

A MESSAGE FROM PASTOR ESALA



Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

As I sit here writing these words to you, I still have 27 shopping days left until Christmas, if, of course, you include Christmas Eve day. If I'm true to myself, I'll fritter every one of those days away and end up staring at all the half-empty shelves of leftovers in the stores. At least, that's the way it used to be. Out of necessity, our family has actually adopted the practice of celebrating the gift-giving and family meal-eating a week or two prior to December 25. This year we're going to do it on the weekend after.

The reason for this in the past was my normally dizzying work schedule around Advent, Christmas Eve and Christmas Day. It's not so dizzying anymore as a part-timer, but we've stuck to our pattern of celebrating. One of the unexpected outcomes it seems, is that we've been able to focus a bit more on the "advent" part, as it were, of Christ's first coming, of a new era in the history of mankind, and to reflect on His second Advent.

My point in this bit of personal rambling is that just as Jesus came the first time, He's coming again! There will be a second Advent! And just as His first arrival was a jolt to the shepherds who were tending their flocks by night, His Second Coming will be a jolt to the whole world! It's true! He's real! He really is coming back to claim His Kingdom! The sad thing about it is that there will be so many who think they still have an infinite number of shopping days left, but then it will be too late.

The Good News is that Christ's Church is still alive and is still proclaiming the glorious news of His birth, life, death and resurrection to hearts that will but receive Him by faith. This makes them ready no matter when He returns.

Are you ready for Christmas? Maybe or maybe not. Are you ready for the Savior's Second Coming? You are if you trust in Him for salvation. I guess that makes us ready for Christmas too, in all the things that count.

A very blessed Christmas to you and yours!

Dan Esala

Dan Esala, Vacancy Pastor



Sunday Services
9 AM Adult Bible Study
10 AM Worship Service
1st & 3rd Sundays—communion

Connect with us!
hlcaurora.org

456 S. Chillicothe Road
Aurora, OH 44202
Ph: 330.562.9660

DECEMBER SERVER'S LIST

If you cannot serve on your assigned date, please find a replacement and let Dawn know. Thank you for serving.



Date	Music	Worship Assistant	Greeters	Reader	Communion	Sermon/PP	Acolyte
Dec. 7	Lori	Chris	Ruth & Ruth	Chris	Becky	Dawn	Shorter
Dec. 14	Lori	None	Larry & Chris	Bob	none	Dawn	Gideon
Dec. 21	Lori	Paul	Karol	Karol	Bev	Dan	none
Dec. 24 Eve	Lori	Greg	Bev	Greg	Becky/Bev	none	Shorter
Dec. 28	Lori	None	Marge & Glenda	Andy	none	Dawn	none

Children's Christmas Program

The Children's Christmas Program will be December 21 during the service. The theme is familiar symbols of Christmas that we often overlook. Children will tell about and display the symbols.

There will be a short practice after the Dec. 14 service (15 min.) to insure we sort of know what is going on. Parents should let Becky B. know if their children will not be able to participate.



December



Fred K.	3
Nathan W.	5
Dawn G.	7
Elliott F.	11
Chuck S.	17
Emily G.	19
Decker B.	19
Aaron S.	25
Sue D.	30

Birthdays

BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION

DECEMBER 28



AFTER WORSHIP



Join us after worship that day in the fellowship hall to celebrate with cake, a special song, and time with one



Do you have an event you are planning at Hope?

Please be sure to let Dawn know details of your event.

She will add it onto the new master calendar.

The welcome tablecloth and sign are located on top of the filing cabinets in the office and are available for all church events.

Advent Services & Suppers
Sunday Dec 7th at 5 PM
Sunday Dec 14th at 5 PM
Sunday Dec 21st following
Christmas Concert
Please sign up on welcome table to bring a dish to share.

THIRD @ 3

On December 21, the Third @ 3 is presenting a music program by the duo of Jessie & Jason. They will be playing traditional and contemporary Christmas music. Stay after for our Advent Service and dinner!

Sounds of the Season
JESSIE BARR & JASON BURDETT
December 21, 2025
3 PM

THIRD @ 3

Hope Lutheran Church
 456 S. Chillicothe Rd.
 Aurora, OH
 hlcaurora.org

VOA THANKSGIVING



Once again Hope and Hope Preschool were extremely generous in providing a Thanksgiving meal for VOA families. Forty family units, totaling over 120 individuals including seniors and children.

