Hi-Lines December 2023



HOUSE OF PRAYER

Is a gathering of God's people connecting our faith to our daily lives so that all would encounter Christ in each person.



Rooted in Ritual



In this Advent season and the weeks leading up to Christmas, we find signs of ritual all around us. From the music we hear on the radio (certain songs a little too often), to the way we decorate our houses. As we move from

Pastor Eric Luedtke

houses. As we move from the Thanksgiving holiday

through Advent and into Christmas, I am struck by the many foods that become ritual in many of our lives. Of course, as a pastor, I would be remiss in not pointing out the ritual that so many Christians have of gathering for worship to celebrate the birth of Jesus.

When done well, there is something powerful about ritual in the ways that it connects us to something bigger than ourselves. In Judaism festival days are linked not only to ritual but also to story – often the story is intertwined in the ritual so that one is not shared without the other. The challenge can come when ritual is separated from its purpose. When we lose the "why" in our ritual we cease to have meaning and leads to us saying things like "we've always done it this way."

What are your rituals? What are the activities, events, music, and foods that you look forward to in this season? I really would love to hear what some of you do (stop by my office and share your stories, send me an email, drop off some baked goods – HA!).

Beyond thinking about what your rituals are, I invite you in this season to consider some questions around your rituals:

- Does this ritual bring me joy or does it make me weary?
- Is this a ritual I want to share with others or do I want to keep it for myself?
- Who else do I know that participates in this ritual, and maybe we can do it together?

When you consider WHY these rituals are important to you and your family, you may just find a deepened sense of joy in these moments. You may find rituals you are willing to celebrate as something from the past that can be let go. You may discover a new way for your family to connect.

In this season of Advent, of preparing and waiting, I pray that the rituals you choose bring you joy and give you life. And may all of our rituals remind us of God's presence in our lives, Emmanuel, God with us.

Advent & Christmas at House of Prayer



December 10th - Festival of Carols 10:00 am

Combined Liturgical and ReFuel Worship Service

December 17th - Liturgical Worship - 9:30 am

ReFuel Coffeehouse Worship - 11:00 am

Childrens' Christmas Program at Woodlake 9:00 am

December 24th - No Morning Service

ReFuel Christmas Candlelight Worship - 2:00 pm Liturgical Christmas Candlelight Worship - 4:00 pm

December 31st - Liturgical Worship - 9:30 am

ReFuel Worship - 11:00 am

Leadership Ministry Team Update

Relationships



Caity Wright President

Happy December everyone! The topic of this month's article is an easy one in my opinion; it's Relationships. I think House of Prayer absolutely excels in relationships and it is clear why it is one of our values.

Relationships are as much about being open to new relationships than nurturing and growing the ones that you already have. If you think about our values; Welcoming, Relationships, Compassionate Community,

and Openness, each of them is a part of Relationships. Being welcoming and open to everyone is a huge part of relation-

ships. Compassion and community are also vital. They are all so intertwined but I see the center being the relationships. And that's true of us too, relationships are truly central to House of Prayer.

I keep joking that Grandma Donna can't get a shoutout every single article, but this one is inevitable. If you didn't know my grandma, she was the relationship queen. There was no visitor to HOP that went unwelcomed, no friend or family member that went without a phone call on their birthday, she was the best. She embodied the values of HOP, but especially relationships. I see and think of her every day and one of the places I see her most is through relationships. She was so loving and her people knew that they were absolutely adored by her. I miss her so much but I'm so glad there are so many places and relationships where I see her.

Even though Grandma Donna isn't physically here anymore I still have lots of HOP grandparents, parents, and friends to watch over me and there are very few things I am more grateful for. I know that I forever have a home at House of Prayer and true friends in the people here. That's why this article was easy. Relationships are easy here. Whether I've known you my whole life or if it's only been a short time, it doesn't matter. Once you're here, you're part of the community. End of story. And I am so immensely grateful for that.



Monthly Finance Report

October and YTD operating deficit continues to track better than budget. Year to date we are \$32,000 below the budgeted deficit, with an actual deficit of \$20,163 vs a budgeted deficit of \$52,403. It was in the plan of the budget to use dedicated funds to completely meet the needs of the 23-24 year.

