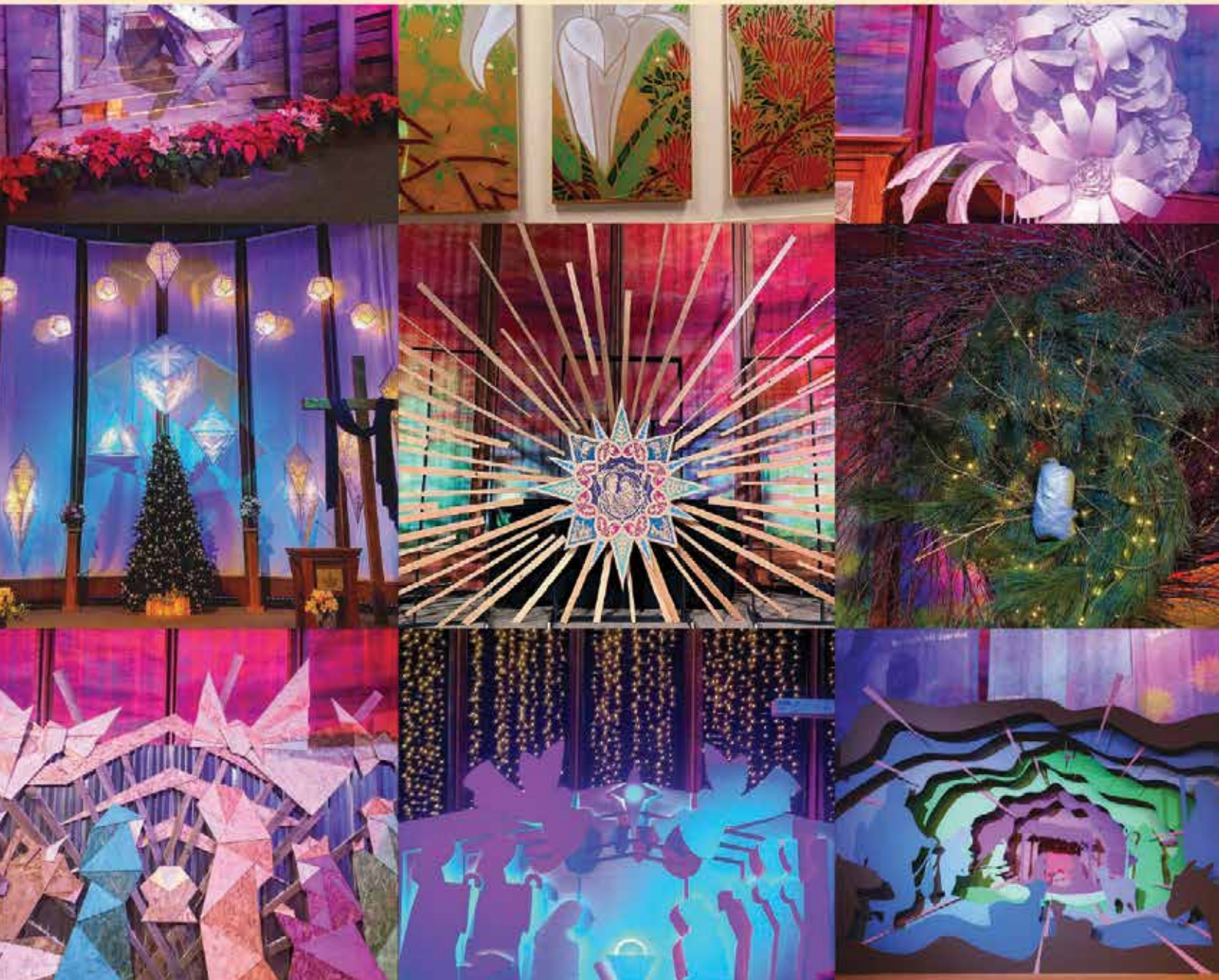
VOL. 26 ISSUE 4

WINTER 2026

WORDS OF HOPE



THIS WINTER AT HOPE

This issue of Words of Hope is filled with articles about connecting, serving, and opportunities to grow in your faith. Please take a moment to read through these articles and plan how you and your family will stay connected and growing in faith this season.

