



Ray Of Hope

Church Of Our Lord Jesus Christ

"My House shall be a house of prayer for All People."

(Isaiah 56:7)

Founded: 10/31/1983. Now in our Forty-first year of Ministry.

MISSION: Love God, Love your neighbor,
and make disciples of every person

everywhere. (Matthew 22:37-39; Matthew 28:19)

"It is time to put our faith into action."

"Faith without works is dead." (James 2:14-26)

Veronica Floyd, Moderator

Rev. Br. Shawn F. Benedict, O.S.B, Appointed Pastor

We extend a special welcome to our visitors.

You are as welcome here as Jesus Christ Himself.

Scripture exhorts us: "Welcome one another, then, as Christ welcomed you, for the glory of God" Romans 15:7 (NABRE – 2011)

Participate in some or all parts of this worship event as you are comfortable. We are building a wonderful Christ-centered Community here, and we invite you to share in our joy! After the Worship Service, please join us for refreshments and sharing.

Today is February 25, 2024, Lent Week 2 of 5, Year B

Black History Month 4th Sunday

Ray Of Hope Church teaches the same Christian faith of ancient ecumenical consensus. St. Vincent of Lerins, a fifth-century monk and theologian, described it as

"what has been believed always, everywhere, and by all."

Scientific Discovery, Academic Knowledge, the Holy Scriptures, and Spirituality are Universal and Unified. (Br. Benedict 8-6-23)

Scripture Readings for this worship event:

First Reading: Genesis 22:1-2, 9A, 10-13, 15-18 NRSV 1st Test. pg. 17

Psalm: 116 selected verses with responsorial in this bulletin.

Second Reading: Romans 4:13-25 NRSV 2nd Test. Pg. 155

Gospel: Mark 8:31-38 NRSV 2ND Testament page 44

***We use the term 1st for the "Old" Testament and 2nd for the "New" Testament. The NRSV Bible 1st Testament numbers are found in the front portion, and the 2nd Testament numbers are found in the later portion. If this confuses you, ask someone around you to assist you. Thank you.**

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CALL TO WORSHIP

Visit and greet one another until the bell rings.

Bell's 1st ring. As the bell rings, please find your seat and pray silently for the next few minutes. Please refrain from conversations as these disturb those trying to pray.

The St. Francis and St. Clare of Assisi bell at Ray Of Hope Church, 380 W. 1st St. in Elmira, NY, was a gift from Michael Quinnell of Syracuse, NY, in September 2005. The bell rings out 39 joyful rings, in contrast to tolling the bell in single rings. The 39 joyful rings honor the 39 lashes Jesus endured that we now celebrate in victory and gratitude for our Salvation. "The chastisement for our peace was upon Him, And by His stripes, we are healed." (Isaiah 53:5) We ring the bell before worship and Bible Enrichment sessions. Listen carefully and see if you can hear all 39 rings.



WE GATHER TO PRAISE THE LORD AND GIVE THANKS

+ Pastoral Welcome

Leader – 1: Hello. My name is _____. I am in_(city) _____, _(State)_____. Good morning. Welcome to Ray Of Hope Church Of Our Lord Jesus Christ, the faith community founded in Central New York and now all across the World through the Internet, where everyone is welcome. You may participate in some or all parts of this worship event as you are comfortable. We announce all instructions, page, and song numbers and use a psalm response verse to assist people with various stages of visual impairment.

Leader-2: Hello. My name is _____. I am in_(city) _____,

_(State)____. Good morning, and welcome ■ (** Reader, stop, look up at the people, and smile.**) Everyone is welcome to receive Holy Communion with us during the second part of this worship event. We celebrate the Lord's open table where Membership in this or any church is not required to receive Communion. People participating on the Internet, please bring the following items to your table at this time so you are prepared: 1) a cup with some wine or grape juice, 2) a small piece of bread, cracker, or matzo on a plate, 3) a second cup with some water, and 4) a side napkin.

Leader-1: Today's bulletin order of worship and music supplement are available on Facebook Live; right-click the "Featured Links" icon. On Skype, look in the Chat window for two document icons. On our website, look at the large gold box labeled SUNDAY WORSHIP INFORMATION at www.rayofhopechurch.com. Take a moment now and gather these items. We will start shortly; thank you.



ALL PEOPLE HAVE RECEIVED SALVATION AS A FREE GIFT FROM GOD, ARE ETERNALLY SECURE IN GOD'S LOVE AND ARE BY MODERN TERMS, "SAVED." ALL LGBTQSIA2ss+ persons of every sexual orientation and every gender expression are SAVED and are called to live out the fullness of who they are so that God may be praised. Ray Of Hope Church, Inc. officially took this position on September 18, 2011 and changed the By-laws to secure this position. (www.rayofhopechurch.com/faith.htm) (www.rayofhopechurch.com/purpose.htm)

(The Congregation amended this By-law on September 18, 2011, and used to read: We believe that Salvation is available to all who call on the Name of Jesus Christ, and are re-born into the Life of Christ.)([Article 10 STATEMENT OF FAITH 10.01 Short Form Statement Lines 1140 – 1143](#))



Bell's 2nd ring will announce the start of the worship event.

Leader – 2: (** Reader, look up at the people and smile.**) Thank you for spending time with us. In Romans, Chapter 15:7, the Scriptures instruct us to:

ALL: "Welcome one another, then, as Christ welcomed you, for the glory of God." (NABRE)

Leader -1: You are as welcome here as Christ Jesus himself. (** Reader, stop, look up at the people, and smile.**) Show the glory of God by introducing yourself and welcoming the **SAINTS** around you. To be extra careful, we observe COVID-19 safety protocols by waving across the room and into the camera for the Internet.

Pastor: Good Morning, **SAINTS!** I ask you, in whose Name are we meeting?

ALL: We meet in the name of God our Creator, Christ Jesus Our Lord and Saviour, and in the name of the Holy Spirit. Amen

Pastor:

Ray Of Hope Church officially began on 10/31/1983.

Today is February 25, 2024, the Second of Five Sundays of Lent in our 41st year of ministry. The sixth Sunday is Palm Sunday, the start of Holy Week. During these five weeks of Lent, we look within ourselves to find areas in our spiritual life where we could grow and begin to do those things to facilitate that growth.

February 25 is also the fourth Sunday in Black History Month. To read my pastoral statement on our participation in Black History Month, please turn to page 37 of this program.