REVENUE:

Giving was a bit softer last month, leaving year-to-date totals flat to budget. Total revenue is also tracking to budget, with continued positive variance from one-time and contract rent income.

EXPENSES:

Most expenses were very close to budget, with some extra savings in the Property category, due to no scheduled or unanticipated HVAC expenses. We continue to have savings in HR until fully staffed with open ministry and permanent RALY positions.

God created us for relationship, with God and one another. While we continue to value the relationships we have within our membership, we also acknowledge the church is not simply a building that exists to solely meet the needs of its members. The Church is God's people doing God's work in the world. As such, we are committed to minister to those within the congregation and to the community.



Corinthians 12:12 For just as the body is one and ha nany members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body; so it is with Christ.

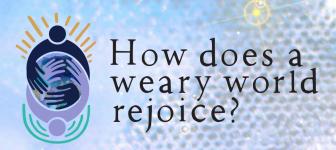
Leadership Ministry Team Update

DEDICATED ACTIVITY:

In October, funds were received for Facilities, and for Fall Festival rental fees. Dedicated funds used in October paid for phase one of the parking lot patch repairs, and minor fund amounts for Fall Festival expenses and Preschool supplies.

At House of Prayer we have an Evangelism Dedicated fund. Within the last month an opportunity came up to go beyond our pre-planned outreach efforts. House of Prayer provided funding for Reconciling Works, which is a Lutheran organization celebrating it's 50th Anniversary of working toward equity, inclusion, and welcome of marginalized communities. Just as Jesus was flexible and did miracles as he was traveling on the way to another town, House of Prayer reaches out when unplanned situations arise.

House of Prayer Lutheran Church							
	Op	erating S	ummary				
	Oct-23			YTD			
	Actual	Budget	\$ Var	Actual	Budget	\$ Var	
Income							
4000 Offerings	25,516	31,200	(5,684)	121,553	123,500	(1,947	
4100 Rental Revenue	12,020	9,967	2,053	39,520	36,166	3,354	
4609 Other Worship Revenue	293	360	(67)	823	1,324	(501	
4700 Preschool Revenue	8,726	9,000	(274)	20,834	21,400	(566	
Total Income	46,555	50,527	(3,972)	182,730	182,390	340	
Total Expenses	51,848	59,924	(8,076)	202,893	234,793	(31,900	
NET OPERATING GAIN (DEFICIT)	\$ (5,293)	\$ (9,397)	\$ 4,104	\$ (20,163)	\$ (52,403)	\$ 32,240	
DEDICATED FUND ACTIVITY							
	Oct 2023			Fiscal YTD			
DEDICATED FUNDS RECEIVED							
Evangelism	100.00			2,500.00			
Facilities Fund	1,150.00			5,385.00			
Fall Festival	709.00			709.00			
Worship	-			2,098.00			
Preschool	52.00			6,696.09			
TOTAL	2,011.00			17,388.09			
Less: DEDICATED FUNDS USED							
Evangelism	-			(123.00)			
Facilities Fund	(4,980.00)			(4,980.00)			
Fall Festival	(450.00)			(450.00)			
Worship	-			(2,098.65)			
Preschool	(481.03)			(8,238.00)			
TOTAL	(5,911.03)			(15,889.65)			
NET DEDICATED FUND GAIN (DEFICIT)	(3,900.03)			1,498.44			
TOTAL GAIN (DEFICIT)	(9,193.03)			(18,664.56)			



Advent

In this season of Advent, we gather around the theme "How Does a Weary World Rejoice?" We may recognize these words as a phrase from the beloved hymn "O, Holy Night" but we may not always feel joy in our weariness. During this season you are invited to engage that question through a variety of opportunities and tools that are being made available. Choose one or all of these ways to engage the season of Advent and ponder the question: "How will you rejoice in your Weariness?"

Advent Devotionals

Pickup this full color devotional book near the Welcome Desk on Sunday mornings. You can read a page a day - focus on the beautiful artwork, meditate on the hymns, write out responses to the questions, share the book with a friend and read it together. The options are endless. There's also an electronic version available on the HOP website on the Announcements page.

