



**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 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 September 24, 2023, Year A  
Semi-Annual Meeting of the Congregation**

**Rite of Membership welcoming Edward R. Askins into Membership  
Southern Tier Extension of Ray Of Hope Church**

**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: Proverbs, chapter 4, verse 10 - 13 NRSV 1st  
Test. Pg. 587**

**Psalm: 98 with a response in this bulletin.**

**Second Reading: 2 Timothy 2:14 – 16 NRSV 2<sup>nd</sup> Test. Pg. 212**

**Gospel: John 14:18-21 NRSV 2<sup>ND</sup> Testament page 109**

**\*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.**

This online presentation is covered by our Onelicense Print Permission and Streaming License A-741278, our Christian Copyright License Incorporated License Number 706121, and Christian Copyright License Incorporated Streaming Plus License 21787152.



## CALL TO WORSHIP

### Visit and greet one another until the bell rings.

**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) 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 \_\_\_\_\_, 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. You can 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.

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 \_\_\_\_\_. Good morning, and welcome. Participants on the Internet may receive Holy Communion with us later in this worship event. Membership in this or any church is not required. We celebrate the Lord's open table. **Internet participants, please bring the following items to your table at this time to prepare: 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 the music supplement are available on Facebook Live; right-click the "Featured Links" icon. On Skype, look in the Chat window for two document icons. At our website, look in 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. This morning, Ed Askins will play a prelude, "**I Worship You Almighty God,**" **Words and Music by Sondra Corbett.** We ask everyone to listen attentively to enjoy this prayer time and refrain from visiting. Thank you.

**Prelude played by Ed Askins on the piano. "I Worship You Almighty God" Words and Music by Sondra Corbett.**

©1983 Integrity's Hosanna! Music (Admin. by Integrity Music). CCLI Song # 20807 Used with permission through our Christian Copyright License Incorporated License Number 706121 and Christian Copyright License Incorporated Streaming Plus License 21787152.



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

**Leader – 2:** 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. Show the glory of God by introducing yourself and welcoming the people around you. To be extra careful, we observe COVID safety protocols by waving 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:** Jesus promised to be with the Church to the end of the age. We joyfully give God thanks and praise.

**ALL: Alleluia! Alleluia! Praise the Lord.**

**Pastor:** We come here to pray. 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 those present and God.



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

**Today is September 24, 2023, the eighteenth week of Pentecost,**  
the Forty-eighth Sunday in our 40<sup>th</sup> year of ministry.

The Semi-Annual Meeting of the Congregation and the celebration of the Rite, the Sacrament of Membership.  
Today, we welcome Edward R. Askins into Membership.

**Today's sermon theme:** Our Testimony, Why We Are Here.

**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: Alleluia! Alleluia! Let the Holy Anthem Rise. G&P 399**

Text: 87 87 D; Edward Caswall, 1814–1878. Music: St Basil's Hymnal, 1889.  
Contributor: HOLY ANTHEM Onelicense Song # 84068. Used with Print Permission and Streaming License A-741278

**+ The Candle Of Hope**

**Leader -1:** Please be seated. Now we light our Candle Of Hope to celebrate our faith and trust in the promised "Blessed Hope," 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 years later, some churches, religions, and even countries still reject 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 Names Project AIDS Memorial Quilt to keep HIV/AIDS in the conscious prayers of people.

**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 # 91



## NAMES Project AIDS Memorial Quilt Block #91

- Curt McCullough (1)
- Steven Fields (2)
- John Quinn (3)
- Kirk Barefield (4)
- Jack Tremain (5)
- Paul Varner (6)
- Harley Knight (7)
- Pat O'Leary (8)

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

**Leader -2:** In silent prayer, remember the names of family and friends who have died from **COVID-related illness** and other causes of death. Pray for their families to experience a blessing from the Holy Spirit when they remember their loved ones. (\*\*pause for silent prayer.\*\*) We hope this candle's flame will

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 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: SHINE JESUS, SHINE** Words & 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.