FIRST SONG: COME TO ME Text and Music Weston Priory and Gregory Norbet G&P 629 Contributors: Gregory Norbet Tune: Text based on Matthew 11:28–30; Psalm 23. Original text and music: Gregory Norbet, OSB; © 1971, 1994 (revised text), The Benedictine Foundation of the State of Vermont, Inc. All rights reserved, used with permission. Onelicense Song # 81269 Used with Print Permission and Streaming License A-741278

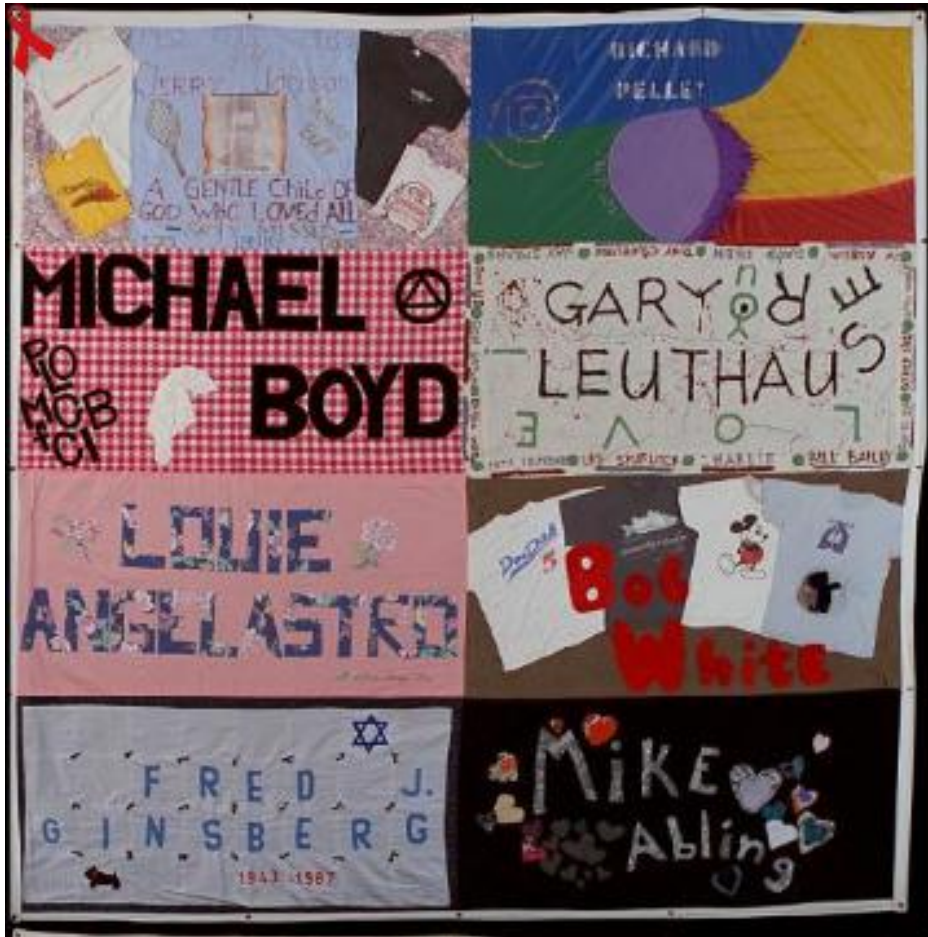
+ The Candle Of Hope

Leader -1: Please be seated. Today, we light our Candle Of Hope to celebrate our faith and trust in the promised "Blessed Hope," also known as "The Rapture," the return of Christ who will transform the living faithful and raise all to new life. Jesus said: (John 5:25 and Titus 2:13)

ALL: "I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die." (John 11:25, 26)

Leader -2: In 1983, Ray Of Hope Church was started in part to form a unique ministry to persons affected by and infected with HIV/AIDS. Forty-one years later, some churches, religions, and even some countries continue rejecting the sick, lonely, and dying people with HIV/AIDS who need spiritual guidance. Therefore, we continue to read aloud over **110,000** names sewn into the AIDS Memorial Quilt to keep HIV/AIDS in the conscious prayers of people.

Leader -3: Hello. My name is _____. I am in_(city) _____, _(State)_____. Scroll the page to see the panel names on Block # 105.



Names on Block # 105

- Jerry Johnson (1)
- Richard Pelley (2)
- Michael Boyd (3)
- Gary Leuthauser (4)
- Louie Angelastro (5)
 - Bob White (6)
- Fred J. Ginsberg (7)
 - Mike Abling (8)

(source: <https://www.aidsmemorial.org/interactive-aids-quilt>)

Leader -2: In silent prayer, we also remember the names of family and friends who have died from COVID-19-related and other illnesses. We pray for their families to experience a blessing from the Holy Spirit when they remember their loved ones. (**pause for silent prayer.**) May this candle's flame help bring to mind the joy and happiness known in life, the comfort offered by the Holy Spirit in our loss, and the "Blessed Hope" we have in the Resurrection of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

ALL: Amen

(National AIDS Memorial website where you can visit over 48,000 panels and over 110,000 names on the Quilt virtually:
<https://www.aidsmemorial.org/interactive-aids-quilt>)

Second Song: **Jesus, My Confidence Words and Music by M.D.Ridge**
G&P #624 © 1989, 1992, M. D. Ridge. Published by OCP.
All rights reserved. Contributors: Words and Music by M.D. Ridge. OCP
Octavo/Bonus Music. First Line: Jesus, My Confidence. Onelicense Song
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WE PREPARE OUR HEARTS

+ Confession and Forgiveness of our sins.

Leader -2: Please be seated. (wait) So far, we assembled, greeted one another, and praised God in song. Now, Ray Of Hope Church provides another service: Christ forgiving our sins through the powerful ministry of the Holy Spirit.

Leader – 3: Hear the Word of God in First John, Chapter One, verses eight and nine: "8 If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. 9 If we confess our sins, Jesus, who is present, faithful, and just, will forgive and cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

(Source: <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=i+John+1%3A8-10&version=NRSVUE>
Scripture quotations are taken from the New Revised Standard Version Updated Edition. Copyright © 2021 National Council of Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. See notice above announcements in this bulletin.) (modified for clarity by Br. Benedict)

Leader -2: Now, we consider our relationship with God and others in silent prayer. Then, confess faults, sins, and failures to Christ, who will forgive us immediately.

(silent prayer for time to confess our sins. count to 20)

Leader -2: We pray together:

ALL: I confess to Almighty God, and to you, my brothers and sisters, that I have sinned through my own fault in my thoughts and in my words, in what I have done, and in what I have failed to do. I declare in the midst of this assembly of believers that I am truly sorry for having offended anyone, and God, in any way. **Therefore**, I ask you, my brothers and sisters, all the angels and the saints, to forgive me and pray for me to the Lord our God.

Leader -4: Hello. My name is _____. I am in_(city) _____, _(State)_____.

World Leaders continue to choose war and corrupt government to attempt to overpower other people. The disregard for human life is growing daily because of war and aggression; we pray, Lord, have mercy.

ALL: Lord, have mercy.

Leader -4: Human life as God's gift. All forms of discrimination are learned behaviors, chosen lifestyles intentionally taught, and disregarding the gift of life. We pray: Christ, have mercy.

ALL: Christ, have mercy.

Leader -4: The Church's message must be used to guide people to a relationship with the living and present Christ. Without the experience of the living Christ among us, the Church becomes just another social services agency. People are starving for a reality that only Jesus can provide in person. Lord, have mercy.

ALL: Lord, have mercy.

L-4: Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the World; have mercy on us.

ALL: Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the World, grant us peace.

Pastor: We pray that all of God's people may one day be reunited in God's Kingdom without losing anyone. Therefore, we ask Almighty God to have mercy on all of us, forgive all our sins, and keep us in everlasting life.

ALL: Amen.

Leader -4: Through confession and forgiveness, we have prepared our hearts to accept the renewal God offers when we listen to the Word, the Holy Scriptures. The Church now provides the service of praising God in thanksgiving together.

Pastor: Please rise as you are able to sing "The Gloria."

