



THE ANCHOR

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www.mthopelcmsgrayling.org

MtHopeLCMS@gmail.com

WE VALUE

Bible-centered
Preaching &
Teaching

Dynamic Praise &
Worship

The Sacraments

Prayer

Evangelism

Christian Education
for All Ages

Loving Relationships

Strong Christian
Families

OUR VISION

By the love of Christ,
our vision is to work together,
reaching out to all people,
through the Gospel,
in our various activities and events.
As we encourage each other to worship
and grow in God's Word,
we will be a Christian influence
in our community.

OUR MISSION

BUILDING TOGETHER SPIRITUALLY
FOLLOWING THE TRIUNE GOD

OUR PURPOSE

- Glorifying** God through *WORSHIP*
- Reaching** out to all with the Good News of
salvation in Christ through *EVANGELISM*
- Actively** caring for God's people in Christ
through *FELLOWSHIP*
- Creating** a family of God by Word and Sacrament
through *MINISTRY*
- Equipping** people of all ages for life in Christ
through *DISCIPLESHIP*

Notes and Announcements

Family Fare Receipts

January 8th will be our next potluck, hosted by the Elders. Hope to see you there!

There is a basket on the table in the narthex for these receipts. We are collecting them for the Day Care. If you have questions, please talk to Terry Tody.

Reminder: Noisy offering will be taken on second Sundays!

Noisy Offering for January through March will be going to Lutherans For Life.

Thank you for your donations.

Altar

1st-Martha Pregler
8th-Martha Pregler
15th-Louise Lazzarino
22nd-Kay Vedder
29th-Dee Musselman

LWML is looking for used sheets to use as middles in quilts. If you are cleaning out & find any, please donate them for quilts.

Thank you!

Elders

1st-Jeff Pregler
8th-Jeff Pregler
15th-Dave Jansen
22nd-Jason Hartman
29th-Jack Owens

At our potluck on 1-8-2-23, we will be having **Ken Bendick appreciation Day!**

Anyone need name tags? Have you lost, misplaced, or maybe never received name tags? Please contact Mary Heinlein at 989.348.4350 or MtHopeBookkeeper@gmail.com



January Family Night will be on the 9th at 6 pm featuring the movie "Amazing Grace", which is based on John Newton and how he was moved by the Lord to write the song. Please bring finger food!

MT. HOPE'S WEBSITE

Did you know that Mt. Hope has a website? If you go to <http://www.mthopelcmsgrayling.org/> our website will come up. It is a multi page site with much information about our church, our congregation, our Pastor, what programs we are involved with and much more! Although there is a "member log-in" area, this is just for those who work on the site. Nancy Hatfield is our webmaster who keeps our website updated and makes any necessary changes. Anyone who goes to our site can access all pages. So...check it out!



Mt. Hope Financial Report

Mary Heinlein, Bookkeeper

Attendance

GENERAL FUND

	NOV 2022 Year to date			
Income	7,108.50	35,092.88	13	63
Expense	-6,762.36	<u>-34,492.96</u>	20	30
Net	346.14	599.92	23	23

TOTAL ALL EARMARKED FUNDS

73,543.67

27 73

NOV 2022 Year to date

Together in Missions	20.00	821.80		
Christian Help Center	20.00	130.00		
Noisy Offering	199.90	402.15		

NOV 2022 Year to date

Church Extension Fund (CEF) Mortgage		470,000.00		
Mortgage Principal Payment	1,258.87	28,966.17		
Earmarked Principal Payment	5,700.00	<u>89,736.64</u>		
Mortgage Interest Payment	1,126.13			

CURRENT MORTGAGE BALANCE

351,297.19

"Thank You" to Abbi Drews for volunteering to upload our Sunday morning services to the web!!



Attention: People need to sign up to host coffee hour or there will not be one.