## 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: "<sup>8</sup> If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. <sup>9</sup> 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:** In silent prayer, consider relationships with God and others. Then, confess faults, sins, and failures to Christ, who will forgive us 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 \_\_\_\_\_.

We were born during the Age of the Spirit, the Dispensation of the Church. We all could do more to build up the Church and share the message of the liberating Gospel of Christ; we pray, Lord, have mercy.

**ALL: Lord, have mercy.**

**Leader -4:** We have seen the evidence of prayers answered. We know prayer can help people find their way through the world's chaos. Sometimes, we fail to guide others to prayer, and Christ, we pray: Christ, have mercy.

**ALL: Christ, have mercy.**

**Leader -4:** The advertising industry demands our attention with every commercial, billboard, and pop-up on our computers. Sometimes we could promote the mission of the church and the Gospel more enthusiastically; we pray, 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, and we pray.

**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.**

**+ Opening Prayer**

**Leader 5:** Eternal Word of God, lead us to your truth and wisdom. As we listen to your Word, please help us grow, change, be transformed, and

equipped for service and ministry.

**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 reading is Proverbs, chapter 4, verses 10 through 13 in the NRSV updated edition of 2021. The 1989 pew Bibles have a similar reading on page 587 in the First Testament. Here begins the reading.

### **Admonition to Keep to the Right Path**

- <sup>10</sup> Hear, my child, and accept my words,  
that the years of your life may be many.  
<sup>11</sup> I have taught you the way of wisdom;  
I have led you in the paths of uprightness.  
<sup>12</sup> When you walk, your step will not be hampered,  
and if you run, you will not stumble.  
<sup>13</sup> Keep hold of instruction; do not let go;  
guard her, for she is your life.

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

**ALL: Thanks be to God!**

[Read full chapter](#)

(Source: <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Proverbs+4%3A10-13&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:** \*\*\*\* **If an introduction is needed:**\*\*\*\* Hello. My name is

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

Today's Psalm is 98, with selected verses and a responsorial verse.  
Today's response is, " The Lord has made known salvation; Alleluia, Alleluia."

**R.: The Lord has made known Salvation; Alleluia, Alleluia.**

Sing to the Lord a new song  
God has worked beautiful things.  
With God's own hand and holy arm  
salvation and victory have come.

**R.: The Lord has made known Salvation; Alleluia, Alleluia.**

God has made known Salvation;  
has shown justice to all nations;  
has remembered truth and Love  
for the entire house of Israel.

**R.: The Lord has made known Salvation; Alleluia, Alleluia.**

All the ends of the Earth have seen  
the Salvation of our God.  
Shout to the Lord, all the Earth,  
ring out your joy, all you people.

**R.: The Lord has made known Salvation; Alleluia, Alleluia.**

Sing psalms to the Lord with the harp  
with the sound of music.  
With trumpets and the sound of the horn  
acclaim the King, the Lord.

**R.: The Lord has made known Salvation; Alleluia, Alleluia.**

Let the sea and all within it thunder;  
the world and all its peoples.  
Let the rivers clap their hands  
and the hills ring out their joy.

**R.: The Lord has made known Salvation; Alleluia, Alleluia.**

Rejoice at the presence of the Lord, who comes,  
who comes to rule the Earth.

God will rule the world with justice  
and the people with fairness.

**R.: The Lord has made known Salvation; Alleluia, Alleluia.**

\*\* Inclusive language and prose added by Br.  
Benedict, based on multiple translations.

## + 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 2 Timothy, chapter 2, verses 14 - 16 in the Jubilee Bible 2000 (JUB) Copyright © 2013, 2020 edition. The 1989 NRSV pew Bibles have a similar reading on page 212 in the Second Testament. Here begins the reading.

<sup>14</sup> Counsel these things, charging *them* before the Lord. Strive not in words that profit nothing, *but rather* subvert the hearers.

