

# PASTOR'S PARAGRAPHS



**E**piphany initiates the spreading of the Gospel to the Gentiles! January 6th is often named the "Gentile Christmas." (Remember that the promised Messiah was for the people of Israel and all those involved were Jewish.) The Magi, not kings, were probably astrologers from Iraq who were convinced that the star (or alignment of planets in the constellation Leo) portended the birth of a king. They were not Jewish, but traveled west to find the infant, Jewish king. The One they discovered was the King of Kings, and they worshipped him with expensive offerings. This encounter of Gentile and Messiah initiated the making disciples of all nations! We celebrate the Light of the world during the Epiphany because Jesus is manifested, the meaning of "epiphany," as the Son of God. Our epiphany call is to proclaim the Good News that Jesus, Son of God, is Savior of the whole world, and our world surely today needs that Good News now more than ever. We begin with our neighbor and move it forward to a sin darkened world.

**N**ew Year's Day signals the beginning of the new! We start new resolutions. We start planning what we will be doing differently this new year. The past is past. January is named for Janus, a two-faced Roman god who looked back and forward at the same time. As followers of Jesus Christ, the new born King and the One who said, "behold, I make all things new," we enjoy the "new" experience each morning. Washed in the waters of our baptism, we have 365 new starts this year. What will you do when you are unfettered from the shackles of past sin and lawlessness? The game plan for this new creation unfolds in the pages of Scripture, where you will find your story. The more we read, the more we discover that we have much in common with Abraham, Moses, David and the first disciples. Maybe what we discover is not new at all, but becomes new for us as we follow in the footsteps of those who have walked with God. Find you new self in the Word!

**H**urricane Harvey effects still linger in the greater Friendswood area and our call is to walk beside those who are still recovering. Pastor Jon has done yeoman's work in coordinating aid and support for members of Hope. The Texas District disaster relief efforts continue to reach out with coordinated support from Orange to Rockport. Remember in prayer and donation those effected.

**O**n a personal note, the Hobratchk family starts its thirty-sixth year at Hope. A lot has changed since we arrived and I was installed on 17 Jan 1983. Friendswood was barely 9,000 people and 528 and 518 were both two lane roadways. There stood on campus an old Sanctuary and education facility. The Green Building needed restoration after the '79 flood. God has had his hand in this past and will do so for the future. Blessed New Year!!

# Notes from Pastor Jon



The end of an old year and the beginning of a new is usually the time when the media look back at what happened over the previous twelve months and decide what was best and worst. You and I might do the same. Some things that happened will be happy memories that we want to hold close in our hearts. But other events we want to keep buried in the past. When our God addresses His people, He often first takes a look back and recalls what He has done for them: *"I freed you from slavery in Egypt."* *"I brought you to a good and prosperous land."* *"I gave you victory over your enemies."* *"I have pardoned your sin and remember your iniquity no more."* Not only might we look back at 2017, the start of the Year of our Lord 2018 is also a time to look forward. What will happen? What are the possibilities this year?" Your God does the same for you. His Word is filled with the hope He has given us – the hope of New Creation, our Lord's Second Coming, the defeat of our final enemy: death and the resurrection of all flesh. **The life of the world to come – that is your hope because it is already a done deal in Christ.** All the promises of God are yours in Christ. So I urge you to be a people of hope and anticipation. We wait with eager anticipation for our Lord to return, but witness, mercy, and life together continues. What will happen in 2018? Let's find out together as a congregation.

## OUTREACH:

God's Word calls followers of Jesus to, "be His witnesses." How do we do that? The thought of talking about Jesus to others can terrify some. Or at least, we might be apprehensive about confessing Jesus Christ to those who do not know Him. Would some training and encouragement be helpful?

Hope will be conducting an Evangelism Workshop on Sunday, February 4, 2018 starting at 12:30. We will begin with a meal. And then we will utilize the newest training course called "Every One His Witness" – which has been received well across our Synod. The workshop will be an opportunity for all of us to learn how evangelism is relational, and contextual. And we will build a flexible and adaptable framework for personal evangelism. Much more information will be coming in the near future. But for now, save the date!

A blessed new year to each of you!

His Peace Be with You,  
Pastor Jon

## STEPHEN MINISTRY:

Stephen Ministry celebrated another year with our annual get together for a dinner out. Thank you, Stephen Ministers, for your service to our Lord, Church, and Community. I look forward to another year of faithful service and dedication to one-on-one Christian care.