Special thanks to the many who prepared for our Christmas Eve worship including:

... Pastor Paul Schneider

... our instrumentalists:

Claudia Albright	A J Stancil
Marj Kelsey	Steve Koch

... our vocal choir under the direction of Chris Lauria

... and our Handbell choir:

Kristie Wilkins	Joan Thompson
Mary Vest	Mary Heinlein
Carol Shields	Roy Kronsbein
Marj Kelsey	Leslye Vest
Jonathan Wilkins	Nicholas Wilkins
Jim Heinlein, Director	

**TO PLACE
SOMEONE ON
PRAYER CHAIN:**

Call Lynn Richmond at
989-390-8632 or
lynncarolmorris@yahoo.com

Jamie Wohn will be handling the **sign changes**. Please email him with any necessary info for the sign at jackwohn3@gmail.com or jackwohn3@aol.com. If urgent, text him at (810) 965-1891



Many hospitals across the U.S. have policies that prohibit or strictly limit abortions – another confirmation that killing unborn babies is not health care.

Hospitals save pregnant mothers' and babies' lives every day, providing emergency medical care, pregnancy and delivery services, care for premature babies, miscarriage and ectopic pregnancy treatment, and so much more. But abortions – contrary to the claims of the pro-abortion movement – are not recognized as “essential health care” by many of these life-saving medical facilities.

Even in states where abortion on demand is legal, many hospitals have policies that prohibit or limit abortions, former Planned Parenthood executive Emily Stewart wrote this week [in a column at Health Affairs](#).

Stewart, the executive director of Community Catalyst, claimed these hospitals' anti-abortion policies “stand in the way of advancing health equity” and put women's lives at risk.

However, she did not cite any examples of women dying or being seriously harmed as a result of the supposedly “dire situation.” That is because hospital anti-abortion policies do not stop doctors from [providing life-saving medical care to pregnant mothers](#). [State pro-life laws do not either](#).

Stewart said there are policies restricting or prohibiting abortions in both public and private hospitals across America.

She continued:

Policies prohibiting or sharply restricting abortion exist at some public hospitals, such as those run by certain municipalities, local hospital districts, or the Indian Health Service (which is governed by the discriminatory Hyde Amendment restrictions on use of federal funding for abortions), disproportionately affecting people with low incomes. Some non-profit hospitals – including Adventist, Baptist and Evangelical Lutheran hospitals, as well as secular ones, especially in the South – also have policies prohibiting their providers from performing abortions.

But the most expansive refusal policies can be found in Catholic health systems, which now include three of the nation's six largest private health systems and are expanding rapidly through acquisitions of physician practices, urgent care centers, retail health clinics and ambulatory surgery centers.

In Washington state, where abortions are legal for basically any reason through all nine months and taxpayer-funded, 41 percent of hospital beds are in Catholic facilities, she said, citing research from her organization. Similarly, more than one fourth of all hospital beds in pro-abortion Oregon, Colorado and Illinois also are in Catholic hospitals, according to the research.

“Moreover, in 52 geographic regions around the country, a Catholic hospital is the sole provider of hospital care, leaving patients with little other choice, that same report found,” she said.

Stewart argued that these policies are harming women, but the evidence indicates the opposite. The fact that these policies are prevalent and long-standing in hospitals – highly-skilled, intricate medical facilities dedicated to healing and saving people's lives – shows that aborting unborn babies is not necessary or good medical care.

Tens of thousands of doctors confirm this. In 2021, the Alliance for Hippocratic Medicine, which represents more than 30,000 physicians and other healthcare professionals, told the U.S. Supreme Court in a brief that [abortions are not health care](#) and more than 90 percent of OB-GYNs do not provide them.

“As physicians and other healthcare professionals, we know that when we care for pregnant women, we are caring for two distinct patients,” the alliance said.

Prominent OB-GYNs also have been correcting false information about pro-life laws and ectopic pregnancy and miscarriage treatments. [In a video earlier this year](#), Dr. Christina Francis, of the American Association of Pro-Life OB-GYNs, said she worked at a Catholic hospital during her residency that did not do abortions, and she and the other doctors treated women with ectopic pregnancies and miscarriages.

“I've never needed to perform an elective abortion, and yet I've been able to take care of women with ectopic pregnancies and miscarriages throughout my career,” she said. “... And my ability to treat these conditions would not be hindered by a state outlawing abortion.”

And the Word became flesh ... We celebrate at this time of year that God, according to His faithful promises, sent His salvation into the world through the person of Jesus, the Christ. Our ears revel in the glorious words:

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it ... And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen His glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth” (John 1:1–5, 14).

God's Word continues to come through the Scriptures, the Word of God, as we read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest it. Jesus said, *“If you continue in my word, you are truly my disciples. You will know the truth and the truth will make you free” (John 8:31–32)*. And also, *“You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life, and it is they that testify about me” (John 5:39)*.

