



**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 Fortieth 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 very 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)**

**Everyone is invited to participate in all parts of the worship service as they feel 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 March 23, 2023, Women's History Month Wk. 4**

**Lent Week 5, Year A**

**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."***

**Scripture Readings for this worship event:**

**First Reading: Ezekiel 37:7-14 NRSV 1st Test. Pg. 806**

**Psalm: Psalm 130 selected verses - responsorial in this bulletin.**

**Second Reading: Romans 8:1-11 NRSV 2<sup>nd</sup> Test. Pg. 157**

**Gospel: John 11: selected verses NRSV 2<sup>ND</sup> Testament page 104**

**\*We use the term 1st for the "Old" Testament and 2nd for the "New" Testament. The NRSV Bible 1st Testament numbers are in the front, and the 2nd Testament numbers are in the back of the book. 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 for a social time before the Bell is rung.**

**Bell's 1<sup>st</sup> 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. 1<sup>st</sup> 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) The bell is rung 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 \_\_\_\_\_, and I am in the City of \_\_\_\_\_ in the State of \_\_\_\_\_. 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. In this Church, each person decides to participate in some or all the parts of the worship event as they feel comfortable. We also assist people at various stages of visual impairment by announcing all instructions, page, and song numbers and using a psalm response verse.

To be added to our email list, email [rayofhopechurch@aol.com](mailto:rayofhopechurch@aol.com) and write "email list" in the Subject.

Visitors in the Chapel can fill out the email information form at the hospitality table and place it in the offerings/donations box on the wall.

**Leader-2:** Hello. My name is \_\_\_\_\_, and I am in the City of \_\_\_\_\_ in the State of \_\_\_\_\_. Participants on the Internet may receive Holy Communion with us during this worship event. You are not required to be a member here or in any church to receive Holy Communion with us today. We celebrate the Lord's open table. Viewers at home, please bring the following items to your table at this time to prepare for the Holy Communion portion; 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:** The bulletin order of worship and the music supplement for today are available in three ways. On Facebook Live, right-click the "Featured Links" in the window. On Skype, right-click the "Order of Worship" and "Music Supplement" posted in the Chat window. Finally, on our website, find the large gold box labeled SUNDAY WORSHIP INFORMATION at [www.rayofhopechurch.com](http://www.rayofhopechurch.com). Take a moment now and gather these items. We will start shortly.



**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](http://www.rayofhopechurch.com/faith.htm)) ([www.rayofhopechurch.com/purpose.htm](http://www.rayofhopechurch.com/purpose.htm))**

(This By-law was amended 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](#))



**Bell's 2<sup>nd</sup> ring to announce the start of the worship event.**

**Leader – 2:** Thank you for spending time with us. You are as welcome here as Christ Jesus himself. 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:** Glorify God by introducing yourself and welcoming the people around you. \*\*While we are still observing COVID safety protocols, we may wave across the room and into the camera for the Internet.

**Pastor:** 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:** Peace be with you.

**ALL: And also with you.**

**Pastor:** We come here to pray. Each person is an equal and active partner in all we do in the next 90 minutes. At Ray Of Hope, the worship event is not a spectator's activity where people come to hear some good music and a teaching/lecture. Instead, each person's primary responsibility is to pray during each section of the "service actively." The definition of the word liturgy is the prayer-work of the people. The people lead, serve, organize, and facilitate this public time of assembly to worship and experience God and one another. The people are actively praying and serving each person present and God.

**\*\***Last Sunday, I forgot to mention that some of the family members I Officiated the funeral for the day before had a private viewing because they were sick with COVID. So this reminds us COVID is still very much with us. We still wave for

greetings and the sign of peace, and we still use individual communion kits in the Chapel as part of our COVID safety protocol. \*\*

Today is the fourth Sunday of Women's History Month.

(<https://womenshistorymonth.gov/> )

Today is also the fifth and final Sunday of Lent. Holy Week begins next Sunday with Palm Sunday.

Today's readings have many themes, as usual. Any one piece I choose to speak on will leave many others on the sidelines. The theme I chose is the power of the Holy Spirit to direct us in life and death as we prepare to participate in Holy Week.

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

Today we are celebrating the **twenty-second Sunday** in our 40<sup>th</sup> year of ministry. Welcome to the **"WOKE"** Church of Elmira, NY, and the World.

**Romans 13:11 "Now is the time to WAKE from your SLEEP."**

We are proud to be known as the "WOKE" Church of Elmira and Central NY. Popularized by African-American young men, "woke" is: having or being marked by an active awareness of systemic injustices and prejudices, a liberal progressive orthodoxy, especially promoting inclusive policies or ideologies that welcome and embrace ethnic, racial, and sexual minorities. Awake and aware.

Source: Dictionary.com:

<https://www.dictionary.com/browse/woke>

In Theological terms: Awakened by the Holy Spirit, alive in Christ, actively supporting persons of all Religions and faiths and those with no faith or religion.

See the Ray Of Hope Church Statement of Purpose for more information. Right Click Here:

<http://www.rayofhopechurch.com/purpose.htm>

Our prayers for the innocent victims of Ukraine, Turkey, and Syria will be at the Prayers of the People this morning. As we pray, we intentionally hold these and so many other people in our thoughts. as we progress through this worship event.