Sermon Series:

September 16-November 22—Questions Jesus Asked
Jesus asked far more questions than he answered. Scholars say Jesus asked 307 questions, was asked 183 questions by others and only directly answered 3 of them. There is power in a question. This fall we will look at some important questions Jesus asked and reflect on what that means for our lives together. Got questions? So does Jesus!

November 25 & 29—Thanksgiving & 1st Sunday of Advent

December 2-December 20—Jesus' Family Tree: Advent Sermon Series
This Advent sermon series tells the stories of Jesus' parents, grandparents, great grandparents, great-great... well, you get the idea. We will journey from Abraham to David, to the exile, to the night before Christmas. We will hear about the shining and not so shining personalities in Jesus' own family tree, and how God redeems the past for His purpose.

December 23-December 25—Join us for Christmas
(See worship schedule on page 5)

December 27—"Go Tell It on the Mountain" (John 3:16)
On the Sunday after Christmas, join us for a back-to-the-basics sermon reminding us of the life-changing reason for the season: "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:16). Christmas sweaters are welcome.

December 30 —Worship on break (all Campuses)

January 3-February 7—How to
The book of James focuses intently on how we live out our faith. James illustrates boldly that faith in Christ looks like love in action for others. How useful is our serve? As James as the backbone, this series will examine some of the "How-tos" of our faith. If I am a follower of Jesus, what does that look like in our world today?

Important Dates:

October 28 & November 1—All Saints Week | Communion all Worship Services | all Campuses

November 12—Man Talk Men's Breakfast | 6:30am South Campus | Details at fargohope.org/men

November 14—Restore & Receive | 9:00am-12:00pm South Campus | Details at fargohope.org/women

November 15—Young Adult Worship Night 6:30pm-8:00pm | South Campus

November 15—Baptism Orientation | Noon | West Campus Lunch provided, register at fargohope.org/baptism

November 16—Surviving the Holidays
GriefShare | 6:30-8:00pm | North Campus Lounge
DivorceCare | 6:30-8:00pm | South Campus Room 100

November 16—Card Making Ministry | 5:45-7:15pm South Campus

November 18 & 22—Congregational Vote for the purpose of calling Pastor Andria Messelt | After all worship services at all Campuses

November 20—Volunteers Needed: Salvation Army Food Box Distribution | 10:00am-4:00pm | South Campus | Register at fargohope.org/adults

November 25 & 29—Youth Programming on Break

December 2 & 6—Communion

December 5—Women's Christmas Brunch | 9:00am South Campus | Details coming soon to fargohope.org/women

December 10—Man Talk Men's Breakfast | 6:30am South Campus | Details at fargohope.org/men

December 13—Baptism Orientation | Noon | South Campus Register at fargohope.org/baptism

December 18—Volunteers Needed: Salvation Army Food Box Distribution | 10:00am-4:00pm | South Campus | Register at fargohope.org/adults

December 20—Young Adult Worship Night
6:30-8:00pm | South Campus

December 21-22—Volunteers Needed: Salvation Army Toy Shop | South Campus | Register at fargohope.org/adults

December 23-January 3—Youth Programming on Break

December 30—Worship on break (all Campuses)

December 31—Year End Giving Deadline by 4:00pm

January 5—Women of the Word Launch
6:30-7:45pm | North & South Campuses
Details coming soon to fargohope.org/women

January 6 & 10—Youth Programming Resumes | Communion

January 14—Man Talk Men's Breakfast | 6:30am
South Campus | Details at fargohope.org/men

January 17—Young Adult Worship Night
6:30pm-8:00pm | South Campus

January 17—Baptism Orientation | Noon | North Campus Register at fargohope.org/baptism

January 18—GriefShare: Loss of Spouse Seminar
6:00-8:00pm | South Campus

January 20 & 24—Baptism Week | North Campus
Join us at all worship services

January 24—Annual Meeting | 12:00pm | South Campus. All members are welcome | Lunch is served promptly at Noon.