The monetary donations exceeded the cost of turkeys and pies and will be used in the New Year to provide additional food for the VOA Pantry.



SUNDAY SCHOOL

What hard workers there were! Sunday School children and teens packed 40 bags for the VOA Thanksgiving. And some of those bags got heavy, but the troops carried them all into the sanctuary for a blessing and prayer for those who provided food and those who will receive food.



Sunday School continues to meet each week during worship. The classes have learned about the fruit in the Garden of Eden, the ten commandments, and that God gives us rules to honor Him and keep us safe.

Thank you to the youth of the church who worked hard to pack 40 Thanksgiving meal bags for families in Aurora that were blessed at the end of the service on November 23rd.



**POINSETTIA
ORDER FORMS
ARE ON
THE WELCOME
TABLE
Deadline to order
Dec. 7th !**

THIRD @ THREE—BALLOON GUY!

Hope's "3rd at 3 Sunday afternoon in November with PhilUp the Balloon Guy was great fun! Everyone loved football helmet, butterfly, and princess crown balloons. There were even balloons that turned some of us into Santa and his reindeer! Be sure to join us on Sunday, December 21st at 3:00 p.m. for a Sounds of the Season holiday strings concert.



JANUARY TRIVIA!

Start studying your Bible now to prepare for our annual Bible Trivia contest coming in January! And, as an added bonus, you can win a prize if you can guess what church member this is!

Hint: it was Halloween!



BIBLE TRIVIA



SUNDAY
JANUARY 18
3 PM

Bible Trivia
Individuals or Teams
Prizes!



Hope Lutheran Church
456. S. Chillicothe Rd.



The next church council meeting will be on Thursday, December 11th at 3:30 p.m.

If you have any agenda items for the council to discuss, please see Hope's church president, Greg B., or email him at presi-

"Never worry about the size of your Christmas tree. In the eyes of children, they are all 30 feet tall." ~ Larry Wilde

DECORATING THE SANCTUARY

Thanks to the Bells and the Blackwells who spent Black Friday decorating the sanctuary for Advent and Christmas.



ONLINE GIVING



Hope Now Has Online Giving:

Are you looking for an easy and secure way to streamline your giving to Hope? Online giving is now available on Hope's new e-giving platform, **Vanco**.

One time and recurring donations can be found on Hope's website through the **Giving Here** tab on the main menu.

Additional information about giving at Hope can also be found on the Giving page of the website.

See church president Greg B. or email him with any questions at president@hlcaurora.org.

ADVENT SERVICES

Are you looking for a way to prepare your mind and heart for the celebration of the birth of our Savior?

Join Hope's Advent Sunday evening services on December 7th and 14th at 5:00 p.m. and after the 3rd at 3 social event on December 21st around 4:00 p.m.

These services include a brief service followed by a potluck supper. Signup sheets to provide a food item (if possible) are available on the welcome table outside the sanctuary.

ADVENT CALENDARS



Through a grant from Thrivent Financial and funds from Hope, Advent calendars were provided to all Preschool students during Pastor Dan's chapel service last week.

Advent calendars will be distributed to Sunday School children and teens on November 30. These calendars highlight the "Reason for the Season" in preparing young hearts for the birth of Jesus.

VOTER'S MEETING

Please plan to briefly stay after worship on Sunday, December 14th for an annual voter's meeting for church members. The church's budget will be discussed and voted on at the meeting.

The Three Gifts

After the Christmas pageant, I asked my 6-year-old son if he remembered the gifts that the Magi brought to Jesus. He thought for a minute then said "gold, frankincense, and humor". We could all use that!



The **In the Word Bible Saturday** study takes place at church and new members are welcome at any time.

December meeting dates this month are and 12/13 and 12/27.

9:15 coffee and fellowship; 9:30 small group study; 10:30 Q&A with the pastor.

For more information, please email Cheryl T. at 505Tomaselli@gmail.com. Beginning in January the Bible study will begin exploring the Book of Acts.

The **Sunday morning adult Bible Study** meets at 9:00 a.m. in the fellowship hall. Pastor Esala is leading a study on the Book of Proverbs. Join the study to learn more about seeking God's truth, living a wise and Godly life, and embracing obedience to His ways.



CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE

Christmas Eve worship candlelight service will be held at 4:00 p.m.

The service will include communion.

There is no Christmas Day worship service this year.



