Hi-Lines January 2024



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.



Can We See Clearly Now?



"If people can't see what God is doing, they stumble all over themselves; But when they attend to what God reveals, they are most blessed."

~Proverbs 29:18 (The Message)

Pastor Eric Luedtke

A more colloquial version of that proverb is, "for lack of vision, the people perish." I appreciate the emphasis that Eugene Peterson places on the first version I offered above. In his common-English-matter-of-fact kind of way, Peterson draws out two important aspects of this verse:

- 1. We need to see what God is doing.
- 2. When we attend to what God reveals, we receive blessing.

Over the past couple of years, I've been fortunate to spend some time with Dr. Jeremy Myers and Kristina Fruge of the Riverside Innovation Hub, a project of the Christensen Center for Vocation at Augsburg University. Kristina and Jeremy have been working with small groups of leaders in local congregations to help them better understand the local context in which they exist and to discern what God is calling them to be part of in that context. In short, they are "attending to what God is revealing."

Over the past year we have spent time at House of Prayer discerning where God is leading us. Building on our Core Values (Welcome, Relationships, Compassionate Community, Openness) we arrived at a vision of *encountering Christ in each person*.

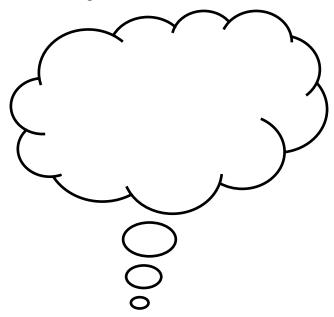
Imagine for just a moment what the world would look like if EVERY person saw Christ in EVERY other person.

No, really.

Pause right now and imagine it.

I'll wait.

And see, I've left you some blank space to write down a thought or two.



It seems like an audacious goal, doesn't it? We can come up with a million reasons for why it can't happen.

But what if ... and hear me out ... what if we actually take steps toward making this happen? What if we lived as though every decision we make could make this a real possibility? How would this change our neighborhoods and our interactions with others?

Continued on Page 2

Can We See Clearly Now?

(continued)

Throughout January we will be exploring this vision through our Mission statement:

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

An expanded version of this statement includes our core values and the statements of our mission:

House of Prayer is a gathering of God's people who value Welcoming, Relationships, Compassionate Community, and Openness. We connect our faith to our daily lives by caring for each other, our neighbor, and our creation; nurturing the gift of music; being inwardly fed to outwardly feed; and collaborating with others so that all would encounter Christ in each person.

Maybe you've already seen these new banners in the narthex that highlight our Mission and Vision.



These statements are not just decorations, they are guiding principles by which we live into our shared ministry at House of Prayer. Starting January 14, we will examine a piece of our Mission and Vision each week in worship. We'll take time to consider tangible questions that we can each explore individually and as a congregation that help us dig deeper into each part of our Mission and Vision. We'll also be challenged each week with an action step, one or more ideas of how we can live out our mission as individuals and as a congregation.

And our Core Values, Mission, and Vision go beyond worship themes in the season of Epiphany, they are the guiding principles that our Leadership Ministry Team use as we make decisions that drive the ministry of House of Prayer; they are the guiding principles that our staff use in shaping how they prioritize the tasks in front of them; they are the guiding principles that each of us, as members of House of Prayer, will use to shape how we participate in God's plan for our community.

Make it a priority to be in worship. Engage conversation during fellowship hour. Attend to what God is revealing in this time and in this space. You will be blessed. *Pastor Eric*

Can We See Clearly Now?

(continued)

Epiphany 2024 - HOP's Mission & Vision

The Epiphany season will be a focus on our Mission and Vision as House of Prayer Lutheran Church.

Our Core Values are based in scripture and ground us in who we are.

Our Mission is what guides us forward with focus toward the vision of what Christ hopes we would accomplish as a congregation.

Each week we study scripture that grounds us and provides an opportunity to consider one tangible way in which we will live out our Mission in the week ahead.





