

New Hope Lutheran February Newsletter



Wednesday Lenten Services

February 18 — Ash Wednesday
12 noon Hollandale
7 pm Blanchardville

February 25, March 4, 11, 18,
25, April 1
7 pm Blanchardville

Wednesday Bible Study

February 25, March 4, 11, 18,
25, April 1

12 noon Hollandale
(bring your lunch!)

Wednesday Lenten Suppers

February 25, March 4, 11, 18, 25,
April 1

5:30pm Blanchardville

Confirmation Students

February 18 — Ash Wednesday
7 pm Blanchardville

February 25, March 4, 11, 18, 25,
April 1
7pm Blanchardville



Sunday School will resume on February 8th! Class will be from 10:30 a.m. to 11:15 a.m. on Sunday mornings at the Hollandale Site. Parents are encouraged to stay for the church service. We will again, at times, have the children join in with church at the beginning of the service. If you're interested in subbing for class if occasionally needed, please contact Tiffany Bethke at 608-212-9028 or bethke blessings@gmail.com

Looking forward to another great year!



Semi-Annual Congregational Meeting February 1st

**Following the 10:00am
service at the Hollandale site.**

(There is only one service this day.)

From the Pastor's Desk

by Pastor Chris Strohm

Happy February,

I have been to a number of continuing education events the past couple of months but the one that struck me the most was listening to our Presiding Bishop Yehiel Curry. He was telling the story of his first call at a mission start up in the Chicago area.

This church started in the space of an existing Lutheran congregation but eventually they outgrew that space and began to look for a new one. In a neighborhood not too far away they found an older church which they were able to purchase. One of the reasons they were able to outgrow the old space was because of their youth program along with other programs. Being a mission church and being new to the neighborhood, Rev. Curry along with other volunteers went around to the neighbors inviting them to their programs and their worship. The neighbors were not interested in anything they were offering. This left the church feeling confused and unwelcome.

Now it happens the building they occupied was also a polling place and one election day also happened

to coincide with a huge rainstorm. A bunch of neighbors showed up, not to vote but to speak to the pastor with an odd request. They wanted to look at the basement. It had been a torrential downpour all day and was forecasted to continue through the night and the neighbors looked and appeared to be upset that the church basement was dry.

A unique feature about this building is that in one corner of the basement was a huge steel wheel with the shaft going into a subbasement and marked on the wheel were two arrows which said, open and close. Bishop Curry remembered being told by the previous owners to always keep it closed or the basement would flood. This wheel controlled a valve in the sewer system.

The neighbors then invited the Bishop to visit their homes which he did and as he descended into the basements it became apparent the water they were standing in was raw sewage. He simply said, "This ain't right."

The people weren't interested in the programming the church offered, instead what the church

could offer them, what they needed from the church was for that valve to be opened. For the church to allow the possibility that their basement might flood in order for the neighbors to endure the storm without raw sewage backing up into their homes.

The church is more than Sunday worship and programming. It is more than the building. It is the you and me, it is all of us who are called to bring the light of the gospel into the world. We do that by offering to our neighbors what they need, not what we think they need but what they really need. Through doing this we open doors for the light of the world to enter into those closed and dark spaces.

I've asked this before, Why New Hope? What ain't right that New Hope can help to make right? Think on it and get back to me.

Pastor Chris



COFFEE
& FELLOWSHIP



Join Pastor Chris Thursday, February 5th

"Coffee with the Pastor" from 8:30am to 9:30 am in Blanchardville at "Bistro on Main". This coffee hour, on the 1st Thursday of every month, is meant to be a time of informal fellowship — anyone who wants to stop by for coffee & conversation is welcome!

Sunday Worship 8:30 in Blanchardville & 10:30 in Hollandale

February 2026

Sunday Worship Assistants

February 1 — One Service 10am at the Hollandale site — 11am Semi-Annual Congregational Meeting

Greeters/Ushers: (H)

Communion: (H) Vicki Chrostowski

Reader: (H) Marlys Hittesdorf

Musicians:

Becky Johnson,
Cinda Hittesdorf,
Marlys Hittesdorf,
Carmen Danz

February 8

Greeters/Ushers: (B) Ron & Ellen Syse (H)

Communion: (B) Ellen Syse (H) Kaye Gilbertson

Readers: (B) Nancy Meyer (H)

Altar Committees:

(B) Beth Kundert
(H) Jean Christen

February 15

Greeters/Ushers: (B) Ron & Ellen Syse (H)

Communion: (B) Ellen Syse (H) Gary & Andy Whitford-Holey

Readers: (B) Judy Watrud (H)

February 22

Greeters/Ushers: (B) Ron & Ellen Syse (H)

Communion: (B) Ellen Syse (H) Rhonda Kirch

Readers: (B) Julie Saether (H)



Go to the [News](#) page on New Hope Lutheran website to download the latest version of

The Trumpeter

News for the South Central Wisconsin Synodical Women's Organization

Women of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

<https://www.newhopelutheran.info/news>

We will have a First Communion class for anyone who is ready to learn more about this sacrament. This class is scheduled for February 22nd, beginning at 11:30 am in Hollandale, following our late service.

