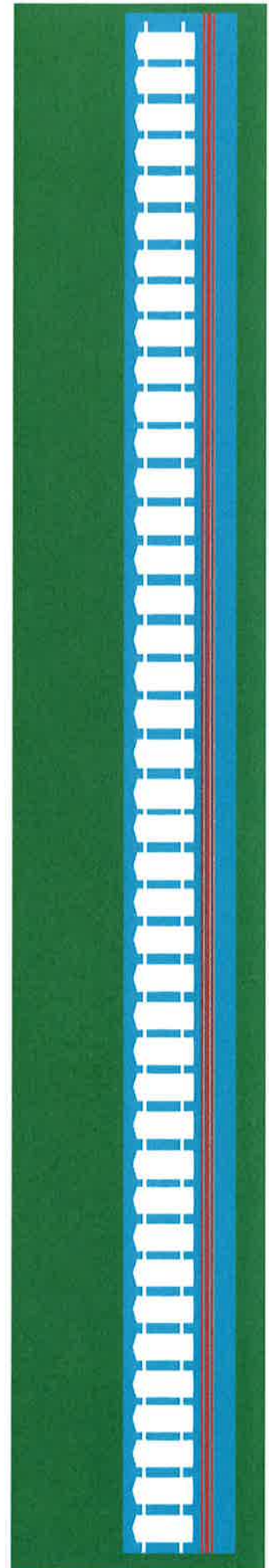
FIRST COME, FIRST SERVED

REGISTRATION CLOSES: WED, NOV 8

Payment must accompany Sign Up

QUESTIONS

jvangelder@spencerhope.org or 712-363-0885



Kim Smith

Children/Family News

TRUNK OR TREAT



Thank you to ALL of the volunteers who helped make our 2017 Trunk or Treat a huge success! This annual event wouldn't be possible without all of you donating candy and your time! We truly appreciate each one of you!

This annual event blesses our community and is an opportunity to meet more of our neighbors. Even Willy from our Neighboring Series came to join the fun!

CHILDREN & PRESCHOOL CHRISTMAS CHOIR

All children Kindergarten through 5th Grade are invited to join the Children's Christmas Choir. We are practicing on Wednesday evenings beginning November 1 from 6:30–8:00 p.m. in the Harbor basement. If your child is participating in AWANA and would like to be a part of the choir, please contact Kim Smith at 262-3016. We will be singing at both worship services on Sunday, December 17. The preschoolers will also be participating in both worship services on December 17 with their Christmas songs, and they will be practicing during their Sunday School hour. If your preschooler is planning to participate please let Kim Smith know as soon as possible.

WOMEN'S NIGHT OUT

All ladies are invited to join us at a Girls Movie Night on Friday, November 10 at 7:00 p.m. We will be watching *Laughing in the Dark* with Chonda Pierce, female comedian, as she shares her struggles and God's faithfulness with her humor. Snack and water will be provided. Bring your own soda and a friend!



Ray Meyer

Adult News



Small Groups

We are in the middle of our fall campaign "The Neighboring Life" which is being augmented by Pastor Russell's Sunday morning message. We have a few of the study guides still available; please contact me if you would like to purchase a copy (you may purchase even if you are not in a small group), or if you would like more information about our small groups.

Prayers and Squares

This team has been very busy in regards to the number of quilts that have been given out the last few months. This quilting ministry provides quilts for people who are going through tough times and for babies baptized at Hope Church. When a need arises, the quilts are placed in the church lobby complete with the exception of the knots being tied. People can then offer a prayer for the individual and tie a knot. Please contact Gloria Schmillen or Stephanie Johnson if you would like to participate in making the quilts, and all proficiency levels are welcomed! Let us know if you or someone you know at Hope would appreciate a quilt.

Journey 50 and Beyond



Sarah Kerns presented information about Feed Our Children at our last meeting on October 11. After listening to Sarah, we all helped fill bags for the week. It was educational and also fun to work together as a unit to provide the weekend food for many children. We had an excellent turn out, so

the work was done in a very short time. Thank you, Sarah, for your time with us and also for coordinating this program in our community. We will meet again on Wednesday, December 13, at 11:30 a.m.