Let's do that. Let's continue in His Word. Let's search the Scriptures.

Does this capture your imagination? What would happen if thousands of us, tens of thousands of us read through the entire Bible in 2023? Would that change us? Would that draw us closer to Jesus? Would that make us clearer on God's love, grace, mercy, wisdom? Would that give us something to talk about with our neighbors, friends, and relatives?

Do not receive this as some sort of command, a function of the Law. Receive it as an invitation, like when Jesus said, *“Take and eat” (Matthew 26:26 NIV)* or like when Ananias invited Saul, *“Rise and be baptized washing away your sins” (Acts 22:16)*.

Consider these three items as, together, we build an ethic of Bible reading.

Always look for Jesus

First, always look for Jesus. The Bible is Christocentric—it centers around Jesus. Too often when we approach the Scriptures we start with questions like “What does this mean to me?” or “What is this saying about me?” Remember, the Bible is not about you; it is about Jesus. We should lead with the question, “What is this passage telling me about or helping me to understand about Jesus?”

For instance, when we read about Job, or Esther, or David when he slew Goliath, we should not first think about how

those accounts compare to our lives, but rather how they compare to Jesus'. He went through horrific suffering and was restored. He came at just the right time to save His people. He stands in and rescues His brothers from death. Certainly, these accounts apply to us, but they point to Jesus.

Don't stop starting

Second, don't stop starting. Some of you reading this are thinking, *"I tried that before, but I ended up quitting."* Somewhat like the advice given to smokers who want to quit—*"Don't quit quitting"*—when it comes to reading through the Bible, don't stop starting. *"I started before but didn't make it."* Well, start again.

Here are a few helps:

- Find a partner to encourage you.
- Find a reading schedule that alternates between Old Testament, New Testament, and Psalm passages.
- Set aside a consistent time of day.

Worship weekly (the serendipitous connections to what you read at home that week will motivate you to continue your reading schedule).

Don't be discouraged

Third, don't be discouraged if you do not fully understand—or even agree with—everything that you read. Reading the Scriptures is an encounter with God; of course, you will not understand everything about Him. There will always be a hiddenness about Him this side of eternity. Keep in mind also that we are sinful and fallible; our mind will not be fully aligned with His. However, we look to His word to change our thinking—not the other way around. Reading the Bible and different difficult portions of it make us, like Jacob, wrestle with God. In the midst of the wrestling is blessing.

And then what? What if thousands of us successfully complete reading through the Bible in 2023? What next? Let's do it again the next year. Each year we will see something we missed or were not ready to understand before. Each year we are at a different place in life and different passages will apply in a way they had not before. Each year we will gain more than an abundance of biblical truths; we will gain a more intimate relationship with Jesus and the life He has for us. He prayed, *"Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent"* (John 17:3 NIV).

About the Author

Rev. David A. Davis serves as President of the Michigan District, LCMS. Rev. Davis and his wife, Sallie, have four grown daughters, two granddaughters, and two grandsons.

Each year the LFL Council of Federation Presidents sponsors a national essay contest for students in two categories. One category includes students in grades 6-8 and the other in grades 9-12. Students in the Federation states and all other Non-Federation states are eligible to participate. After all of the states have submitted their winners, a national committee selects one winner to be the National Essay winner in each category. For a student to qualify, they must either belong to a Lutheran church or attend a Lutheran school.

LFL NATIONAL ESSAY WINNERS



Alyssa Bivens

2022 National Essay Winner – Grades 6-8

Good Shepherd Lutheran School, Collinsville, Illinois

Illinois First Place

Essay Title: The Blessing of Life

Alyssa Bivens is currently a freshman at Metro East Lutheran High School in Edwardsville, Illinois. She was recently valedictorian of her 8th grade class at Good Shepherd Lutheran in Collinsville, Illinois, and has been published in three poetry volumes.

Alyssa enjoys playing soccer and deer hunting in her free time.



