



# For The JOURNEY MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

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*With Christ as our center, we are called to reach out and share God's love with all.*

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March 2025

## Becoming Purveyors of Awe

Have you ever had a moment that stopped you in your tracks? A moment so full of beauty, mystery, or clarity that you felt something shift deep within you? Maybe it was while looking up at a sky bursting with stars, or in the midst of a song that seemed to sing directly to your soul. Maybe it happened in worship, in prayer, or in an unexpected conversation that felt like holy ground.

These moments-what Sue Nilson Kibbey calls conflux moments- (think confluence -like that of the Eau Claire and Chippewa Rivers) are intersections between us and the heart of God.



They are divine encounters that propel us forward, shifting our understanding, deepening our faith, and stirring us to action. Some come through learning—hearing a scripture in a new way. Others come as a sudden insight, a deep conviction, or even a fleeting but undeniable nudge from the Spirit.

The question is: Are we paying attention?

### Awe as a Pathway to God

This Lent, we are embarking on a worship series called Purveyors of Awe, and I cannot think of a better mission for our time. Because here's the truth: The world is hungry for something deeper. People are yearning for meaning, for wonder, for something bigger than themselves—whether they walk through the doors of the church or not.

One of the most important things we can do as a church is not just to invite people into the church, not just to provide programs that alleviate suffering (though those things matter deeply), but to invite people into a life of awe—a life of deep awareness, joy, and connection with God and one another.

But before we can share that with the world, we have to discover it for ourselves.

*(Pastor Jen's Message - Continued on Page 2)*



### ONLINE WORSHIP available on our Facebook Page

Sundays at 9:00am & Special Services

[https://www.facebook.com/Hope-United-Methodist-Church-116517175038771\\_10](https://www.facebook.com/Hope-United-Methodist-Church-116517175038771_10)

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for more  
info and  
LINKS



*(Pastor Jen's Message - Continued from Page 1)*

Lent is a season of heightened attention—a time when we are called to strip away distractions and attune ourselves to God's presence in new ways. That's why, alongside worship, we'll be engaging in small group studies and inviting one another into a "season of awe practices" that help us open our eyes, ears, and hearts to the sacred all around us.

Encountering the Holy in the Ordinary

I think about the young man I spoke with a few years ago who had been struggling with a major life decision. He was lost in doubt, unsure of what God was calling him to do. Then one morning, in the quiet of his home, he opened his Bible and read "Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go" (Joshua 1:9). He had read those words before, but this time, it was different. It was as if God had spoken directly to him. He knew, in that moment, that he had to take the leap.

That was a conflux moment. That was awe.

I think about a woman in our congregation who had carried a heavy burden of grief for years. She had gone through the motions of faith, but the weight of loss had made it hard for her to feel anything. Then, one Sunday, as the congregation sang a simple refrain—It is well with my soul—she felt something shift. A peace she couldn't explain settled over her. Tears streamed down her face, but they weren't just tears of sorrow. They were tears of release.

That was a conflux moment. That was awe.

And sometimes, awe is found in the smallest, most fleeting nudges—like the moment you stand outside on a crisp evening and feel overwhelmed by the sheer vastness of the stars, or when a child's laughter reminds you of the beauty of pure joy.

Purveyors of Awe in Our Community

If we want to be a church that truly impacts the world, we have to do more than offer programs. We have to become purveyors of awe—people who create spaces for divine encounters, not just within our church walls, but in the wider community.

What would it look like for Hope UMC to be known not just as a church, but as a place where people encounter awe? Where they come not just for answers, but for wonder? Where they leave not just with information, but with transformation?

That's the journey we are on this Lent.

So, as we enter this season, I invite you to open yourself to the moments that move you. Pay attention to the nudges, the insights, the deep stirrings. Ask yourself: When was the last time I stood in awe of God?

Then, let's take the next step together. Let's become people who live in wonder. Let's become a church that doesn't just experience awe, but shares it. Because in a world that often feels heavy and hurried, maybe the greatest gift we can offer is simply to help others stop, look up, and recognize the holy that has been there all along.

