



April Whispers 2026

Hope United Church of Christ



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Dear Friends,

It was an interesting conversation considering how close Easter was...

“What do you mean do I still believe in the Resurrection?” Derek said, avoiding eye contact with me. “I don’t know if I believe in the church anymore. I wasn’t talking about the Resurrection.” Derek had spent the past hour telling me everything he thought was wrong with the church: sexual abuse scandals, health-and-wealth prosperity-gospel swindlers, consumeristic cultural tendencies, and what has come to be called “church hurt.” Derek, once active in our church, had quietly stopped attending years ago and he was almost daring me, the new preacher, to invite him back.

The reality is that Derek is not alone. We are witnessing what researchers call “the largest and fastest religious shift in U.S. history,” with over 40 million adults having left church communities in the last 25 years. Though 62% of US adults still identify as Christians that is well down from the world I grew up in. In fact, it’s dropped 9 points just in the last ten years. At this rate, by the time today’s kindergartener graduates high school, more people will be outside the church than inside it. And, let’s be honest, if we quit counting those who only show up occasionally, we’ve already passed that point some time ago. A massive 75% of US adults aged 18–34 do not go to church regularly, a culture-shifting number unless it changes.

Friends, these numbers are not just statistics. They’re names. Faces. People we’ve prayed for, counseled, and cried with. We feel their absence every Sunday. How do we minister effectively in such an environment?

Well, there is both good news and bad news when it comes to that question. The bad news is that most churches will fail at real ministry. We fail because we all want the church we grew up in, forgetting that that church hasn’t existed since we were a child and can’t exist again any more than Nicodemus can return to his mother’s womb. The good news is that the Spirit of God is still blowing and, for those sensitive to the Spirit’s presence, new birth/re-birth is not only possible but probable.

Of course, it means listening, listening to not to what we ourselves want as much as to what others are saying, learning where their spirits are hurting and offering them the Holy Spirit as a balm for the pain in their lives, and becoming agents of God’s Spirit focusing on his purposes more than our own agenda. Interestingly enough, where these things all come together the church is not just surviving but thriving.

While the traditional aspects of religious behavior (e.g., church attendance) have dropped to all-time lows, spirituality (e.g., prayer) is actually on the rise in America. Young adults in particular are asking questions like “Who am I?” “Where did I come from?” and “Why am I here?” People are looking for meaning and purpose in life. We in the Church are better positioned than anyone to help people in their search for those answers, but to do so we have to connect with people who are skeptical of religion and view the church a lot differently than most of us do. But, it’s Easter and there’s no better time to begin proclaiming the good news about life and re-birth!

Peace and blessings,

Pastor Gene



Hope Happenings

Debbie Mader, Worship Committee

Gathering sap from Maple trees and cooking it down into syrup has been a spring tradition in my family for generations. Just as a Maple tree must weather the harsh freezing and thawing cycles of winter to release its sweetness, followers of Jesus often undergo seasons of personal challenge before they are ready to be “tapped” for a greater purpose. Here are some worship opportunities to strengthen your faith and develop a more personal relationship with God.

Maundy Thursday – April 2nd at 6:30 p.m. (Sanctuary)

- Holy Communion, interpretation of elements of the Last Supper

Guest Musician: Joyce Josie

Liturgist: Dawn Mason

Usher: Ben Bodoh

Good Friday – April 3rd at 6:30 p.m. (Sanctuary)

- Stripping of the altar
- Reflections on the Seven Last Words of Christ from the Cross
- Ending the service by leaving the church in silence

Guest Musician: Carmen Riebel

Liturgist: Bryan Hahn

Usher: Dennis Vogt

Easter – April 5th:

- 6:30 a.m. Sunrise Service (in Sanctuary) includes redressing of the altar

Usher: Gordie Vong

- Easter Breakfast prepared by Circle of Hope served immediately following the Sunrise service
- 10:15 a.m. Easter Worship Service (in Sanctuary)

Liturgist: Marlyn Hahn

Ushers: Katrina Dering, Ben Bodoh

April 12th -

Liturgist: Allison Gleisner

Usher: Dennis Vogt

April 19th -

Liturgist: Kris Steiger

Usher: Gordie Vong

April 26th - Blessing of Vehicles

Liturgist: Sam Bailey

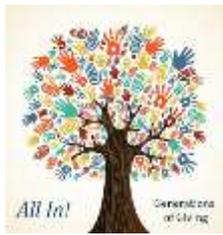
Usher: Ben Bodoh

May 3rd - Invite a Friend/Fill a Pew

Liturgist: Todd Gleisner

Usher: Katrina Dering, Dennis Vogt





Stewardship

UPDATE!!! We have extended the **DEADLINE to April 5th**-The directory is coming along nicely, and we would like to thank everyone who has had their picture taken so far. We will be taking pictures on April 5th, if you haven't had your picture taken yet. If you would like to provide your own, please email your picture to hopeuccfremont@outlook.com. Pictures must be from the waist up if possible. Please contact Cindy Kohl 920-450-6623, Lori Schmidt 920-497-1492 or Jan Lamers at 920-428-6415 with questions. Thank you!!

OH NO!!! I forgot my offering envelope, not to worry we now have offering envelopes in the Pew Offering box for you to use! Grab an envelope, check the box & fill out your name.

A BIG THANK YOU!!! Glenn Schmidt & Steve Schmidt for making and installing the new holders. They look wonderful!!