Advent Calendars

We have two calendars available for you printed at the Welcome Desk.

Do you like to color? Markers crayons r

Do you like to color? Markers, crayons, pencils, we've got a daily coloring Advent Calendar with daily activity ideas (it's geared toward children, but aren't we all children at heart, especially as we await Christmas?) If a calendar you can cross off each day is more your style, we have that, too. Just a quick thought for each day - some invite you to reach out to others, some invite you into personal activities, one at a time these Advent ideas will take you from December 1st to Christmas Eve. If you aren't able to pick one up in person, you can print one from the HOP website on the Announcements page.

Visio Divina Bible Study

10am - Monday, Dec 4, 11, 18 - Parish Hall We'll gather together for a multi-sensory Bible Study. A chance to hear scripture read out loud and meditate on artwork. We'll read statements from the artists that created the art about their inspiration. We'll have art supplies so you can create your own art in response.



And, of course, WORSHIP - See times and details on the cover page.

Gathered in Gratitude - Collaboration Thanksgiving Worship

We had a festive evening of worship and fellowship as we gathered with Tapestry, Woodlake, Oak Grove here at House of Prayer for our annual Thanksgiving Eve worship service. A wonderful joint choir was in full voice; Intern Joe Jorgensen delivered a heartfelt message reflecting on scripture; we worshipped in Spanish and English, and we enjoyed lively conversation with pie following our time of worship. We look forward to these opportunities to share with our partners in ministry across Richfield and give thanks to God for the opportunity to serve our community together. If you have questions regarding this event, please contact Pastor Eric at eluedtke@hoplc.org, or Roselyn Hanson Weber at rhansonweber@hoplc.org.





Festival of Carols *Rejoicing in a Weary World*Sunday, December 10, 10:00 am

Please join the Combined HOP & Woodlake Adult Choirs, HOP Handbell Choir, HOP Winds, Josh Countryman, and the HOP Sunday School youth for a special service celebrating this Advent/Christmas season, as we anticipate and rejoice over the coming of Christ to our world.

This expanded Service of Lessons and Carols has its origins in the music of the Church of England. It is shaped around several scripture readings that convey the Christmas story, moving from the promise of the Savior to bring light to the darkness, the miracle of the annunciation, to the joy of Christ's birth. The readings are interspersed with festive carols, hymns, and traditional music for choirs and congregation, which guide our reflection and response to each of the lessons.



Come worship with us as we celebrate this very special season of the Church Year!

If you would like to **sing with the Combined Choirs** in leading this festive service, please join us for our upcoming rehearsals:

Wednesday 12/6 - 6:30-8:30 pm Saturday 12/9 - 5-7 pm Dress Rehearsal Sunday 12/10 - ca. 8:30 – 9:45 rehearsal prior to service

If you have any questions, please contact Roselyn Hanson Weber at <u>rhansonweber@hoplc.org</u>.

Altar Guild



Altar Guild will not be meeting on the second Monday of the month in December. Instead, we will gather at the church on Friday, December 22, 2023, at

1:00 pm to set up the Poinsettias for Christmas. Anyone interested in assisting Altar Guild in enriching our Christmas celebration by participating with the poinsettia set up, is welcome to join us.

Altar guild annual sanctuary cleaning Monday, January 8, 1:00pm

Please join Altar Guild in cleaning the sanctuary pews and Altar. Bring a bucket and rags. Let's make our sanctuary radiant for the in coming New Year! If you have any questions, please contact Lerae Finn at leraef@comcast.net...



Book Discussion Group

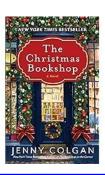
House of Prayer Book Discussion Group will meet on Thursday, December 7th, at 1:30 pm in the Office Conference Room.

At our December meeting, we will be discussing: *One Plus One by JoJo Moyes*

In January, we will be discussing: *The Christmas Bookshop by Jenny Colgan*

We welcome anyone who loves to read! For more information about Book Club, please contact Sandy Williams at srwllms70@hotmail.com.