I hope you'll join us this Lent as we step into this sacred pursuit together.

In Christ,  
Pastor Jen

## *Ash Wednesday:*

### **A Shared Journey into the Wilderness**

Lent begins with a moment of truth. On Ash Wednesday, we step into the wilderness with Jesus—facing temptations, confronting our own struggles, and remembering that we don't walk this road alone.

This year, Hope UMC, Pleasant Valley UMC, and Lake Street UMC will come together for a shared Ash Wednesday experience. Three services, one sacred invitation: to pause, reflect, and receive the ashes as a sign of our need for God.

**Wednesday, March 5<sup>th</sup>**

**Noon – Lake Street UMC**

**4:00 PM – Pleasant Valley UMC**

**6:00 PM – Hope UMC**

Lent calls us to realign our hearts with God. Let's begin the journey together.

*Awe is a profound emotional response that can significantly impact our wellbeing and perception of the world. Awe often arises from experiences that transcend our usual understanding, such as viewing vast landscapes, listening to powerful music, encountering extraordinary acts of kindness, or feeling heightened devotion and a Divine Presence connecting us all. To be a "Purveyor of Awe" is to be intentional about curating a life of spiritual depth. This has implications not only for one's own life, but also as motivation to tend to the wellbeing of others. Let us approach this Lent with awe.*

**March 2: "Transfiguration/Astounded at the Greatness" and Holy Communion**  
**Luke 9:28-36**

Transfiguration is about astonishment. It is about amazement. It is about awe. It's something that might be hard to capture in worship in your overly familiar sanctuary with the people you know so well. So, how do we capture this sense in our weekly expression of worship? We sing it. And we see it.

**March 9: "Wonder"**  
**Psalm 107, Psalm 139**

The "wide eye of wonder" creates optimal conditions for awe. When we open our senses to the "extraordinariness of the everyday ordinary," we have begun the journey to a deeper existence than what resides at surface-level. Wonder can be an antidote to anxiety and depression, pulling us instead toward the awe-filled knowledge that there is more than meets the eye, there are solutions in the midst of problems, possibilities where we sense only dead-ends.



**March 16: "Meaning"**  
**Psalm 19**

We humans are "meaning-mongers." Our brains are wired to interpret the ordinary stuff of life in metaphorical ways so that we can make some sense of it all. We long for meaningful lives in which we are more sure about the direction of our lives and about what we are to bring to this world. We yearn for experiences that leave us feeling more fulfilled. When we are "on the lookout" for meaning in our lives, we live at a deeper level and mere existence turns into purpose.

**March 23: "Curiosity"**  
**Proverbs 2**

The element of curiosity is linked to wellbeing of all kinds—spiritually, mentally, creatively. Awe-filled experiences are curiosity-boosters. Play, imagination, experimentation, and even simply slowing down to "linger longer" as we engage with the sights and sounds and smells of our ordinary surroundings can add to the amount of awe in our lives. Curiosity resists easy labeling and classifying, rather it invites us to deeper discovery about life, faith, and each other.

**March 30: "Delight"**  
**Psalm 36**

We humans love repetition... up to a point. But sometimes we just need a good "Wow!" and some goosebumps to help us feel fully alive. Our physical response to awe-filled moments come from a very ancient part of our evolution—even before language. And those goosebumps? They helped us forge connections with others as we faced the vast mysteries of life together. Delight still plays an important role in our spiritual needs and in our sense of a deeply relational life.

# ONLINE GIVING is NOW AVAILABLE!



Scan the QR Code, then scroll down to the GIVE NOW option to set up or modify online giving. You can even download Hope's Church Connect Page as a "web app" to your phone or mobile device to make it easier to access. (For tips on setting this up on your phone visit: <https://www.churchtrac.com/support/connect/install-church-connect-app>) This is a great way to stay connected with Hope UMC!

## Why use online giving?

- Convenient & Secure
- Allows you to view your contribution history (regardless of how you made the contribution)

## How does online giving work?

You can either set up your contributions through secure ACH (bank account) or with a credit card, whichever is more convenient for you.