Grace MacPherson

2022 National Essay Winner – Grades 9-12

Homeschool Educated

Minnesota First Place

Essay Title: Blessed

Grace Emma MacPherson lives in Mankato, Minnesota, and is 16 years old. Until this year, she has been home educated, but thanks to the Post-Secondary Education Option in Minnesota, Grace is now completing her first semester at Bethany Lutheran College as a junior in high school. Grace enjoys the flute and plays the organ. She constantly analyzes the grammar around her, and carries a dictionary, just in case! She is the author of *The King's Sword*, her first publication. Grace is the beloved biggest sister to six siblings, precious daughter to Ryan and Marie, and God's own child, through faith in Christ.

The Blessing of Life by Alyssa Bivens

In America, suicide is the tenth leading cause of death, with one person taking their life every eleven minutes (“Facts about Suicide”). However, this is not God’s will for the world. The Psalmist reminds us of God’s view on human life by saying, “... **the Lord protects him and keeps him alive; he is called blessed in the land; you do not give him up to the will of his enemies**” (Psalm 41:2 ESV). Clearly, God values life and has called us to help others value it, too.

First, God has called us to help our neighbors in their struggles. In one of his letters, Paul wrote, “**Bear one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ**” (Galatians 6:2 ESV). Encouraging private meetings with a pastor or setting up a time to share experiences with others in similar situations are two ways that the Church can remove the burdens of those who want to commit suicide. By sharing their feelings with people who can empathize, they will hopefully see their blessings, how they bless others, and that God will help them through their situation.

Additionally, God calls us to pray in unfortunate circumstances like these. Peter states in his first book, “**Casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you**” (1 Peter 5:7 ESV). Unfortunately, reminding people with suicidal thoughts of their blessings can be ineffective. Prayer is powerful, so in this case, we must take it to God, trusting that He will guide this person through their trials or comfort others who are affected. We must believe that God will protect and bless them.

Most importantly, God has a plan. According to Jeremiah, God says, “**‘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’**” (Jeremiah 29:11 ESV). God will use their pain to bless their future; He won’t give up on them, so neither can we. He will use that person to bless others, so with God’s help, we must remind them of this and encourage them not to take their life.

Ultimately, God values life and wants us to share that message. He calls us to help and pray for our neighbors who want to commit suicide because He promises He has a plan for everyone. God will protect and bless His creation; we must trust Him, follow His commands, and share His Word.

Work Cited: “Facts About Suicide.” *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention*, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 24 Feb. 2022, www.cdc.gov/suicide/facts/index.html.

Blessed by Grace MacPherson

When I first babysat Paul, he was four months old. I have six younger siblings, and the rhythm of a baby’s development is familiar to me. Like many four month olds, Paul wiggled around, rocked on his tummy, and responded to my voice. It came as a surprise when I learned he has Down syndrome.

The CDC defines Down syndrome as “a condition in which a person has an extra chromosome. Typically, a baby is born with 46 chromosomes. Babies with Down syndrome have an extra copy of one of these chromosomes, chromosome 21.” This leads to facial characteristics that differ from the average baby, including a flatter face and smaller ears. Down syndrome usually causes delays in developmental stages and a somewhat lower IQ than the average population (www.cdc.org).

While a staggering 96.5% of abortions occur for social or economic reasons (www.hli.org), countless precious lives of the unborn are ended due to other reasons, and birth defects such as Down syndrome are among them. But is it realistic for a mother to think that being pregnant with a baby with Down syndrome is a good reason to have an abortion?

Actually, statistics reveal the opposite. A 2011 study interviewed numerous individuals with Down syndrome and discovered that 99% of people with Down syndrome were content with their lives, 96% were happy with the way they looked, 97% liked their siblings—and the list goes on (Skotko). I can testify to this after my months of caring for Paul. He just celebrated his first birthday, so I could hardly interview him the way this study interviewed others, but he is one of the happiest babies I have ever met.

The first few verses of Psalm 41 read, “**Blessed is he who considers the poor; the Lord will deliver him in time of trouble. The Lord will preserve him and keep him alive.... The Lord will strengthen him on his bed of illness**” (Psalm 41:1-3). God promises here not only to protect and care for the healthy, but also for the weak. As God’s children, we should honor the sanctity of human life, and care for and love the healthy and the weak alike.

