



# HOUSE OF PRAYER



*Is a gathering of God's people who value:*

**Welcoming, Relationships, Compassionate Community, and Openness**

## Advent: Permission to Dwell in Darkness

*God said, 'Let there be lights in the dome of the sky to separate the day from the night; and let them be for signs and for seasons and for days and years, and let them be lights in the dome of the sky to give light upon the earth.' And it was so. (Genesis 1:14-15)*



Minister Kelly Sandin

As Northern Hemisphere dwellers, we know December daylight is at its briefest. There is both the dying of light and the dying of vegetation. We live by day and night and seasons. It's a part of our biological rhythm.

This gradual darkness of December eventually leads us to the winter solstice on December 21, when we are the furthest away from the sun. At that time, the day is at its shortest. It's cold and dark and we yearn for the return of light.

Waiting for the sun's return was a celebration of feasts for pre-Christian people across the east and west in the Northern Hemisphere. Different cultures had varying traditions that included lights, food, gifts, and stories.

In 274 CE, Roman Emperor Aurelian proclaimed December 25 as a general feast day for the *Birth of the Unconquered Sun*. Some scholars believe Christmas originated in Rome as a Christianization of the feast of the sun's birth. Likewise, Advent church gatherings may have been a way to show Christian faith in the midst of feasts born out of solstice observances.

However, we can learn from pre-Christian customs. Gertrud Mueller Nelson wrote in *To Dance with God* that it was necessary to stop and succumb to the darkness and death of the season. Slowing down meant coming in from the fields and setting aside tools. It involved bringing in their wagon wheels and decorating them with lights and greens. It was a sign of stopping and turning inward. Nelson continued by suggesting what this would be like for our lives today. What

if, in this season, we were to “remove – just one – say just the right front tire from our automobiles and use this for our Advent wreath...having to stay put, we would lose the opportunity to escape or deny our feelings or becoming because our cars could not bring us away to the circus in town.”

For me, and maybe for you, this would keep the season sacred, freeing us from the stress of commercial Christmas that steals our peace. With our Advent Wreath aglow, we could give ourselves permission to slow down, reflect, and look to Christ as our source of light.

As we wait in silent darkness for Christ's light, let the Advent readings assist in daily prayer. Light a candle before dawn or in the darkness of the evening and read the lectionary readings for the week. Pray before each one, asking God to illuminate what it is you need to hear. Read aloud one text at a time and sit in silent meditation.

12/3 - First Sunday of Advent: Isaiah 64:1-9; 1 Corinthians 1:3-9; Mark 13:24-37; Psalm 80:1-7, 16-18.

12/10 - Second Sunday of Advent: Isaiah 40:1-11; 2 Peter 3:8-15a; Mark 1:1-8; Psalm 85:1-2, 8-13.

12/17 - Third Sunday of Advent: Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11; 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24; John 1:6-8, 19-28; Psalm 126.

12/24 - Fourth Sunday of Advent: 2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16; Romans 16:25-27; Luke 1:26-38; Psalm 89:1-4, 19-26.

In this Advent season, allow the still darkness to comfort you as you seek God's holy presence and trust that “new life starts in the dark. Whether it is a seed in the ground, a baby in the womb, or Jesus in the tomb, it starts in the dark” (Barbara Brown Taylor, *Learning to Walk in the Dark*).

God's Peace and Hope,  
Minister Kelly



## Around House of Prayer

*From our Congregation President*



Scott Wright

### Feedback Requested

Happy December! I hope everyone had a wonderful Thanksgiving. I, personally, have a lot to be thankful for. A wonderful family, a supportive church, a grace-giving God, and a great career that gives me flexibility to volunteer and do the things I enjoy doing. Thanks be to God!

During this Advent and Christmas season, how can we live out our value statement: “House of Prayer is a gathering place of God’s people who value: Welcoming, Relationships, Compassionate Community, and Openness.”

One way to live out our value statement is to see the future and be the future. Most of our 15 for ’15 capital campaign went to deferred maintenance projects. The campaign was a great start but did not fully address all of our building needs. The Narthex looks great, but I believe the Fellowship Hall and all the bathrooms need to be updated. The boilers could be combined to save energy. If we want to be the future, we need to continue the momentum and continue to build program funding also.