Ray of Hope Church, Inc. *The Gloria* Wnds and Music
10th Annual Meeting "Music for Worship" Church Liturgical
7/25/17, 1/21/24

2. = 6/8 *Refrain*

GLO-ry to God in the high-est, AND
 peace to all peo-ple on Earth.
 GLO-ry to God in the high-est.
 We give You thankS - and praise. Al-le-lu-ia.
 We give You thanks and praise

Verso 1

You are the One God, Sov-ereign of the
 Uni-verse, On-ly Ho-ly God, We wor-ship You, We
 give you thanks, We praise You for Your great glo-ry! (Refrain)
 D.C.

7/25/17, 1/1/24 *Church Liturgical Arts by [unclear]*

VERSE 2

The Gloria, Pg 2

LORD, Jes-us Christ-, The on-ly Be-got-ten Son of God, You are
 LORD God, Lamb of God, You take away the sin of the
 world: HAVE MER-cy on us; you are seated at the
 right hand of God: re-ceive our prayer. (TO Refrain)

Verse 3

For You a-lone are the hol-y one, You a-lone are the
 LORD of all, You a-lone are the MOST High,
 Je-sus Christ, with the Ho-ly
 spir-it, in the glo-ry of God, in the
 Ho-ly spir-its, in the Ho-ly uni-ty of
 God. (TO REFRAIN)

© 7/25/17 1/124 Gaudes! Liturgical Arts Ben Berner

Verse 4: Amen

The Gloria, Pg 3

ALL: A ————— men; we give you thanks and

We give you thanks and praise

LORD, we praise you LORD we bless you, we give you thank we give you praise

ALL: Praise!

A —————

We give you thank and praise

We give you thank and praise LORD, we praise you LORD we bless you

ALL: men

men al-le-lu-ia

mine @ 7/25/17 - 11/24/18
Gaudete! - 1/19/16
Pete Behm

+ Opening Prayer

Leader: Eternal Word of God, we now dedicate these next few minutes to hear the Sacred Scriptures read aloud. We ask the Holy Spirit to open our understanding of what we hear so we may apply it in our lives, for we desire to give you honor and glory in all we do through Christ, our Lord.

ALL: AMEN.

Leader 5: Please be seated now as we listen attentively to the Scriptures.

ALL: We read God's Word to recall, reflect on, and rejoice in the action of God in life.



THE SERVICE OF THE WORD OF GOD

Reader: Hello. My name is _____. I am in_(city) _____, _____(State)_____. The first reading is the Book of Genesis, chapter 22, verses 1-2, 9A, 10-13, 15-18. It is on page 17 in the front of the NRSV Bible. Here begins the reading:

God put Abraham to the test.

He called to him, "Abraham!"

"Here I am!" he replied.

Then God said:

"Take your son Isaac, your only one, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah.

There you shall offer him up as a holocaust on a height that I will point out to you."

⁹ When they came to the place that God had shown him, Abraham built an altar there and laid the wood in order. He bound his son Isaac and laid him on the altar on top of the wood. ¹⁰ Then Abraham reached out his hand and took the knife to kill^[a] his son. ¹¹ But the angel of the LORD called to him from heaven and said, "Abraham, Abraham!" And he said, "Here I am." ¹² He said, "Do not lay your hand on the boy or do anything to him, for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from me." ¹³ And Abraham looked up and saw a ram, caught in a thicket by

its horns. Abraham went and took the ram and offered it up as a burnt offering instead of his son. ¹⁴ So Abraham called that place "The LORD will provide," ^[b] as it is said to this day, "On the mount of the LORD it shall be provided." ^[c]

¹⁵ The angel of the LORD called to Abraham a second time from heaven ¹⁶ and said, "By myself I have sworn, says the LORD: Because you have done this, and have not withheld your son, your only son, ¹⁷ I will indeed bless you, and I will make your offspring as numerous as the stars of heaven and as the sand that is on the seashore. And your offspring shall possess the gate of their enemies, ¹⁸ and by your offspring shall all the nations of the earth gain blessing for themselves, because you have obeyed my voice."

Reader: This is the Word of the Lord!

ALL: Thanks be to God!

[Read full chapter](#)

Footnotes

- a. [22.10](#) Or to slaughter
- b. [22.14](#) Or will see; Heb traditionally transliterated Jehovah Jireh
- c. [22.14](#) Or he shall be seen

(Source: <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+22%3A1-18&version=NRSVUE> Scripture quotations are taken from the New Revised Standard Version Updated Edition. Copyright © 2021 National Council of Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. See notice above announcements in this bulletin.)

+ Psalm

Reader: Hello. My name is _____. I am in_(city) _____, _____(State)_____. Today, the Psalm is 116, with selected verses (10, 15, 16-17, 18-19). The response is, "I will walk before the Lord in the land of the living."

R. I will walk before the Lord in the land of the living.

I kept my faith, even when I said,

"I am greatly afflicted;"

Precious in the sight of the LORD

is the death of his faithful ones.

R. I will walk before the Lord in the land of the living.

O LORD, I am your servant;
I am your servant, the child of your serving girl.
You have loosed my bonds.
I will offer to you a thanksgiving sacrifice
and call on the name of the LORD.

R. I will walk before the Lord in the land of the living.

I will pay my vows to the LORD
in the presence of all his people,
¹⁹ in the courts of the house of the LORD,
in your midst, O Jerusalem.

Praise the LORD!

R. I will walk before the Lord in the land of the living.

Footnotes

- a. 116.10 Some early witnesses begin a new psalm here

(Source: <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+116&version=NRSVUE> Scripture quotations are taken from the New Revised Standard Version Updated Edition. Copyright © 2021 National Council of Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. See notice above announcements in this bulletin.)

+ Second Reading

Reader: Hello. My name is _____. I am in_(city) _____,
_(State)_____. The second reading is the Book of Romans, Chapter 4,
verses 13-25. You will find this on page 215 in the back of the 1989 NRSV
Bible. I will read the 2021 updated version. Here begins the reading:

¹³ For the promise that he would inherit the world did not come to Abraham or to his descendants through the law but through the righteousness of faith. ¹⁴ For if it is the adherents of the law who are to be the heirs, faith is null and the promise is void. ¹⁵ For the law brings wrath, but where there is no law, neither is there transgression.

¹⁶ For this reason the promise depends on faith, in order that it may rest on grace, so that it may be guaranteed to all his descendants, not only to the adherents of the law but also to those who share the faith of Abraham (who is the father of all of us, ¹⁷ as it is written, "I have made you the father of many nations"), in the presence of the God in whom he believed,^[a] who gives life to the dead and calls into existence the things that do not exist. ¹⁸ Hoping against hope, he believed that he would become "the father of many nations," according to what was said, "So shall your descendants be." ¹⁹ He did not weaken in faith when he considered his own body, which was already^[b] as good as dead (for he was about a hundred years old), and the barrenness of Sarah's womb. ²⁰ No distrust made him waver concerning the promise of God, but he grew strong in his faith as he gave glory to God, ²¹ being fully convinced that God was able to do what he had promised. ²² Therefore "it was reckoned to him as righteousness." ²³ Now the words, "it was reckoned to him," were written not for his sake alone ²⁴ but for ours also. It will be reckoned to us who believe^[c] in him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead, ²⁵ who was handed over for our trespasses and was raised for our justification.