Contact Pastor Chris,

newhope.pastor@tds.net,

608-341-5032 if you are interested.



Confirmation News from Pastor Chris



- We will meet for class on February 4 and 11 beginning at 7:00 pm both days.
- **February 18th** is Ash Wednesday with services at noon in Hollandale and 7:00 pm in Blanchardville.
- For those attending Quake, Feb. 13-15, we will have a meeting on **February 4** at 8:00, following Confirmation, to discuss behavior, room assignments, meal plans, and travel times.
- **February 17th** is our Drive Thru Spaghetti dinner event. I will be asking for volunteers to help with this, both adults and students. This is a Tuesday and I know that there are other things happening that day but we have enough other students who are not involved with those activities that should be able to help.
- March looks pretty quiet except for our Lenten Services on Wednesdays.
- **April 2** we will have our 2nd Dinner Church with the students taking on the roles of the apostles to help lead us.
- **April 19th is Confirmation Sunday.** 2nd year students your Faith Projects are due on the 18th.



Keep in your Prayers: We remember our members & friends, the sick and the homebound, those recovering or grieving, especially Alex Emberson, Jan Slater, Andy Haffele, Maggie Cernek (daughter of Sara & Matthew Cernek), Mary Gobrecht (mother of Kim Watrud), Doris Haldiman, Steve Eastman, Ruth Vamstad, Lynette Stansfield, Sue Anderson, Rick Fredrickson, Roger Strohm (Pastor Chris's Dad), Stuart Vamstad, Josalyn Riha, Katie Herbert (niece of Pastor Chris), Lisa Hartz (daughter of Elaine & Marv Engelke), Bev Lien, Dave Hermanson, Karen Beecher, Vicki Hughes, Roger Kittleson, Donna Arneson, Lyle Klosterman, Mary Carr, Doris Hermanson, Carl and Patty Schneider, Richard & Peggy Gilbertson, Carole Zweifel.



First, to Ellen Syse, for managing the receipt, distribution and maintenance of the poinsettia plants at Christmas. I'm thankful for my helpful, little Elf!

Second, to everyone who gave me Christmas cards and gifts, and sympathy cards for the passing of my nephew. I appreciate your thoughts and prayers.

Michele



New Hope Lutheran “on a mission”!

Mission is something every member of New Hope can be a part of all through the year!

Here are some opportunities to participate...

- Mission Monday: come to the Blanchardville site on Mondays from 1:00-3:00 pm or 6:00-8:00 pm to help with a variety of mission projects including tying quilts, making plarn mats for the homeless and making blankets for Project Linus. **No experience is necessary.**
- The Darlington food pantry is in need of 12 or 18 count empty egg cartons. Please bring them to the church; a volunteer will transport them to their office.
- A local organization is seeking donations of new or gently used flannel. This group makes period pads for girls so that they may attend school. Unused flannel from sewing projects, shirts, pillowcases, sheets, etc. are appreciated for this worthwhile project. Please bring your flannel to the church; a volunteer will transport them to their office.
- A local vet office will accept empty child-resistant prescription pill bottles with lids. (Please, no 'over the counter' bottles or those with lids that are NOT child-resistant.) Please bring to the church; a volunteer will transport.
- To assist with the production of quilts that are sewn and donated, the church would be pleased to receive skeins of yarn, excess fabric and spools of thread that are no longer needed for any home crafting projects. Please bring to the church; thank you in advance!
- Do you have any flat or fitted sheets that you no longer use? These sheets can be used as backing for quilts that are made for Lutheran World Relief. Sheets may be brought to either church site.

One immediate need...

Project Linus provides handmade blankets to children 0-18 in the United States who are seriously ill, traumatized or otherwise in need. We are in **immediate** need of fleece material to continue making Project Linus blankets. If anyone would like to donate fleece for the making of these blankets, recommended size of fabric is 60"x50". Unable to shop for fabric? Donations for the purchase of fleece material can be made to "New Hope Women of the ELCA".