Theme & Description
How Does a Weary World Rejoice? We Trust our Belovedness
So That All Would Encounter Christ in Each Person
Tangible Question: How would our world be different if we treated EVERYONE around us as if they are Jesus?
Action Step: This week, treat one person around you as you would treat Jesus.
Collaborating with Others
Tangible Question: What could House of Prayer do that would be made easier in collaboration with others?
Action Step: Greet one person you don't know well and ask them a "WHEAT" question.
Nurturing the Gift of Music
Tangible Question: How do you engage music in your daily life (radio, recording, performing)?
Action Step: Share the music of House of Prayer with someone that doesn't know our church (invite them to an event, send them a link to our YouTube page, etc.)
Caring for Each Other, Our Neighbor, and Creation
Tangible Question: How does our relationship change when we take care of the people or creation around us?
Action Step: Call someone you haven't seen in worship for a while and see how they are doing. Talk a walk with a friend giving thanks to God for the gifts of nature and neighbor as you walk. Eliminate Single use plastics from your home.
Being Inwardly Fed to Outwardly Feed
Tangible Question: Am I being spiritually nourished by the activities I participate in?
Action Step: Go through the drive-thru and pay for the order of the person behind you in line. When you prepare your next meal, set aside a portion and bring it to a friend or neighbor who would otherwise eat alone. When making your shopping list, add a meal of shelf-stable foods that you will donate to VEAP. Participate in Bible Study or Book Group.

Leadership Ministry Team Update

Monthly Finance Report

November was a good month, with an operating gain of \$5,352 compared to a budgeted deficit of \$8,591. Total revenue was higher than budget by \$7,863. Total expenses were better than budget by \$6,080. Year to date, HOP has a net operating deficit of \$14,811 compared to a budgeted operating deficit of \$60,994. When including dedicated revenue and expense, the year-to-date total deficit is slightly better at \$10,173.

REVENUE

Offerings increased over last month, totaling \$34,000, which was 17% better than budget. Year-to-date offerings are trending close to budget. Additional rent revenue from a new tenant and from one-time rent also helped to bump up total November receipts. Preschool revenue continues to be stable and very close to budget. Year to date total revenue is 4% better than budget

House of Prayer Lutheran Church Operating Summary							
	Actual	Budget	\$ Var	Actual	Budget	\$ Var	
Income	Actual	Budget	y vai	Actual	Buuget	y vai	
4000 Offerings	34.745	29,600	5,145	156,298	153.100	3.198	
4100 Rental Revenue	13.170	9.967	3,203	52,690	46.133	6,557	
4609 Other Worship Revenue	158	418	(260)	981	1,742	(761)	
4700 Preschool Revenue	8,775	9,000	(225)	29,609	30,400	(791)	
Total Income	56,848	48,985	7,863	239,578	231,375	8,203	
Total Expenses	51,496	57,576	(6,080)	254,389	292,369	(37,980)	
NET OPERATING GAIN (DEFICIT)	\$ 5,352	\$ (8,591)	\$ 13,943	\$ (14,811)	\$ (60,994)	\$ 46,183	
DEDICATED FUND ACTIVITY							
	Nov-23			Fiscal YTD			
DEDICATED FUNDS RECEIVED							
Evangelism	364.00			2,864.00			
Facilities Fund	850.00			6,235.00			
Fall Festival	3,771.00			4,545.00			
Worship	230.00			2,328.00			
Preschool	757.00			6,696.00			
TOTAL	5,972.00			22,668.00			
Less: DEDICATED FUNDS USED							
Evangelism	(364.00)			(987.00)			
Facilities Fund	(50.00)			(5,030.00)			
Fall Festival	(100.00)			(550.00)			
Worship	-			(2,099.00)			
Preschool	(961.00)			(9,364.00)			
TOTAL	(1,475.00)			(18,030.00)			
NET DEDICATED FUND GAIN (DEFICIT)	4,497.00			4,638.00			
TOTAL GAIN (DEFICIT)	9,849.00			(10,173.00)			

and similarly higher than last year.

EXPENSES

Expenses are 13% below budget year to date. The main expense savings are the open ministry position, heating costs, delayed HVAC and building repairs. Areas that are higher than budget include the purchase of a laptop for the new Congregational Care Minister and new outside Reconciling In Christ signage. These expenses were in line with future staff plans and HOP mission.

DEDICATED FUND ACTIVITY

The Fall Festival brought in \$3.771 of sales revenue with very little expense incurred for the successful event. Community donations were made to All Nations Indian Church from the special Thanksgiving service collection and Preschool grant funds from the state paid additional wages for HOPP staff.

Happy New Year!