Reader: This is the Word of the Lord!

ALL: Thanks be to God!

[Read full chapter](#)

Footnotes

- a. [4.17](#) Or *trusted*
- b. [4.19](#) Other ancient authorities lack *already*
- c. [4.24](#) Or *trust*
 - a.

(Source: <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+4%3A13-25&version=NRSVUE>
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+ The Holy Gospel of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ

Reader: We sing an acclamation before and one after the reading of the Gospel. Please rise as you are able for the Gospel Acclamation.

Gospel Acclamation

We Love Your Word!

To my friends in Christ
at Ray Of Hope Church

"Music for Worship"

Music by: Gaude! Liturgical Arts
October 31, 1993
Revised 8/2013

We love Your Word, O Lord for it set us free. We know the
truth, O Lord; We are Yours e - ter - nal - ly. So we stand to hear Your
Word. We praise You for Your Word. Al-le - lu - a! for Your Word. It heals our
hearts, souls and minds. For Your Word, Al - le - lu - ia! Thank You Je - sus!

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Reader: The Gospel reading is Mark, chapter 8:31-38, on page 44 in the back of the 1989 NRSV Bible. I will read the 2021 updated version. This reading is a continuation of last Sunday's Gospel.

Reader: Truly present among us, the Lord is with you.

ALL: And also with you.

Reader: A reading of the Holy Gospel according to Mark.

ALL: Glory to you, O Lord. May the Word of God be in our (+) minds that we will understand it, on our (+) lips that we will speak it, and in our (+) hearts that we will love it.

Jesus Foretells His Death and Resurrection

³¹ Then he began to teach them that the Son of Man must undergo great suffering and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes and be killed and after three days rise again. ³² He said all this quite openly. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. ³³ But turning and looking at his disciples, he rebuked Peter and

said, "Get behind me, Satan! For you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things."

³⁴ He called the crowd with his disciples and said to them, "If any wish to come^[a] after me, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. ³⁵ For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel,^[b] will save it. ³⁶ For what will it profit them to gain the whole world and forfeit their life? ³⁷ Indeed, what can they give in return for their life? ³⁸ Those who are ashamed of me and of my words^[c] in this adulterous and sinful generation, of them the Son of Man will also be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels."

Reader: This is the Gospel of the Lord!

ALL: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ!

[Read full chapter](#)

Footnotes

- a. [8.34](#) Other ancient authorities read *follow*
- b. [8.35](#) Other ancient authorities read *lose their life for the sake of the gospel*
- c. [8.38](#) Other ancient authorities read *and of mine*

(Source: <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Mark+8%3A31-38&version=NRSVUE>
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Gospel Acclamation

Forever, We Are Yours!

To my friends in Christ
at Ray Of Hope Church
for the 1996 New Year,
The Year of The Holy Spirit!

"Music For Worship"

Music by: Gaude! Liturgical Arts
December 31, 1995

Glo-ry to the One God! Glo-ry to our Sa - vior Je - sus the
 5 Christ! And, to the Ho - ly Spi - rit, for - ev - er You're Our God!
 9 You brought us out of dark - ness, in - to Your mar - ve - lous Light! Your Word is our
 13 joy! For this we give You glo - ry, both now and ev - er more!
 17 For - ev - er we are Yours! For - ev - er we are Yours!

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Ray Of Hope Church Of Our Lord Jesus Christ, Inc.

The LGBTQSIAN2ss+ Pride Activities, and Social Events Center of Elmira, NY.



The only Church in Central New York founded and fostered by the GLBTQSIAN2ss+ community for 40 years. October 31, 2023 - 40th Anniversary now in our 41st year in Ministry.

But by the grace of God I am what I am, and God's grace toward me has not been in vain. 1 Cor. 5:10

+ Sermon

Ray Of Hope Church teaches the same Christian faith of ancient ecumenical consensus. St. Vincent of Lerins, a fifth-century monk and theologian, described it as

"what has been believed always, everywhere, and by all."

2 Corinthians 4:5-6 ⁵ For we do not proclaim ourselves; we proclaim Jesus Christ as Lord and ourselves as your slaves for Jesus's sake. ⁶ For it is the God who said, "Light will shine out of darkness," who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ. (NRSVUE)

Today, I will speak on two themes, one directly from the Readings and the second from our Statement of Purpose.

1- the Readings.

The readings during the Season of Lent review the Covenants. Last week, the Covenant with Noah and all of creation. Today, we have the covenant with Abraham and the importance of sacrifice underscored.

You may ask, what kind of God would ever require the sacrifice of a child to appease the God? The answer is Elohim, the Hebrew word for God, Gods, Goddess, Goddesses, the great ones that appear 2,340 times in the Hebrew Testament, and that word is rendered as God in our English Bibles. The Divine of all creation has the authority to create, birth, destroy, and bring death upon anything in creation. Divine authority is a fact of creation.

Moon lander Odysseus tipped sideways on lunar surface but

'alive and well'

By Steve Gorman and Joey Roulette

February 24, 2024 3:50 AM EST Updated 11 hours ago

" Feb 23 (Reuters) - The moon lander dubbed Odysseus is "alive and well" but resting on its side a day after its [white-knuckle touchdown](#) as the first private spacecraft ever to reach the lunar surface, and the first from the U.S. since 1972, the company behind the vehicle said on Friday. " (Source:

<https://www.reuters.com/technology/space/moon-lander-described-alive-well-day-after-white-knuckle-lunar-touchdown-2024-02-23/>)

This landing on the moon, all the study, resources, design, and all that goes into getting out into space and landing somewhere else proves that Science is not the pinnacle of knowledge that anti-religionists make it out to be. Science is no more certain about anything than religion is. The lunar lander tipped over on its side. (source: <https://www.reuters.com/technology/space/moon-lander-described-alive-well-day-after-white-knuckle-lunar-touchdown-2024-02-23/>)

Some reality greater than our understanding played a role in the lander tipping over; that is a fact. Japan confronted God's reality of design on January 19, 2024, when its lunar lander ended its journey to the Moon upside down. Again, there must be something scientists are not comprehending just yet that caused the upside-down landing. (source: <https://www.space.com/japan-slim-moon-lander-awake-after-hibernation>)

I bring up these two lunar landings to emphasize the point that Scientists are attempting to understand what the Divine has put into place and how to do various things with that Divine reality of design, be it on Earth, in the atmosphere, outer space, or on any other collection of matter or gasses anywhere in the Universe. We are attempting to discover what is already there. So, the Divine that has put all of this in place maintains the authority over all of it and over us, from birth to death, before and after our death. Our acceptance or decision not to accept God's reality design does not change that design. We only live and move and have our being within it. (Acts 17:28)

In today's first reading, Abraham accepted God's place, even to require Abraham to sacrifice his son. What a test of trust to be asked to sacrifice one's child. There are verses in this story that were left out of the lectionary today in the interest of time. Two of the verses are essential, in my opinion. Abraham knew that God would intervene somehow. In verses 4 and 5, we read: ⁴ On the third day, Abraham looked up and saw the place far away. ⁵ Then Abraham said to his young men, "Stay here with the donkey; the boy and I will go over there; we will worship, and then we will come back to you."