Card Ministry

If you're looking for a fun, creative activity that brightens someone's day, come join us for Card Ministry on the 6th of December, from 10:00-11:30 am. We will only meet once this month, and will go back to meeting on the 1st and 3rd Wednesdays of the month in January.

We will also not be selling cards on the last Sunday this month, as it is New Year's Eve. We will return to selling cards on the last Sunday of the month in January. In the meantime, if you have any questions, contact Nancy Bjornstad at ne bjorn6203@yahoo.com.



Game Meet-up

Do you love card and board games? Want to learn some new ones or play old favorites?

Join Dave and Sara From 1:30 to 5;00 pm on Friday Dec. 1st in the Narthex. Come in the door with the awning.



We will have games to play, but you can bring your own. It is your responsibility to keep track of your games. Covered drinks are allowed.

Want to take the bus? 77th St E & Chicago Ave S Stop Number: 48623 Route 540

If you have any questions, please contact Sara Barnaby at anriasgames@gmail.com.

Minister of Congregational Care (MCC) Position Posted

We have received interest from a diverse slate of strong candidates who are passionate about congregational care for our open staff position. Our team have conducted first round interviews and will continue with a second round in early January. Once a primary candidate is selected for the position, we may need to have a special congregational meeting to extend a pastoral call to this part-time staff member. Watch for additional information in January as the process moves forward and we look forward to introducing a selected candidate with the congregation. If you have specific questions about the position or the process, contact Pastor Eric at eluedtke@hoplc.org 612.866.8471 ext. 2.



2024 Offering Envelopes Available

For those who use our preprinted offering envelopes for HOP giving, you may pick up your packet in the office. Envelop packets are located next to the staff mailboxes, and are sorted alphabetically by last name.



We do have a few extra packets available, please contact pbenson@hoplc.org or 612-682-3158 ext. 4 to make a request. If you're looking for another easy alternative to give to HOP, try our HOP Giving page at hoplc.org/give, for an automated, secure, paper free option. Thank you for your generous support of House of Prayer. Contact Patti Benson at pbenson@hoplc.org for questions.

Coffee & Donut Fellowship

Our ever-popular fellowship hour continues to be a wonderful time for gathering and connecting. We whole-heartedly thank our devoted volunteers



who faithfully make the coffee, pick up the donuts, set-up, serve and clean-up every Sunday morning. We look forward to more friends helping with this special church ministry wherever you can pitch-in. *Youth can help, too!* The sign-up board is available every Sunday morning in the Narthex or contact the church office to be added to the list. Please connect with Andry Jurcich (andryj@invisik.com) to get involved.

Poinsettia Garden & Year-End Giving

Between Thanksgiving and Christmas, we find ourselves in a mind frame of gratitude and giving. Many of us give of our time and finances during this season thanking God for our blessings.

As you consider the importance of House of Prayer in your life, consider a special gift to boost our shared ministry.

Your financial gifts help to fund outreach to our community, provide a welcome environment for children and youth, and support the spiritual lives of our members. An extra gift during this season will help us head into 2024 with confidence that we can grow into the plans God has for House of Prayer.

Thank you! Pastor Eric

Please complete the pink form available at the Welcome Desk or give online at https://hoplc.org/give. If you have any questions, contact Patti Benson at pbenson@hoplc.org/612-866-8471 ext. 4.





Fall Festival

On Saturday, November 4, we held our annual Fall Festival.

We had 17 vendors, plus the House of Prayer items (i.e. knitting, silent auction and bake sale). A great afternoon was had by all, with many interesting items to peruse and buy.

We are looking forward to next year, and we want to thank everyone who put so much time into making this event successful; including the Fall Festival team, those who baked goodies, attended to the tables, made crafts, and donated items for the auction.

We are blessed to have a community of people who are willing to put the time and effort into this Festival, which raises money for many different church needs.

Please contact Julie Bonebrake at <u>jabonebrake@yahoo.com</u> with any questions



RALY, Youth, Children and Family

Thankfulness

Hello from Preschool! We can hardly believe 3 months have passed since our school year began! It's wonderful to watch the holidays through the children's eyes and Thanksgiving was such a fun time for us. We focus on gratitude and thankfulness during the month of November and we were able to practice with each other, as well as host our first annual Grateful Gathering. 45 of the children's family mem-



bers joined us to watch the children sing, visit our room to show what they've been working on, and hear our gratitude for them. We have plenty of fun activities planned for December and can't wait to watch the season through their eyes! If you have questions about preschool, contact Nicole at

nolson@hoplc.org.







