



the anchor

Hope Lutheran Church
3295 Old Hwy 5 South, Ellijay GA 30540

December 2009

From the Pastor

The rhythm of the church has changed in recent weeks. At least it seems that way to me. With our building process behind us - a process that by necessity was self-centered and inward looking - we now seem more than ready to start looking outward again!

To help us do that, we find ourselves blessed to have a wonderful new congregation council in place - great leaders all - working hard to expand our vision and mission, and looking for better ways to organize our work and involve more people effectively in that work.

We have a member family which has challenged all of us to consider matching up to \$25,000.00 of their dollars to help us reduce our property and new building debt even as we're just settling in to our new home on the hill. The less debt we have, the more ways we can serve the community.

On our second Sunday in our new home we had a baptism; on our third Sunday we communed five young people for the first time; we've had a wonderful Thanksgiving meal that raised more than \$500.00 for our youth scholarship fund; we've got a prayer retreat coming up in a couple of weeks; a dedication service with many people invited to attend on the weekend after that; ten kids in a confirmation class each Sunday; and on and on and on. Our building-up ministries are alive and well!

This week we begin a new member's inquiry class that promises to open our fellowship even more to our communities around us. On that opening up to the community note, we've already had a request from the Gilmer Community Food Pantry (an organization that Hope Lutheran Church helped start) request space for a volunteer appreciation luncheon in our new fellowship hall, and a group of ladies from the community are wanting to use our fellowship hall from time to time for quilting.

For my part? I find myself doing a lot of pastoral care lately - spending time with all of you as you're living out your faith during these challenging days in our difficult world. Our lay leadership at Hope seems to be stepping up in a new and wonderful way - allowing me to step back in certain ways and to step forward in others!

Our council in a faithful and responsible way is dealing with recent ELCA decisions regarding human sexuality that have been controversial to say the least. In the next weeks they will be talking with you to discern how Hope Lutheran Church as a congregation might respond to those decisions. I encourage all of us to pray for good discussions and a faithful response.

In our new building we have been given a great gift and an equally great challenge: we are the body of Christ - called to be the heart and hands and voice of our resurrected Lord and Savior for the sake of a broken world. As we move forward into God's future it is left to us to faithfully discern God's will for our lives as a congregation and to be active in our response to the mission and the work to which we are called.

Each week at Hope Lutheran Church we gather for worship and fellowship so that our faith might grow and that our spiritual muscles might be built up.

Then, each week - being so built up - we are sent out into the world that our faithful service and our witness might continue.

Plans for Our Dedication

Assistant to the Bishop Rev. Dr. Delmer Chilton will be with us on December 13th at 3:00 PM as we formally dedicate our new building. A letter with details of the dedication will be coming to all Hope members during the first week of December so please keep your eye out for it either in your e-mail or in your mailboxes at home.

New Members Inquiry Class Continues

A three-week New Members Inquiry Class is now being held on successive Saturdays - November 28th, December 5th and December 12th. The classes begin at 10:00 AM and are open to anyone interested in finding out more about Hope Lutheran Church and our Lutheran faith.

New members will be received into the life of the congregation at the 10:00 AM service on Sunday, December 13th. If you'd like to learn more about these informal sessions, please call Pastor Dave Smedley at (404) 226-6833.

Ladies Prayer Workshop



Friday and Saturday
December 4th and 5th

The Advent Season is a special time as we await the birth of our Savior, Jesus the Christ. What a perfect time to enrich our prayer life. Please join us in Hope's new Founders Hall as we enjoy learning, discussion, fellowship and prayer. This event is open to both members and guests; meals are provided.

Our schedule will be as follows:

<u>Friday, December 4th</u>	<u>Saturday, December 5th</u>
Dinner 6 p.m. - 7p.m.	Breakfast 8: a.m. - 8:30 a.m.
Session 7 p.m. - 9 p.m.	Session 8:30 a.m. - 12 noon
Dismissal to homes at 9 p.m.	Lunch 12:00 noon - 1 p.m.
	Session 1 p.m. - 4 p.m.