## CONFIRMATION:

After Christmas break, Confirmation classes resume regular schedule starting January 7<sup>th</sup> for the second half of our teaching year. But the day before, we have Nerf Wars! January 6<sup>th</sup>, 5-9pm. We will start all together – students and parents – in the Great Room with a shared meal. Then students, and any parents wanting to join the fun, begin battle in the Gym at 6 pm. There will be an email with more details about dinner – and what you might be willing to bring. Remember your Nerf Blasters and Darts! Cost = \$0.

# Music Ministry



A special thank you to all the musicians who served during the Advent and Christmas season! Below is a letter exchange between myself and the composer of our Lessons and Carols service, Holy Light.

May God's Light Shine in your hearts!  
Stephanie

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Below is a letter and response that I received and wanted to share. .

Dear Mr. Hobby,

About seven years ago, your father found out that we were using Holy Light for our service of Lessons and Carols. He reached out to one of our members, Harry Reichert, who grew up with him at the Hershey School for Boys. Harry was so excited that we were using your music that was dedicated to your father. Last Spring, Harry let me know that your father had passed. My condolences to you and your family. Harry speaks so highly of your father.

Our congregation and community has been greatly impacted by Hurricane Harvey, much like the Greater Houston area. Before the storm, I had decided to use Holy Light again to highlight a Lutheran composer for the 500th Anniversary of the Reformation. However, it has now taken on a greater meaning. The Houston Astros brought us great joy with their World Series win, but now we must face the holidays in our new reality. Two of my sopranos and two of my orchestra members will not be in their homes for Christmas. The 30% of families who lost their homes in our town, will not be home for Christmas. We will be using your service to bring light to the darkness. We want to bring the only hope of Jesus to our congregation and our community.

I am sure that this will be a difficult holiday season for you as you are grieving, but please know that the knowledge of God's light, passed down to you from your father, will be passed on to a community who needs that light to shine in our time of darkness through your service of Holy Light. Thank you for such beautiful music.

Advent and Christmas Blessings,  
Stephanie Poyner, Director of Music  
Hope Lutheran Church, Friendswood, Texas

Greetings from Fort Wayne, IN.

Last month I was thrilled when "Maestro" Poyner informed me that she would be again conducting a December performance of my work, *Holy Light*. Please know how delighted I am that you – together – will offer the work during this Advent season.

Your performance, along with others around the country, means a little more to me this year because the earthly journey of the one for whom it was written – my father – came to its end this spring. Dad was not only my biggest cheerleader; he had an amazing ability to brighten with God's light the lives of everyone with whom he had contact...including the medical staff during his final days in the hospital. Needless to say, he would have been ecstatic at the news of your program. I'm not sure souls get week-end vacations away from the pearly gates, but if they do, you can count on both of my beloved parents sitting there in the front row cheering you on. Just don't expect much in the offering plate!

Furthermore, I am quite moved that the work could be used as a tool to brighten the spirits of the good folks of your area who have endured so much due to the recent hurricane. Although time has past and the media attention has diminished a bit, please do not feel that you are now alone. Beyond the ongoing prayers and good wishes of my congregation, we were recently able to raise - with God's help and some matching funds - about \$63,000 which was sent to Lutheran Disaster Relief to help with the hurricane relief. Be confident that geographical limitations cannot contain nor prevent our "quiet" companionship with you on your journey to recovery.

The good wishes and thoughts of a very honored Hoosier church musician will be present with you during these blessed days. My hope is that you have found at least some musical reward during your preparation of the work. More importantly, as you bless others by sharing your musical gifts, I hope that each of you might also receive rich blessing from the message of God's light in and for this sometimes dreary world. In that spirit, I would encourage you with the last word I share with our choirs every Sunday: "SHINE!"

Peace and joy be with each one of you!  
Bob Hobby



# Youth Ministry

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It was such a blessing to observe and participate in the intergenerational Bible study through Advent! Relationships begun and nurtured between generations over the course of three short weeks will inevitably bless every age group. Studies continue to show the importance of interaction between young and old and no where do we find better opportunities for that than within our faith family. For that reason we continue to seek ways to bring generations together whether it is *to serve*, such as the recent invitation for families to come together to clean the sanctuary, *to discuss* as in our recent Advent Bible study series or *to play* as with our upcoming open gym night marking the return of BASIC and SWAT. What ideas do YOU have for bringing us all together?