January 27 & 31—Baptism Week | South Campus
Join us at all worship services

January 27-February 14—Pajama Drive
all Campuses

January 31—Hopekids Family Fun Event
Pancakes & Pajamas | 4:00-5:00pm
South Campus

February 3 & 7—Baptism Week
West Campus | Communion
Join us at all worship services

Hopekids sing in worship:

December 9

North Campus | Grades 3-5

South & West Campuses | Grades 2-5

December 13

South Campus | Grades 2-5

December 16

North Campus | Grades Prek-2

South & West Campuses | Grades Prek-1

December 20

North Campus | Grades Prek-5 (9:45am only)

South Campus | Grades Prek-1

West Campus | Grades Prek-5

HopeCare Events Visit fargohope.org/hopecare

DivorceCare
Mondays | 6:30-8:00pm | South Campus | Current session: October 12-early January (13 weeks, not including holiday breaks) Details at fargohope.org/hopecare. Come and find help and healing for the hurt of separation and divorce. Join anytime!

GriefShare
Mondays | 6:30-8:00pm | North Campus Lounge
Current session: September 21-January 4
Spring session: February 1-early May (13 weeks, not including holiday breaks) Details at fargohope.org/hopecare

GriefShare is a special seminar and support group for people grieving the loss of someone close. This group is sponsored by people who understand what you are experiencing and want to offer you comfort and encouragement during this difficult time.

Surviving the Holidays:
November 16
DivorceCare | 6:30pm | South Campus
GriefShare | 6:30pm | North Campus
Are you or someone you know struggling with the thought of the upcoming holidays after separation, divorce, or the loss of a loved one? Please consider joining either session. All are welcome.

GriefShare: Loss of Spouse Seminar
January 18 | 6:30pm | South Campus
Loss of a Spouse seminar is to encourage those grieving the loss of a spouse to face their future with renewed hope.

Pajama Drive
January 27-February 14 | All Campuses
We are collecting pajamas of all sizes for FM area organizations who help children and adults in crisis. Please leave your donations in the pack 'n plays located in the hallways at each campus.

GOOD NEWS TO THE POOR

Have you ever wondered what it would take to end poverty in Fargo-Moorhead?

In 2025, Hope pastors began meeting with local mission partners for "listening sessions," asking the question: "What can our church do to help end poverty in our community?" We learned that the Fargo-Moorhead metro area has some of the best-run nonprofit organizations in the nation, but we need more volunteers to run them.

According to United Way of Cass-Clay, in our community in 2025:

- food pantries distributed 5,642,785 pounds of food to 45,661 poor households in our region
- Cass and Clay County schools distributed 73,000 packs of food for hungry kids on the weekends
- missions provided 77,958 shelter nights
- programs connected 1,665 schoolchildren in need to positive mentors
- over 900 volunteers provided 6,504 backpacks
- more than 2,600 children received access to mental health services they could not otherwise afford.

The bad news: That's a lot of needs! The good news: That's a lot of needs met! Will you play a part in bringing this good news?

In 2026, Hope members and community leaders formed the "Good News to the Poor" team (a phrase from the Bible found in Isaiah 61:1; Matthew 11:5; Luke 4:18; and Luke 7:22). One of our projects was to create a "menu" to connect small groups to vetted mission partners. The result of that project is volunteer.fm, a simple website menu you can remember, use, and share with others!

The volunteer.fm webpage features a growing list of vetted volunteer opportunities at local organizations that makes it very easy to volunteer.

Our Goal: to mobilize...