Those needing extra care throughout their lives are still a gift from God. When I was eleven, my grandmother came to live with my family for several months. She had been struggling with dementia for years, and due to my grandfather’s work schedule, it was hard for him to meet all her needs. It wasn’t always easy to have an extra person in the house—especially someone who required a lot of care—but her presence was still a blessing. I was able to spend a lot of time with her that otherwise would have been impossible. Not only do we bless people whose needs require more patience and time, but in doing so, we find ourselves blessed by them. Paul directs older women to “**admonish the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, homemakers, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be blasphemed**” (Titus 2:4-5). I had the opportunity to experience this through my grandmother’s presence in my home. Even when her memory was failing, her faith in God remained strong. Long after she had lost the ability to speak more than a few words at a time, she sang the Lord’s Prayer with my family as part of our evening devotions.

God’s love is with us always, regardless of our abilities. Even the strongest and wisest among us can do nothing to gain forgiveness. Salvation is ours by the grace of God. Our Heavenly Father assures us He will never leave us. Isaiah 46:3-4 reads, “**Listen to Me, O house of Jacob..., who have been upheld by Me from birth: even to your old age ... I will carry you!**”

Psalm 41 reads, “**The Lord will preserve [you] and keep [you] alive, and [you] will be blessed on the earth.**” But this is not all that the mercy of God does for us. Not only are we blessed on this earth, but we can rest assured that anyone who, by the power of the Holy Spirit, believes in the forgiveness we have in Christ will also receive eternal life. This is the life that my grandmother now has and that all other believers will have some day. Resting in this promise, we trust that God will preserve us and keep us alive forever!

[MATTHEW HARRISON](#)



Respect for Marriage Act: Misnamed law threatens religious liberty

DECEMBER 14, 2022



(LCMS/Erik M. Lunsford)

By Matthew C. Harrison

As we in the church have been keeping busy with our myriad daily vocations and tasks — contemplating the Advent of Christ as a babe at Bethlehem, His continued coming to us in Word and Sacrament, and His return in glory — the U.S. Senate has passed, and the U.S. president has signed, the misnamed Respect for Marriage Act. This bill’s genesis is related to the U.S. Supreme Court’s decision this June on *Dobbs v. Jackson*, which overturned *Roe v. Wade* and caused incalculable alarm.

Some suggest that if the Court could find reason to overturn a half century of legal precedent in *Roe*, a recent ruling like *Obergefell v. Hodges*, which codified same-sex marriage on alleged constitutional grounds, could likewise face judicial extinction at the hands of the more conservative court. The bill was passed in the U.S. House of Representatives without debate. It faced a greater potential challenge in the Senate, but to overcome the hurdles, an amendment was proposed and passed to protect the religious freedoms of those who dissent (like The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod [LCMS] and her agencies, schools and institutions). On Dec. 13, President Biden signed the bill into law.

Critics — and I’m one of them — view the alleged protections as no more than window dressing and believe the bill will make our future more difficult, requiring more legal action for those claiming First Amendment rights (i.e., the free exercise of religion). Amendments that would have offered significant protections failed in the Senate.

For the church, the chief issue at stake is not the troubling rapid drift of America away from Christianity or morality. The chief issue involves government and society on all levels defining what is moral or not for the church, and particularly for churchly institutions that interface with government. The Respect for Marriage Act will invite challenges to the nonprofit status of our faithful agencies of mercy and provide impetus for continued challenges to our schools and universities. This may even affect our congregations, since all of them have nonprofit status. This trend is already a concern for our military chaplains, whose First Amendment guarantees are being squeezed to the conscience-breaking point.

The Gospel is at stake. Christ preached, “The kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel” (Mark 1:15). The apostles preached the same thing. Preaching repentance is integral to preaching the Gospel. We will not yield to any man, government, legal authority or human threat. We must preach the Law and call out sin for the sake of repentance. We must proclaim the Law and repentance in order to preach the blessed Gospel of free forgiveness in Christ. The Law of God condemns us all, including those tempted to homosexual sin. And the Gospel is for all.

This is not about “those” people getting “holy” like us! What Phariseeism we are often guilty of! Jesus said, “I have not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance” (Luke 5:32). I will preach as directed by the Word of God. The Gospel is at stake. Compassion and eternal life for all is in the balance. “Faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ” (Rom. 10:17).

Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God. (1 Cor. 6:9–11)

We live in the end times. It is an era of mass delusion and deception. Transgenderism has increased a thousandfold in recent years and is largely a social media-driven phenomenon, as I’ve pointed out previously. The depression and suicide rates of these young people are astronomical. Hermann Sasse wrote about lies in Germany — precisely in the church — in 1936:

The lie is the death of man, his temporal and his eternal death. The lie kills nations. Through their lies, the most powerful empires of the world were laid waste. History knows of no more unsettling spectacle than the judgment which comes to pass when the men of an advanced culture have rejected the truth, and are now swallowed up in a sea of lies. As was the case with fading pagan antiquity, where this happened, religion and law, poetry and philosophy, life in marriage and family, in the state and society, in short, one sphere of life after another, fell sacrifice to the power and curse of the lie.

Where man can no longer bear the truth, he cannot live without the lie. Where man, even when dying, lies to himself and others, the terrible dissolution of his culture is held up as a glorious ascent, and decline is viewed as an advance, the like of which has never been experienced. If, according to the irrefutable testimony of history, this is the judgment of God on the lie, should God then not also punish the lie in His church? Truly He who is the Judge of all the world will do this! For the power of the lie extends even into the church. Since the days of the apostles there has been lying in the church as in the rest of the world. For people in the church too are and remain poor sinners until their death. (“Union and Confession,” The Lonely Way [St. Louis:

The world remains the world. Jesus said, “My kingdom is not of this world” (John 18:36). He also said, “Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s” (Mark 12:17). Christians are to be good citizens. Our participation in our communities as decent neighbors cannot be undervalued. But in many cases, we will have to make difficult choices, especially for our children when public schools intend to indoctrinate them to believe that Christians, even their own parents and grandparents, are bigots.

What do we do?

1. We shall pray and believe, “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life” (John 6:68). Let’s hold to the sacred Scriptures no matter what. Jesus said, “It is written, ‘Man shall not live by bread alone’” (Luke 4:4). Jesus also said, “From the beginning [God] made them male and female” (Matt. 19:4).
2. We shall realize we live in a post-Constantinian period. The Roman Emperor Constantine converted to Christianity in A.D. 325. He brought great strength and blessings to both the church and the state. On the downside, in the Western world, the church and the state were radically mixed and confused. While the state was viewed throughout much of Western history as a “protector” of the church, most often government “protection” meant the demise of the Gospel. We Christians know this reality from the New Testament. “We must obey God rather than men” (Acts 5:29).
3. We shall be people of compassion, after the model of our Savior, Jesus. We shall proclaim Christ in Law and Gospel — come what may — for the salvation of many. And we shall be compassionate to all. Government policies like the Respect for Marriage Act cause unending harm to marriage and family life and encourage lives at odds with both reason and the New Testament. Individuals are confused and hurt terribly. Christ saw the revulsion of the sinners, strangers, lost, hurt, lepers, sick and others, and He was drawn to them. We are witnesses of true love in the name of Jesus.
4. We shall remember that we are sinners. Our minds and hearts are every bit as filled with sin and filth as any outward life we encounter. Our message is not, “Get holy and join us holy people!” Our message is, “Stop acting as though you were sinless. As Luther said, ‘Christ dwells only in sinners.’ Join us sinners. Repent and believe the Gospel.”

What the President Said About Millions of Americans

breakpoint.org/what-the-president-said-about-millions-of-americans/

John Stonestreet, Timothy D Padgett December 16, 2022



This past Tuesday, at a ceremony hosted at the White House, President Biden signed into law the so-called Respect for Marriage Act. The president used a lengthy speech delivered beforehand to soundly denounce any challenge to any aspect of LGBTQ ideology and activism. Specifically, in a striking display of anti-reason, President Biden condemned opposition to sterilizing, castrating, or permanently wounding children with gender dysphoria, as akin to racism and antisemitism.

Lest anyone should miss the aim of this new law, as more than a few voices from mainstream evangelicalism clearly did, the administration invited a “non-binary drag artist,” who often dances seductively in front of children, to the celebration. For anyone still in the dark, the White House was lit up in the liturgical rainbow of colors representing the new sacralized sexuality. The Christians and conservatives who dismissed concerns over what this bill means and who claimed it represented nothing new and contained all the conscience protections people of faith could hope for should take a hard look at what the new law’s strongest advocates think it means.