Take Them a Meal

Kristal Jensen is our point person for this meal ministry. This is a program designed to furnish homemade meals for people who have been affected by hospitalization. Please contact Kristal at 264-8897 if you or someone you know at Hope would appreciate this service. You may also contact her if you would like to be a volunteer.

Visitation

Beth Mulenburg coordinates our visitation program which includes monthly visits to people who find it hard to get outside their home or care facility. Please feel free to contact Beth if you would care to be visited or offer your services as a volunteer.

Elder & Deacon Nominations

All confessing members of Hope Church are reminded that your Elder & Deacon nomination papers for 2017 are due back to the office by Sunday, November 5.

Library Order

The Library Team is putting together an order. If you have specific requests of titles for books or DVD's you would like purchased for the church library, please leave a note with the title and author in the check-out box on the library desk or email Char Maertens at charmaertens@gmail.com

Mission Emphasis Sunday

On Sunday, November 19 at the 8:30 & 10:45 a.m. worship services Joel Frank will be leading us in worship. During the Sunday School hour (9:45 – 10:40 a.m.) all adults are invited to hear Joel and his wife, Leah in the Sanctuary share more detailed information about the work they are doing in the mission field. (there will be no Adult Sunday School). Hope Kids Preschool children and K-12th grade will meet in their regular locations for Sunday School.

Decorating Help Needed

Everyone is invited to come help decorate the Christmas tree, lobby and sanctuary for Christmas/Advent on Tuesday, November 21 beginning at 5:00 p.m. Come when you can, leave when you must. All ages are encouraged to join the fun, and pizza will be provided. Please sign up at the Information Desk by November 19 to let us know how many will be joining us for pizza.

Thanksgiving Worship Service

Our Thanksgiving worship service will be on Wednesday, November 22 at 7:00 p.m. in the Harbor. We will sit and worship around tables and the environment will be great for all generations. Plan now to attend this special evening of worship.



Consistory News

The regular meeting of the Hope Reformed Consistory met at 7:00 p.m., in the Well, on Thursday, October 12, 2017. A quorum was present.

Present: **Deacons** Ryan Blau, Ivan Crane, Eric Van Der Heide, Gary Van Wettering, Jason Warren; **Elders** Karmen Brown, Bryan Christoffer, Arvin Druvenga, Doug Siepkes, Terry Johnson, Cedric Winterboer, **Pastors** Russell Muilenburg, Jay Van Gelder. **Absent:** **Deacons** Danny Dekker

Pastor Russell read Isaiah 55:10-11 and lead a discussion of Chapter 8 of "DiscipleShift" by Jim Putnam. Pastor Russell closed the devotional time with prayer.

ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION AND DECISIONS

MMSC to accept and approve the minutes of September 14, 2017.

MMSC to accept and approve the financial report given by the Deacons, including an update on Open Doors 2.0.

MMSC to approve the following from Open Doors funds allocated for regional missions:

- Cherish Center \$3,000
- RCA Student Loan fund \$3,000
- Hope Church live stream audio visual updates \$10,000

Update was provided on Classis meeting scheduled for November 14 regarding unity in the RCA.

Discussion was held regarding bulletin format.

Discussion was held regarding possible revisions to the nominations process for Elder and Deacon.

Pastor Russell closed this part of the meeting with prayer.

ELDERS' MEETING

Pastor Russell opened the meeting with prayer.

Constitutional Question was asked and answered in the negative with some discussion.

MMSC to approve baptism request(s): Danny and Liz Dekker for daughter Clara Marie; Luke and Molly Lovin for daughter June Lenee

MMSC to accept profession(s) of faith: Cheryl Hurst, Dave and Sara Schmidt, Laura Wiemers, Aaron and Kylee Zinn

MMSC to approve membership request(s), pending discussion with one individual: Mitch Wiemers from Sacred Heart Catholic Church

MMSC to approve wedding ceremony requested to be performed at Hope Church and/or by Hope Church pastors:
No requests.