<sup>15</sup> Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that has nothing to be ashamed of, rightly dividing the word of truth.

<sup>16</sup> But avoid profane *and* vain wordiness, for it will develop into ungodliness.

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

**ALL: Thanks be to God!**

(Source: <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2+Timothy+2&version=JUB> Jubilee Bible 2000 (JUB) Copyright © 2013, 2020

Translated and Edited by Russell M. Stendal

May be quoted in other works. May be used freely in all non-profit, non-commercial Bible distribution endeavors provided the content is not altered..)

## + 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.

## Opening 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!

©1993 by Gaude! Liturgical Arts. All Rights Reserved. International Copyright Secured. Reprinted here under CCLI#706121

**Reader:** The Gospel reading is John, chapter 14:18-21 in the NRSV updated edition of 2021. The 1989 pew Bibles have a similar reading on page 109 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.**

<sup>18</sup> "I will not leave you orphaned; I am coming to you. <sup>19</sup> In a little while the world will no longer see me, but you will see me; because I live, you also will live. <sup>20</sup> On that day you will know that I am in my

Father, and you in me, and I in you. <sup>21</sup> They who have my commandments and keep them are those who love me, and those who love me will be loved by my Father, and I will love them and reveal myself to them."

Reader: This is the Gospel of the Lord!

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

[Read full chapter](#)

(Source: <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+14%3A18-21&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.)

## Closing 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!

**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**

=====  
The readings are selected for our celebration of Membership today.  
The First Reading: Proverbs, chapter 4, verse 10 - 13 King Solomon is passing on to his listeners the benefits of godly wisdom, and one of them is a long life. We understand the

Holy Spirit as the author of all such wisdom. Here, then, God is asking us to trust the Word for all it says on small matters; if you "walk" or if you "run" as well as every matter of life. We are told to hold on to Wisdom and instruction and to guard her, "for she is your life." Do note Wisdom is said to be "she" and "she is your life." The early church (roughly the first two hundred years) often referred to the Holy Spirit with feminine pronouns. Since Jesus said the Holy Spirit would guide the Church into all truth, John 16:13, truth was equated with wisdom, therefore, the Holy Spirit is the seat of all Wisdom. The Greek word for wisdom is sophia, a central piece of all Greek Hellenistic religion and philosophy. So, seek the Holy Spirit in the Word and hold on to Her, and your life will be lengthy and well.

The Second reading: 2 Timothy, chapter 2, verses 14 - 16 in the Jubilee Bible 2000 (JUB) Copyright © 2013, 2020, includes a traditional rendering of verse 15. In both the verses before it and after it, the warning is to avoid arguing over exact words, details, appearances, and we would include gossip, chatter, online noise, etc. As in the first reading, cling to the Word of God.

Now, the verse with the traditional rendering:

<sup>15</sup> "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that has nothing to be ashamed of, rightly dividing the word of truth."

This rendering became a banner theme of the Bible Prophecy Conference Movement of ca. 1870 to ca. 1919. This verse was embraced by nearly all theologians working on the renewal of Eschatology that began in 1850. Many, including Dake, Scofield, and Larkin, even named books using words from this verse, such as "Rightly Dividing the Word." In the first twenty years of the 20th Century, the debate over the Inspiration of Scripture and other articles of Doctrine was quite fierce, especially in the colleges, universities, and seminaries of the Northern States. Most Bible translations during and after this time of debate use alternate word choices such as:

<sup>15</sup> Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved by him, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly explaining the word of truth. (NRSVUE)

I selected this reading today knowing Ed has been carefully studying the Word and theologies during this time of discerning the choice for Membership, including "Rightly Dividing the Word" by C. I. Scofield.