Abraham knew somehow that he and his son would come back. There is much more on this than time permits today. Ultimately, God does what The Angel Of The Lord stopped Abraham from doing, namely, God sacrifices the Only Begotten Son of God for our sins. God so loved us that God did the sacrifice for our sins.

Psalm 116 is the voice of Abraham and every other human as we struggle to maintain our faith in all of life's circumstances.

I kept my faith, even when I said,

"I am greatly afflicted;"

Precious in the sight of the LORD

is the death of his faithful ones.

How is the death of the faithful one precious? By our faith and trust in God, our death will lead to our resurrection to eternal life. This is God's design; all we can do is try to understand it and then move, live, and breathe within it.

In the second reading, Romans 4:13-25 we have it confirmed: Abraham's dispensation was of promise. ¹³ For the promise that he would inherit the world did not come to Abraham or to his descendants through the law but through the righteousness of faith." We are all children of Abraham: Romans 4:16, 17 ¹⁶ For this reason the promise depends on faith, in order that it may rest on grace, so that it may be guaranteed to all his descendants, not only to the adherents of the law but also to those who share the faith of Abraham (who is the father of all of us, ¹⁷ as it is written, "I have made you the father of many nations"), in the presence of the God in whom he believed,^[a] who gives life to the dead and calls into existence the things that do not exist."

, ²¹ being fully convinced that God was able to do what he had promised. ²² Therefore "it was reckoned to him as

righteousness." ²³ Now the words, "it was reckoned to him," were written not for his sake alone ²⁴ but for ours also. It will be reckoned to us who believe^[c] in him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead, ²⁵ who was handed over for our trespasses and was raised for our justification.

Jesus: Mark 8:36-38 "³⁶ For what will it profit them to gain the whole world and forfeit their life? ³⁷ Indeed, what can they give in return for their life? ³⁸ Those who are ashamed of me and of my words^[c] in this adulterous and sinful generation, of them the Son of Man will also be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels."

This is God's design; this is God's plan. It is our place to study, accept, and live it.

Accepting, studying, and living out God's plan is what brings me to the second point today: putting this understanding into action.

2) The direct application of putting our understanding of faith into action is often played out in our politics here in the United States. Politics and religion are often tightly intertwined all over the world.

We are in a Presidential Election year. In addition to the Office of the President of the United States, 468 seats in the United States Congress (33 in the Senate and 435 in the House of Representatives) are also up for election in November 2024. (source:

https://ballotpedia.org/United_States_Congress_elections,_2024) The real power for lawmaking at the Federal level is in the Congress. The Senators and Representatives are expected to bring the opinions and standards of their local region to the decision-making process in our United States Capital, and thereby, we hope to have an authentic temperature of the views and desires of the people. The party in the majority also has a lot of leverage to make decisions that could impact social life for many years ahead. One area the majority party has power over is the appointment of Federal Judges and Supreme Court Judges. The Constitution of the United States assigns lifetime appointments to Federal and Supreme Court Judges. If the majority party falls into patterns of governing by the ideology of some constituents rather than the established principles outlined in our Constitution and other governing

documents, we could face the risk of unraveling our democratic process. Gubernatorial elections are also being held in eleven states and two territories in November of this year, 2024. Finally, there are numerous state and local elections, including nine lieutenant gubernatorial seats, ten attorney general seats, and seven secretary of state seats. There are many more down-ballot seats up for election in 2024. (source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2024_United_States_gubernatorial_elections)(https://ballotpedia.org/State_executive_official_elections,_2024)

Just for a moment, pause, and in your mind, imagine and consider the number of people who will be elected into office all across the United States of America this November 2024. There are two reasons I am bringing this up. First, many people mistakenly think the only election that matters is who "wins" the presidency. Very soon, we will hear two, possibly three names over and over concerning who will "win" the election. It seems that we hear very little about most the other seats being filled or even who is running to fill them; which leads to my second point.

Secondly, an ideology that presents as "Christian" and "American" is attempting to overtake our political system. This ideology is not new and has roots as deep as the initial explorers who "discovered" this continent and established a new country for God. According to some writers, it was established particularly as Christian.

Critical to understanding this ideology is to remember you have heard me say all theological systems appear to grow out of the view taken of the final events of the Bible, the eschaton, called the field of Eschatology. The prominent schools of eschatology are Spiritual, Amillennial, Postmillennial, and Premillennial. The Postmillennial school is fueling the current self-named conservative right-wing political agenda. I used to think many of this system's leaders, who have gained tremendous strength since the late 1960s and 1970s, were unaware of the eschatology that was shaping just about their entire political agenda. However, in the last ten or so years, these leaders have been speaking their "truth to power." While I have yet to hear any politician say the term postmillennialism, they do talk about dominion, theocratic, Christian nation-building. The ever-growing increase of elected officials who ascribe to this ideology is the reason I am talking openly about this today because there is

no daylight between politics and religion with postmillennialists.

The popular contemporary secular name for the Postmillennial theological system is Christian Nationalism. The definition provided by Wikipedia is precisely interchangeable with the definition of postmillennialism. From Wikipedia:

Christian nationalism is a type of *religious nationalism* that is affiliated with *Christianity*. It primarily focuses on the internal politics of society, such as legislating *civil* and *criminal* laws that reflect their view of Christianity and the role of religion/s in political and social life.^[1]

(Footnote1: *Perry, Samuel L.; Whitehead, Andrew L.; Grubbs, Joshua B. (Winter 2021). Baker, Joseph O. (ed.). "Save the Economy, Liberty, and Yourself: Christian Nationalism and Americans' Views on Government COVID-19 Restrictions". *Sociology of Religion*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press on behalf of the Association for the Sociology of Religion. 82 (4): 426–446. doi:10.1093/socrel/sraa047. ISSN 1759-8818. PMC 7798614. S2CID 231699494.*)

Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christian_nationalism#cite_note-Socrel_2021-1

*** Many believe the founders wanted a Christian America. Some want the government to declare one now*** <https://apnews.com/article/american-founders-christian-nation-conservative-beliefs-4ea388e8d80c54016a6a4460cbef9b82>

***Mike Johnson Gathers Far-Right Christians to Cast Out Demons
<https://www.rollingstone.com/politics/politics-features/mike-johnson-prayer-repentance-demons-1234962043/>

IVF Supreme Court Ruling in Alabama. "Alabama court ruled frozen embryos are children. Experts explain potential impacts to IVF treatment" By Sara Moniuszko, Edited by Paula Cohen, Updated February 21, 2024. CBS News. (<https://www.cbsnews.com/news/alabama-frozen-embryos-children-experts-ivf-fertility/>)

***** <https://www.christiansagainstchristiannationalism.org/> Christians
Against Christian Nationalism

=====
*****OPEN MICROPHONE *****
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WE RESPOND TO GOD'S WORD

+ The Prayers of the People

Leader – 4: Hello. My name is _____. I am in_(city) _____, _(State)_____.
Having heard the Word Of God, we pray to God in Christ through the powerful
ministry of the Holy Spirit. Everyone is welcome to pray out loud for
themselves, for others, prayers of praise and thanksgiving, or whatever is on
your heart. Please keep the prayers brief so that as many people as possible
may participate in the given time. We invite you to speak your prayers loud
enough so everyone may hear your prayer and join you in spirit and truth. So,
we begin with _____

(The person leading will invite prayers from the various rooms in the
service.)