We are blessed to have Joanne Astalos facilitate this special event. Joanne's leadership in the area of *Spiritual Growth* has blessed Christians for many years. She holds a certificate in *Spiritual Formation* from Columbia Seminary, has been a one-on-one *Spiritual Director* for 19 years, *Retreat Leader* at the Monastery of the Holy Spirit, instrumental in leadership of the *Kairos Ministry* over 20 years, and *Featured Speaker* at Ladies of Hope Second Annual Ladies Luncheon.

For more information or to register contact Laura Rogne at 706-889-0000 or laurarogne@gmail.com. There is also a sign- up sheet on the table in the church library.

Poinsettia Sign-up

If you'd like to sponsor a poinsettia plant (or two) for this year's Christmas decorations at Hope, please sign up on the sheets on the bulletin board in the Narthex. Sign up either "in honor of" or "in memory of" special people in your life. The cost this year will be \$9.00 per plant.



Teddy Bear Collection



Each year at Hope Church we take up a collection of Teddy Bears and other stuffed animals for children in crisis. For the 15th year now we are asking you to help brighten up the Christmas of a child having a tough holiday season. This year the "critters" will be given to the Appalachian Children's Center and one other organization still to be determined. Bring your bear or other stuffed animal to the church by Sunday, December 20th. If you have questions, contact Ellen in the church office.

Children and Youth Christmas Program

Hope's children and youth will lead the congregation with their annual Christmas Worship Service on Sunday, December 20th at the 10:45 service. Practice sessions for the program will be held during Sunday school times on the 29th of November and on the 6th December, and on Saturday, December 12th and on Saturday, December 19th -- both at 10:00 AM

There will be a special reception in honor of the children following worship on the 20th.

Youth to Carol at Nursing Home



Hope's Youth group will again trek with song sheets in hand to sing Christmas carols at the Gilmer Nursing Home. They will gather at the church on Saturday, December 19th at around noon (following the Children and Youth Christmas service practice that's scheduled for 10:00 AM), eat lunch and leave for the nursing home.

Parents are needed to help with transportation.

Notes From Council

The Congregational Council met twice in November, on the 11th and the 18th. A church member has issued a \$25,000 challenge to Hope members that would go toward paying down the debt on our new building. The goal is to meet that challenge by the end of this calendar year, before the new mortgage loan is negotiated. Details for the December 13 Dedication Service were discussed, including the possibility of off-site parking for that afternoon. With regard to other scheduling matters, Christmas Eve services will be at 4 PM and 7 PM, and there will be a Council Retreat on January 8th and 9th. Plans were begun to establish a way to coordinate the use of our building by community organizations. Other items that Council dealt with this month are discussed in the Pastor's article in this issue of *the anchor*. Please refer to that article for details.

Know Your Council Members

Hope members are always encouraged to bring any concerns or good ideas they might have to our congregation council members. Please know who they are and how to contact them:

Christine Westerman - president - 706-972-9301 (cell) - westerman@ellijay.com
Emil Harvey - vice president - 706-847-0869 (cell) - goodvibes47@hotmail.com
Dick Nagel - secretary - 706-273-2371 - dpnagel@etcm.com
Roger Ashcraft - treasurer - 678-641-7417 (cell) - rlcaa@windstream.net
Michael Bates - 678-454-0999 - michaelbates@ellijay.com
Diane Burton - 706-636-2395 - dburton562002@yahoo.com
Juanita Littleton - 706-276-1221 - kikker2@ellijay.com
Shawn Stoffer - 404-319-4586 - dsstof@etcm.com
Nathan Bates - 678-454-0999
Kim Waid - 706-972-0023 (cell) - kimwaid@hotmail.com

DECEMBER CELEBRATIONS

BIRTHDAYS



1-Dec Gene Rivers
2-Dec Bud Settles
4-Dec James Jonason
5-Dec Michael Suzor
7-Dec Bob Martin
10-Dec Zach Elliott
10-Dec Helen Gordon
11-Dec Laura Rogne
19-Dec Edna Marshall
20-Dec Vicki Christensen
20-Dec Chuck Maatta
21-Dec Rabbit Armstrong
25-Dec Diana Barbato
26-Dec Timothy Christensen

ANNIVERSARIES



9-Dec Juanita & Kermit Littleton
11-Dec Rabbit & Bobbie Armstrong
16-Dec George & Sara Eubanks
23-Dec Phyllis & Richard Nagel
24-Dec Jim & Priscilla Smith
27-Dec Linda & Richard Bowers
27-Dec Don & Nancy Burkhalter
27-Dec Chris & Larry Westerman

Merry Christmas!