When you did it to the least of these, my brethren, you did it to me." Matthew 25:40



The **Pecatonica Food Pantry** is open these dates in February:

Saturday, 2/7 9-10:30am

Wednesday, 2/11 6-7pm

Saturday, 2/14 9-10:30am

At the Blanchardville Church site

Spaghetti Dinner

DRIVE THRU

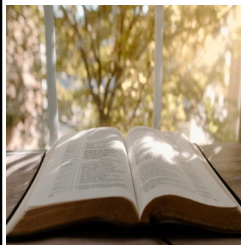
Located at New Hope Lutheran Church of
Blanchardville & Hosted by the Youth

February 17th, 4:30pm - 6:30pm
(or until gone)

Dinner includes: Spaghetti with meat sauce,
salad, bread, & dessert



FREE WILL OFFERING



Weekly Bible Study with Pastor Chris every **Tuesday from 8-9 am** at the River Bend Café in Blanchardville. The Bible Study focuses on the upcoming readings for Sunday. This is open to anyone who would like to dive a little deeper into the Bible.

Sunday, February 8, 2026

(bible study Tuesday, February 2)

First Reading: Isaiah 58:1-9a [9b-12]

Psalm: 112:1-9 [10]

Second Reading: 1 Corinthians 2:1-12 [13-16]

Gospel: Matthew 5:13-20

Sunday, February 15, 2026

(bible study Tuesday, February 9)

First Reading: Exodus 24:12-18

Psalm: 2

Second Reading: 2 Peter 1:16-21

Gospel: Matthew 17:1-9

Sunday, February 22, 2026 — First Sunday in Lent

(bible study Tuesday, February 16)

First Reading: Genesis 2:15-17; 3:1-7

Psalm: 43

Second Reading: Romans 5:12-19

Gospel: Matthew 4:1-11

Sunday, March 1, 2026 — Second Sunday in Lent

(bible study Tuesday, February 24)

First Reading: Genesis 12:1-4a

Psalm: 121

Second Reading: Romans 4:1-5, 13-17

Gospel: John 3:1-17

Thank you to everyone who signed a "candle" for Carole Zweifel's 94th birthday. She was so surprised to see her door decorated with so many candles. Her comment? "Wow, I must be really old!" I sincerely appreciate your help to make this birthday greeting possible and to put a smile on Carole's face! --Marlys



Our Lenten Journey this year will take place in the Gospel of John. Our guide for this journey will be Amy-Jill Levine, a New Testament Scholar who happens to be Jewish. She will guide us through this gospel through a Jewish lens where we will learn how this gospel was understood by it's earliest readers. We will also learn how it has been interpreted traditionally, and how we should understand it in our lives today. We will do this through the noon Bible Study and also at our 7:00 Lenten worship with the help of our Confirmation Students.



BOARD OF EDUCATION REPORT 1/12/26 (amended version) Minutes taken and submitted by: Julie Saether

- The New Hope Lutheran Board of Education met on Jan. 12 at 7:00 pm at the Hollandale New Hope site. Teri Green and Pastor Chris were present, along with Julie Saether, incoming board of education member.
- Discussed needing a second person on the signature card at the bank for the youth account. The person would need to be available during the daytime. Julie said she could do it. It will be brought up at the Feb. council meeting as it needs to be voted on.
- Discussed Spaghetti supper hosted by the youth. Terri talked to Jess K. about heading it up again and she agreed. The date is Tues. Feb. 17 and it will be at the Blanchardville New Hope Lutheran site. Teri will get out publicity.
- Discussed Youth Quake on Feb. 13-15. Pastor Chris will meet with students interested in attending after confirmation at 8:00 on Feb. 4. Teri will attend this meeting.
- Discussed the 2 summer mission youth trips. One will be for junior high youth and will be going to Isle Royale. It will be an adventure and hiking kind of trip. Rainelde Raymond will be leading this. The second one will be a Youth Mission trip for high school age students. This will be through Youth Works. Pastor Chris will have a meeting with the youth and parents who are interested in attending either one of these on Jan. 28 at 7:00 at the Blanchardville site. Julie will help organize these.
- Discussed the 2027 Youth Gathering. Will need to start meeting with the high school students interested in attending. It is for students entering 9th grade on up. The registration for this needs to be in this fall.

FINANCIAL REPORT December 2025**Submitted by: Becky Johnson**

God's glorious abundance allows us to continue providing helpful ministries like Sunday worship, Sunday School, Confirmation and Bible Study. Our recent resources for continuing these ministries include:

- December's income of \$32,917.91 and expenses of \$29,752.49 – a surplus of \$3,165.42
- YTD Income of \$213,842.74 and expenses of \$227,796.02 – a need of \$13,953.28

BOARD OF TRUSTEES REPORT 1/12/26**Minutes taken and submitted by: Jay Massey**

Board of Trustees Meeting held on January 12th, 2025 at Blanchardville Ch. 5:00 pm.
All in attendance were Pastor Chris Strohm, Dan Hittesdorf, Neal Klassey, Jay Massey.