Leader – 4: (when all prayers have been heard) Lord Jesus, we lift our
spoken and unspoken prayers, and we ask you to intercede for us as our
High Priest at the right hand of God.

ALL: Amen.

Leader - 5: Hello. My name is _____. I am in_(city) _____,
_(State)_____. At this time, we show our gratitude to God and our dedication
to the Church of Jesus Christ, His Body present in the world, by offering
our financial gifts and support for this ministry.

There are many convenient ways to participate with your donation. Anyone



may use the QRCode or press control + click or tap on this link: [Donate to Ray Of Hope Church Of Our Lord Jesus Christ](#) in the bulletin or mail a check to Ray Of Hope Church, 380 W. First St. Elmira, NY 14901. People in the Chapel may use the envelopes and the donation box next to the door before, during, or after this worship event.

Offertory Song: **Let All That Is Within Me** by Melvin Harrell. Words and Music by Melvin Harrell ©1963 Gospel Publishing House (Admin. by Music Services, Inc.) CCLI Song # 2841616 Used with permission through our Christian Copyright License Incorporated License Number 706121 and Christian Copyright License Incorporated Streaming Plus License 21787152.

A prayer of thanksgiving for the offering is said here.

(We sing **The Doxology here.**)

ALL: Praise God from whom all blessings flow. Praise God, all creatures here below. Praise God above ye heavenly hosts. Praise God the Son and Holy Ghost. Amen.



WE CELEBRATE THE SACRED MEAL OF CHRIST

Pastor: Blessed are you, Lord, God of all Creation. Through your goodness, we have this bread, and fruit of the vine, which the Earth has given us and human hands have lovingly made.

Now, through the powerful ministry of the Holy Spirit, this bread will become for us the Bread From Heaven (Exodus 16:2, Psalm 78:24, John 6:32, 41,50,58), and this fruit of the vine will become for us the Cup of Our Salvation (Psalm 116:13), the Cup of Everlasting Life (John 6:54-

57), and together they will be the Sacrament of the Eucharist, the very Body and Blood Of Christ (John 6:54-56; 1Corinthians 10:16).

ALL: Blessed be God forever.

(Other titles include the Bread of the Angels (Psalm 78:25), the Bread of God (John 6:33), Cup of Our Salvation (Psalm 116:13), the Cup of Everlasting Life (John 6:54- 57), the Cup of the New Covenant (Matthew 26:28, Luke 22:20, 1 Corinthians 11:25)

Pastor: Please set down your communion kit.

Pastor: Truly present and risen among us; **SAINTS** the Lord is with you!

ALL: And also with you!

Pastor: As His Body, we lift up our hearts!

ALL: We lift them up to the Lord!

Pastor: As His Church, we give thanks to the Lord, our God!

ALL: It is right to give God thanks and praise.

Pastor: It is truly right and just....

May our voices be one with all the fabulous Faithful from every time and place as we sing our song and join their unending praise hymns.

Holy, Holy, Lord!

To my friends in Christ
at Ray Of Hope Church

"Music for Worship"

Music by: Gaude! Liturgical Arts
October 31, 1993
Revised 8/2013

Ho - ly Ho - ly Ho - ly Lord, God of pow'r and
5 might. Hea-ven and earth are full of your glo-ry. Ho - san - na in the
10 high-est. Ho - san - na in the high-est. Ho - san - na in the high-est.
16 Bless - ed is the One who comes in the name of the Lord.
22 Ho - san - na in the high-est. Ho - san - na in the high-est. Ho -
27 san - na in the high-est.

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+ We Invoke the Blessing Of The Holy Spirit

Leader: At Ray Of Hope Church, we pray together and ask the Holy Spirit to give us the same gifts that Jesus gave when He instituted Holy Communion for His Church. We invite you to extend your hands forward over the bread and fruit of the vine or extend your arms out with palms turned up in prayer and say the following Invocation of the Holy Spirit with me.

ALL: O God, in the Name of Jesus, we, your faithful people, ask your Only One and Holy Spirit to bless and separate this bread and fruit of the vine for Christ's purpose. Through the powerful ministry of the Holy Spirit, give to us the Body and Blood of Jesus

Christ in precisely the exact same manner that He gave them, and commissioned us to do often in His Holy Name. You alone, O Loving, True God, authenticate for us that this is the Messiah, Christ, New Covenant Meal that Jesus instituted for **our physical and spiritual well-being. We ask this in the Name of Jesus. Amen**

Leader: You may relax your arms and hands.

+ The Words Of The Institution Of The Holy Eucharist

WORDS OF INSTITUTION SONG: Remember Me. Words and Music by Gerrit Gustafson and Martin J. Nystrom © 1991 Integrity's Hosanna! Music. c/o Integrity Music, Inc., P.O. Box 16813, Mobile, AL, 36695. All rights reserved. International copyright secured. CCLI Song # 451177 Used with permission through our Christian Copyright License Incorporated License Number 706121 and Christian Copyright License Incorporated Streaming Plus License 21787152.



The Reception of Holy Communion

BEHOLD THE LAMB OF GOD BEHOLD HIM WHO TAKES BEHOLD THE BREAD OF LIFE AND THE CUP

Lord, you make me worthy to receive you and by your Word, I am healed.

Pastor: Open your kit and receive Holy Communion at this time. The Gift of God for the People of God....

Pastor: I assure you, by the promises of Christ, that anyone who receives this Holy Communion today will indeed receive sanctification and healing in mind, body, soul, and spirit, be raised by Christ to new life, and live forever.

ALL: Thanks be to God.

PRIVATE PRAYER FOR A SPIRITUAL COMMUNION.

Pastor: We understand that some of you watching do not have actual Holy Communion Bread and Wine. We invite you to pray for a Spiritual reception of Holy Communion based upon a prayer in a Prayer Book at the Episcopal National Cathedral. This prayer assures all the benefits and blessings of a physical reception. Together;

Oh, My Jesus, I believe you are truly present in the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar. I love you above all things and welcome you in my soul. Since I cannot now receive you in the Sacrament of your Body and Blood, come spiritually into my heart. Cleanse and strengthen me with your grace, Lord Jesus, and let me never be separated from you. May I live in you, and you in me, in this life and the life to come. Amen.

Spiritual Communion Prayer from the Episcopal National Cathedral Prayer Book.

A spiritual communion is a personal devotional that anyone can pray at any time to express their desire to receive Holy Communion at that moment. Still, circumstances impede them from actually receiving Holy Communion.

+ The Lord's Prayer

Leader -4: Having heard the Word of God and remembering the sacrifice of the Cross, we invite everyone to pray together the prayer of Jesus.

**ALL: Our Father, who art in Heaven,
hallowed be thy name,
thy kingdom come,
thy will be done,
on Earth as it is in Heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread;
and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those
who trespass against us; and
lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
and the power, and the glory,
forever and ever. Amen**

+ Final Doxology

Pastor: Together, we pray:

ALL: It is through Christ, with Christ, and in Christ, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, that all honor and glory is yours, Almighty God, forever and ever.

Doxology/Amen!

