



**BETHEL EVANGELICAL
LUTHERAN CHURCH**

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Dear Beloved in Christ,

I believe one of the greatest gifts God has given us is hope. After all, that is what His promises are designed to do – inspire hope. It gives us the ability to look at any situation and know that regardless of how it may appear God is with us and we then rely on **(Romans 8:28)**. This is the essence of what hope is. However, the challenges of life can sometimes seem overwhelming. I know because I have faced those challenges just like you have and will be again on Monday. When these challenges attack, the thing they often come after is our hope. They try to move us from hope to despair, but that doesn't have to be the case. Today, I want to remind us all to stand tall and to be encouraged by the hope that dwells within us, within you; and that hope that comes from our Father in Heaven. Here, I will provide a definition of hope and I pray it will encourage you to walk in the victory that comes from hope. Let's start by taking a look at what **hope** is from both a dictionary definition and a biblical one.

Hope - (Dictionary) – The general consensus from all dictionary definitions is that hope is a feeling of expectation, a desire or wish for a certain thing or event to happen.

Hope - (Bible) – A biblical definition of hope takes this one step further. Hope is an expectation with certainty that God will do what He has promised.

Here the difference is that one is a wish or desire, the other is a certainty or guarantee. **(Hebrews 11:1-3)** Tells us:

“Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. For by it the people of old received their commendation. By faith we understand that the universe was created by the Word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things that are visible..”

Here we see that you cannot have hope unless it is tied together with faith. In essence, you have hope because you have faith and you have faith because you have hope.

However, you don't just have faith in faith or hope in hope, there is no real value in that. What matters most is the object of your faith and hope – that makes all the difference.

The thing that separates the basic definition of hope and the biblical definition of hope is what I call The God Factor. Your hope should be based on the fact of who God is and nothing else. If God is not the object of your hope then you don't have true biblical hope because the certainty has been removed. Without that, your hope simply reverts back to a wish.

If God has said it, you can trust His promise because it is impossible for God to lie. Remember that the Lord God never has, does not know, and never will break a promise. Knowing and understanding this is the foundation of trust. This trust therefore becomes an anchor for the soul. Anchors are designed to keep you steady so that you will not be moved. This anchor that it is impossible for God to lie is the foundation for our certainty and the backbone for our hope. It is the reason why we/you can have hope today.

We all must walk by faith and not by sight. Regardless of your situation, find out what God has said about it and let that be the truth you believe about it. Because it is! This does not guarantee that your situation will change immediately but the beauty of hope is that even if the situation remains, so does your hope. Because of hope you have confidence knowing God will respond and keep His promises. If that is what He said you can be certain that is what He will do. As He tells us in (**Jeremiah 29:11**): “For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope.” And...“This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us—whatever we ask—we know that we have what we asked of Him” (**1 John 5:14-15**). See also: (**Matthew 18:19**) And always remember, (**Romans 8:31**) “What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?”

God's Blessings Always——Rev. Donn Woolweber



PRAYERS PLEASE

Pastor Woolweber will be having bypass surgery on Monday, April 8 and prayers are being requested for a successful operation and quick recovery. Keep Debbie in your prayers also for strength and guidance during this time of recouping. We will have worship services held by our Elders and guest ministers for the next month or two. If you are in need of pastoral care, please contact Rev. Ron Bright at 412-926-7811 or Debbie Woolweber at 818-681-5494 or Fred Heintz at 412-213-3883.



BOARD MEETING GLEANINGS

- Waiting to hear from Nina, music director/organist that we interviewed last month. Luke Swanson has been doing a great job being our organist.
- Fred Heintz will be leading the Wednesday morning Bible study at 10:00 a.m. using the *Faith on the Edge Series* book “The Unexplained: Miracles Mysteries and More”. The chapter topics are: Miracles, Mystical Experiences, Near-Death Experiences, Dreams, Demons, Angels.
- Paul Hoffman and Gary Swanson will be leading the Sunday morning Bible Study on the Book of Acts
- The Seder was once again a big success thanks to the Swanson family. This year 27 people participated in the Jewish Passover tradition.
- It was decided to have Easter coffee hours in the future since this year’s impromptu breakfast was a hit.
- The blind ministry at First Trinity held their 25th anniversary celebration which Fred and Gary attended.
- The financial books for 2023 will be audited soon. See Curt Hetz if you can help in this endeavor.

LETTER RECEIVED

We recently received correspondence from our adopt-a-student at Concordia Seminary. You can find the letter on the Social Hall Bulletin board. Feel free to drop Joshua Marlatt a card or letter of encouragement as he studies to be LCMS minister.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

02 – Luke Swanson

04 – Tad Swanson

16 – Debbie Woolweber

22 – Paola Hammer

25 – Dayna Dorsey

27 – Elizabeth Gurtner



HAPPY ANNIVERSARY

04 – Paul and Kristen Hoffman

05 – Charlotte and Tim Hornish

18 – Pastor and Debbie Woolweber



SEWING SAINTS

Come and join us on SATURDAY, APRIL 27 at Bethel at 9:00 a.m. as we continue to cut and sew walker bags for Concordia residents. See Donna Heintz for any questions.