## Are there fees?

You will not be charged any fees and will receive credit for your full contribution. The church will be assessed processing fees. You will have the option to make a donation to help offset these fees, but it is not required.

- ACH (US ONLY): \$0.25 flat rate per transaction  
If the contributor chooses to use instant verification, there is a one-time \$1.50 fee for each bank account that a donor connects. After this initial fee, ACH transactions have a flat rate of \$0.25/transaction.
- Credit Card Processing Fees: 2.2% + \$.30 per transaction (3.5% for Amex)

## GIVING OPTIONS



**OFFERING PLATE** on Sunday morning



**US MAIL:** Hope United Methodist Church  
2233 Golf Road, Eau Claire, WI 54701



### ONLINE GIVING – Now Available

Scan the QR Code, then scroll down to the GIVE NOW option to set up or modify online giving.

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### ELECTRONIC GIVING:

1. You can set up automatic electronic payments through your individual financial institution. For example, RCU has a Bill Pay option where you can designate the church as a payee and decide how often you'd like them to mail a paper check to the church or make an electronic payment to the church.
2. We will be phasing out our current ACH Electronic Giving option with Vanco and transitioning to the new Online Giving option through ChurchTrac, our church management software. If you are currently using the VANCO system, there is no need to make any changes if you'd like to continue using this form of payment, but we will not be creating any new accounts.

Still have questions? Please contact Kristen in the office:  
Phone: **715-835-5310** (leave a message) / Email: **hopeumcec@yahoo.com**

# UPCOMING EVENTS



## UPCOMING COMMITTEE MEETINGS

- March 3 1:00pm Nurture  
5:00pm Faith Formation
- March 10 5:00pm Finance
- March 12 4:00pm Trustees
- March 17 6:00pm Ad Board

NEW UPDATED Committee Meetings  
ZOOM Link:

<https://zoom.us/j/3994452832?pwd=zQLjteVM7017VFggxPRg4q5wPwmd1p.1&omn=97039744985>



### Rehearsals 7:00pm:

Tues March 4  
Tues March 11

### Sing for Worship:

Sunday, March 9  
Sunday, March 16

### Pop-Up Food Pantry Dates:

10:00am - 11:00am

Saturday, March 22

Saturday, April 26



## The Gathering Table: A Dinner Church for Real Life

The world is changing—has our faith kept up? Every day, we make countless choices—about money, work, family, relationships, politics, and an uncertain future. In the middle of it all, how are we truly listening to Jesus?

At *The Gathering Table*, we're setting aside the formality and getting real. Over a simple meal, we'll have honest conversations about what Jesus' words mean for us today—and how they can actually transform our lives. No sermons. No pressure. Just a space to connect, ask big questions, and wrestle with faith in the middle of real life.

This is for everyone—whether you're a lifelong churchgoer or just curious. Bring your doubts, your hopes, and your appetite.



**Three Wednesdays in Lent: March 12, March 26, and April 9**



**6:00-7:00 PM**



**Hope Church**

You don't have to RSVP—just come hungry for food and conversation. Pull up a chair. There's a place for you at *The Gathering Table*.



**Regular Office Hours: 9:00am-1:00pm Tues, Wed, Thurs**


(Office hours may change occasionally, please call before you visit)



## New AED at Hope!

The AED was purchased with money from Memorial Funds. It is located at the main entrance on the wall. March 9th we will have a short demonstration after worship service on how to use it.