RALY, Children, Youth and Family

HOP Sunday School

For children up to 5th Grade



We are looking forward to a fun-filled month this December as we prepare for the Christmas holiday. Please save the date for our various collaborative opportunities and come join us!

Sunday, December 3rd at 10:30am: First Sunday of Advent—Make your own Advent candle to mark the days until Christmas.

We will also be collecting our God's Global Barnyard boxes of loose change to see how much money we raised and choose the Good Gift we will donate to help a family. Meet at the "Church Barn" in the Narthex. (No worries if you don't have a Barnyard collection box. Join us to help pick the gift! www.goodgifts.elca.org.)

Saturday, December 9th at 6:00–7:00pm: Festival of Carols Rehearsal—Join our intergenerational choir to sing one to two songs during the Festival of Carols service.

Sunday, December 10th at 10:00am: Festival of Carols Sunday Service— Meet at 9:45am in the Library.

Sunday, December 17th at 8:00–10:00am: RALY Collaborative Christmas Pageant— Join RALY (our collaborative youth group program with Woodlake Lutheran) for this year's pageant at Woodlake Lutheran. Rehearsal will be at 8:00AM and the pageant will be during Woodlake's 9:00AM worship service. Woodlake Lutheran is located at 2120 W 76th St in Richfield.

Sunday, December 24th at 4:00pm: Christmas Eve (Liturgical) Service-- Join the inter-generational choir to sing one or two songs during the service.

Sunday, December 31st: Winter Break—No Sunday School

Contact Kristi Liu at <u>Kline010@umn.edu</u> or Andry Jurcich at <u>andryj@invisik.com</u> with questions.

RALY Recap - November Richfield Area Lutheran Youth (6th-9th Grade)

RALY had a great month of giving back, having fun, and learning about God!

We started the month with RALY Fear Factor, where youth faced their fears and heard a message that "God is with you" despite those fears.

On RALY Leads night, youth learned about a core discipleship skill... listening where we read the story of Mary and Martha!

Next, it was onto Feed My Starving Children where 5 youth and 3 adults packed meals for people all across the world.

Finally, 7 youth attended our fun RALY Adventure night where we headed to Urban Air for fun and fellowship!



December RALY Calendar

December 6 (RALY Serves)- Dinner Provided. Shop Till We Drop! Through LSS we'll head to Target to buy a gift(s) for a youth in need this holiday season. *Optional - Bring \$20 to donate to this cause!

December 13th (RALY Leads) - Dinner Provided. This night, guest star Andy Pokel will be there to prepare our group for the RALY Christmas Pageant (Sunday December 17th). All are welcome to attend and participate!

December 20th (RALY Celebrates!) - Dinner Provided. RALY is having a White Elephant Christmas Party! All youth should bring a wrapped gift from home to share as part of a white elephant gift exchange! Gifts can be fun, silly, useful, or anything in between.

Community Engagement

Every Meal

We are excited to be supporting Every Meal in the Richfield community as the distribution partner at Richfield STEM.



EVERY MEAL

This means that every week a team of volunteers from House of Prayer will distribute food to lockers of the children who have signed up to receive Every Meal food assistance. Our team delivers on Thursday afternoons at 2:20pm (may vary on vacation weeks) by meeting at the school, gathering the distribution inventory, and putting bags into lockers. Every week we are trimming our time and currently, we are able complete the task in about one hour.

Please consider making a special gift this holiday season!

Contact Kim Houle at 612-558-0634 for more information. Together we can fight child hunger in our community.



Adopt-A-Drain

Thanks to your hard work, the drains are clear and our water is cleaner!

You've done a lot of work to remove leaves and dirt and other debris from your drain. Thank you!

Now it's time to take a minute to let us know how much debris you picked up from streets and sidewalks around your drain. If you've already reported what you've cleaned, then your work is done, if not, please consider letting us know how much debris you removed - reporting is quick and makes a huge difference.