A reminder, the end of the calendar year is not the end of the financial year. House of Prayer ends its financial year June 30.



Leadership Ministry Team Update

My Favorite Time of Year



Caity Wright President

Happy Holidays everyone! I am writing to you in the days leading up to Christmas and New Year's Eve. I can't believe its this time of year already. I should have seen it coming with the amount of darkness we've had each day. It's been deceiving, however, it looks like mid-July outside! I can't remember the last time my parents have been tempted to have Christmas dinner on the patio, but here we find ourselves!

Weather aside, the halls of House of Prayer have been aglow with various groups, events and special worship services that make the season special. Just a short time ago, we had our wonderful Festival of Carols service, and a festival it was! From the choir to the bells and the band, it was such a joyous event that calls on so many of our

church's talents. I so enjoy getting to see people display their hard work and holiday spirit in music.

That service fed directly into our Christmas Eve services, also some of my favorites of the year. We had our ReFuel candlelight service at 2pm and our festive Christmas candlelight service at 4pm. Our worship and music teams worked incredibly hard to put together meaningful services and everyone around the church played a role in the great turnouts we had for each one.

Regardless of how you spend these last days of your calendar year, I hope that everyone enjoyed this entire holiday season. It's a special time at church, yes, but more than that is a wonderful time to spend with friends, family and others and harken to whatever the reason for the season is.

Around House of Prayer

Card Ministry

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

We will also be selling cards on the last Sunday of the month (January 28th). In the meantime, if you have any questions, contact Nancy Bjornstad at nebjorn6203@yahoo.com.



Lonely Library

Our library seems to be the loneliest room in our church, but we do have so many great books for you there! Here are some special titles to consider for your winter reading. Also, go to our online catalog at www.librarything/catalog/

<u>HouseofPrayer</u> to find more books, CD's and DVD's.

- Same Kind of Different as Me (Hall) 920 HAL
- All the Light We Cannot See (Doerr) FIC DOE
- The Color of Water: a Black Man's Tribute to His White Mother (McBride) 974.1 MCB
- Before We Were Yours (Wingate) FIC WIN

These are just a few of the many titles we have in the library. We encourage you to spend some time perusing the list, and invite you to check out a book! For questions, please contact Mary Markes at mmarkes@frontiernet.net.

Altar Guild

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



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..



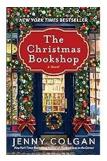
Book Discussion Group

House of Prayer Book Discussion Group will meet on Thursday, January 4, at 1:30 pm in the Office Conference Room.

At our January meeting, we will be discussing: *The Christmas Bookshop* by Jenny Colgan

In February, we will be discussing: *West With Giraffes* by Lynda Rutledge

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





2023 Contribution Statements

HOP will mail your 2023 calendar year contribution statement in mid-January.

We will include on this statement any check, cash or online contributions received or postmarked through December 31, 2023.

Thank you for your continuing generous support of House of Prayer.

Should you have any questions on contribution statements, please contact Patti Benson at pbenson@hoplc.org or 612-882-3158 ext. 4.



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 January 5th 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.

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. We look forward to more fellowship times ahead in the New Year and encourage more friends to volunteer. 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 roster. We especially need a coordinator to keep us organized. Please connect with Andry Jurcich (andryj@invisik.com) to get involved.



Boys and Girls Club Recap



We've learned a lot about the youth from Richfield Middle School last month! One, they love Uno and Baking! Two, they are super nice and devour the snacks we provide! And three, they like coming to Woodlake for WL/HOP sponsored after school activities! Each week approx-

imately 10 kids come from the Boys and Girls Club to participate in various activities. We've built a lot of relationships through laughter and learning together. Big thanks to Mary Weaver, Ken Mandl, Deb Olson, and all the amazing volunteers who have made this program happen! In January, we'll be offering tutoring our kids from the Boys and Girls Club, so if you would like to participate, please email Pr. Neal Cannon (ncannon@woodlakechurch.org).

Festival of Carols 2023—Rejoicing in a Weary World

On Sunday morning December 10th the musicians of HOP and friends joined together to create a special Festival of Carols service for the Second Sunday of Advent. The joyous tones of voices, handbells, wind /brass instruments and organ created a festive musical celebration through word and music. It was a wonderful community collaboration between the singers from HOP and Woodlake Lutheran, the HOP Handbell choir, the HOP Winds, and the HOP Sunday School Children.