Hope’s unit of the LWML meets **the second Sunday of every month** in the fellowship hall following worship. All ladies are welcome to help us plan for future ministry outreach opportunities. If you would like more information on LWML please visit LWML.org

National mission grant amount awarded was **\$2,622,270.00 to 33 different ministries for 2025-2027**. I will share a write up each month on one of the ministries. Thank you to all who use a mite box to contribute your change to make LWML such a “mitey” ministry! You can drop off your mite boxes in the wooden box on the welcome table or the church office or give to Marge G.

2025–2027 National LWML Mission Grant #5



Growing Together to Share Braille and Large Print



Lutheran Braille Workers, U.S. \$100,000



Youth participate at a servant event in Michigan



Volunteers binding braille volumes

About This Mission Grant Recipient

Millions of people around the world are blind or visually impaired and are seeking to strengthen their Christian faith but find it difficult to access scripture-based reading materials. Lutheran Braille Workers (LBW) is committed to providing Christian materials in braille and specialized large print worldwide at no cost.

With a part of the grant funds, LBW will establish five new Ministry Pro-

hold five related servant events at LWML conventions, Lutheran universities and schools, and district youth gatherings. Service opportunities provide young people with the chance to grow in their God-given gifts and share the Gospel.

This grant will allow LBW to produce and freely distribute approximately 10,000 additional volumes of Bibles and other Christian materials. This grant will be used to purchase specialized paper, card



Northeast Zone
Ohio District

The Ohio District Northeast Zone (the zone that Hope belongs to) of the LWML holds a Prayer Service each year during Epiphany or Lent for the purpose of strengthening prayer life through Word and song.

This year Hope has the privilege of hosting the LWML Prayer Service on

Saturday, February 28, 2026
9:30am Coffee and Fellowship
10:00 am Service begins
11:45 lunch
Mite Offering - \$6 Registration

Our lunch menu will be soups and salads and crusty bread. Doesn't that sound like a wonderful meal for a day in February?! **If you have a special salad or soup or dessert you would like to share, please let Celia E. know. There will be a sign-up sheet in January.**



P.R.A.Y.E.R. — Praise, Remember, Ask, Yield, Excitement, Rejoice

The 2026 LWML Prayer Service to be held at Hope is based on the acronym P.R.A.Y.E.R. — Praise, Remember, Ask, Yield, Excitement, Rejoice — is a classic, yet updated, service from over a decade ago.

Rev. Henke wrote that the service “prompts the participants to remember that God does not speak to His children in prayer. Rather, His children speak to Him, assured that He readily speaks to them in His Word and in the Sacraments, as the Holy Spirit gives His divine counsel through very clear direction or, sometimes, His ‘nudging.’”

And finally, Women of Hope, I do hope you will join us on that day to connect with other Lutheran women during this special Lenten service. It's a great opportunity to experience what LWML is all about. There will be much more information on the service to share, so keep reading your newsletter in the coming months.



Another great opportunity to gather with other Lutheran women is the Ohio District Convention. If you can't make the entire two days, there is a worship service on Friday night that you won't want to miss! I'll be sharing more in the coming months to give you an idea about our convention. This month I'm highlighting our

Bible Study leader, Rev. Dr. Steven Schave L.A.M.P.



Rev. Dr. Schave currently serves as the executive director of the Lutheran Association of Missionaries and Pilots, a Gospel mission dedicated to reaching remote areas in northern Canada with short- and long-term volunteers-in-mission. Prior to this, he served the LCMS as the director of urban and inner-city mission, director of church planting, and as parish pastor to several congregations. For more information about LAMP, go to lampministry.org.



Ohio District LWML Convention "Joyful Always"

June 26-27, 2026

St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Westlake OH

Musician and Presenter	Hannah Nunnenkamp-Engelman
Keynote Speaker	Christina Hergenrader
Proclaimer	Rev. Dr. David Buegler
Bible Study Leader	Steve Schave

HINT! Place a mite box in your laundry room and stuff it with the loose change from your dryer.



Hope Lutheran Church is a congregation

In the

Ohio District

of the

Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod

Are you following Hope? Church news, updates, and reminders are posted several times a week on Hope's website as well as on Hope's Facebook, Instagram, and X (Twitter) accounts. Be sure to check these resources often to stay up to date.

Website: hlcaurora.org

Facebook: Hope Lutheran Church in Aurora, Ohio

Instagram: hopelutheranchurchauroraohio

Twitter: @HLCAurora