To my friends in Christ
at Ray Of Hope Church

"Music For Worship"

Music by: Gaude! Liturgical Arts
October 31, 1993

All hon - or and glo - ry be un - to You. Al - migh - ty

5 God world with - out end. A men! Al - le - lu - ia

11 A men! Al - le - lu - ia! All hon - or and glo - ry to you! A - men!

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+ Sign Of Peace

Veronica Floyd, Moderator: The Peace of the Lord Jesus Christ is with you.

ALL: And also with you.

Leader: Please take a moment to share a sign of Peace with those around you.
**During COVID, we wave across the room and into the camera for the Internet.

Leader: Now, we clean our tables and altars. Please be sure all of the crumbs are in your cup. Add some water and swirl it around inside the cup. Drink the water. Dry the cup with the side napkin.

Clear your worship table and altar.

COMMUNION SONG: WAY MAKER. Words and Music by Osinachi Kalu Okoro Egbu © 2016 Integrity Music. For use solely with the SongSelect® Terms of Use. All rights reserved. www.ccli.com CCLI Song #7115744. Used with permission through our Christian Copyright License Incorporated License Number 706121 and Christian Copyright License Incorporated Streaming Plus License 21787152.

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New Revised Standard Version – 1989

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General Offering for the week of January 21 \$1,488.00 (some people give monthly rather than weekly) Attendance 11

General Offering for the week of January 28 \$112.00 (some people give monthly rather than weekly) Attendance 9

General Offering for the week of February 4 \$810.00 (some people give monthly rather than weekly) Attendance 9

General Offering for the week of February 11 \$340.00.00 (some people give monthly rather than weekly) Attendance 4 Sunday; Ash Wednesday, February 14, Attendance 13

General Offering for the week of February 18 \$510.00 (some people give monthly rather than weekly) Attendance 10 Sunday; Wednesday, February 21, Attendance 6

**** Additional Special Gifts ****

We are grateful for these special gifts received this week.

**** Recent Special Gifts ****

An anonymous \$1,000.00 donation was given to Ray Of Hope Church, Inc. "In memory of William and Jean Houser, from their Special Memory Fund." This donation was given to the Building Improvement Fund especially for the exterior paint and clapboard repair project we will do this summer.

Brother Benedict purchased a \$180.00 second tier to the copyright license for sheet music.
Annie and Gary donated \$100.00 to the Building Fund.

Thank you to everyone for your generosity.

We give God thanks and praise for all these gifts given. We appreciate the special gifts being made at this time.

To be added to our email list, fill out the email information form at the hospitality table and place it in the offerings/donations box at the door. Internet participants can email rayofhopechurch@aol.com and write "email list" in the Subject box.

UPCOMING EVENTS ON OUR CALENDAR

** See the Q.R. Code on the last page.**

February 26, Monday, 3:00- 4:00 p.m. By-Laws Revision Committee, chaired by April Struhm. April invites all to participate in this meeting, and one may join the committee or attend occasionally. The meeting is both in-person at the monastery and virtual on Skype.

February 27, Tuesday, 6:30 p.m. **Inquiries Class #6** Polity and Practice (an explanation of the By-Laws and operational procedures to govern Church administration).

February 28, Wednesday, Noon Traditional Mass in English - in person. **Lent Week 2 of 5**

February 29, 2024, Friday, at 2:00 p.m. Council Meeting.

Sunday, March 3, 2024 Worship at 10:30 a.m. **Lent Week 3 of 5**

March 4, Monday, 3:00- 4:00 p.m. By-Laws Revision Committee, chaired by April Struhm. April invites all to participate in this meeting, and one may join the committee or attend occasionally. The meeting is both in-person at the monastery and virtual on Skype.

March 5, Tuesday, 6:30 p.m. **Inquiries Class #7** Polity and Practice (an explanation of the By-Laws and operational procedures to govern Church administration).

March 6, Wednesday, Noon Traditional Mass in English - in person. **Lent Week 3 of 5**

Thursday, March 7, 2024 begins **Cabrini**, the movie In Theaters International

Women's Day: <https://www.angel.com/watch/cabrini/episode/5fd84450-f6df-4caa-8abd-e7d2efd812e4> "Cabrini, you would have made an excellent man." (Mayor of New York City)

Sunday, March 10, 2024 **Laetare Rejoice** Sunday in **Lent Week 4 of 5**

March 11, Monday, 3:00- 4:00 p.m. By-Laws Revision Committee, chaired by April Struhm. April invites all to participate in this meeting, and one may join the committee or attend occasionally. The meeting is both in-person at the monastery and virtual on Skype.

March 12, Tuesday, 6:30 p.m. **Inquiries Class #8** Sexuality and the Bible.

March 13, Wednesday, Noon Traditional Mass in English - in person. **Lent Week 4 of 5**

Sunday, March 17, 2024 St. Patrick's Day Worship at 10:30 a.m. **Lent Week 5 of 5**

March 18, Monday, 3:00- 4:00 p.m. By-Laws Revision Committee, chaired by April Struhm. April invites all to participate in this meeting, and one may join the committee or attend occasionally. The meeting is both in-person at the monastery and virtual on Skype.

March 19, Tuesday, 6:30 p.m. **Inquiries Class #9 Final** Sexuality and the Bible.

March 20, Wednesday, Noon Traditional Mass in English - in person. **Lent Week 5 of 5**

HOLY WEEK, 2024 Palm Sunday, March 24, 2024, 10:30 a.m.

March 27, Wednesday, Noon Traditional Mass in English - in person.

Holy Thursday, March 28, 2024 7:00 p.m. 8:15 p.m. silent prayer 8:30 p.m. Benediction

Good Friday, March 29, 2024 The Stations of the Cross 7:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.

Holy Saturday, March 30, 2024 7:45 p.m.- 9:15 p.m. The Vigil Of The Resurrection Of Christ.

No worship on Sunday morning, March 31, 2024



We Are Sent Forth To Serve

Leader - 2: **SAINTS:** The Lord is with you!

ALL: And also with you!

Leader - 2: We bless you and praise you God for this time of worship we have enjoyed together today. Send us forth now to share what we have experienced with others. We ask you, Almighty God, to bless us with quiet miracles, the warmth of love, and fill us with wonder and peace; (*+*) In the Name of God, the Christ, and the Holy Spirit.

ALL: Amen

Leader - 2: We pray Romans chapter fifteen, verse thirteen together saying:

ALL: Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in

believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. Amen (Romans 15:13)

Leader-4: We go forth in peace and Love to serve all people and the Lord ...

ALL: ... on our journey into renewal, fresh beginnings, new possibilities, and a renewed embrace of our potential! Thanks be to God.

CLOSING SONG: Lord, Who Throughout These Forty Days

Text: CM; Claudia F. Hernaman, 1838-1898, alt. Music: The Whole Psalmes in Foure Partes, 1563, alt. Contributors: ST. FLAVIAN Onelicense Song# 84254 Used with Print Permission and Streaming License A-741278

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Organist: Clyde McLennan, organist, producer of "good quality accompaniments for congregational singing available at no cost. As from October, 2015, I, Rev. Clyde McLennan, performer in this collection, have assigned my performer rights in this collection to Hymnary.org. Non-commercial use of these recordings is permitted. For permission to use them for any other purposes, please contact manager@hymnary.org."

(<https://www.smallchurchmusic.com/About-New.php>)

The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this. Isaiah 9:7 This is all God's fault, God's design, God's doing from start to end.