10,000 **people of Hope** to form...

1,000 **small groups** to support...

100 **mission partners** to deploy...

10 **people per project** to end poverty in...

1 **community** the Fargo Moorhead (FM) area...

➤ **All you have to do is form a small group, connect with a mission partner, and serve there consistently (e.g. monthly). Through this effort, we hope to end poverty in our community!**

MERRY CHRISTMAS

Join us at Hope Lutheran Church for Christmas worship this year!
All Christmas Eve services will be candlelight services.

Early Christmas Eve | Wednesday, Dec 23

North & South Campus | 6:00pm

Christmas Eve | Thursday, Dec 24

North Campus | 11:00am, 1:00pm, 3:00pm, 5:00pm, 7:00pm, 9:00pm* (Traditional)

South Campus Sanctuary (Contemporary) | 11:00am, 1:00pm, 3:00pm, 5:00pm*, 7:00pm, 9:00pm

South Campus Discovery Center (Traditional) | 3:00pm, 5:00pm

West Campus | 1:00pm, 3:00pm, 5:00pm

Christmas Day | Friday, Dec 25

All Campuses | 10:00am (Communion)

North Campus (Traditional)

South & West Campuses (Contemporary)

**Livestreamed at fargohope.org/watch*

Ministry Highlight: GriefShare

by Bunnie Johnson-Messelt

I moved to Fargo in August of 1997. My middle son and my daughter moved with me. I had been divorced since June of 1994. My daughter started 8th grade and needed to be in confirmation. I joined Hope Lutheran and my faith journey at Hope began.

I decided to became more involved at Hope, and began with the decorating committee. I met wonderful people who welcomed me to the congregation. Each Sunday, God reached out to me through the Scripture readings, the sermons or the worship team music. It was amazing! I continued growing my faith through Stephen Ministry, HopeCare opportunities, bringing communion to homebound members, and Bible studies. I met so many faith filled members who exemplified Hope's mission "To encourage all people to know the love of Christ." Every opportunity expanded and deepened my faith.

In June of 2002, my sister who was 48 died of a massive heart attack. It was a shock and very unexpected. At that time, I was bringing communion to a homebound member of Hope. She was an angel on earth for me as I grieved. She passed away in August 2002 at 53. My heart was so sad from the loss of these two individuals. The grief kept me asking "Why God?" No answers came. I did not do any grief work at that time and there are still times the grief surfaces even after 24 years.

The opportunities at Hope Lutheran Church continued to grow my faith. Attending the Women of Faith conferences in St. Paul was great! Meeting members of Hope who attend North and South Campus promoted a connection and supported the concept of one church with two locations. Now we have added a third Campus.

Grief would surface again in April of 2019. My 85 year old mom died from a massive stroke. Once again it was unexpected. At that time, my husband had been battling cancer for over two years. Five months later he would die. I cannot describe the deepness of these losses. In 2020, our world was hit with COVID and life changed forever.

The loneliness, grief, isolation and sadness were overwhelming. This was a very dark time for me. I leaned into my faith and God was there. He held me as I wept, encouraged me to remember the good times, and to trust in His love for me. I knew I would eventually be okay.

I received a phone call from Linda Coons, a GriefShare facilitator at the North Campus in December of 2021. Hope sponsors two GriefShare groups a year. It is a 13-week support group for those who are grieving the loss of someone recent or years ago. It is led by people who have walked their own grief journey. That January 2022 night brought individuals from all walks of life, all ages, and various types of loss. No one knew what to expect, but the facilitator, Kim Youngquist, welcomed everyone with warmth and kindness. It became a safe place to share or just to listen to the videos and the other participants. People did not have to speak. GriefShare materials said, "from mourning to joy." For me, I knew this would help me. I didn't want to be held in the darkness forever. I wanted to live, get through this loss and find joy again. GriefShare helped me believe that I could.