**LAY PASTORAL  
CARE TEAM  
CONTACT INFORMATION**



If you could use support, or if you know of someone who might, please contact a member of our Lay Pastoral Care Team

Judy Ganong	715-514-0258
Connie Jacobsen	715-838-9594
Jan Lorentz	608-886-0668

## FINANCE NEWS

FINANCIAL REPORT - JANUARY 2025		
	<u>MTD</u>	<u>YTD</u>
<b>Contributions</b>	\$8,393	\$8,393
<b>Expenses</b>	\$13,264	\$13,264
	(\$4,872)	(\$4,872)

CONNECTIONAL GIVING (APPORTIONMENTS)	
<i>Conference Assigned</i>	<i>We Have Paid</i>
<i>Amount for 2025:</i>	<i>As Of 1-31-25:</i>
\$16,980.00	\$1,477.00



## Beacon House Dates for 2025

- March 5-7 (Wednesday-Friday)
- May 20-23 (Tuesday – Friday)
- October 8-10 (Wednesday – Friday)
- December 2-5 (Tuesday – Friday)

## Beacon House Volunteers Needed For March

We will be serving at Beacon House (Family Promise of Chippewa Valley) Wednesday-Friday, March 5-7. Please contact Joey (715-563-0984 or gibbonje@hotmail.com) or sign up on the clipboard if you can provide a meal, serve or donate.

Monetary donations to cover overnight staff at \$80/night are appreciated. Please see <https://www.familypromisecv.org/donate> for additional items and may be dropped off at church prior to March 1.



the  
COMMUNITY TABLE

## Volunteer at Community Table

If you are interested in forming a team to volunteer to serve at the Community Table, please sign up on the clipboards. You will be contacted to see your interest and availability if we get a group that would want to serve. Thank you!

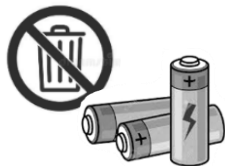
**There are many opportunities to share your gifts and talents:**

- Reading
- Greeting
- Sunday Fellowship
- Mowing (Summer/Fall)
- Running PowerPoint
- Help to Prepare/Serve Communion
- and many more!

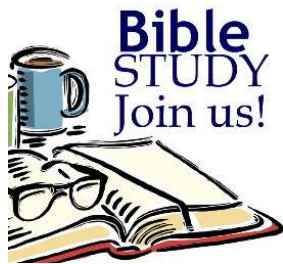
**Please let Pastor Jen know if you are interested, or if you have questions.**



**Don't Throw Your Batteries in the Trash!**



Place your old batteries in the box in the hallway at church, and we'll make sure they are disposed of appropriately and can keep them out of the landfill.



**Bible STUDY**  
Join us!

Our next gathering will be March 24th at 1:00pm. Please contact Linda Larson with questions.

*Women of*  
**HOPE** **WOMEN OF HOPE**

Women of Hope will meet on March 15th at 9:00am in Fellowship Hall to play Bingo. Please bring a white elephant item for winners. Coffee and treats will be served.



**UPCOMING FOOD PANTRY SUNDAYS:**  
MARCH 2  
APRIL 6  
MAY 4

**GIFT CARD COLLECTION to fill the FOOD PANTRY**



To be more flexible and responsive to the needs of those using our Little Food Pantry, we are adding another option for contributions.

You can now bring in grocery gift cards from any area grocery store (any amount) instead of actual food items. Our team will use these gift cards to purchase needed items. This allows them to purchase during sales and better monitor when certain items/needs are in higher demand.

So, next time you are purchasing your groceries, throw in a gift card for the food pantry. It's that simple to make a difference! If you prefer, pantry items donations or monetary gifts can still be made.

NOTE: Gift Card donations will be treated like other "In-Kind or Donated Goods" contributions. You are giving an item to the church. If you would like this contribution to appear on your giving statement, you must fill out a REIMBURSEMENT/DONATION OF GOODS FORM (copies are in the office) and select the "Donation" box. Your gift will be recorded as Donated Goods /Gift Card on your giving statement, without a dollar amount. It is up to you to keep a copy of your receipt to record the value for tax purposes.