Finally, the Gospel, John 14:18-21. Next to the Holy Scriptures, the most absolute defining quality that separates the Church from any other institution or organization on Planet Earth is the Doctrine of Real Presence. In this Gospel reading, as in many other verses, Jesus promises even after his physical human life He is and always will be truly present and with us. This Doctrine separates Christianity from every other Religion on Earth. He also



assures us the Holy Spirit lives in us in the verse preceding this reading:

John 14:17 <sup>17</sup> This is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him because he abides with you, and he will be<sup>[c]</sup> in<sup>[d]</sup> you. (NRSVUE)

Jesus even promises we fully participate in the divine union that He shares with God and the Holy Spirit, a union so obvious we named it "The Trinity." In this Gospel Reading, Jesus includes all of us in that union when He explains the day was coming when the world would no longer see Him, but we would actually "see" Him and participate in the Divine Union of God:

John 14:20 <sup>20</sup> On that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you.

Our Testimony, Why We Are Here.

1) Last Sunday, we celebrated the victory of the Cross of Christ, God's Love to the World, in our lives. Despite all the hostile rhetoric from some Churches, Theologies, and Politics, we found a group of people at Ray Of Hope Church Of Our Lord Jesus Christ who openly testify the Bible and the Real Presence of Christ completely embrace us and empower us to be the Body Of Christ, the Church today, for real, in this very place and time we find ourselves.

I have been active in this church for thirty of the forty years of its ministry. I can see how church and society have sometimes shown and then withdrawn support for people of all sexual orientations and gender expressions over these forty years. The similarity to standing on the sandy beach to see, hear, and feel the waves of the active ocean water wash in and out, back and forth, reaching further in sometimes and not as far other times, with loud roaring sounds down to a slight trickling gives an illustration of the attitudes, understanding, progress, and backlash we have experienced.

Embracing the Bible, the Holy Scriptures, and the Sacraments is the unique reason Ray Of Hope is the church founded, fostered, and consistently supported by the LGBTQSIANE2ss+ Community of Central New York State. Ray Of Hope is the first Christian Church in Central, Upstate New York to publically testify the Bible does not condemn us. The founders and foundresses were standing on the shoulders of Rev. D. Sherwin Bailey, Fr. John J. McNeill, John Boswell, Rev. Troy Perry, and the literalist biblical interpreters looking behind the English translations to find the real meaning of the original biblical texts. Surprisingly to some, it is still the works of C. I. Scofield and most of the Bible Conference theologians of 1870 - 1919 (+) who are the most helpful to us with the bible text. We disagree with them on sexual expression, but their treatment of the misused texts

to condemn us is still some of the finest scholarship available today. During these last forty years, the academic profession has produced an immeasurable amount of studies, publications, courses, and degree programs to examine every knowable aspect of our lives, past, present, and predictable future. We have truly been blessed in the academy, church, and society. The Cross of Christ has triumphed in our lives.

There is an ancient Latin expression: Lex orandi, lex credendi, lex vivendi: "the law of what is prayed [is] the law of what is believed [is] the law of what is lived." This ancient Christian motto also shows the way the tools of the religion developed. The Order of Worship, the Liturgy was developed and established before the Creeds and before the approved books (canonical lists) were assembled into the Bible. Creeds, official Bibles, Church Law (By-laws and policies), and ethnic practices all developed after communal prayer.

The believers gathered in communal prayer, and this is where the Church of Jesus Christ began: Hear the book of Acts, chapter 2, verses 1 - 4 and 16 - 21.

### **The Coming of the Holy Spirit**

**2** When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. <sup>2</sup> And suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. <sup>3</sup> Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them. <sup>4</sup> All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability.

<sup>16</sup> No, this is what was spoken through the prophet Joel:

<sup>17</sup> 'In **the last days** it will be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit upon **all flesh**, and **your sons** and **your daughters** shall prophesy, and your **young** men shall see visions, and your **old** men shall dream dreams.

<sup>18</sup> Even upon my ~~slaves~~ servants, both men and women, in those days I will pour out my Spirit, and they shall prophesy.