I noticed a peace that came over me after a few weeks. I experienced hope and was able to experience a lightness. I remember sitting on my patio watching some neighbor boys jump on their trampoline. They were laughing and having so much fun. Who can resist the laughter of children? I felt a leap of joy for the first time in a long while. It was a sign I could not ignore.

When GriefShare ended, God kept nudging me. I contacted Kim Youngquist, Hope's Stephen Ministry Coordinator. I wanted to learn more about grief and how it affects our body, mind, and spiritual being. I wanted to help others. In helping others, we are the recipients of so much more. I am a co-facilitator for the spring session of GriefShare. I get to see the Holy Spirit work in people as they are healing and moving forward in their grief.

When GriefShare begins there are many tears, which you expect. Some feel that they don't know who they are or can't move on without their loved one. They feel as if they lost their best friend, their history, their confidence, their entire identity. Then midway you begin to see a shift. Everyone realizes that they are with others who have experienced some of the same things, and understand how grief affects you physically, spiritually, and even your memory—and they start to open up. They console each other and help one another. It is at this point that I truly become more of a facilitator and get to watch the Holy Spirit leading and healing them in their needs. Week 13 we have a potluck, and you get to see the comradery, hear the laughter, and witness the friendships that have formed. We get to experience joy!

People who have been through grief often become more sensitive to others in grief, and are able to reach out. That's how I believe the Holy Spirit works in each of us. We reach out to others who just need someone to care. We take action, and that's what Christ wants us to do. GriefShare provides resources so they can become good receivers, and then they can become better givers.

If someone is wondering if GriefShare is right for them, I encourage them to just come and try it. I believe they'll find a safe, comfortable place to connect with people who understand and are going through the same things. Sometimes people are not ready to process their grief yet, and that is OK. This is a safe place, and you are not alone. Come give it a try.

I believe Hope Lutheran has a strong program that will encourage strength and healing through the grief process whether your loss was recent, or some time has passed. GriefShare provides a way to move forward, through baby steps or giant steps. It is at your pace. Faith makes all things possible, but it does not make all things easy. We are not promised a life free from trouble, but we are promised that God is always there. Overcoming grief is not easy, but we can do it because of our faith, and our faith will grow and deepen as we heal.

If you are grieving, you are not alone.
Register for GriefShare by visiting fargohope.org/hopecare
Upcoming GriefShare events can be found on page 3.

Position Overview

Many people at Hope are familiar with our pastors and the staff who are busy with our core ministry programming including Worship Arts, HopeCare, Youth Ministry, Adult Ministry, and Young Adult Ministry. But did you know that behind the scenes, the Executive Director of Ministry Operations, with support from the church office team, manages the budget, income & expenses, facility repairs & maintenance, I.T., and Human Resources for over 172 employees? Things like insurance policies, contracting, audits, benefits, and making sure the administrative needs throughout the organization are met and that all are working together as a team to carry out the mission of Hope Lutheran Church.

Our pastors and this congregation would not be able "to encourage all people to know the love of Christ" without the Executive Director of Ministry Operations and the team of dedicated staff members who support all aspects of operations for our congregation and its ministries.

Though mostly behind the scenes, this is an important transition for our church, and we want you to know more about the position and the incredible leaders who have held the title. We are excited about Josh Kading stepping into the role of serving as Hope's new Executive Director of Ministry Operations, and we wish to celebrate Judy Aafedt, Hope's retiring EDMO, for her 15 years of dedicated service to the mission and ministry of Hope Lutheran.

Judy Aafedt—Retiring Executive Director of Ministry Operations

I started my career at Hope on June 6, 2011, as the Business Administrator eventually taking over the operations side of Hope including Finance, Human Resources, Information Technology, Hope Center for Learning, Facilities, and Administration, along with closely working with the Hope Lutheran Foundation. Through the years, I have seen year-after-year growth in every area of the church from congregation to staff to ministry.