I want to take this opportunity to wish you all a very Merry Christmas. Working here at Hope is a joy for me year round, and I appreciate all your support and friendship. Have a wonderful time celebrating with your families.

- Ellen Ottinger

December Worship Assistants

Assisting Ministers

6 Nicholas Christensen
13 Maureen Bremm
20 Vicki Christensen
24 Laura Rogne
27 Laura Rogne

Lectors 8:15

6 Carol Ashcraft
13 (No 8:15 Service)
20 Jan Austin
24 Carol Ashcraft (4 PM)
27 Kermit Littleton

Greeters 8:15

6 Sally Burke & Charlene Ivey
13 (No 8:15 Service)
20 Rich & Kay Hein
24 TBA
27 Kermit & Juanita Littleton

Ushers 8:15

6 Sally Burke & Charlene Ivey
13 (No 8:15 Service)
20 Rich & Kay Hein
24 TBA
27 Kermit & Juanita Littleton

Acolytes 8:15

6 Hope Bobak
13 (No 8:15 Service)
20 Bryan Bremm
24 Bryan Bremm (4 PM)
27 Hope Bobak

Communion 8:15

6 Rich & Kay Hein
13 (No 8:15 Service)
20 TBA
24 Roger & Carol Ashcraft (4 PM)
27 TBA

Counters

Jim Peterson & Vern Haugen
Bill Are & Shawn Stoffer
Emil Harvey & Stan Ashworth

Chris Westerman & Vern Haugen

10:45

Bill Strawser
Judy Kruger
Emil Harvey
Ron Rogne (7 PM)
Rena Ashworth

10:45

Joanne Cleberg & Elaine Chambers
Vern & Betty Haugen
Jim & Jean Lyons
Bud Cochran & Sylvia Johnson (7 PM)
Bill & Kat Are

10:45

Kristie Drost & Brannen Trahan
Bill & Barbara Fail
Keith & Donna Sadler
TBA
Richard & Linda Bowers

10:45

Bryan Bremm
Cody Hinton
Justen Trahan
TBA (7 PM)
TBA

10:45

Bill & Jan Strawser
Rudy & Judy Kruger
Emil & Judy Harvey
Ron & Laura Rogne (7 PM)
Stan & Rena Ashcraft

Worship Assistants for the Dedication Service, so far: Lector, Jan Austin; Acolyte, Hope Bobak; Communion Assistants, Helen Gordon, Carolyn Maatta, Steve & Jan Austin

The Hope Staff

Church: 706.636.HOPE (4673)

E-mail: hopeelca@ellijay.com

Pastor Smedley: 706.692.2557

Accompanist: Rae Reta Peel: 706.635.6115

Music Director: Bob Martin: 706.635.4986

Minister of Discipleship\Keeping In Touch Ministry Director:

Laura Rogne: 706.276.1614

Administrative Assistant: Ellen Ottinger

Church: 706.636.4673

Home: 706.276.2375

E-mail: esotting@ellijay.com

Maintenance: Nancy Hinton: 706.280.1970



"Anchored in His Word/Ministering in His Mountains"

Officers & Congregational Council

President Christine Westerman

Vice President Emil Harvey

Secretary Richard Nagel

Treasurer Roger Ashcraft

Financial Secretary Steve Austin

Council Members:

Michael Bates Juanita Littleton

Nathan Bates Shawn Stoffer

Diane Burton Kim Waid

Please contact any council member if you have any suggestions, questions, or concerns. Council meetings are held on the third Wednesday of each month at 7 PM. Meetings are open to all and your presence is welcomed.