Do you work in the medical field? We'd like to put together a panel of diverse career representatives in the medical field to share their experiences with our senior high youth. Panel participants would join us for Bible study hour on Sunday, January 21 to share what has drawn them to the field, what they do and how their vocation weaves together with their faith. Contact Robin Groeper to be a part of the panel. [rginchrist@hotmail.com](mailto:rginchrist@hotmail.com) or 832-425-7813

Spaghetti lunch will be served following the late service on January 28<sup>th</sup>! Come enjoy a pile of noodles with a buffet of sauce selections as well as salad, breads and desserts. Your free will offering supports youth traveling to Camp Eagle this summer.

Open Gym! Come play! We will hold an open gym night, Wednesday, January 10<sup>th</sup> from 6:00-8:00. Come have a slice of pizza and pick a game of basketball, rumble in the gaga gaga pit or just play some board games on the sidelines. Families of all ages are welcome.

## On the calendar:

January 7: Senior High Bible study begins the "Wait Training" series  
January 10: Open gym night  
January 13: Upwards basketball games begin—concession stand opens!  
January 21: Medical careers panel in Senior High Bible study  
January 28: Annual Youth Spaghetti lunch  
February 10: TRIVIA NIGHT



## Thank you very much...

The Christmas musical was a wonderful celebration of Christ's birth! Thank you so much to Mrs. Penny and the preschool parents for working so hard with our preschool angels so they could learn their special song.

Thank you to the cast parents for faithfully bringing your children to practice, and thank you to all the wonderful children who were a part of the program. Our cast and chorus did a fantastic job sharing the good news of Jesus' birth.

We are also very grateful for our light and sound team – Hannah King and Grace Chauvin!

A big thank you to everyone who set up for and cleaned up after the program. You helped make a big task easy to handle both before and after our musical.

Finally, thank you to Mrs. Hobratchk, Ms. Stephanie, and all the wonderful teachers and substitute teachers who served throughout 2017! We couldn't make our Sunday morning programs work without you. Thank you for taking the time to help grow the faith of our Hope children.

Wishing you all a blessed 2018,  
Krista

Krista Beken  
Director of Children's Ministries

## Upward Basketball ~ Get in the game!

Upward basketball games begin Saturday, January 12<sup>th</sup>. We will welcome over 200 players, and their families, to our campus. YOU can be a part of this great outreach ministry.

\*Referees are needed for both Friday night and Saturday games. Male or female; no experience needed. The more help we have, the less time any one person has to commit. Each game lasts only one hour.

Contact Krista Beken, Chris Riggs, or Mathews George for more information.

\*Help us feed those Saturday referees and the other folks who are here throughout the day. The meal should feed 10-12 hungry people. Meals in the past have included lasagna, chicken spaghetti, sloppy joes, hamburger helper meals, baked potatoes, and tacos.

If you are interested in providing a meal, please contact Robin Groeper or Krista Beken.

## Upcoming Events

\*Upward practices resume January 8<sup>th</sup>; games begin January 11<sup>th</sup> & 12<sup>th</sup>

\*January 10<sup>th</sup> - SWAT Resumes

## A Final Note

Check This Out – A little food for thought as you're formulated your New Year's Resolutions:

<https://refocusministry.org/2017/12/14/stop-looking-for-teachable-moments/>

# Children's Ministries



# Ladies Guild

Quite a change from the recent season. Disappearing are the ornaments, the tags, bags and colorful wrappings, and maybe even a newly broken toy. The sounds of horns and fireworks announces another season — a New Year. May our Ladies Guild continue to unwrap the individual gift given to each of us as we “Serve the Lord with Gladness” this 2018.

Now is the time to choose what particular month, office, activity or participation you will offer this year. Yearbooks will be available as soon as all information is gathered, and you will find all about Ladies Guild contained therein. It's so handy to have names, email addresses, dates of birthdays and anniversaries right at hand. And don't forget to choose a special Hostess date.

Already organized and scheduled for our January 9th meeting is a Bible study, and Terri Wenzel will be our hostess and lead the opening prayer. Heidi Riggs will present the devotion, and we plan and hope for all of us to be there.

See you then — Happy new Year!



## Flower Chart

The 2018 Flower Chart sign up for Altar Flowers has been moved to the bulletin board next to the mailboxes. Several spots are still available. The cost is \$30.00 per arrangement. Each arrangement can be taken home after the 11:00 a.m. service. (Please do not take the liner home.) Check should be made payable to Hope Lutheran Church and placed in the envelope attached to the Flower Chart.

Please pay for your flowers when you sign up. Questions? Contact Katherine Kohn or Debbie Hasty at 281-482-7943. Thank you.

## Women's Retreat 2019

It is time to begin planning for our Women's Retreat in February of 2019. Would you like to help in the planning?