This information provides data to cities and watershed organizations about the debris in the streets. It helps us secure funding to keep the program alive and inspires more people to be part of this movement. With over 14,000 people working together nationwide, collectively, we've collected over 650,000 pounds of leaves, trash, and other debris before it got to the water!

Keep up the great work protecting and improving the quality of our local waterways! Don't forget to report your work here: mn.adopt-a-drain.org.





VEAP

Please place non-perishable food items in our designated VEAP tub in the narthex. Terri Behrends-Singer will transport your donated items to the VEAP distribution center.

VEAP also publishes a monthly "wish list" that you can check and help fulfill: https://veap.org/ways-to-give/most-needed-items/
This page also provides a link to order directly from Amazon to have items delivered directly to VEAP.

Contact Terri Behrends-Singer at <u>terri@hr4u.org</u> if you have questions about VEAP.



Community Engagement

Tapestry Fundraiser a Success

On Saturday, November 18, fourteen HOP members attended the silent auction brunch fundraiser in support of Tapestry meeting their annual budget goals. There were several other churches supporting this ministry and we are very fortunate to be able to celebrate their 9th year of ministry in Richfield. The event raised \$10,000 toward Tapestry's ministry!

Along with Sunday evening (5:00 pm) worship and praise, Tapestry offers Spanish language courses, English language courses, and a Tuesday community meal to everyone. They worship at Oak Grove Lutheran Church (70th & Lyndale).

Contact Pastor Eric at <u>eluedtke@hoplc.org</u> if you have questions about Tapestry.



HOP Foundation

Charitable Giving

Remember House of Prayer Foundation in Your End-Of-Year Charitable Giving! The most popular time to make a charitable donation is November and December. It's so popular that this period of year-end giving is often called the "Giving Season."

The HOP Foundation's goal is to preserve all contributions for perpetuity and award grants using the actual earnings from those invested contributions to worthy House of Prayer and community out-reach projects. The HOP Foundation is a separate 501C3 charity from House of Prayer, so checks intended for the Foundation must be separate from House of Prayer and made out to the HOP Foundation. Our total grant awards for 2023 was \$33,800 and our current investment balance is \$733,011.22. The HOP Foundation committee meets and awards grants during the year. Besides monetary gifts there are many ways to donate to the Foundation, such as a gift in memory of someone, appreciated stock, QCD (Qualified Charitable Distribution) from an IRA and by remembering the Foundation within your estate plan.

Projects the HOP Foundation has supported in 2023 include Music Celebrations, Luther Park, HOP Preschool Supplies, HOP office laptops and Friendship Fund. Community organizations supported this year are Conversations with Friends (an immigration project), Tapestry to sponsor work permits and Mpls Synod ELCA Racial Justice project.

THANK YOU, House of Prayer for your continued support of the HOP Foundation! The HOP Foundation welcomes and recognizes any contribution and will send a letter you can use as proof of your tax-deductible contribution. If you have any questions about the HOP Foundation, please ask one of our board members. Current members are: Charlie Robbins, Jill Johnson, Sandy Williams, Jon Kietzer, Steve Pierson, Jill Larson, Julie Bonebrake and Pastor Luedtke as a non-voting member.

House of Prayer Lutheran Church 7625 Chicago Avenue South Richfield, MN 55423

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

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In-Person Worship Services:

Sundays at 9:30 a.m. & 11:00 a.m. www.hoplc.org/recordings



The *Hi-Lines* is published by the House of Prayer staff and volunteers. Any questions can be directed to Cara Wright, Director of Administration, at cwright@hoplc.org, or Mary Weaver, Administrative Assistant, at mweaver@hoplc.org.

Milestones

WEDDING ANNIVERSARIES

Anniversaries (50+ years and 5 year increments)

Couples	Date	Years
Ronald and Susanne Erickson	12/18	52
Michael and Pamela Murphy	12/18	53
Larry and Mary Markes	12/19	53
Ernie & Jeanne Lindstrom	12/30	63

MEMORIAL SERVICES

Sue Zmeskal 10/27

A Look Back



2008 Operation Christmas Child