**Pastor:** With our whole heart, mind, and soul, we begin to worship God in the beauty of holiness, spirit, and truth. (Psalm 96:9; John 4:23-24)

**ALL: Together, we give God thanks and praise.**

**FIRST SONG:** Joyful People Come and Worship Music: Ludwig van Beethoven, 1824; adapt. Text: June Norris, © 1987; alt. with permission. The Hymnal Project, © 1990 MCC San Francisco Used by permission

## + The Candle Of Hope

**Leader -1:** Please be seated. Now we celebrate our faith, our trust, in the promised "Blessed Hope," the return of Christ who will transform the living faithful and raise all to new life by lighting our Candle Of Hope. The verse we are about to recite, as we do every week, is part of today's Gospel reading. 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:** As we light the Candle of Hope, we read the names on the Names Project Aids Memorial Quilt to remember those who died of AIDS. Ray Of Hope Church started in part to form a unique ministry to persons affected by and infected with HIV/AIDS. However, some churches, religions, and countries continue to reject sick, lonely, and dying people with HIV/AIDS who need spiritual guidance.



**Leader -3:** Hello. My name is \_\_\_\_\_, and I am in the City of \_\_\_\_\_ in the State of \_\_\_\_\_. Looking up at the screen, we see the panel names on Block # 68

- James Guyer (1)
- Jim Avis (2)
- Charles "Trixie" Drew (3)
- David Jackson (4)
- Court Miller (5)
- Sam Miller (6)
- Michael S. (7)
- Roy Bowman (8)

**Leader -2:** In silent prayer, we remember the names of our family and friends who have died from COVID-related illness and other causes of death. We pray for their families as they remember their loved ones. 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**

(NAMES Project website where you can visit over 48,000 panels and over 100,000 names on the Quilt virtually:

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

**SECOND SONG:** Hosea

Text and Music Weston Priory and Gregory Norbet

Contributors: Gregory Norbet, Weston Priory

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## WE PREPARE OUR HEARTS

### + Confession and Forgiveness of our sins.

**Leader -2:** Please be seated. (wait) So far, we gathered together, greeted one another, and praised God in song. Now, we prepare to accept God's renewal when we listen to the Word and the Holy Scriptures by reflecting on our relationships with God and other people in silent prayer. Christ is present and listening to receive the silent confession of our faults, sins, and failures. He promises to forgive our sins immediately. (silent prayer)

**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 \_\_\_\_\_, and I am in the City of \_\_\_\_\_ in the State of \_\_\_\_\_.

God continues the loving act of creating new life. Unfortunately, some religions, governments, and societies define limits on education, social, and economic opportunity based on gender, ethnicity, and other categories. This manufactured inequality has caused great harm; therefore, we pray, Lord, have mercy.

**ALL: Lord, have mercy.**

L-4: Through the ministry of Christ, we should promote equal respect and place of women and girls, and every gender expression, in all aspects of Society; Christ, have mercy.



**ALL: Christ, have mercy.**

L-4: We pray that pastors and congregations lead the way to correcting all forms of discrimination through the tools of education and action; 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 united in God's Kingdom without the loss of 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.**

**Pastor:** Please rise as you are able to give God thanks and praise for the forgiveness of our sins by praying the Gloria. The Church has prayed this prayer since the earliest records of worship services.

**Spoken:**

**Glory to God in the highest,  
and peace to God's people on Earth.  
You are the One God, Sovereign of the Universe,**

**Only Holy God, we worship you,  
we give you thanks,  
we praise you for your glory.**

**Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God,  
Lord God, Lamb of God,  
you take away the sin of the World:  
have mercy on us;  
you are seated at the right hand of God:  
receive our prayer.**

**For you alone are the Holy One,  
you alone are the Lord of all,  
you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ,**

**with the Holy Spirit, in the glory of the  
Holy Unity of God. Amen.**

**THIRD SONG:** **As The Deer** Words and Music by Martin Nystrum © 1984

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### + Opening Prayer

**Leader 5:** O Loving, Eternal, and Creating God, lead us to the truth, your Word, and help us initiate action and change in our lives, so we are transformed and equipped for service.

**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

### + First Reading

**Reader:** \*\*\*\* **If an introduction is needed:**\*\*\*\* Hello. My name is \_\_\_\_\_, and I am in the City of \_\_\_\_\_ in the State of \_\_\_\_\_.

The first reading is in the Book of Ezekiel, chapter 27, verses 7-14. We are reading from the NRSV Updated Edition of ©2021. The NRSV pew bibles have a similar reading on page 806. This reading is the resurrection of the dry bones in the valley. Here begins the reading:

<sup>7</sup> So I prophesied as I had been commanded, and as I prophesied, suddenly there was a noise, a rattling, and the

bones came together, bone to its bone. <sup>8</sup> I looked, and there were sinews on them, and flesh had come upon them, and skin had covered them, but there was no breath in them. <sup>9</sup> Then he said to me, "Prophecy to the breath, prophecy, mortal, and say to the breath:<sup>[a]</sup> Thus says the Lord GOD: Come from the four winds, O breath,<sup>[b]</sup> and breathe upon these slain, that they may live." <sup>10</sup> I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived and stood on their feet, a vast multitude.