I’m looking for feedback. The LMT (Leadership Ministry Team) recently discussed the possibility of another capital campaign. Are you willing to give generously again for a potential 20/20 Vision Capital Campaign? Some of the things we’re looking at are:

- With 20/20 Vision, we would include programming funds: an assistant for Community Outreach
- Building issues to be considered: Fellowship Hall, bathrooms, boiler system, windows in the office area, water system in entire complex.
- Campaign projects would involve approximately \$500,000 in funding.

Please email, call or talk to me. I can be reached at [scott.wright@horacemann.com](mailto:scott.wright@horacemann.com) or 612-386-6847 (cell).

Finally, have you seen some gains in your portfolio this year? Please consider a special holiday offering or other ways to support HOP financially this year. For example, if you are over 70-1/2 years old, have an IRA and are required to make Required Minimum Distributions, you may be able to make a distribution to House of Prayer directly from your IRA. The amount contributed to House of Prayer is counted against your Required Minimum Distribution amount and may result in lowering your taxable income, lowering the amount of your Social Security being taxed and increasing your medical itemized deductions because of having lower income. You should consult your tax or financial advisor to see if any of this applies to you. Of course, any gift you make to House of Prayer is greatly appreciated and enables us to continue our ministry and mission work.

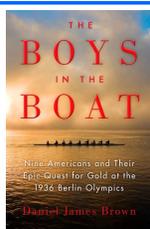
### FEAST Worship Schedule Change Saturday, January 6th, 5:00-6:30pm



Feast worship and dinner will move to the FIRST Saturday of the Month beginning January 6. Invite your friends and join us in the Fellowship Hall for this innovative and dynamic gathering!

### Book Discussion Group

We will meet **Thursday, December 7**, at 7:00 p.m. in the Fireside Conference Room to discuss *The Boys in the Boat* by Daniel James Brown.



### Welcome Minister Kelly!

Minister Kelly Sandin was installed on Sunday, October 15, 2017, as Interim Minister of Faith Formation and Visitation. Kelly recently completed her Master of Divinity degree at Luther Seminary in St. Paul. We are very excited to welcome Minister Kelly to our “all-star” House of Prayer staff!



## Around House of Prayer

### Advent / Christmas Worship Highlights



#### December 10 – Festival of Carols

1:30 p.m.: Pre-service Holiday Concert by Northern Winds Concert Band

2:00 p.m.: Worship Service with anthems, readings and carols.

#### December 17 – Children’s Christmas Program

At both 9:30 and 11:00 a.m. worship services

#### December 24 – This Sunday is “Advent 4”

9:30 a.m. worship only (No ReFuel at 11 a.m.)

#### December 24 - Christmas Eve Services

2:00 p.m. – ReFuel Christmas Eve worship

4:00 p.m. – Traditional Christmas Eve worship with all HOP musical ensembles, candle-lighting,

#### December 25 – Christmas Day Service

10:00 a.m. - With lessons and carols

### Festival of Carols - December 10th

This year’s Festival of Carols, titled *All Earth is Hopeful*, will be held on Sunday, December 10.

The Northern Winds Concert Band will begin their pre-service holiday concert at 1:30, with the Festival worship to begin immediately following at 2:00. The event will again feature all the House of Prayer musical groups, with readings, hymns, and scripture woven in and around the anthems to “tell the story.”

Mark your calendars now to come out and take in one of HOP’s grandest traditions – and tell all your friends!



### New Member Sunday

On Sunday, November 19, we welcomed seven new members to House of Prayer—and of course, there was cake! Be sure to take a minute in the coming weeks to greet them.