We will have our initial planning meet on Monday, January 15 at 6:30 p.m. in Room 103. Please come join us as we map out a plan for this wonderful ministry event. The more, the merrier! Mark your calendars! We'll be looking for you.



## Time for a New Year's Resolution?

The new year brings an opportunity to re-commit or resolve to take on a new practice. How about a commitment to Bible study?

One option to consider: A video and discussion-based Bible study called "Israel's Mission — Becoming a Kingdom of Priests in a Prodigal World." This class will guide us in experiencing the Bible through historical context. We will be studying the people and events of the Bible in their geographical, historical,

and cultural contexts. Once we know the who, what and where of the Bible story, we will be able to understand the why. By deepening our understanding of God's Word, we begin to experience God and grow in relationship with him. We will watch video of the land of Israel, and then work through questions and discussion about application in our world today.

If this topic interests you, please consider signing up on the poster provided in the Narthex so that a study guide can be purchased for you (\$13.00). Or stop in for the first class and see if you think this class will appeal to you. Our first class will be on January 14th in Room 104. Lynn Hobratchsk will facilitate. Happy New Year! Happy New Year Resolution to dig into God's Word!

## Stephen Ministry Celebrations

2018! Can you believe it? Time does certainly seem to fly. Only a few weeks ago we were shopping, wrapping, baking and decorating to prepare for celebrating our Savior's birth. Now the paper hats and horns blowing will usher in the celebration of a New Year.

Stephen Ministers can add another celebration to the list. This year Stephen Ministry celebrates its 43rd year. Just think of all the men, women and young children who requested and received comfort and care as they shared their heartaches and concerns with a Stephen Minister.

Many have benefited from time spent with their personal Stephen Minister, and their needs ranged from birth to death issues. Children, family, marriage, employment, finances, illness, relationships, divorce, grief, loneliness and spiritual concerns are among topics shared, along with many others. Know that no matter what the subject, no one judges but listens with care and compassion. Privacy is assured, and confidentiality as well. How long does it take? As long as needed.

So you can see why Hope has reason to celebrate this ongoing Ministry. Look at those in the pews on any given Sunday and you will see many who could benefit from such a relationship. Maybe it's you.

But, unless a request is made, no one will approach or call you, no one forces or insists. Help is best when the need is acknowledged. As for God's guidance as you think on your needs. As we begin this New Year of service, help us celebrate God's love with each other. Happy New Year!



## 2018 Coffee Hour

Many, many opportunities are still available for your help. ***Without your help this ministry CANNOT happen, and it will GO AWAY.***

Please sign up now so we can plan our year and you will get your preferred times to serve! Reminders will be sent out a few weeks before you volunteer. The sign up board is in the Narthex or you can contact Debbie Hasty at [dhasty@hope-lutheran.org](mailto:dhasty@hope-lutheran.org) or 281-482-7943.

***So prayerfully consider helping with Coffee Hour for 2018 so it doesn't go away. Know that if these dates are not filled, Coffee Hour will not exist.*** Dates still available: 3/18, 4/8, 4/22, 4/29, 5/13, 6/3, 6/17, 6/24, 7/15, 8/5, 8/19, 9/2, 9/16, 9/30, 10/21, all of November, and all of December.

## Mailboxes

It's that time of year again — the dreaded "Mailbox Cleaning." Please, please, please make an effort this month to clean out your mailbox and anything that you have left on top of the mailboxes. In January, the mailboxes will be re-alphabetized and everything left will find it's way into the trash.

Any questions — call me. Thank



## Columbarium Committee Update

**Construction:** In March of this year, the Voters approved proceeding with the Columbarium Ministry at Hope. As you can see when you enter the Sanctuary, construction of the Columbarium has begun - that is what is being built between the CFD and Sanctuary. The original design was modified slightly to include elevating the location about 3 feet, so the actual Columbarium structure is located above the 500 year flood plan (i.e. Hurricane Harvey water level).

**Pre-Construction Sale Continuing:** Thank you to those members who have already purchased niches – this has allowed us to proceed with construction. Sale of the niches at the pre-construction price of \$ 3,000 per niche is continuing; after construction is completed we anticipate the price will increase to \$ 4,000 per niche.

If you are interested in purchase of a Columbarium niche or have questions related to the Columbarium Ministry please contact the Church office or one of the Committee members; Harold Benson, Margie Riley, Katherine Kohn, or Bruce Hunter.