Based on the Lessons & Carols tradition of the Church of England, the music was interspersed with scripture readings that relayed the story of Christ's coming into the world. Andry and Matthew Jurcich, along with two of our RALY students, Evelyn Murphy and Leo Paradise, served as readers. The congregation also joined insinging many of the beloved Advent and Christmas hymns. A festive time of fellowship followed the Festival of Carols service, with warm cider and Christmas treats enjoyed by all. Please contact Roselyn Hanson Weber at rhansonweber@hoplc.org if you have any questions.







Christmas Eve at House of Prayer

We Made Room

With friends and family from far and wide, we made room in our hearts and lives for the story of Christmas to strike us once again with awe, mystery, and memory. Whether the season strikes us with joy or grief, sorrow or celebration, we make room for the hope and promise that comes when Christ enters the world as an infant. On Christmas Eve we made room for song and story to enter our lives through handbells, brass, organ, piano, guitar, and voice conveying the ancient story shared once more. Please contact Pastor Eric at eluedtke@hoplc.org if you have any questions.



Minister for Congregational Care

After conducting first round interviews with four candidates, our team has identified a primary candidate with whom we have scheduled a second interview. If both our team and the candidate discern that we should move forward, we anticipate announcing a special congregational meeting in early February to extend a pastoral call to this part-time staff member. Watch for additional information in eNews and Community News as the process moves forward. We look forward to introducing a selected candidate to the congregation and the ways this

role will increase our opportunities to care for one another. If you have specific questions about the position or the process, contact Pastor Eric at eluedtke@hoplc.org or 612.866.8471 ext. 2.



Synod Assembly Delegates Needed

Each year our Minneapolis Area Synod holds Synod Assembly, a gathering of ros- Minneapolis Area Synod tered and lay leaders from across our Synod who make decisions and set the direction for ministry of our Synod. This year at Synod Assembly there will be an election of Bishop (Bishop Ann has served two six year terms, the limit as directed by our Synod constitution) in addition to the regular business of the Assembly. House of Prayer gets to send two lay people to the Assembly as voting members. Synod Assembly is held May 2-4. Additionally, voting members for Synod Assembly are strongly encouraged to attend the Conference Assembly on the morning of Saturday, February 10. If you are interested in serving in this way or want to learn

more about what is involved, please contact Pastor

Eric at eluedtke@hoplc.org or 612.866.8471 ext 2.

RALY, Youth, Children and Family

Happy New Year From HoPP

Happy New Year! We love what the New Year brings and are so excited for what 2024 will hold for the sweet preschoolers in our school. We tend to see skills explode in the first few months of the new year. All of that practice, repetition, and learning in the fall really starts to shine when we return to school after Christmas break. While our days are filled with phonetic learning, math concepts, cutting and gluing skills, finding patterns, and lots and lots of books, we also spend so much time building our community and learning how to deal with disappointment, different opinions, and frustration as well as celebrating joy, collaboration, and success! We hope you all have a wonderful 2024! If you have any questions about HoPP, contact Nicole Olson at nolson@hoplc.org.







RALY, Children, Youth and Family

HOP Sunday School

For children up to 5th Grade



Happy New Year! We excitedly look forward to gathering with all our Sunday School friends again and continuing to learn about God's love for all people though Bible lessons, crafts, songs, and games. Sundays in January we will meet at the Sunday School nook in the Narthex at 10:30 am before heading to either classroom 1 or the Library for our lessons and crafts. This month we journey through the New Testament to learn about Jesus' life and ministry. All children (Pre-K and older) are invited to join the fun. No preregistration required! Parents are welcome to attend or enjoy Coffee and Donuts Fellowship. For questions or more details, please contact Kristi Liu at kline010@tc.umn.edu.

ELCA Good Gifts Update

The generosity of our church family made it possible for our Sunday School group to raise \$200 for our November hands-on project: "God's Global Barnyard."



Thank you to everyone who contributed coins and cash to our fundraiser! Together we are able to gift goats, chicks, a rooster, a beehive, and a fruit tree to bless different families around the world.