*From left to right:*

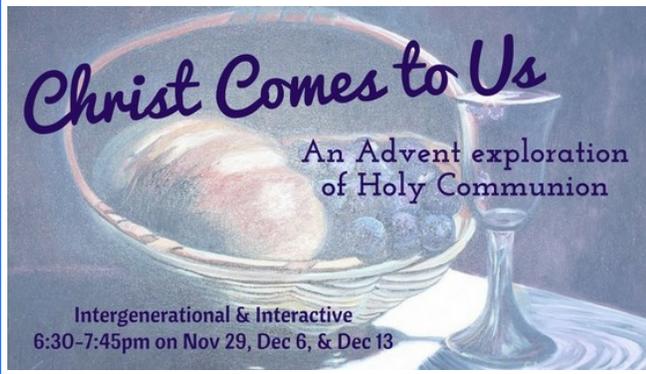
Brian Falk, Joshua Kukowshi and Heather Harrison, Beth Lawrenz, Abby Whalen, Curtis Ackerman, and Wayne Lundeen.



## Children, Youth and Family

### Intergenerational Advent

As we celebrate Christ coming to Earth this Christmas season we also want to remember the ways God meets us on a regular basis. One prominent way is through the bread and wine of Holy Communion. Adults and youth are invited to join us for three Wednesday nights in advent where we'll explore the mystery of communion together through games, conversation, Bible study, Luther's small catechism, and baking bread together! Come at 6:30pm on Nov. 29, Dec. 6, and Dec. 13 with a short worship service to follow at 7:45.



### Children & Youth Calendar

- 12/3: Sunday School – Christmas Program prep
- 12/6: Intergenerational Advent  
Why do we take communion?
- 12/10: Sunday School – Christmas Program prep
- 12/13: Intergenerational Advent  
Baking Bread Together
- 12/16: Christmas Program Dress Rehearsal  
10:30-11:30am
- 12/17: Children's Christmas Program  
9:30 & 11:00 services
- 12/20: Youth Night – Christmas Party
- 12/24: No Sunday School  
Advent service at 9:30am,  
Christmas Eve services at 2pm & 4pm
- 12/25: Christmas Day service at 10:00am
- 12/27: No Wednesday night programs
- 12/31: No Sunday School  
Normal services at 9:30 & 11am
- 1/3: Youth Nights restart  
Learning night with peer groups
- 1/7: Sunday School restarts  
The Lord is My Shepherd



### Advent Devotions

Sparkhouse, a Lutheran publishing group, has free daily devotions available during advent for the whole family to enjoy! If you'd like to sign up, please email Ben Whalen ([bwhalen@hoplc.org](mailto:bwhalen@hoplc.org)).



### Christmas Program

This year the children's Christmas Program will be on December 17 at both the 9:30 and 11:00 services. We hope you can come that day to see and hear them retell the beautiful Christmas story! Mindy and the Sunday School children have already begun practicing their music and picking out which roles to play. Parents please remember the dress rehearsal on Saturday the 16<sup>th</sup> at 10:30am and please let Mindy know if you have any questions ([mennickes@comcast.net](mailto:mennickes@comcast.net)). Thanks!



### Family Mission Weekend

Save the dates for July 13-15, 2018 for our next Family Mission Trip!

Once again, all ages – children, parents, couples, single adults, grandparents, etc. – are invited for a weekend of service and fun together with folks from Oak Grove & Woodlake Lutheran churches. This year we'll head to the Duluth/Superior area from Friday morning through Sunday afternoon. More information to come soon but please let Ben Whalen ([bwhalen@hoplc.org](mailto:bwhalen@hoplc.org) or 612-500-9523) know if you are interested.

## In The Community

### Heroes & Helpers

Each December, Richfield police officers and community members accompany Richfield youth to shop for gifts for their family. Afterwards, everyone returns to City Hall to wrap presents and enjoy dinner and desserts together.

This event is only possible with help from lots of community volunteers including several House of Prayer members. Thank you for being a part of this! If you did not yet sign up and still want to volunteer, please contact Ben Whalen ([bwhalen@hoplc.org](mailto:bwhalen@hoplc.org) or 612-500-9523) asap.



### New Year- Wood Lake Nature Center

**Sunday, December 31, 5:00-9:00 pm \$5/person**  
*(free for Friends of Wood Lake Members)*

Make this your New Year's Eve tradition: Celebrate the new year at Wood Lake with family and friends! Follow hundreds of candle-lit luminaries on a walking trail through cattails and trees while keeping a lookout for deer, coyote, and owls. Roast marshmallows over a crackling fire, warm up inside with hot cocoa, make a craft, play a game, and enjoy the brisk winter evening. No pre-registration required. For more information, call 612-861-9365.