(The following happens during the Tribulation)

<sup>19</sup> And I will show portents in the heaven above and signs on the earth below, blood, and fire, and smoky mist.

<sup>20</sup> The sun shall be turned to darkness  
and the moon to blood,

before the coming of the Lord's great and glorious day.

<sup>21</sup> Then **everyone who calls** on the name of the Lord shall be saved.'

This reading in Acts, Chapter Two, is the first recorded act of the believers assembled for prayer on the first day of the Church of Jesus Christ. Christ's Church started with prayer, then sacraments - sacred moments when the work of the Holy Spirit was obvious with confession and forgiveness, healing, baptism, Christ's Eucharist, baptism in the Holy Spirit, prophecy, teaching, understanding, all of the gifts, always from the start there were caring ministries - the Gospel put into social action. This was followed by establishing order and ministry, and later came the establishment of approved books for Scripture and public reading and teaching.

Ray Of Hope Church also began with a worship service called by Mr. Ted Ewald and thirteen others in July of 1983. This first communal worship event of record was followed by other prayer services, classes on the Bible and the Church, social ministry, and caring for the sick and persecuted. Ray Of Hope has been a testimony church from the very first meeting. See the letter referenced: [right click here](#).

Just as the first congregation on the first day of the Church gathered for worship as recorded in the Book of Acts, and just as the first people who started Ray Of Hope Church gathered for worship on their first day, so today, the first and most important thing we do as a church is pray together in communal prayer. From the prayer service, everything else grows out. Still, the first and most primary thing we do that separates us from social service agencies, department stores, hospitals and schools is we pray and worship together in community. When that bell rings, the most essential thing Ray Of Hope Church does is about to happen: communal worship of God. Our first priority as Members and Friends of Ray Of Hope Church is attending the public communal worship event on Sunday morning together.

### [3.10 Expectations of Members.](#)

It is expected that Members attend regularly and specially called meetings of the Church membership and regularly attend worship services and other functions as health permits; further, each is expected to provide financial and volunteer help in support of the work of the Church and to be committed to growth in understanding and application of the Ray Of Hope Church Of Our Lord Jesus Christ "[Statement of Faith](#): and [Statement of Purpose](#)."

There is so much more to say about our wonderful and unique testimony as a church, but time will not permit. Three additional defining points regarding our testimony as a Church of Jesus Christ:

1) Our Testimony as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Queer /Questioning, Heterosexual / Straight, Intersex, Asexual, Eunuch, Two-Spirit, plus People including the entire spectrum

of genders and gender expressions, is: The Holy Scriptures, Sacraments/Ordinances/Rituals and the structure of a well ordered Church can be an outstanding contribution to our lives as individuals and as a community.

2) Our Testimony is: separating the spoken and written rules of churches into the categories of Doctrine, Dogma, Teaching, and Practice; it is clear all matters of sexuality and gender managed by Denominations are teachings, not biblical doctrine.

3) Our Testimony is: after careful study of the original languages of the Scriptures and a working knowledge of how the institutional church has evolved in time and place, we are compelled to open all ministries to all persons and to facilitate this, we use inclusive language and we are sensitive in the design and presentations of our worship spaces to show this equality.

\*\*\*\*\*OPEN MICROPHONE \*\*\*\*\*

=====

The Rite / Sacrament of Membership.

Today, we celebrate the sacrament of Membership with Ed Askins. Ed has requested to come alongside us in this testimony for Christ. We are very grateful, and we say thank you to God, to Our Lord and the Holy Spirit, to Phillipa, and Ed. Phillipa actively considered Ed's desire to join Ray Of Hope. If Phillipa had not supported the idea, Ed would not have gone forward with the Membership process. Thank you, Phillipa for your support and involvement at Ray Of Hope. Everyone enjoys your participation and friendship; "You are as welcome here as Christ Himself."