Minutes of Discussion.

- Went over Estimates for Cleaning of Split Units for both Churches and Parsonage also along with estimates for Tuck Pointing for Bl. Church Site.
- Motion made by Neal Klassey and Second Jay Massey to take Monroe Heating and Sheet
- Metal proposal for the cleaning of Split Units at all NH. Luth. Sites to Council for approval. This is a proposal to have a Contractor to clean Split Units for all Sites.
- Trustees also went over estimates for Tuck Pointing for the Bl. Church site.
- Neal made a motion to go with the Stoffels Estimate presented to us for Tuck Pointing and Jay second it.
- There were minutes of discussion about the Carpeting for both Church Sites.
- Neal will measure Square Footage of both Church Sites.
- The Back Door of Hollandale Luth. Ch. to the Vestry room will be replaced. This Door has been Funded, for replacement.
- Motion made and second for the replacement of the Door.

Mission Mondays

The Mission Room is open Mondays from 1-3 p.m. and again from 6-8 p.m. Mission opportunities are set up in Mission Central along with instructions on what needs to be done. People are encouraged to stop by when it works for them, to help with various missions. Feel free to come whenever and as often as you'd like to be a part of "God's Work/Our Hands". Please continue to bring in your clean plastic grocery bags which will be made into mats for the homeless.

- Becky Johnson called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m. at the Blanchardville site.
- Present were Pastor Chris, Judy Watrud, Jay Massey, Dan Hittesdorf, Neal Massey, Lisa Toay (via zoom) and Michele Kittleson. Also present were Jeff Saether and Julie Saether (via zoom) who are incoming council members, and Chuck Meyer.
- Since there wasn't a quorum of current council members, Becky announced that we could not vote on any of the items on the agenda.
- Pastor Chris lead us in a Prayer of Lamentation.
- There was a correction to the Secretary's report from November meeting. It should read: *Judy moved to designate 10% of the lefse sales for November be given to **Project Comfort** not The Lutheran subscriptions.*
- Becky presented the treasurer's report for December and 2025 year
- There was a correction to the Trustee Report in that the front door of the parsonage has been fully funded, not the replacement of the back door at the Hollandale site.
- Pastor reported that he was at 3 days of Continuing Education classes the first week of January. On Martin Luther King Day he attended a presentation by Bishop Curry in Decorah, IA. This week on Tuesday he will have the local morning Bible Study, then pastor's weekly Bible study and two Synod related meetings. Wednesday evening, January 28, he is meeting with those high schoolers interested in summer trips. February the confirmation students will be attending Youth Quake so will need pulpit supply for 2/15.
- Correspondence: Thank you notes for Christmas gifts were passed around from Marlys Hittesdorf, Tina Steiner and Becky Johnson. Also thank you's from Blanchardville Hollandale Area Fund, ELCA Global Missions and the ELCA for gifts sent. A letter from the Synod office was also circulated regarding Synod Assembly which will be May 15 and 16 This is an election year for Bishop, Vice President, Treasurer and multiple Synod Council positions.

NEW BUSINESS:

- As there wasn't a quorum, items were informational:
- Space for Food Pantry and old gas stove.
- Semi Annual Meeting will be February 1 at Hollandale. Annual Reports are available.
- The proposal to elect a president from council members will be on the February agenda.
- Hollandale Musicians: Discussed that this item would fall under the Deacons.
- Lenten Suppers: As the first supper would be on February 25, this can be discussed at the February 16 Council Meeting.
- Chicken Barbecue: The date would be May 3. Julie Saether volunteered to chair.
- Confirmation will be April 19 and Graduation Sunday will be May 17.

OLD BUSINESS:

- Tabled

Closed with the Lord's Prayer



- The semi-annual congregational meeting was called to order by Chuck Meyer at 11:00 a.m. following worship at our Hollandale Site.
- Becky Johnson gave an update of our financial position as of August 31. She explained that due to the “summer slump” in worship attendance and giving, we are running behind about \$8200.00. As of the middle of September, she has been unable to send payments to Portico which covers Pastor Chris’ health insurance, retirement, etc.
- Chuck reported on the progress of the Capital Projects. The east entrance door at the Blanchardville site is almost completed. Because the repairs and carpeting in the Fellowship Hall were considerably less than projected, the projects that have been completed (soffits, fascia, rain gutters, door) are less than \$100,000 of the \$150K that was approved at the previous Congregational Meeting.
- While working on the soffits and fascia, it was discovered that the bricks on the building are in dire need of tuck pointing. The resurfacing of the parking lot also hasn’t been completed. Roger Kittleson moved to delay the tuck pointing and parking lot resurfacing until late spring or early summer of 2026. Duane Kundert seconded and the motion carried.
- Beth Kundert moved and JoAnne Eveland seconded to adjourn. Meeting adjourned at 11:30 a.m.