Particular congregational care situations were discussed.

Closed the meeting with prayer.

DEACONS' MEETING

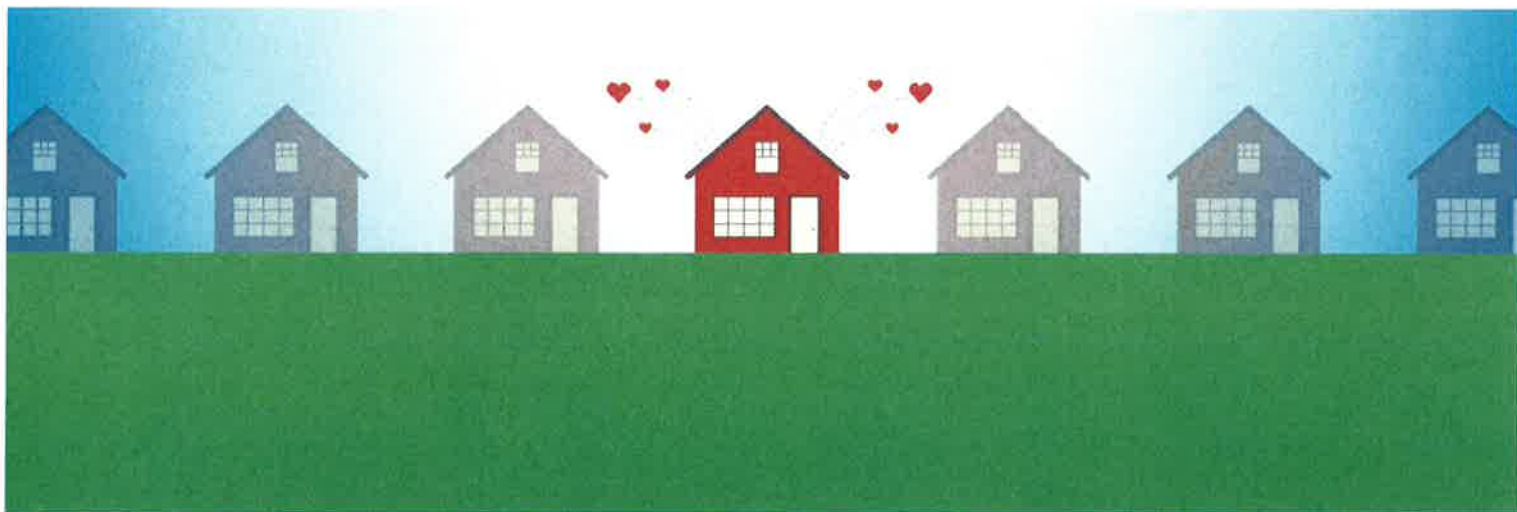
Eric opened with prayer.

Financial situation was discussed. Giving is trailing budget and a little behind last year, so it is projected to be very close to actual expenses for 2017. It was determined that we will send a letter with campaign update and include a general fund giving update, and some specific unbudgeted needs we have as well, in order to encourage additional contributions toward our general fund.

Website and technology upgrades discussion.

Discussed fence installation along the west end of our new lot as agreed to when we purchased the property.

Ryan closed with prayer.





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www.spencerhope.com

WORSHIP

**Sundays at
8:30 a.m. & 10:45 a.m.**

also available to read & view online at
www.spencerhope.com

**Sunday School
Sundays 9:45—10:40 a.m.**

Ages 18 mos. Through Adult

schedule & sermons

November Sermon Schedule



The Neighboring Church

November 5: Say

November 12: Wrap-Up



November 19: Missions Sunday



His Name is...

November 26: God Most High

Hope Church Staff:

Russell Muilenburg, *Lead Pastor*; Jay Van Gelder, *Pastor of Student Ministries*; Eric Meeter, *Worship Music/Assistant Youth*; Ray Meyer, *Congregational Care*; Kim Smith, *Children & Families*; Josh Hamrick, *Facilities Director*, Lori Swanson, *Office Administrator*.