Pastor: April Struhm and I presented the required sessions of the Inquiries Class for Ed over the last three weeks. Kaiden Benedict was also present for the sessions. We are satisfied with Ed's level of interest in the materials presented and we certify he is an excellent candidate for Membership in Ray Of Hope Church Of Our Lord Jesus Christ, Inc.

Edward, if you are prepared to make your promises to Christ and this Church's Members and Friends, please step forward and stand with us here at the Communion Table, the Altar.

Seeing that Ed cannot stand here with us, we will have to forego this ceremony; thank you everyone.

OOOOOOH! Something new is happening here. Today will be our first Rite of Membership conducted online! This day will be referenced many times going forward as the first time we did this, indicating a change in practice that is part of our evolving with the times.

Alright, so Ed, do you desire to become a Member of this Congregation?

Ed answers.

Veronica Floyd, Council Member, Moderator. According to our by-laws, section 3.03 it is agreeing to support the Statement of Purpose that is required for Membership. Ed will be asked the questions; however, this is a perfect time for each Member present to silently renew your commitment to these goals we stated when we joined this Church.

Pastor: Ed, we invite you to join us in these promises we are living out:

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,

April Struhm, Council Member and Vice-Moderator: Will you join us in this goal, Ed?

Ed: I will, with God's help.

Christina McLaughlin, Member: Will you join us as we

- **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,

April Struhm, Council Member and Vice-Moderator: Will you join us in this goal, Ed?

Ed: I will, with God's help.

Lisa Frost, Council Member and Treasurer: Now, Ed, at Ray Of Hope Church we

- **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,

April Struhm, Council Member and Vice-Moderator: Will you join us in this goal, Ed?

Ed: I will, with God's help.

Kaiden Rae Benedict, Member: Now, Ed, we promise to put our religion into action in

ways that will

- **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,

April Struhm, Council Member and Vice-Moderator: Will you join us in this goal, Ed?

Ed: I will, with God's help.

Pastor: Finally, Ed, we promise to

- **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.

Pastor: Will you join us in this goal, Ed?

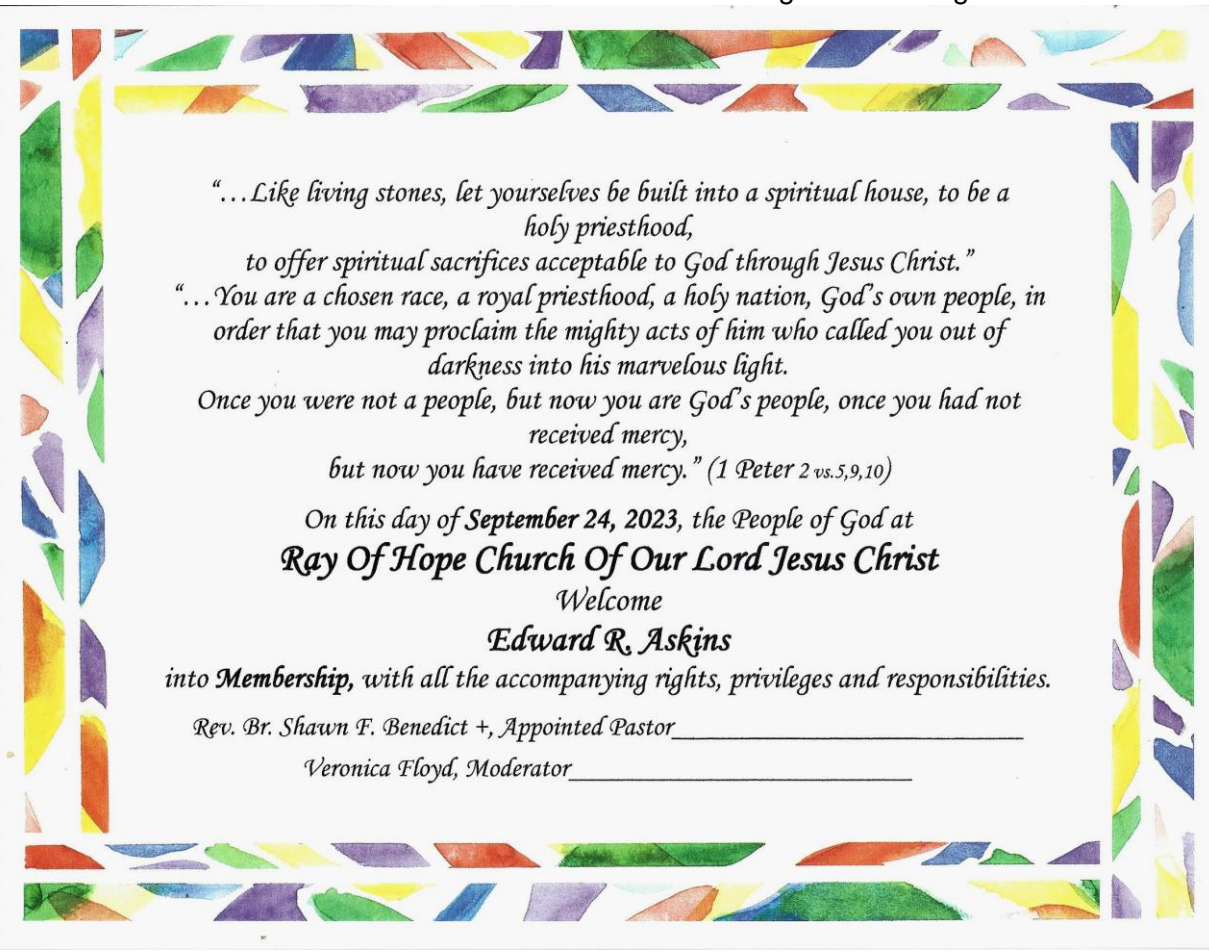
Ed: I will, with God's help.