### Thanks Sheridan Story Supporters!

Thanks to you we've already raised enough money to provide weekend food for students at Centennial Elementary for almost a full year! Several volunteers have already begun distributing the food. A huge thanks to all who have made this possible! If you signed up to contribute but have not yet done so, please do that soon. Any questions about donations can go to Jo Shoberg ([jshoberg@hoplc.org](mailto:jshoberg@hoplc.org)).

## Supporting Immigration in Richfield

This past spring several members formed an "Immigration Task Force" to explore the ways that House of Prayer can support our immigrant neighbors. There are now several initiatives in the works:

**Citizenship Classes:** HOP and Hope Church are working together to host citizenship classes at HOP starting in the spring. This multi-week course is for people who are preparing to take the test to become US Citizens and would involve volunteer teachers and one-on-one tutors. Please contact Paula Kiehl ([pkiehl13@gmail.com](mailto:pkiehl13@gmail.com) or 612-889-1167) if you are interested in volunteering!

**Visit from Assumption:** Patricio Pena, staff member at the Church of the Assumption (just down the road), will be at HOP on Sunday, December 10, to answer any questions we have and seek support in two ways. Assumption Church's Lydia House program is seeking 100 homes willing to welcome Spanish-speaking immigrants should the need arise. They currently have about 20 homes signed up and would welcome interest by our members to be host families. Also, there is substantial unmet need in this immigrant community and a lot of instability. Assumption receives roughly 10 calls a month for help with rent and about 30 calls a month for help with clothing and food. They would welcome monetary donations as they cannot keep up with the demand. Come on the 10<sup>th</sup> to ask questions and lend your support. For more info, please speak with Monica Dorow ([monicadorow@gmail.com](mailto:monicadorow@gmail.com) or 612-387-5917).

**Observing Immigration Court:** Less than 15 minutes from church is the Federal Immigration Court that hears cases from Minnesota and North & South Dakota. The Human Rights Defender Project is seeking volunteers to observe and take notes on immigration court proceedings to bring transparency to the system and report any concerns to legal aid groups who assist immigrants. This can also be a very informative experience for the observer to see what happens in immigration court. If you'd be interested in volunteering for this, please contact Ben Whalen ([bwhalen@hoplc.org](mailto:bwhalen@hoplc.org) or 612-500-9523).



## VEAP Holiday Campaign

VEAP (Volunteers Enlisted to Assist People), one of House of Prayer’s mission partners, is having a holiday giving campaign and they need you. Donate or volunteer to make a difference to individuals and families who access healthy food and social services through VEAP. Here’s how you can get involved:

- Donate Now and raise money for local families <https://veap.org/donate-now/>
- Volunteer as an individual or a group. There are many opportunities including driving, food program, intake and data entry, support, baking banana bread, etc. – <https://veap.org/volunteer>
- Donate healthy food items and place in donation bins in HOP narthex.
- VEAP also has weekly Informational Meetings where you can learn about suburban poverty, VEAP volunteer opportunities, and receive a tour. Go to <https://veap.org> and click on news and events.
- Help VEAP fulfill their Mission “Together, we create pathways to stronger, more hopeful, communities through access to healthy food, housing stability and supportive services.”

Contact Jean Robbins at [cjrobbins@visi.com](mailto:cjrobbins@visi.com) for more information.

## December Financial Report

As the year winds down, we find ourselves focusing on celebrating Christmas and spending time with family, but December also brings about time to think about end of year giving and tax planning. We ask that you prayerfully consider a year-end gift to House of Prayer as you look to maximize your end of year charitable contributions and tax deductions.

We have done great work at House of Prayer and in the community over the year and your funds will be used to continue those good works. General donations are always graciously accepted to give the greatest flexibility for our congregation and staff to keep House of Prayer moving forward. You can also designate a year-end gift to Youth and Family, Community Engagement, Discipleship, or Worship Funds. House of Prayer will be sending our youth to the ELCA gathering in Houston and participating in other camps and exciting activities, the Community Engagement team continues to strive to grow and connect with the community at large, and we continue to bring the spirit of Christ to others through Discipleship and Ministry. When you give to House of Prayer you’ll be able to see and participate in how your funds are used to grow in all these areas.