I was fortunate to be part of the vision for West Campus from the beginning. West Campus began very mobile, moving to different locations. Eventually, the opportunity arose to lease space which provided a 5-year home for our congregation. Next came the land purchase, design process, groundbreaking and construction of the permanent home for the West Campus congregation.

Another big transition was Pastor Paul Nynas becoming the Senior Pastor of Hope, with the retirement of Pastor Chuck Olmstead, while navigating the COVID pandemic. With a change in leadership came a change in the vision of the church, which was an exciting time for me, the staff, and congregation.

Over the years, I was very blessed to work alongside and be mentored by many of you who shared your gifts and talents with me. I am thankful beyond words for those of you who I have gotten to know, share stories with, and even shared some tears with. I am grateful for the opportunity to serve the congregation of Hope Lutheran Church and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

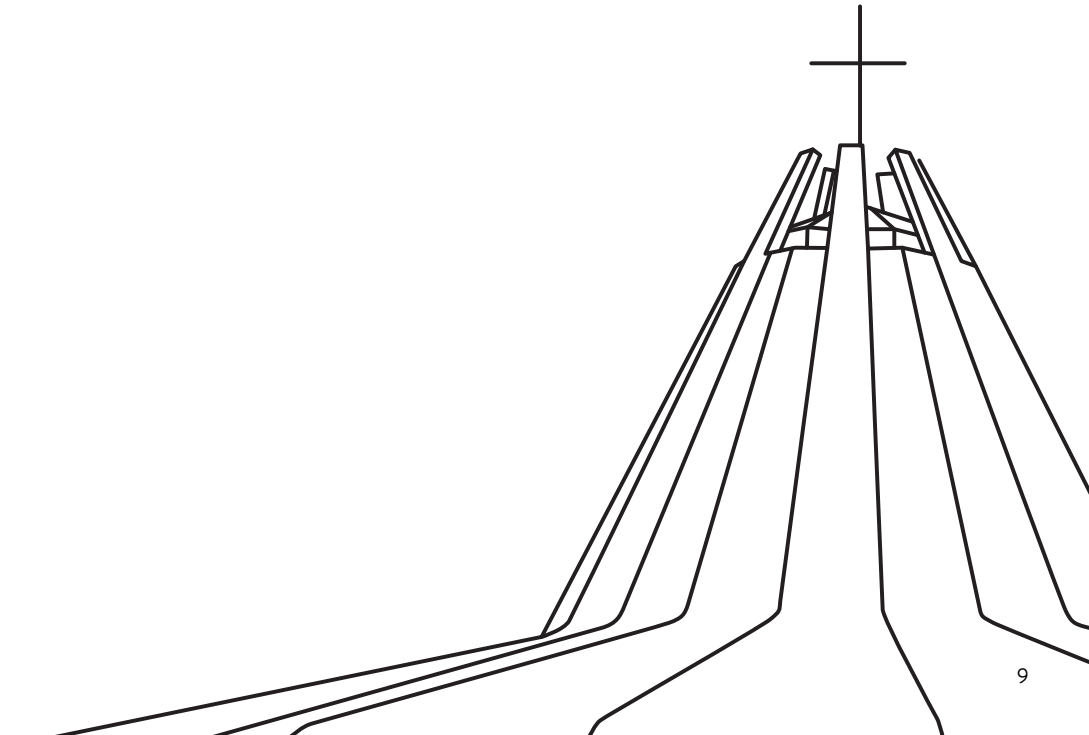
Josh Kading—Executive Director of Ministry Operations

My name is Josh Kading, and I have been blessed with the opportunity to serve as the next Executive Director of Ministry Operations here at Hope Lutheran.

I grew up in Fargo and have called this community home my whole life. My wife, Jenny, and I live in south Fargo with our two sons, Cooper (16) and Cole (13). We have been part of the Hope community for a few years, and our family has been blessed by the people, ministries, and mission of this church.