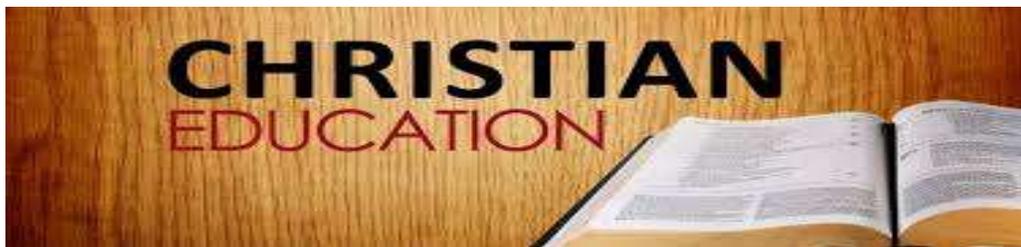


Circle of Hope has been busy.....they have a great assortment of quilts to choose from!

They make great Easter gifts!

Lap \$25.00 Twin \$40.00





Youth Group (11:30-1)

April 12th
April 26th

Confirmation Classes & Sunday School

April 12th
April 19th
April 26th



Sunday, May 17, we will welcome new members to our congregation as we confirm several of our church's youth who have been preparing for this day for some time.

We also wish to extend an invitation to anyone else who has been participating in our congregational life but hasn't official joined the church to contact Pastor Gene (765-505-1866) or Lori Schmidt (920-407-1402) to make arrangements for doing so alongside our confirmands.



Fill-A-Pew Sunday Is Back!

You don't have to wait till fall to invite your family and friends to join us at Hope, we're having "Fill-A-Pew"/"Invite-A-Friend" Sunday again this spring. Sunday, May 3 is the "official" date, though we are glad to have you invite people to join us in worship every Sunday. One addition to our worship celebration for this special Sunday is that we will also enjoy the music ministry of Reflect Worship, featuring Daniel and Catherine Lovett, as part of our service that day. They are from Appleton and playing both traditional worship and contemporary Christian music, they will add a little something extra to our regular 10:15 am worship service.

BLESSING of VEHICLES

Sunday, April 26, 2026
10:00 AM

Hope United Church of Christ
8950 Alpine Rd, Fremont, WI
(in parking lot)

Bring your UTV, ATV, motorcycle, car, truck,
bike, etc. for a blessing for safe travel and
God's protection.
- All are welcome -



Birthdays

Susan Gilbert	4-02
Todd Gleisner	4-03
Ava Gleisner	4-04
Jamison Hosket	4-04
Gary Zuehlke	4-07
Gary Weiss	4-08
Sandy Rasmussen	4-14
Larry Behm	4/20
Benjamin Selsing	4/22
AJ Schmidt	4/27
Leland Barz	4/29



Anniversaries



Gordon & Cindy Vong	4-01	47 years
Roger & Sue Arndt	4-11	56 years
Brian & Dawn Mason	4-21	14 years
Louis & Victoria Kottke	4-26	51 years

**BY
THE
NUMBERS**

	Income	Expenses	Avr. Attendance Mthly
<u>Beginning Balance</u>	\$155,752.43	\$160,560.66	
January	\$ 7,302.81	\$13,272.12	49
February		\$12,452.81	51
	\$	\$159,741.35	



You are cordially invited to attend a special Congregation Meeting on Sunday, April service. The meeting has been called for the purpose of making decisions regarding the upgrading of our sanctuary's audio/visual equipment, its capabilities, and funding for the proposed project. See you there!

Hope Church Sound and Vision Fund

HOPE 1860 toHOPE 2026

- 1860 - Hope was organized as German and Swiss immigrants gathered together to worship in each others homes.
- 1874 - HOPE Congregation was officially organized with 32 members. The church was an abandoned School House that was moved to the east side of Fremont and next to the Pioneer Cemetery
- 1903 - The Congregation decided to build a new Sanctuary on the west of the river. This is where it sits today. This was at a cost of \$1500.
Todays cost would be over \$55,000.
- 1922 - We built the parsonage. This was at a cost of \$4,275.
Todays cost would be over \$81,000.
- 1948 - The building experienced reconstruction as the entrance, seating arrangement and the Altar were moved from the west side of the church to the east at a cost of \$25,000. Todays cost would be over \$336,000.
- 1998 - We took out a loan and started a fundraiser to build our fellowship hall. The cost was in excess of \$250,000. Todays cost would be over \$498,000.
- 2026 - Today, 160 years later we do have one of the most beautiful Churches in Wisconsin but we need to advance our dated sound and visual equipment.
Sound and Visual \$60,000.

Hebrews 13:16 "Do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased."

In 1860 our Ancestors realized that the needs of the Church change. And from generation to generation we reinforced, rebuilt and altered all that would be needed for future Congregations. Today, our Congregation enjoys these sacrifices.

But the needs continue to change and now its up to us.....and its our turn.

The Sound and Visual project will maximize our ability to understand the Word and the Glory of GOD. But it comes at a cost. To do this we need everyones help.

2 Corinthians 9:7 "Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver."

Its up to us and its our turn. Please contribute to our cause.

Question please call:

D. Schmidt 540-6181 M. Hahn 222-2222 W. Weiss 222-2222 B. Hahn 222-2222



April 2026

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1 Lenten Soup Supper 6:00pm Service 6:30pm	2 Maundy Thursday Service 6:30pm	3 Good Friday Service 6:30pm	4
5 Sunrise Service 6:30am Easter Breakfast Easter Worship 10:15	6 Education Committee 5:30pm	7 Bible study Romans 4pm	8	9	10	11
12 Confirmation Class 9:30 Family Worship 10:15 Sunday School Special Congregational Meeting Youth Group	13	14 Bible study Romans 4pm	15	16	17	18
19 Confirmation Class 9:30 Family Worship 10:15 Sunday School	20 Whispers Deadline	21 Bible study Romans 4pm	22	23	24	25
26 Confirmation Class 9:30 Blessing of Vehicles 10:00am Family Worship 10:15 Youth Group	27	28 Bible study Romans 4pm	29	30		