This law does not protect a pluralist society, and it is more than a symbolic victory for the new sexual orthodoxy. It enshrines in law an ideology of human nature that would’ve been unthinkable just a few years ago, even among the far left. It further establishes a category of recently invented rights that will make it only harder to protect children in the days ahead. It also means social exile and legal limbo for anyone who dissents. As the president foreshadowed, anyone who claims that human nature is real and that marriage is between a man and woman will be classed along with the racists and bigots of history.

To strengthen his case, President Biden repeated the now discredited talking point that the murders at Club Q in Colorado Springs were birthed from opposition to the LGBTQ agenda. He connected that violence with state laws designed to protect kids from chemical castration and surgical amputation of healthy body parts (though similar restrictions are becoming increasingly common in Europe). Anyone who supports such protections, the president claimed, is driven by “hate.” In his own words, “Folks, racism, antisemitism, homophobia, transphobia—they’re all connected. But the antidote to hate is love. This law, and the love it defends, strike a blow against hate in all its forms.”

His remarks relied on a vagueness that is typical of these talking points but which conflates opponents of the current program with bigotry of all sorts. Note the appeal to a nebulous “love” as an antidote to a nebulous “hate.” Positioning one side as love and the other as hate, while employing the common and similarly not-defined suffix “-phobia” to a host of words, the president departed from rational conversation. After all, people who are phobic are so motivated by hate or fear that logic is beyond them. This absolves everyone else from persuading or convincing the “haters” with reason or argument. Using these tactics, which the president deployed, others are either evil beyond redemption or sick and in need of quarantine, both for their sake and for ours.

This is the cultural mood that goes along with talk about “stochastic” terrorism. According to this theory, it doesn’t matter if you ever called for violence or if an act of violence had anything at all to do with you, you can still be guilty. By linking opposition to this law to (rightly) ostracized ideas like racism, advocates, like the president, are setting the stage for leveraging hate crime legislation and other cultural tools to criminalize dissent.

For those who assured us otherwise, this is a step beyond what *Obergefell v. Hodges* imposed. In that opinion, Justice Kennedy assured us that good people could disagree. On Tuesday, the president assured us that no good person could disagree.

As confusing as all of this can be, this leap into anti-reason affords the Church with an unexpected opportunity. As much as we hear that gender is a social construct and Christianity is just an ephemeral fad, it’s the new sexual orthodoxy that’s rooted in nothing but a construct. The faith of our fathers, on the other hand, is solid ground: Christianity is the accurate representation of the nature of reality.

As much as the watching world may want to deny that they live in God’s creation, His world is the only one that’s available. At some point, bad ideas will fail. At some point, all good things show themselves to be His artistry. At some point, the air breathed even by God’s critics is revealed to be rooted in the truths about life that the Church has always taught.

This *Breakpoint* was co-authored by Dr. Timothy D. Padgett. For more resources to live like a Christian in this cultural moment, go to colsoncenter.org.

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Reminder about inclement weather and church functions: Our policy for bad weather cancellations has been to cancel morning Bible studies, etc. when local schools close. Evening meetings and events will probably continue, as long as road crews are out and a storm is not intensifying. Sunday services, as well as Advent and Lent midweek services, are seldom cancelled. However, do not attempt to drive if your local conditions are poor and you are uncomfortable driving in the weather!

FAMILY MOVIE NIGHT
January 17, 2023 Council Report

December's Christmas party was enjoyed by 18 people. The white elephant gift exchange was very fun. One individual said, "We are at Christian fun night, enjoying Christian fellowship and stealing from each other!" The finger foods were DELICIOUS and the singing of Christmas songs with the Sunday school students was so much fun!

January 9 will be a Movie Night. The movie is "**Amazing Grace**", depicting John Newton's life from Slave Ship owner to God's "**Amazing Grace**" for John's life. There will be either games or a movie in the Sunday school room for the kiddos enjoyment. As always snacks and/or finger foods will be provided by you. Guests and other family members are always welcome to come. The movie begins at 6:00pm.

The February 13 Family Night will be a Game Night, hosted by Jeff and Martha Pregler. Bring your favorite game, guest or family members. The begins at 6:00 pm.

Sharon Hopkins

TEEN & YOUNG ADULT BIBLE STUDY

We are still studying "**Wonderfully Made.**" As of now we have 2 young women and 1 young man in our group. January's dates for Bible Study are: **January 8, 2023** and **January 22, 2023**. We begin at **9:00 am**. More teens and young adults are welcome!