I'm coming to Hope from Oak Grove Lutheran School, where I served for 21 years, most recently as the principal of the elementary school for the last 14 years. My years at Oak Grove were a tremendous blessing, and I am grateful for the many relationships and experiences that shaped me as a leader and as a person.

I am extremely excited to join the leadership team at Hope and to serve alongside the pastors, staff, volunteers, and members who make this church such a special place. The strong culture of Hope is evident in so many aspects of the church, and I am looking forward to serving in this new role and getting to know even more of you along the way.



MILESTONES
June 24-October 7

Baptisms

Beau Austin Wilmer
Brooksten Leigh, daughter of Skyler & Paige Miller
Callahan Dale, son of Dexter & Gretchen Peters
Crosby Hahn, daughter of James & Sawyer Cronin
Jameson Lee, son of Lee & Crystal Howes
Roman Joseph Peter, son of Jesse & Chantell Hoorelbeke
Emery Brooks, daughter of Ian & Kailey Friswold
Wade Owen, son of Logan & Michaela Moffett
Brooks Michael, son of Dylan & Destinee Ensrude
Blair Jaye, daughter of Aaron & Miranda Bergdahl
Boden Quinn, son of Brodie & Brienne Stairs
Leighton Marian, daughter of Jordan & Madison Bancroft
Mickee Joe, son of Ryan & Alexis Kurle
Tatum Joy, daughter of Erik & Nicolle Johnson
Matthew Paul Riopelle
Tilly Mae, daughter of Matthew & Allison Riopelle
Leora Mary Marsha, daughter of Luke & Leigh Daley
Easton Martin Miller, son of Garrison Miller & Londyn Mikesh
Isla Collins, daughter of Jarryd & Jennifer Phillips
Palmer Kate, daughter of Brendan & Katie Smith
Opal Joy, daughter of Matthew & Karissa Nelson
Parker Kay, daughter of Michael & Amanda Schild
Jaxson Carl, son of Timothy & Kayla Harrer
Jett Samuel, son of Sam & Siennah Callahan
Renna Marcille, daughter of Nathan & Tina Zurn
Cassandra Elaine Sellin
Matthias Raymond, son of Micheal & Lea Ziegler
Layla Lu, daughter of Jamison & Alexis Boyer
Kendall Belle, daughter of Shane & Riley Wolf
Rowan Joseph, son of Brittany & Landon Melchior
Rosie Schatz, daughter of Griffin & Madeline Sauvageau
Lilly Ann, daughter of Destiny & Steven Wanous
Savannah Quinn, daughter of Jacob & Jessica Koponen
Paulina Marie, daughter of Carlos & Olivia Gutierrez
Tony Armstrong Sessing, son of Carlie Armstrong & Tyrel Sessing
Maddox Ross, son of Paul & Hannah LeClaire
Rose Jay Baron, daughter of Alexis Young & Kyle Baron
Beck Thompson, son of Casey & Heather Kulsrud
William Timothy, son of Matthew & Kelsey Port
Ava Rose, daughter of Jon & Mary Michael Hedin

Marriages

Grace Dorsher & Adnew Stueven 6/26/2026
Yang Zhao & Bryan Finneseth 7/11/2026
Allison Repoyo & Jacob Carter 7/11/2026
Jensen Bloom & Ethan Roeder 7/24/2026
Claire Suckow & Darius O'Neill 8/7/2026
Penny Redmann & Jason Peterson 8/8/2026
Emily Jahner & Ty Satter 8/22/2026
Jenna Weinhandl & Derek McLister 8/22/2026
Emily Dockter & James Sayler 8/22/2026
Lexi Loomer & Sam Sticha 8/29/2026
Kiley Kuehl & Joe Weatherly 9/3/2026
Lydia Farnham & James Strand 9/5/2026
Olivia Teckenberg & Max Bartels 9/5/2026
Amanda Petersen & Nathan Tangen 9/6/2026
Lauren Wenaas & Cole Birch 9/19/2026
Taylor Berry & Chase Erickson 9/26/2026
Chentel Cherrier & Andrew Fiske 10/2/2026
Hannah Flaa & Jacob Teigen 10/3/2026