<sup>11</sup> Then he said to me, "Mortal, these bones are the whole house of Israel. They say, 'Our bones are dried up, and our hope is lost; we are cut off completely.' <sup>12</sup> Therefore prophecy and say to them: Thus says the Lord GOD: I am going to open your graves and bring you up from your graves, O my people, and I will bring you back to the land of Israel. <sup>13</sup> And you shall know that I am the LORD when I open your graves and bring you up from your graves, O my people. <sup>14</sup> I will put my spirit within you, and you shall live, and I will place you on your own soil; then you shall know that I, the LORD, have spoken and will act, says the LORD."

**Reader:** This is the Word of the Lord!

**ALL: Thanks be to God!**

[Read full chapter](#)

**Footnotes**

a. [37.9](#) Or *wind* or *spirit*

b. [37.9](#) Or *wind* or *spirit*

(<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ezekiel+37%3A7-14&version=NRSVUE>)

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**+ Psalm**

\*\*\*\* **If an introduction is needed:**\*\*\*\* Hello. My name is

\_\_, and I am in the City of \_\_\_\_\_ in the State of \_\_.

The Psalm today is number 130, with a responsorial verse. The response today is, "With the Lord there is mercy and fullness of redemption."

**R. With the Lord there is mercy and fullness of redemption.**

Out of the depths I cry to you, O LORD;  
LORD, hear my voice!  
Let your ears be attentive  
to my voice in supplication.

**R. With the Lord there is mercy and fullness of redemption.**

If you, O LORD, mark iniquities,  
LORD, who can stand?  
But with you is forgiveness,  
that you may be revered.

**R. With the Lord there is mercy and fullness of redemption.**

I trust in the LORD;  
my soul trusts in his word.  
More than the night guards wait for the dawn,  
let Israel wait for the LORD.

**R. With the Lord there is mercy and fullness of redemption.**

For with the LORD is kindness  
and with God is unending redemption.  
God will redeem Israel from all their iniquities.

**R. With the Lord there is mercy and fullness of redemption.**

## + Second Reading

**Reader:** \*\*\*\* **If an introduction is needed:**\*\*\*\* Hello. My name is \_\_\_\_\_, and I am in the City of \_\_\_\_\_ in the State of \_\_\_\_\_.

The second reading is in the Letter to the Romans, chapter 8, verses 1-11. Again, this is the NRSV Updated Edition of ©2021. The NRSV pew bibles have a similar translation on page 157 in the second testament. Here begins the reading:

## Life in the Spirit

**8** Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. <sup>2</sup> For the law of the Spirit<sup>[a]</sup> of life in Christ Jesus has set you<sup>[b]</sup> free from the law of sin and of death. <sup>3</sup> For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do: by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and to deal with sin,<sup>[c]</sup> he condemned sin in the flesh, <sup>4</sup> so that the just requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.<sup>[d]</sup> <sup>5</sup> For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit<sup>[e]</sup> set their minds on the things of the Spirit.<sup>[f]</sup> <sup>6</sup> To set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit<sup>[g]</sup> is life and peace. <sup>7</sup> For this reason the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God's law—indeed, it cannot, <sup>8</sup> and those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

<sup>9</sup> But you are not in the flesh; you are in the Spirit,<sup>[h]</sup> since the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. <sup>10</sup> But if Christ is in you, then the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit<sup>[i]</sup> is life because of righteousness. <sup>11</sup> If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus<sup>[j]</sup> from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also through<sup>[k]</sup> his Spirit that dwells in you.

Reader: This is the Word of the Lord!

**ALL: Thanks be to God!**

[Read full chapter](#)Footnotes

### Footnotes

- a. 8.2 Or *spirit*
- b. 8.2 Gk *you* is singular; other ancient authorities read *me* or *us*
- c. 8.3 Or *and as a sin offering*
- d. 8.4 Or *spirit*
- e. 8.5 Or *spirit*
- f. 8.5 Or *spirit*
- g. 8.6 Or *spirit*
- h. 8.9 Or *spirit*
- i. 8.10 Or *spirit*
- j. 8.11 Other ancient authorities read *Christ* or *the Christ* or *Jesus Christ*

k. [8.11](#) Other ancient authorities read *on account of*

(Source: <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+8%3A1-11&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 John, chapter 11, verses 1-3, 6-7, 14-15, 17, 20-27, 32-44. We are reading from the NRSV Updated Edition of © 2021. The NRSV pew bibles have a similar translation on page 104 in the second testament.

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

**ALL: And also with you.**

**Reader:** A reading of the Holy Gospel according to John.

**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.**

## **The Death of Lazarus**

**11** Now a certain man was ill, Lazarus of Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. <sup>2</sup> Mary was the one who anointed the Lord with perfume and wiped his feet with her hair; her brother Lazarus was ill. <sup>3</sup> So the sisters sent a message to Jesus, <sup>[a]</sup> "Lord, he whom you love is ill."

<sup>6</sup> after having heard that Lazarus <sup>[b]</sup> was ill, he stayed two days longer in the place where he was.

<sup>7</sup> Then after this he said to the disciples, "Let us go to Judea again."

<sup>14</sup> Then Jesus told them plainly, "Lazarus is dead. <sup>15</sup> For your sake I am glad I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him."

## **Jesus the Resurrection and the Life**

<sup>17</sup> When Jesus arrived, he found that Lazarus <sup>[c]</sup> had already been in the tomb four days.