Engaging Generosity

Have you ever wondered why we call money, currency? It comes from a Latin word that literally means “flowing.” It is the same word where we get the word current from. Like anything with a current it is meant to move. When you dam up a river what happens? The water can become stagnant, a breeding ground for mosquitoes, algae, weeds, it can begin to stink. When electricity stops flowing, what happens? Nothing runs. The same thing can happen with money.

Money is not meant to stop, it is not meant to simply stockpile. When that happens, when we are just focused on stockpiling money we worry that we will never have enough. We become self absorbed, joyless. If everyone just stockpiled their wealth the economy would come crashing down. Money is meant to flow, any system of trade depends on the give and take of valuables.

When we give, when we are generous to God, to our families, friends, neighbors, to people in need something happens. Generosity changes us, filling our lives with joy and filling our lives with blessing. Our generosity to God and to others not only touches God and those we help but it also changes us. I’m not saying that your life will be filled with riches but what I am saying is that your heart will be lighter and your life a little more peaceful as one worry is removed from you.

One of the best ways to give to God and others is to give to your church. Your giving not only helps to keep the lights on, keep the electricity flowing, or pay the Pastor’s salary, it also is a place where those in need receive help. Your gift to the church aids in many different ministries and also flows out to the greater church to touch people you will never meet but who give thanks for your generosity.

Pastor Chris

JANUARY

Birthdays

Lorenzo	Hume	January 1
Glenn	Linder	January 1
Sandra	Schober	January 1
Justin	Lockard	January 2
Ridge	Toay	January 4
Elaine	Becker	January 4
Anna	Hughes	January 4
James	Parkinson	January 7
Bryan	Lisser	January 10
Madeline	Morhoff	January 10
Jim	Gordon	January 12
Leyton	Donnelly	January 12
Erica	Kundert	January 13
Carolyn	Ruegseg-	January 13
Roman	Peters	January 14
Carole	Zweifel	January 15
Lynette	Stansfield	January 15
Linda	Klassy	January 18
Marvin	Engelke	January 19
Keith	Legler	January 20
Heather	Price	January 21
Ann	Sills	January 22
Larry	Green	January 23
Jayden	Henderson	January 24
Laverne	Landmark	January 25
Kate	Garthwaite	January 25
Betty	Severson	January 27
Olivia	Watrud	January 28
Alice	Peters	January 28
Erik	Gilbertson	January 28
Paige	Watrud	January 28
Jayne	Kurschner	January 28
Jean	Christen	January 30

January

anniversaries

Robert Jr. & Judy	Watrud	01/04/1964
Tina & Jeffrey	Steiner	01/18/1986
Fred Jr. & Mary	Kolb	01/20/1973
Micah & Kimberly	Watrud	01/21/2021
David & Marlys	Reeson	01/29/1972
Natalie & Wade	Wyse	01/30/2010



The **LP gas stove** formerly used for the Norwegian suppers is available. It is yours for a donation to the church.





Barbara	Ruegsegger	February 1
Kristine	Marty	February 3
Lonnie	Krebs	February 3
Randall	Busser	February 4
Judy	Hendrickson	February 7
Gina	Leonard	February 7
Marlys	Reeson	February 7
Ellie	Brown	February 7
Evan	Stansfield	February 11
Kyle	Kleppe	February 15
Stephen	Dieckhoff	February 16
Kara	Terrill	February 17
Eric	Straehl	February 17
Melvin	Kleppe	February 17
Margaret	Disrud	February 17
Saige	Bedward	February 20
Wayne	Christen	February 22
Christian	Stansfield	February 23
Lydia	Wahl	February 23
Steve	Van Hout	February 27

Melvin & Diane	Kleppe	02/02/1963
Roger & Michele	Kittleson	02/23/1964
Tom & Joanne	Eveland	02/21/1981
Steve & Mary	Pilling	02/14/2004

Please submit information to be included in the January Visitor to the church office by
Thursday, February 12th.



*The birthday and anniversary lists are run from a report showing active members.
 If we've missed a birthday, or anniversary, please contact the office at newhopeoffice@tds.net or 608-523-4239.*