We are also discussing the possibility of attending the Michigan District Youth Conference in June 2023 on Mackinaw Island at Mission Point. We pray that all of these fine young adults can attend.

LADIES BIBLE STUDY

We're still studying the "**52 Women of the Bible.**" We're learning a lot about how these ancient women can affect our lives of today! It's very interesting and enjoyable. All women of Mt. Hope and other churches are welcome to attend. We meet every Tuesday from 1-2:30 pm.

Although January and February will be a little different this year, since the leader is unavailable for part of these months. The dates for study are: **January 10, 17 and 24. No study on January 31st** and all of **February**. We'll **pick up** again in **March 2023**.

Stewardship is about receiving God’s blessings thankfully, managing them faithfully, and giving them generously.

Three friends—a surgeon, an engineer, and a politician—were discussing which of their professions was the oldest.

The surgeon said: “Eve was created from Adam’s rib—a surgical procedure.

The engineer replied: “Before Adam and Eve were created, order was created out of chaos, and that was an engineering job.”

The politician said: “Yes, but who do you suppose created the chaos?”

GOD’S WORD TELLS US THAT WE ARE TO VALUE OTHERS AND TO LOOK TO THE INTERESTS OF OTHERS.

“Do nothing from rivalry or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves” (Philippians 2:3).



“A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger” (Proverbs 15:1).



In the Apostle Paul’s letter to the Corinthians, he wrote, “*For we are God’s fellow workers*” (1 Corinthians 3:9).

He calls us to be His instruments through which He shares His grace, love, and mercy with the world.



January

*He has shown you,
O mortal, what is good.
And what does
the LORD require of you?*

*To act justly and to
love mercy and to walk
humbly with your God.*

MICAH 6:8 NIV





Jackie Bulmer~4th
 Lynn Richmond~4th
 John Niemann~9th
 Amy Kolka~11th
 Carol Shields~16th
 Don Kelsey~19th
 Shirley Bragg~26th
 Susie Dougherty~26th
 Erin Krabill~30th

Anniversaries

Paul & Dee Musselman~14th
 Vicki & Bob Howden~28th

Healing

Members

Jan Smith
 Bill Richmond
 Judi Riske
 Ruth Stocker

Friends

Gabriel Schlak
 Jan Knoellinger
 Dalton Miron
 Sue Pierce
 Kendra Daschner
 Devon Kacher
 Chris McMannamon
 Jerry Sandow
 Scot Ferguson
 Joan Reisch

Cancer

Members

Mike Nowak
 Lynn Richmond
 Paul Smith
 Barb Mauro
 Steve Koch

Friends

Sue Rebandt
 Richard Lovell
 Donna LaDuke
 Jim Dugdale
 Don Kernstock
 Barb Vidal



In Military Service

Christopher Dysinger, Kevin Krokosky,
 Darin Nicholas,, Jeremiah Hose, Travis Kulak,
 Andre' Miller, Keil Clough, Trevor Clough,
 Todd McCarver, Victoria Doster,
 Conrad Weissenborn, Rick Dillenbeck



Dollie Adolph
 Jean Wittig

PRAYER REQUESTS



Prayer request forms are available either in the Narthex on the podium by the guest book or in the office on the secretary's desk. If you need a prayer by

Pastor that day, you can give your completed prayer request form to one of the elders or ushers and ask that it be given to Pastor before worship. If your prayer request isn't needed until later in the week, you can place it in the offering plate or place it on the secretary's desk in the office.

Assisted Living & Nursing Home List

Michigan Veterans Homes - Grand Rapids

Kenneth Hopkins

The Lighthouse at Roscommon

Elsa Knutson

**MT. HOPE LUTHERAN CHURCH
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GRAYLING, MICHIGAN 49738**

(989) 348-5921
MthopeLCMS@gmail.com

(989)348-0166 (fax)
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THE CHURCH STAFF

PASTOR

Pastor's Cell Phone:

Pastor's E-mail Address:

ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT

Nicole Alma

Office Hours: Wednesday 10am-2pm

BOOKKEEPER

Mary Heinlein (989) 348-4350

CUSTODIAN

Marty Haskin

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