<sup>20</sup> When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went and met him, while Mary stayed at home. <sup>21</sup> Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. <sup>22</sup> But even now I know that God will give you whatever you ask of him." <sup>23</sup> Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again." <sup>24</sup> Martha said to him, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day." <sup>25</sup> Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. <sup>[d]</sup> Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, <sup>26</sup> and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?" <sup>27</sup> She said to him, "Yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Messiah, <sup>[e]</sup> the Son of God, the one coming into the world."

## Jesus Weeps

<sup>32</sup>When Mary came where Jesus was and saw him, she knelt at his feet and said to him, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died." <sup>33</sup>When Jesus saw her weeping and the Jews who came with her also weeping, he was greatly disturbed in spirit and deeply moved. <sup>34</sup>He said, "Where have you laid him?" They said to him, "Lord, come and see." <sup>35</sup>Jesus began to weep. <sup>36</sup>So the Jews said, "See how he loved him!" <sup>37</sup>But some of them said, "Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man have kept this man from dying?"

## Jesus Raises Lazarus to Life

<sup>38</sup>Then Jesus, again greatly disturbed, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone was lying against it. <sup>39</sup>Jesus said, "Take away the stone." Martha, the sister of the dead man, said to him, "Lord, already there is a stench because he has been dead four days." <sup>40</sup>Jesus said to her, "Did I not tell you that if you believed, you would **see the glory of God?**" <sup>41</sup>So they took away the stone. And Jesus looked upward and said, "Father, I thank you for having heard me. <sup>42</sup>I knew that you always hear me, but I have said this for the sake of the crowd standing here, so that they may believe that you sent me." <sup>43</sup>When he had said this, he cried with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out!" <sup>44</sup>The dead man came out, his hands and feet bound with strips of cloth and his face wrapped in a cloth. Jesus said to them, "Unbind him, and let him go."

Reader: This is the Gospel of the Lord!

**ALL: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ!**

[Read full chapter](#)

### Footnotes

- a. [11.3](#) Gk *him*
- b. [11.6](#) Gk *he*
- c. [11.12](#) Or *will be saved*
- d. [11.16](#) Gk *Didymus*
- e. [11.17](#) Gk *he*
- f. [11.25](#) Other ancient authorities lack *and the life*
- g. [11.27](#) Or *the Christ*

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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  
Christ! And, to the Ho - ly Spi - rit, for - ev - er You're Our God!  
You brought us out of dark - ness, in - to Your mar - ve - lous Light! Your Word is our  
joy! For this we give You glo - ry, both now and ev - er more!  
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 LGBTQISA2ss+ Pride Activities, and Social Events Center of Elmira, NY.  
The only Church in Central New York founded and fostered by the GLBTQISA2ss+ community for 39 years. October 31, 2022 - 39th Anniversary now in our 40th 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**

Was the raising of Lazarus a fictional metaphor or an actual event? Website: Cold-Case Christianity with J. Warner and Jimmy Wallace. <https://coldcasechristianity.com/writings/is-the-raising-of-lazarus-fictional/>

### Is The Raising Of Lazarus Fictional?



By  
[J. Warner Wallace](#)  
Published  
April 7, 2017

Resurrection: **ISRAEL** Ez. 37:12 Thus says the Lord GOD: I am going to open your graves, and bring you up from your graves, O my people; and I will bring you back to the land of Israel.

Resurrection: **CHURCH** Romans 8:9,10,11

Resurrection: Jesus the Resurrection and the Life. John 11:25

The **Glor**y of God is resurrection. John 11:40 <sup>40</sup> Jesus said to her, "Did I not tell you that if you believed, you would

see the glory of God?"

John 11: 25-27:: <sup>25</sup> Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life.<sup>[f]</sup> Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, <sup>26</sup> and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?" <sup>27</sup> She said to him, "Yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Messiah,<sup>[g]</sup> the Son of God, the one coming into the world."

The song: "I Am The Bread Of Life" By Suzanne Toolan, RSM, b.1927, that we will sing today includes both verses. Our regular Liturgy includes verse 25 during the lighting of the Candle Of Hope.

=====

INTRODUCTION TO HOLY WEEK What follows are the questions Ray Of Hope Church will answer in the four worship events of Holy Week, 2023.

"The week that changed everything." "The week that changed the world." "The week that 'got it right' forever."

Palm Sunday – not "palm/passion" Sunday; why not? We are Celebrating the Triumphant Entry of Jesus into Jerusalem. Why didn't the Temple staff and established professional clergy welcome Jesus? The clergy of his day seemed really upset with Jesus. Why did they reject him as a fraud, a blasphemer, and an insurrectionist? Who were the people who did welcome Jesus, and how did they know it was time for the Messiah to be revealed? Why did Jesus enter the city so humbly? Finally, we might ask, "what was He thinking" since He didn't seem to act like a King about to take over the World. Did Jesus enter the Temple that day? Why didn't He sit on His Throne in the Holy of Holies?