# J.O.N.A.H. NEWS & UPDATES

(Joining Our Neighbors Advancing Hope)

*JONAH mission statement:*

*JONAH exists to deepen relationships within and among faith communities and partner organizations to empower people in addressing the root causes of social injustice in the greater community.*

Visit the JONAH website for updates and more information  
[www.jonahjustice.org](http://www.jonahjustice.org)

**JOIN A TASK FORCE** - Consider attending one of JONAH's task forces to see if you would like to get involved:

- Environmental Task Force
- Immigration Task Force
- Chippewa Valley Child Poverty Coalition
- Affordable Housing Task Force
- Transportation Task Force
- Chippewa Valley Justice Action Team
- Mental Health Group



**Feb 18**

**Becoming Kin: An Indigenous Call to Unforgetting the Past and Reimagining Our Future**  
- By Patty Krewac

**Apr 15**

**A More Perfect Union: A New Vision for Building the Beloved Community**  
- By Adam Russell Taylor

**Jun 17**

**Becoming Abolitionists: Police, Protests, and the Pursuit of Freedom**  
- By Derecka Purnell

**Aug 12**

**How We Show Up: Reclaiming Family, Friendship, and Community**  
- By Mia Birdsong

**Oct 14**

**We Who Believe in Freedom: Activism and the Struggle for Social Justice**  
- By Alice P. Green

**Dec 9**

**Hope for Cynics: The Surprising Science of Human Goodness**  
- By Jamil Zaki

JONAH is proud to introduce our 2025 Book Club list, with all titles focusing on *hope.*

Come ready to discuss and get to know other JONAH members on the specified date at 6:15pm at Dotter's Books, 307 South Barstow in Eau Claire. Register [here](#).



## HOPE UMC LEADERSHIP - 2025

<b><u>Administrative Council</u></b>			
	Renee Marino		Chairperson of Ad Council
	Lynne Larabee		Lay Leader and Chair of Finance Committee
	Sharon Fortune		Lay Member to AC
	Judy Shuck		Church Treasurer
	Cheryl Muller		Chair of the SPRC
	Mike Larabee		Chairperson of the Board of Trustees
	Sharon Fortune		Chairperson of the Outreach Committee
	Judy Ganong & Connie Jacobsen		Chairperson of Nurture Committee
	Jan Lorentz		Chairperson of Faith Formation Committee
	Bill Zabel & Mark Hysell		Members at-large
<b><u>Hope Staff-Parish Relations Committee</u></b>	Cheryl Muller (chair)	Joey Bohl	
	Cindy Peterson	Sharon Fortune	Becky Gochanour
<b><u>Finance Committee</u></b>	Lynn Larabee (chair)	Judy Shuck/treasurer	Joey Bohl/treasurer
	Doug Fortune	Bob Schwartz	
<b><u>The Board of Trustees (not to exceed nine persons)</u></b>	Renee Marino	Dan Shuck	
	LeeAnn Richards	Mike Larabee (Chair)	Rich Swanson
<b><u>Faith Formation Committee</u></b>	Jan Lorentz	Sandi Hysell	Ben Kittilstad (pianist)
	LeeAnn Richards	Jill Myers	Lacie Weatherholt
	Alberto Larabee		
<b><u>Outreach Committee</u></b>	Sharon Fortune (Chair)	Linda Higgins	Joey Bohl
	Cheryl Muller - Feed My People		Joanne Mellema
<b><u>Nurture Committee</u></b>	Connie Jacobsen (Co chair)	Judy Ganong (Co chair)	Jan Lorentz
	Kay Lee	Barb Rude	
<b><u>Care Team</u></b>	Judy Ganong	Jan Lorentz	Connie Jacobsen
<b><u>Committee On Lay Leadership (Nominations)</u></b>	Pastor (chair)	Lynne Larabee (Lay Leader)	
	Renee Marino	Rich Swanson	Dan Shuck
	Sharon Fortune	Jan Lorentz	
<b><u>Wills, Memorial and Gifts Committee</u></b>			
	Joanne Mellema		Judy Ganong
<b><u>Website Development &amp; Maintenance Team</u></b>		Joey Bohl	Bob Schwartz
	Kristen Kirchman		
<b><u>Funeral Serving and Kitchen Care Team</u></b>	Jan Lorentz(chair)	Judy Ganong	
	Kay Lee	Lois Nelson	Connie Jacobsen
	Dan Shuck	Judy Shuck	Linda Higgins
<b><u>Endowment Fund Committee of Directors</u></b>	Lynne Larabee (Finance Chair)		
	Gary Gochanour	Dan Shuck	
	Rich Swanson	Pastor	Renee Marino