Deaths

Lester (Les) Burkhart 6/13/2026
Katharine (Kathy) Johnson 6/24/2026
Allan Johnson 7/21/2026
Joan Kaehn 7/22/2026
Markus Jackson 8/5/2026
David Hilde 8/9/2026
Dena Lachowitzer 8/10/2026
Christina Harmon 8/19/2026
Robert (Bob) Knight 8/20/2026
Ronald (Ron) Martin 8/24/2026
Jeffery (Jeff) Larson 9/6/2026
Judy Metcalf 9/9/2026
Karen Wieland 9/22/2026
Mathia (Mae) Fitzloff 9/23/2026

NEW MEMBERS
June 24-October 7

New Members
Kyle Baron & Alexis Young
Annika Biegler
Luke & Leigh Daley, Layla and Leora
Ian Friswold
Jake Froemke & Carly Benson
Paul & Hannah LeClaire, Maddox
Jeremy McIntyre
Claire Miner
Jon & Lysette Oster, Hudson and Tatum
Dallas & Emily Raftevold, Margot
Lucy Sorby
Grant Warkenthien

WORSHIP TIMES

SOUTH CAMPUS
Wednesday:
6:00pm Contemporary

Sunday: 8:30am Traditional (In Chapel)
9:30am Contemporary
10:45am Contemporary

NORTH CAMPUS
Wednesday:
6:00pm Contemporary

Sunday: 8:30am Traditional
9:45am Contemporary
10:45am Contemporary

WEST CAMPUS
Wednesday: 6:00pm Contemporary

Sunday: 9:30am Contemporary
10:45am Contemporary

WORSHIP ONLINE

If you are unable to attend in-person, we invite you to worship with us online! You can watch live on our website at fargohope.org/watch, on our YouTube channel at youtube.com/fargohope, or by downloading the Fargo Hope app on your phone.

FARGO HOPE APP & YOUTUBE
Wednesday 6:00pm
Sunday 8:30am Traditional, 10:45am Contemporary

A sermon highlight video is available each Tuesday following worship at fargohope.org/watch, in the Sermon Series playlist on youtube.com/fargohope, or on the Fargo Hope app.

LOCATIONS

SOUTH CAMPUS
3636 25th St. S, Fargo

NORTH CAMPUS
2900 Broadway N, Fargo

WEST CAMPUS
2633 55th St S, Fargo

FARGOHOPE.ORG
CHURCH OFFICE 701.235.6629

HOPE LUTHERAN PASTORS

Paul Nynas
Senior Pastor

Michael Toomey
Executive Pastor

Steven Dunkel
Executive Pastor

Sarah Seibold

Ben Jacobson

Ben Sullivan

Stefanie Jordheim

Andria Messelt
Pastoral Intern

STAFF

For full list of Hope's staff please visit fargohope.org/whoweare

Membership that Matters

Sign up at fargohope.org and a pastor will contact you to visit and welcome you to Hope's family. It's that easy. Questions? Email welcome@fargohope.org.

Words of Hope
Hope Lutheran Church
2900 Broadway N
Fargo, ND 58102

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BAPTISM WEEK

Every worship service will proclaim the promises God makes to us in water and word and will be an opportunity for us to commit, or recommit, our lives to the way of Jesus. Come and be baptized or remember your baptism. Baptism will be offered by sprinkling or full immersion (bring a towel.)

BAPTISM DATES

January 20 & 24—Baptism Week | North Campus
Part of all worship services

January 27 & 31—Baptism Week | South Campus
Part of all worship services

February 3 & 7—Baptism Week | West Campus
Part of all worship services

Questions? Email adults@fargohope.org