Holy Thursday - a celebration, may not have been the actual day of the week. However, it could have been on Thursday night. If it was on Thursday, how might that reconcile to "on the third day Jesus was raised from the Dead?" Passover in 2023 starts on Wednesday of Holy Week, is this related? Was a sacrificial theme present when He gave the Eucharist, His Bread of Life, and His Cup of Salvation? What should we do with a sacrificial theme if there was one? Aren't the claims of eating His body and drinking His blood grotesque? How can we be expected to explain this to modern people? What difference does it make if this is just a symbol or if Christ is really and truly present in the "Bread of Life" and the "Cup of Salvation?" So are you saying God has only saved the "Christians" who have "gone to church" because they are the only ones to have received Holy Communion? If not, then why all this fuss? "Can't we just move beyond this and get our spirituality from the Internet?"

Good Friday – "Good for what or for who?" It looked like a complete failure and loss. Why keep the body on the Cross in artwork now that Jesus is risen? Isn't it time to move past

the Cross and just be spiritual people? "Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world." What is "the **sin of the world**?" It sure doesn't look like the World has stopped sinning. Why is the world so sinful if the Cross of Jesus was so powerful and significant? What kind of God would allow all this chaos, war, poverty, classism, and terrible governments? What is going on here?

Holy Saturday – I thought we were celebrating Easter Sunday, you might ask. What are we doing having Church at night? How does starting at 7:45 p.m. have anything to do with a sunrise service? Perhaps you might be thinking; we should go up on a hill early Sunday morning and have a sunrise service. Did you say Fire? Water? Wind? Earth? Darkness? Light? This Holy Saturday thing is starting to sound like a New Age thing to me.... HOW IS This an Easter Service???

No Church on Easter Sunday Morning??? What is going on around here? This so-called "holy week" doesn't seem like anything I have ever experienced before.....

=====WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH=====

Women and Jesus. There are many good articles and books on the women who followed and supported the ministry of Jesus. Writer, Jill Foley Turner, wrote an article, "4 lessons from Jesus' female founders' for the National Christian Foundation on March 1, 2023.

I found the article fascinating, especially as it emphasizes the financial independence and potential wealth many women may have had. I recommend the article; however, I am not, nor is Ray Of Hope Church, Inc., in any way endorsing the financial programs of the National Christian Foundation. Here is the article: <https://www.ncfgiving.com/stories/4-lessons-from-the-women-who-followed-jesus-from-galilee/>

Jesus, the greatest story ever known to humanity, starts with a very young woman, Mary of Nazareth, the daughter of Joachim and Anne, who was betrothed to her husband, Joseph Nazareth.

Mary shows the most extraordinary example of faith, which means trust in God, ever recorded before or after her life. Mary trusts the messenger who appeared to her suddenly while she was alone in her parent's home. This messenger, an angel, offers her the opportunity to carry the child foretold by the Scriptures who would grow up in her care and become the Messiah, Christ, the Anointed One who would heal the sin of the World. The decision to carry, give birth, and parent this child would put her in harm's way. Mary could be perceived as having sinned first because she would be pregnant during the year of betrothal to Joseph. She could have faced execution for this pregnancy if the laws were followed to the letter. She also faced the potential loss of Joseph and the shame of family

and community that might befall her. Regarding being in harm's way for her pregnancy, there is an interesting article that features this under the subheading:

"Why did Mary visit her cousin Elizabeth?"

**Perhaps the visit was a way of getting her out of harm's way. Honor killings are not a modern invention.** An unmarried pregnant girl like Mary was in real danger from outraged relatives, and Elizabeth's house may have been a safe haven for the young girl. (source: <https://womeninthebible.net/women-bible-old-new-testaments/mary-jesus-mother/> ) \*\*\* Br. Benedict: This website has interesting information regarding women in the Bible. The author is Elizabeth Fletcher, Women In The Bible Author. (Source: <https://womeninthebible.net/about-the-author/> )

Mary not only says yes, but then asks that God's will be fulfilled in her life. An interesting article published by the Biblical Archaeology Society goes into the details of the biblical and religious laws and practices of marriage at the time of the birth of Jesus.

(<https://www.biblicalarchaeology.org/daily/biblical-topics/bible-interpretation/were-mary-and-joseph-married-or-engaged-at-jesus-birth/> )

We know Joseph was advised in a dream to take Mary as his wife and who this Child of God would be. Joseph and Mary showed great courage, great humility, and most importantly, they showed great trust in the Voice and will of God as they were able to discern it. The discernment of the Voice and will of God becomes one of the major themes in the life of Jesus. Everyone around Jesus seemed to have their version of who He is, what He is, and why He was where He was and for what reasons? The questions that swirl around Jesus were "who, what, why, where, and what for?" There was no unified answer to these questions and that seems to be God's will. Ultimately those who sought to destroy the message Jesus was bringing used the many and varied opinions about Him to divide the people. The plurality of thought was not welcomed by the established professional clergy of His day.

Since we are all made in the image and likeness of God, we all carry a piece, a portion, a segment of the presence of God. We can, therefore, enjoy the many perspectives as we seek to understand and to carry out the desires of God in our lives.

Time does not permit the depth of study this topic deserves. I want to review all the women's actions around Jesus in His life and ministry during His first coming.

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_women\\_in\\_the\\_Bible](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_women_in_the_Bible)

Here is an interesting article on the Biblical Archaeology Society website on the prophetess Anna.