Br. Benedict at the time of Renewal of Vows, June 20, 2021: "Looking forward, I like to say the first twenty-five years were spent on **stabilization, survival, and sustainability**. The second twenty-five years will be spent on growth to help Ray Of Hope **thrive, train, and transplant** this Congregation to new leadership. The founders and foundresses successfully transferred the leadership to a new generation, us, and now we must do the same. I plan to fade into the Congregation and continue providing support to the new leadership. My goal is to leave the Congregation with new leadership, in good standing, and thriving."



We never held a vote to decide if we would be an **INCLUSIVE** church for you.

We are not an **OPEN AND AFFIRMING** church for you.

We are not a **RECONCILING CHURCH** or
RECONCILING CONGREGATION for you.

We are not an **OPEN MINDED** or **ACCEPTING** or **WELCOMING**
Church where you can attend as long as you blend in quietly and discretely.

WE ARE YOU!

THIS is the Church where YOU belong.

Ray Of Hope Church is the Church by us, for us, and made by You.

The Third Sunday of Pride, 2019

Made by you and for you, because we are

The Third Sunday of Pride, 2019

Brother Benedict's statement on Black History Month, 2024. In response to our Statement Of Purpose (<http://www.rayofhopechurch.com/purpose.htm>), we use the word "racism" to acknowledge the undeniable record of the enslavement of millions of human beings in the Americas. We also acknowledge ethnic discrimination in our current social structures here in the United States and across the world. Unfortunately, much of systemic racism (in all of its forms) traces theories back to a corrupt interpretation of the sons and grandsons of Noah in the Book of Genesis.

" For hundreds of years, the biblical story of the Curse of Ham was marshalled [sic] as a justification of serfdom, slavery, and human bondage. According to the myth, having seen his father Noah naked, Ham's [sic] is cursed to have his descendants be forever slaves." (Source: [The Curse of Ham in the Early Modern Era: The Bible and the Justifications for Slavery \(St Andrews Studies in Reformation History\) 1st Edition](#)

by [David M. Whitford](#) (Author), first published in 2009 and then in 2016.)

In my humble observation and opinion, I (Br. Benedict) make the following observations at the start of this Black History Month, 2024. The fact of undeniable links between theologies, biblical interpretation, the formation of laws that enabled enslavement and then emancipation, growth to actualized freedom, full citizenship, full rights, and potential granted under the Constitution of the United States puts the entire reality into a central focus point for the Members of Ray Of Hope Church. Ray Of Hope Of Our Lord Jesus Christ, Inc. has always been a Church of political reformation caused by our ongoing Spiritual reformation. In my opinion, when our Congregation's political and religious reformation stops, we will grow stale, we will rot, and die as a church. The entire story of these Americas, as we know about these two continents, is intrinsically bound up in a dialogue between religion and politics and the resultant quality of social life. As a church, Ray Of Hope Church Of Our Lord Jesus Christ, Incorporated,

founded in 1983, we walk into the hall of this dialogue and experience and sit down in the seats to take our part in the conversation and the action the Gospels require of us. In this vein, I welcome our participation in Black History Month, 2024.

Ray Of Hope Church Weekly Schedule

Elmira Worship- Sunday 10:30 a.m. – 380 W. First St. Parsonage/Monastery .
Join us live on SKYPE: rayofhope26 is our contact name. Sign on by 10:15 a.m.
Syracuse Worship- looking for a host in Syracuse. For more information
[Click Here](#).

Bible Enrichment- Tuesday 6:30–8 p.m.-380 W. First St. Parsonage
/Monastery. Or Join us live on SKYPE: rayofhope26 is our contact name. Sign
on by 6:15 p.m. [Click Here](#).

**** to call the Pastor: Rev. Shawn Benedict: 607-280-0374***

Policy Concerning Minors at Events

Ray Of Hope Church Of Our Lord Jesus Christ welcomes all youth and children to worship with us and participate in our activities. We endeavor to provide a safe and non-threatening environment for all children. To this end, we have a Policy Concerning Minors at Events, which is available from the Clerk upon request and is on our website;
http://www.rayofhopechurch.com/Minors_At_Events.htm. Please enjoy your visit with us, and we hope you will return.

NOTE: On June 15, 1996, as a part of the Ordination Ceremony and his profession of Benedictine Vows, Rev. Leo W. McDermott, II retired the use of his secular birth name and was given a new name in religion, Brother Shawn Francis Benedict.

The Chapel is not open to the general public as we try to do our part to stop the spread of COVID-19. Call for an appointment if you want some time to come in and pray. Our regular services will be blended with live participation in the Chapel and live on Skype and Facebook Live. To read the information on how to use Skype to participate with us, [Click Here](#).. Visit our Facebook page [Click Here](#). We will reopen the Chapel as soon as it is reasonably safe and prudent.

Visitors: Please feel free to fill out the information slip below and place it in the collection plate. Please indicate any special needs you may have. All information will be used for church purposes *only*.

(Optional) Name: _____

(Optional) Phone: _____

Email Address: _____

I would like to be included on the church Email list.

I would like to schedule an appointment with the Pastor.



Ray Of Hope Church Statement Of Purpose

In the Spirit of God, and in the footsteps of Christ Jesus, we the Faith Community at Ray Of Hope Church commit to:

- **guide** and welcome all people to the Free Gift of Salvation in Christ Jesus, with a God-ordained celebration of all sexual orientations, and gender expressions, with an open ministry to persons affected by or infected with HIV/AIDS, their families and friends,
- **declare** and openly assert the truth that same-sex relationships, founded and fostered in God-centered Love, are holy and blessed, and in fact originate by the work of the Holy Spirit; and, that God equally uses blessed same-sex and heterosexual Holy Unions and Marriages to bring God's own Love and good news of "Salvation to all who believe" into the World,
- **uphold**, proclaim, and teach the historic Biblical Christian Doctrine, build community through worship and prayer, break the bread, and live the ministry of the Holy Spirit,
- **change** the World around us by living Gospel principles of social justice in everything we do, thereby exposing all forms of prejudice, oppression, racism, homophobia, sexism, and misogyny,
- **proclaim** the ray of hope, which is the soon coming return of Christ Jesus, and the fullness of His Eternal Community where the Will of God will establish liberty, justice, equity, and peace for all God's People and the Universe.

Visit us online:

Our website: <http://www.rayofhopechurch.com/> Mobile-Friendly website version: <http://www.rayofhopechurch.com/P2023-Bookmark.htm> Facebook Page (like and follow) [Click Here](#). Our YouTube page: www.youtube.com/rayofhopenyglbtqs

Scripture verses to share with others:—————

Romans 15:13 Now may the God of **hope** fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in **hope** by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Titus 2:11, 3:4 The grace, the goodness, the loving-kindness of our God has appeared, bringing Salvation **to everyone**.

John 5:24 Those who hear my Word and **believe in God** who sent me, **have** eternal life, will **never** come under judgment and have passed from **death to life** already.

Romans 10:13 "For **whoever** calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved." (repeated @ Joel 2:32; Acts 2:21) "everyone, anyone who" asks. "Lord" here refers to God principally as in the book of Joel that is being quoted, so all persons who call on God shall be saved.

"Behold, I am doing a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?"

(Isaiah 43:19 ESV)

"Behold, I make all things new." (Revelation 21:5)