*Note: The Administrative Council is granted the authority, on behalf of the charge conference, to make any needed changes to our leadership between charge conferences.*

# March 2025

# Hope United Methodist Church

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
23-Feb	24-Feb	25-Feb	26-Feb	27-Feb	Feb 28	1
9:00am WORSHIP Communion Food Pantry Sunday All-Church Potluck	1:00pm Nurture 5:00pm Faith Formation	5:30pm Zumba (FH) 7:00pm CHOIR	<b>Ash Wednesday Services:</b> Noon @ Lake Street 4:00pm @ Pleasant Valley 6:00pm @ Hope <b>Beacon House</b>	6	7	(FH) Set up for Potluck
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Daylight Savings 9:00am WORSHIP Kids Sunday School CHOIR	10 5:00pm Finance	11 5:30pm Zumba (FH) 6:00pm Pastor Jen PV Ad Board 7:00pm CHOIR	12 4:00pm Trustees 6:00pm Dinner Church @ Hope	13	14	15 9:00am Women of Hope (Fellowship Hall)
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
9:00am WORSHIP CHOIR	Pastor Jen at MCCI 6:00pm Ad Board	5:30pm Zumba (FH)	6:00pm Dinner Church @ Pleasant Valley	26	27	10-11:00am Pop-Up Pantry
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
9:00am WORSHIP	1:00pm Bible Study	5:30pm Zumba (FH)	6:00pm Dinner Church @ Hope	30	31	5-Apr
9:00am WORSHIP				3-Apr	Apr 4	

SERVING SCHEDULE	View the most current Serving Schedule, by following this link, or scanning the QR code at the bottom of the page: <a href="https://hopeumceauclaire.churchtrac.com/card/34">https://hopeumceauclaire.churchtrac.com/card/34</a>				
	March 2	March 9	March 16	March 23	March 30
<b>Greeters</b>	Linda Larson	Judy Ganong	John & Merry Weiland	Connie Jacobsen	Linda Larson
<b>Online Greeter</b>	Renee Marino	Connie Jacobsen	Renee Marino	Connie Jacobsen	Connie Jacobsen
<b>Scripture Reader</b>	Cindy Peterson	Ryan Stepp	Linda Norton	Sharon Fortune	Cindy Peterson
<b>Children's Message</b>	n/a	Pastor Jen	n/a	n/a	n/a
<b>Prayers of the People</b>	Pastor Jen	Jan Lorentz	Pastor Jen	Jan Lorentz	Becky Gochanour
<b>Audio Visual</b>	Alberto Larabee	Renee Marino Cindy Peterson	Alberto Larabee	Renee Marino Cindy Peterson	Renee Marino Cindy Peterson

**SUNDAY MORNING SCHEDULE**  
**9:00am Sunday Worship**  
 We will have both In-Person Worship and Online Streaming of the service on our Facebook Page.

**HOPE UMC OFFICE HOURS**  
 Tues, Wed, Thurs 9:00am- 1:00pm  
 Office hours may change occasionally, please call before you visit.

**HOPE UMC STAFF**  
 Pastor . . . . . Rev. Jen Barnet  
 Office Manager . . . Kristen Kirchman  
 Pianist . . . . . Ben Kittilstad

**HOPE UMC website:**  
[www.hope-eauclaire.org](http://www.hope-eauclaire.org)

**facebook**  
  
 Hope United Methodist Church

**Visit and "LIKE" the Hope UMC Facebook page**

From our website, click the "Like Us on Facebook" button just above the map showing our location

**SCAN HERE** 

**for more info and LINKS** 

FOR THE JOURNEY Newsletter articles and updates should be submitted to the church office by the 20<sup>th</sup> of each month. Contributions are welcome.