[\(https://www.biblicalarchaeology.org/daily/people-cultures-in-the-bible/people-in-the-bible/anna-in-the-bible/\)](https://www.biblicalarchaeology.org/daily/people-cultures-in-the-bible/people-in-the-bible/anna-in-the-bible/)

My Jewish Learning website has an interesting historical development article on marriage practices in the ancient Jewish World. (<https://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/ancient-jewish-marriage/> )

Women in the Bible website: (<https://womeninthebible.net/>)

=====  
United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. DOCTRINAL NOTE ON THE MORAL LIMITS TO TECHNOLOGICAL MANIPULATION OF THE HUMAN BODY. 20 March 2023, section 20, page 12:

Any technological intervention that does not accord with the fundamental order of the human person as a unity of body and soul, including the sexual difference inscribed in the body, ultimately does not help but, rather, harms the human person.

DOCTRINAL NOTE ON THE MORAL LIMITS TO TECHNOLOGICAL MANIPULATION OF THE HUMAN BODY. 20 March 2023, section 18, pages 11& 12:

Catholic health care services must not perform interventions, whether surgical or chemical, that aim to transform the sexual characteristics of a human body into those of the opposite sex or take part in the development of such procedures. They must employ all appropriate resources to mitigate the suffering of those who struggle with gender incongruence, but the means used must respect the fundamental order of the human body. Only by using morally appropriate means do healthcare providers show full respect for the dignity of each human person.

To read the entire document, click here:

<https://www.usccb.org/resources/Doctrinal%20Note%202023-03-20.pdf>



**WE RESPOND TO GOD'S WORD**

**+ The Prayers of the People**

**Leader – 3:** Having heard the Word Of God, we pray to God in Christ through the powerful ministry of the Holy Spirit with communal and shared prayers. Our response after each prayer will be: Lord, hear our prayer.

**Leader – 3:** We continue to pray for the children and people of all ages whose lives have been changed forever by war anywhere in the World, especially in Ukraine, where the fighting has raged for 395 days. So,

again we pray and ask You, God, to heal and strengthen the people traumatized; we pray to the Lord.

**All: Lord, hear our prayer.**

**Leader – 2:** We pray for people we know who need healing, support, and encouragement as they go through stages of healing and recovery. We continue praying for people fighting cancer, including Heather's mother, Henrietta Bower, Sue Lemak, Portia Rawles, Bernell Hooker, our Ray Of Hope members Cheryl Allen, April Struhm, and others we are thinking of right now. To this list, we add those in need of general healing, including Ed Askins, Phillpa Askins, and who else????\_\_\_\_\_. We also pray for everyone in our Congregation who has requested our prayers. With all these people in mind, we ask the Holy Spirit to guide the doctors, medical teams, and scientists as we seek healing and wholeness. Finally, we thank God for each day of life we have together. We trust in God's presence today and always; we pray to the Lord.

**All: Lord, hear our prayer.**

[\(https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2023/02/02/fact-sheet-on-one-year-anniversary-of-reignited-cancer-moonshot-biden-harris-administration-announces-new-actions-to-end-cancer-as-we-know-it/ \)](https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2023/02/02/fact-sheet-on-one-year-anniversary-of-reignited-cancer-moonshot-biden-harris-administration-announces-new-actions-to-end-cancer-as-we-know-it/)

**Leader – 2:** We ask for your blessing on people suffering from the effects of climate change, especially the loss of food, clothing, heat, water, and shelter. We pray the leaders of the World will respond to this emergency with awareness, empathy, compassion, and plans for the short- and long-term. We pray to the Lord.

**All: Lord, hear our prayer.**

**Lisa:** At this time, everyone may add silent prayers for yourself or others, thanksgiving, praise, or whatever is on your mind. If you share a prayer aloud, please speak loud enough so everyone can hear you. We begin with \_\_\_\_\_

**Lisa:** Lord Jesus, we lift our spoken and unspoken prayers to you. We ask you to intercede for us as our High Priest at the right hand of God.

**ALL: Amen**



(Visit our moving prayers page [Right Click Here.](#))

## + Offertory And Preparation of our at-home Holy Communion Altar/tables.

**\*\*\*\* Veronica:** 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. Every organization has actual expenses, including but not limited to utilities, building upkeep, insurance, taxes, and so on. In the United States, each Church is a private organization and does not receive public funding. Together, we keep this ministry available to our local and International participants by keeping it financially viable.

There are many convenient ways to participate with your donation. In the Chapel, use the donation box next to the door before, during, or after this worship event. In addition, donation envelopes are available on the hospitality table by the door.

Internet participants may use the [PayPal link](#) in your bulletin, or mail a check to Ray Of Hope Church, 380 W. First St. Elmira, NY 14901. Additionally, the electronic links are always available in posted bulletins, on Facebook, and on our website. So please give what you can, but never give your last.

At this time, we also prepare our Holy Communion Altars and Tables at home and in the Chapel. Internet viewers, please turn to page three and follow the instructions highlighted in yellow under leader two.

We still use individual communion kits in the Chapel as part of our COVID safety protocol.

Everyone may help set the Chapel Communion Table, and you may walk to the donation box during this time.