Lastly, as we look back over 2017, now is also a great time to simply say “thank you!” Whether you give of your time, your money, or add to the spirit of the Church by faithfully showing up for prayer and worship, you are a valued member of the congregation and all that you give is greatly appreciated.

Thank you, Jo Shoberg and Charley Simonson

### October Financials

	<u>Oct-17</u>		<u>YTD</u>	
	ACTUAL	BUDGET	ACTUAL	BUDGET
Revenue				
Offerings	\$47,007	\$45,200	\$162,692	\$161,700
Rental Income	\$4,510	\$4,240	\$12,583	\$10,430
Ministry Income	\$4,177	\$560	\$13,980	\$13,980
	<b>\$55,694</b>	<b>\$50,000</b>	<b>\$189,255</b>	<b>\$178,960</b>
Expenses	<b>\$55,596</b>	<b>\$48,019</b>	<b>\$197,186</b>	<b>\$192,713</b>
Net Operating Revenue	<b>\$99</b>	<b>\$1,981</b>	<b>(\$ 7,927)</b>	<b>(\$ 13,753)</b>





## Fall Festival Update

Amazing, Creative, and Dedicated. These are just a few words that describe the Fall Festival Team which consists of Kathy T. – Co-chair, Ann & Jena H. – table rental, DuAnn T. – luncheon, Elyn K. – publicity, Judy E. – treasury, Kim H. – bake sale table, Sally B. – used books, Sandy H. & Sharon S. – craft table, Stacy K. – raffle table, and Sue B. – greeters. I want to thank the team for such an amazing job well done!

We prepare for the festival starting in July through the last weekend in October with Craft Day. Craft Day invites all members and non-members to help our team prepare items to sell at House of Prayer's craft table. Thank you to all our volunteers who made Craft Day so successful! Ramo organizes a team to set up and take down all the tables used by the vendors. Some of the tables are very heavy and difficult to move around. The Fall Festival Team decided to use some of our profits to replace these tables; 10 were purchased from the 2016 profits, 10 have been purchased from the 2017 profits, and 10 will be purchased from next year's 2018 profits. Our team would like to thank Ramo and his volunteers who set up and removed all the tables. Fall Festival is one of House of Prayer's largest events that fills most of the church with 40+ vendors, 300+ shoppers, and 100+ volunteers. It takes many volunteers to help prepare, set up, craft, bake, work the day of, and take down the Festival. We would like to thank all volunteers for their time and talent; we could not have had a successful event without you! Our team is meeting on November 30 to wrap up this year's event; watch for more information in the January Hi-Lines. Thank you to all who were involved in the success of the 2017 Fall Festival! -Paula Kiehl

## The Heritage Team Remembers

*compiled by Darlene Clauson*

**45 Years Ago: Christmas Cookbooks:** Looking for a last-minute Christmas gift? Our House of Prayer Cookbooks produced by our Churchwomen make the perfect gift. Only \$2.25, only a few are left! The recipes in the Cookbooks are favorites among many families in church. Almost 2,000 books have been sold! Pick them up in the church office. Proceeds enable us to send \$100 checks to the Minneapolis Council of Churches for its chaplaincy program in dire need of our Christmas giving this year. (*Hi-Lines, December 20, 1972*)

**15 Years Ago: A Festival of Carols**, this afternoon, at 4 p.m. at our own House of Prayer. We will be featuring traditional holiday music presented by over 150 musicians including an 80 voice Festival Choir, Cherub choir, Bell choir, Choristers and 35-piece Wind Ensemble. Music directors are Jon Kietzer and Karen Bartz. (*Worship Service bulletin, December 8, 2002*)

**10 Years Ago: HOP's History:** Please don't let HOP's rich heritage slip away! We need volunteers to make a list of what we should look for, help locate those things and then organize these

benchmarks of our history into our "history room." Please let us know if you have documents or items that help define and document for us (and future generations) how we got to where we're at today. The Library Team asked if we wanted video tapes such as Jesse Jackson's sermon in 1987 or a LP record of HOP musical groups or a video of the 1992 Carols and Canticles. Of course we wanted them! Got some HOP history items? Let us know! Willing to help with this project? Contact Jon at ext. 203 or joleson@house-of-prayer.com. Please! Things thrown away or lost are gone! (*Worship Service bulletin, December 16, 2007*)