	ANNUAL PLAN	Y-T-D PLAN	Y-T-D ACTUAL	% OF PLAN
Operating Receipts	\$1,046,393.00	\$678,899.59	\$573,497.53	84.47%
Early Childhood Tithe	\$45,000.00	\$28,500.00	\$28,500.00	100.00%
Total Receipts	\$1,091,393.00	\$707,399.59	\$601,997.53	85.10%
Outreach	\$74,268.00	\$49,171.44	\$2,434.98	50.51%
Education	\$8,850.00	\$3,966.93	\$2,518.25	63.48%
Children	\$2,300.00	\$692.44	\$608.88	87.93%
Youth	\$13,200.00	\$7,225.29	\$6,298.25	87.17%
Music	\$6,000.00	\$3,835.84	\$3,461.25	90.23%
Assimilation	\$500.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	0.00%
Misc. Ministries	\$10,050.00	\$5,541.18	\$3,790.25	68.40%
Personnel	\$637,288.00	\$418,532.20	\$413,031.02	98.69%
Finance	\$62,187.00	\$41,458.00	\$21,096.81	50.89%
Facilities	\$227,150.00	\$127,290.71	\$103,498.05	81.31%
Office & Worship	\$40,600.00	\$24,905.72	\$20,950.25	84.12%
Omnibus	\$9,000.00	\$4,230.00	\$3,765.69	89.02%
Total Expenditures	\$1,091,393.00	\$686,849.75	\$603,853.68	87.92%
Income Less Expenses		\$20,549.84	(\$1,856.15)	

**Debt: \$1,133,076.60**

**Fiscal Year (04/01/17 - 03/31/18)  
As of November 2017**



Jennifer Lobaugh	1/1	Andrew Eaves	1/15	Kevin & Robin Groeper	1/2
Abby Riley	1/1	Hannah Craft	1/16	Paul & Jessica Kroesen	1/2
Sanjay Singh	1/1	Jennifer Tieman	1/16	Patrick & Shalyn Watson	1/2
Terri Wenzel	1/1	Joshua Kerch	1/18	Bradley & Karen Cunningham	1/4
Karen Cunningham	1/2	Deena Prince	1/18	Kirk & Jennifer Dippel	1/4
Kristine Rebstock	1/2	Stacy Schnell	1/18	Steve & Vicki Hartzell	1/4
Virginia VanEycken	1/2	Jack Williams	1/18	Jordan & Kristine Rebstock	1/4
John Alff	1/3	Tyler Watlington	1/19	Rodney & Sharon Pampell	1/5
Donna Battenfield	1/3	Austin Lobaugh	1/20	John & Adel Alff	1/12
Allyssa Alff	1/4	Miria Castille	1/21	Mike & Amy Haverty	1/14
Trisha Mankowski	1/4	Karys Garcia	1/21	Don & Lidia Schneider	1/14
Robert Zimmerman	1/4	Gloria Havard	1/21	Forrest & Brook Williams	1/28
Christopher Riggs	1/5	Claudia Heideman	1/21		
Chad Leveritt	1/7	Rosa Pirker	1/21		
Vira Pond	1/7	John Gisch	1/23		
Carson Gebhardt	1/8	Lindsay Monk	1/23		
Missy Castleberry	1/9	Linda Rebstock	1/23		
Analise Centeno	1/9	Joe Burkhardt	1/24		
Rachel Kuehnle	1/9	Larry Sieraski	1/24		
Chris Lott	1/9	Gerald Butler Jr.	1/25		
Joyce Pfleeger	1/9	Katherine Haverty	1/25		
Rachel Van Chau	1/9	Sharon Pampell	1/25		
Kizzie White	1/9	Nancy Stiles	1/25		
Owen Kramer	1/10	Joey Blankenship	1/26		
Terri Jones	1/11	Beverly Kroesen	1/26		
Jamie Paulder	1/11	Michael Matthijetz	1/26		
Lidia Suarez	1/11	Rachel Pirker	1/26		
Adam Weiss	1/11	Madison Taylor	1/26		
Marshall Breaux	1/12	Ruth Miertschin	1/27		
Paul Currie	1/12	Marlene Guzman	1/28		
Mathews George	1/13	Steve Huning	1/29		
Amy Heinlein	1/13	Saleena Butler	1/30		
Jessica Horak	1/13	Nicole Huning	1/30		
Leslie Engle	1/14	Caleb Norris	1/30		
Breanna Chapin	1/15				

# *Birthdays and Anniversaries*







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1804 S. Friendswood Dr.  
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# Anchor Chain

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*Ralph W. Hobratschk, Senior Pastor*

*Jonathan E. Petering, Associate Pastor*