( \*\* Viewers on the Internet, please read the following statement. \*\* Communion is a gift for the worship community to celebrate together, an action of the local Church. However, if this is an extraordinary situation, and you believe the Holy Spirit is calling you to celebrate at a time other than the live webcast, yield to the direction of the Holy Spirit. Hopefully, you can join us in a live virtual worship event soon. (\*This practice policy was changed on Gaudete Sunday, December 13, 2020.\*) )

**SONG: I Am The Bread Of Life.** Words and Music by Suzanne Toolan, RSM, b.1927 Contributors: Suzanne Toolan Tune: © 1966, 1970, 1986, 1993, GIA Publications, Inc. Text: Based on John 6 and 11; © 1966, 1970, 1986, 1993, GIA Publications, Inc. Onelicense Song # 00044 Lead Me, Guide Me 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition 755 Used with permission. Onelicense # 81048 Used with Print Permission and Streaming License A-741278

**Leader -2:** (\* **Improvise a prayer** over the offering, giving thanks and praise.\*) (When your prayer is complete, please say:) " Please rise as you are able to conclude the Service Of The Word Of God with a doxology."

(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**

**Kaiden:** Please gently hold the communion kit for the following two prayers. Viewers at home pour your wine or grape juice into your cup if you have not already done so. Then add a small amount of water to

the cup. With this water, we remember Jesus is human. With this fruit of the vine, we remember He is divine forever.

**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; 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





## 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

The musical score is written in treble clef, key of D major (two sharps), and 4/4 time. It consists of six staves of music with lyrics underneath. The lyrics are: "Ho - ly Ho - ly Ho - ly Lord, God of pow'r and might. Hea-ven and earth are full of your glo-ry. Ho - san - na in the high-est. Ho - san - na in the high-est. Ho - san - na in the high-est. Bless - ed is the One who comes in the name of the Lord. Ho - san - na in the high-est. Ho - san - na in the high-est. Ho - san - na in the high-est." The score includes various musical notations such as rests, beams, and a triplet of eighth notes on the fifth staff.

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### **+ We Invoke the Blessing Of The Holy Spirit**

**Cheryl:** 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** wellbeing. We ask this in the Name of Jesus. Amen**

**Cheryl:** You may relax your arms and hands.

**+ The Words Of The Institution Of The Holy Eucharist**

**(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**

**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:** Some people are watching from a location where they do not have actual Holy Communion Bread and Wine with them. We offer the following prayer for them based upon a prayer from the Episcopal National Cathedral Prayer book for a Spiritual reception of Holy Communion.

This prayer assures all the benefits and blessings of a physical reception. Together...

**Oh, My Jesus, I believe that you are truly present in the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar. I love you above all things, and I 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, but in which 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:** The peace of the Lord Jesus Christ is with you.

**ALL:** And also with you.

**Veronica Floyd:** 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.

**Veronica Floyd:** 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.

### **SPECIAL MUSIC** Sung by Mrs. Christina McLaughlin: "I Love The Lord"

Words: Isaac Watts (1791, alt.) © Words: Public Domain. Music: Richard Smallwood 1971 Century Oak Publishing Group (Admin. by Conexion Media Group, Inc.) Richwood Music (Admin. by Conexion Media Group, Inc.) CCLI Song # 1168957. Performed with Professional Backing Tracks, Greatest Karaoke Sing The Hits of Whitney Houston. Label: Cooltone Karaoke, Artists: Cootone Karaoke, Cootone title: I Love The Lord (originally Performed by Whitney Houston) [Karaoke Version] Used with permission through our Christian Copyright License Incorporated License Number 706121 and Christian Copyright License Incorporated Streaming Plus License 21787152.

**A silent prayer one might pray during Holy Communion:**

Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the living God, by the will of God and the work of the Holy Spirit, your death brought life to the World. By your holy body and blood free us from all our sins and from every evil. Keep us faithful to your teaching, and never let us be parted from you. Amen.

**A silent prayer one might pray during Holy Communion:** Oh my Jesus, forgive us our sins, save us from the fires of Hell, lead all souls to Heaven, especially those who are most in need of thy mercy.

This prayer is known as the Fatima Prayer. It is prayed thousands of times every day by people praying the Rosary. Looking closely, one can see it is a very gracious prayer that prays for the salvation of all people. Read more of my commentary on this prayer: [Click Here](#).

Ash Wednesday February 22 Attendance: 11

**General Offering** for the week of February 26 \$468.00 (some people give monthly rather than weekly) Attendance 12

**General Offering** for the week of March 5 \$1,418.00 (some people give monthly rather than weekly) Attendance 9

**General Offering** for the week of March 12 \$68.00 (some people give monthly rather than weekly) Attendance 6

**General Offering** for the week of March 19 \$118.00 (some people give monthly rather than weekly) Attendance 6

**\*\*Special Gifts recently given.\*\***

Thank you Lisa Frost for donating the new Progress Flag.

Thank you April Struhm for donation the new Together We Rise Flag.

Thank you Kaiden for your continuous cleaning of our worship space.

Thank you Christina McLaughlin for sharing your singing talents with us.

Thank you April Struhm for volunteering time to watch the building.

We received an anonymous gift of \$100.00 toward the liability insurance. Thank you.

Thank you April Struhm for donating paper products for the restroom.

Thank you Lisa Frost for your recent donation of wine for Holy Communion.

Thank you Ed for coming and painting this last Thursday, 3-23-23.

Thank you to April Struhm for donating a flat screen TV / computer monitor.