**10 Years Ago: The Mitten Tree** is up in the narthex. We are collecting winter hats and mittens for families eligible for assistance from WIC (Women, Infants, & Children). Please have your items on the tree by December 23<sup>rd</sup>. (*Worship Service bulletin, December 16, 2007*)

**10 Years Ago: Pastor Anne Hokenstad** was installed as co-pastor on November 4 by Pastor Susan Tjornehoj. (*Hi-Lines, December 2007*)

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

**ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED**

(612) 866-8471

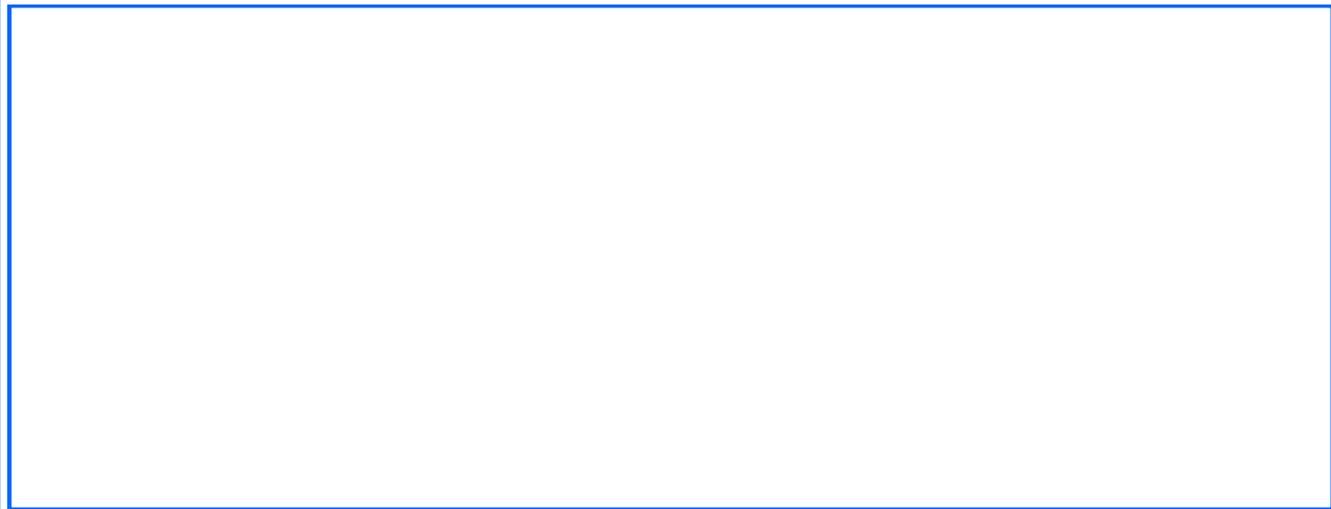
**E-mail:** office@hoplc.org

**Website:** www.hoplc.org.

**Pastors:** Ben Sandin, Senior Pastor  
Kelly Sandin, Interim Minister of Faith Formation  
and Visitation

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**Sunday Worship Services:**  
9:30 a.m. Traditional Service  
11:00 a.m. ReFuel Alternative Worship



The **Hi-Lines** is published by the House of Prayer Staff and volunteers. Copy Editor, Elyn Kirchner, can be reached at [editor.hilines@gmail.com](mailto:editor.hilines@gmail.com) for submissions.

## Milestones

### WEDDING ANNIVERSARIES

<u>Couples</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Years</u>
<i>Anniversaries (50+ years and 5 year increments)</i>		
Dale & Sandy Williams	12/10/77	40 years
Harold & Judith Peterson	12/12/64	53 years
Ben & Kelly Sandin	12/24/07	10 years
Ernie & Jeanne Lindstrom	12/30/60	57 years

### DEATHS

Scott Ware                      11/03/17



**50 Years Ago:** House of Prayer Christmas Sanctuary, December 1967.