Sprout-a-Spark: A space to grow your faith

Our special space for our youngest members continues to be a joyful experience Sundays during ReFuel. Children of all ages can gather at the justright sized art table and engage in worship while letting their creativity flow. The generosity of HOP members to provide craft supplies and toys for this special ministry makes it possible to continue Sprout-a-Spark in tandem with Sunday School all year long. For information and to get involved with Children and Family Ministry at HOP, please contact Andry Jurcich at andry @invisik.com.

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

RALY Recap

In December, we had another awesome month of RALY Activities. RALY Youth donated funds to provide Christmas gifts for a teen mom and baby through LSS. Youth went shopping at Target and picked out the gifts themselves. Our next event guest starred Andy Pokel who prepared our group for the RALY Christmas Pageant. Then before taking some time off, RALY hosted a White Elephant Christmas Party! All youth brought a gift wrapped and ready to share with friends who attended!



RALY Upcoming Events

January 3rd - No RALY

January 10th - RALY Night (Dinner provided): Dude Perfect! RALY will be playing ping pong challenges straight from the YouTube sensation, Dude Perfect! We'll also do a devotion on our desire to be "perfect."

January 17th - RALY Movie Night (Dinner provided): Come relax with us, eat some popcorn, as we watch a good movie!

January 24th - RALY Service Night (Dinner TBD) - on the 24th RALY will find ways to serve the community through our actions!

January 31st - RALY Adventure Night (Dinner provided) - Gameshow Blitz! On this night, we'll have an all gameshow themed event! Come and enjoy the fun! Contact Pastor Neal at ncannon@woodlakechurch.org or Pastor Eric at eluedtke@hoplc.org with questions.

Community Engagement

Every Meal



Our "Locker Ladies" volunteer team meets weekly to distribute 78 bags of food to lockers. This team consists of Beth Buswell, Maxine Dahl, Kim Houle, Irene Sable, Kris

Scharping, and Karen Steenson. When asked what their favorite part of this assignment was, they overwhelmingly responded that they enjoy seeing each other and catching up while doing the task each week, as well as interacting with the staff at the school and providing some positive support at the end of a long school day. The teachers are extremely grateful for having these additional resources for their families. If you'd like to join the crew, please contact Kim Houle at 612-558-0634, or wifeofadrummerguy@gmail.com to be added to the roster.

Richfield 4th of July

Plans are underway to re-invent the beloved city-wide celebration. House of Prayer and Woodlake Lutheran have an opportunity to collaborate on a float, but we need a flatbed trailer or suitable truck to convert into a float.

If you have one or know someone who would be willing to loan theirs, please contact Kim Houle at wifeofadrummerguy@gmail.com, or at 612-558 -0634.

We also need creative talent and energy for the design and build, so please stay tuned for further updates!



VEAP

Your continued support of VEAP in 2024 is vital. Here are the most needed items requested from VEAP:



Whole grain rice (1-2 pound bags)

Whole grain pasta

Hearty soups (high protein, low sodium)

Whole grain cereal (like Shredded Wheat, Kashi, bran cereals, Chex, etc.)

Canned proteins (meat and beans)

Canned fruit and vegetables

Toilet paper

Paper towels

Diapers (all sizes), formula, and baby wipes

Cooking oil

Coffee

Baking essentials (flour, sugar, spices, baking soda/powder)

Laundry detergent

Dish soap

Personal care items (shampoo, toothpaste, hand soap, shaving cream, toiletries, etc.)

Gluten-free products (whole grains like brown rice, wild rice, quinoa, cornmeal; nut flours and butters; rice crackers, GF snacks, etc. Check for gluten-free product label.)

Birthday candles, cake frosting, birthday-themed napkins/plates, cake mix, small birthday party favors like chalk, bubbles or bags of balloons

Dog and cat food (particularly wet food, treats, litter, etc.)

Paper bags and re-usable, cloth totes (We'll always take your extra paper grocery bags. We are not accepting plastic bag or totes donations).

Don't have time to shop? VEAP makes it easier with an Amazon Wishlist: <u>Amazon.com</u>. If you have any questions, please contact Kim Houle at <u>wifeofadrummerguy@gmail.com</u>.



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ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

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Pastor: Senior Pastor, Eric Luedtke

Non-Profit Org. U.S. Postage PAID Twin Cities, MN Permit No. 2944

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)

CouplesDateYearsRoger and Cathy Shromoff1/1754

MEMORIAL SERVICES

Ruthann Clay 12/19

A Look Back



1979 House of Prayer