Many thanks to Ed Askins for the hours spent on repairing the interior walls and ceilings in the monastery. Visit the refinished kitchen, restroom, Fraiser Room, and the Chapel Entranceway, before leaving today.

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

NEW REVISED STANDARD VERSION UPDATED EDITION (NRSVUE)

Publisher: National Council of the Churches of Christ

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Quotations or reprints more than five hundred (500) verses must be approved in writing by the National Council of Churches of Christ in the U.S.A., 110 Maryland Ave., Suite 108, Washington, DC 20002.

#### **UPCOMING EVENTS**

#### **OUR CALENDAR**

March 28, Tuesday Bible Enrichment 6:30 p.m.

**Holy Week 2023:** Palm Sunday, April 2, 10:30 a.m.

Holy Thursday, April 6, 7:00 p.m.

Good Friday, April 7, 7:00 p.m.

Vigil of the Resurrection Saturday, April 8, 7:45 p.m.

No service on Sunday, April 9.

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**We Are Sent Forth To Serve**

**Pastor:** The Lord is with you!

**ALL: And also with you!**

**Pastor:** (a prayer is said) .... In the Name of God, the Christ, and the Holy Spirit.

**ALL: Amen**

**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.**

**SONG: SHINE JESUS, SHINE** Words and Music by Graham Kendrick © 1987 Make Way Music (Admin. by Music Services, Inc.) CCLI Song # 30426 Used with permission through our Christian Copyright License Incorporated License Number 706121 and Christian Copyright License Incorporated Streaming Plus License 21787152.

Visit and follow us on our new TikTok Page: [Right Click Here](#) Here is the link if you need to copy and paste it into your browser:

<https://www.tiktok.com/@rayofhopechurchlgbtqsia? t=8UgoVv5ekqg& r=1> Thank you, Heather and Michael for making this project possible and producing our videos.

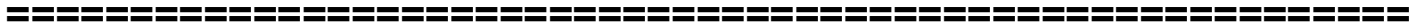
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Volunteer opportunities: As discussed at our Priorities Meeting #2 there are some exterior building volunteer opportunities. There are also some first floor interior volunteer opportunities – painting, patching using drywall mud. If you have some time to spare and interest in these types of work please let Brother know with advanced notice so the necessary supplies will be ready.

**\*\*\* Millennial Series by Dr. John F. Walvoord**  
<https://walvoord.com/series/328>

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

=====**Who can receive the Holy Spirit**=====

**Everyone has access to the Holy Spirit, the gift of God to us.**  
Read this on our website. [Right Click Here](#)



**WHO SHOULD RECEIVE HOLY COMMUNION, THE EUCHARIST, AT RAY OF HOPE CHURCH?**

Everyone may receive Holy Communion, also known as The Eucharist, The Lord's Table, or The Blessed Sacrament at Ray Of Hope Church Of Our Lord Jesus Christ, Inc.

You are not required to be a member of this Church or any other church, to receive Holy Communion at / or with Ray Of Hope Church.

This Holy Communion is the Table of Jesus Christ, who is present among us. Jesus invites you to receive Him in this Eucharistic banquet. If this is your first time receiving The Blessed Sacrament, let us know before you receive it or right after, so we might pray a special prayer of thanksgiving with you.

Unfortunately, through the centuries, many institutional churches have established rules, teachings, and practices that exclude people from Holy Communion. There has been an almost endless list of reasons to exclude people from the Blessed Sacrament. Yet, together, during the worship service, we recite the very words of Jesus, the Words of Institution, "This is my body. This is my blood," and we rehear Christ present with us saying: "Take this, all of you and eat; Take this all of you and drink" of this gift.

After extensive consideration, I take these words, "Take this, all of you.." as a command to the Church to give and bring the Eucharistic Gift to everyone who will receive. This approach also requires us to educate people about this gift. I have said **it is uniquely and deliberately the work of Christ in His Church** to offer the necessary education, guidance, and practices that help people live a life centered and purposed on finding and sharing the Will of God. The Lord's Table is central to that life.

The Eucharist belongs to the Church. The Blessed Sacrament is Christ in, through, with us, and made known in breaking the Bread of Life and drinking the Cup of Salvation. We are to take this gift to the whole World.

We begin by inviting those on the fringe of Society, those pushed aside, poor, not accepted, sick, and who need God's help in extraordinary ways.

We welcome and bring the Eucharist to everyone told they cannot receive it by other Denominations. In conclusion, to everyone told

"no, you cannot" go to Communion in any other church; hear us, "yes, you can" at Ray Of Hope. All are welcome. Or, as we like to say as one of our mottos when we quote Fr. Bartholomew J. O'Brien, "You are as welcome here as Christ Himself."

Come to the Table of the Lord. There is a place set for you too. (Excerpted from the Pastoral Report given at the Annual Meeting 34 on January 28, 2018, by Pastor Br. Shawn F. Benedict, updated 3-6-21, revised 3-3-2023)

Visit our page on the Sacraments. [Right Click Here.](#)

See this in a PDF format from our website, share it with others, or download it to your computer / device. [Right Click Here.](#)

## 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](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.

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Visit us online:

Our website: <http://www.rayofhopechurch.com/> Facebook Page (like and follow) [Click Here.](#)

Our YouTube page: [www.youtube.com/rayofhopenyglbtqs](http://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)