Pastor: Please sign the Statement Of Purpose.

Veronica Floyd, Moderator: Members of Ray Of Hope Church, please rise as you are able or raise your hand for all to see. Now, I ask the Members present, having renewed your own promises silently and heard the new promises made today, will you assure Ed, our new Member of your support, prayers, and holy friendship?

Members: We will, with God's help.

Veronica Floyd, Moderator: Congratulations, Ed and welcome to Membership.



*"... Like living stones, let yourselves be built into a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ."  
"... You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people, in order that you may proclaim the mighty acts of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.  
Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people, once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy." (1 Peter 2 vs.5,9,10)*

*On this day of September 24, 2023, the People of God at  
**Ray Of Hope Church Of Our Lord Jesus Christ**  
Welcome  
**Edward R. Askjns**  
into **Membership**, with all the accompanying rights, privileges and responsibilities.  
Rev. Br. Shawn F. Benedict +, Appointed Pastor \_\_\_\_\_  
Veronica Floyd, Moderator \_\_\_\_\_*

---

## **+ 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:** Violence and Crime are in the news, and more is not reported. We pray for increased respect for the lives of others, empathy, awareness, and care among all people; we pray to the Lord.

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

**Leader – 3:** The war in Ukraine continues past the 547th day. Additionally, Alliances are forming that raise the threat of mass destruction. So, we continue to pray that World Leaders work together to end the war in Ukraine and roughly thirty-one additional Countries; we pray to the Lord.

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

See this website for more information: <https://worldpopulationreview.com/country-rankings/countries-currently-at-war>

**Leader – 2:** We continue praying for people we know who need healing and support; 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/> )

**Leader – 2:** As the Earth suffers the effects of climate change, we pray for people who have lost their shelter and jobs. We pray for the families of those who have lost their lives in these natural disasters. Finally, we pray that world leaders will recognize and respond to this environmental emergency with compassion and plans for change; we pray to the Lord.

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

**Leader:** At this time, everyone may add silent prayers for yourself or others, prayers of 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 \_\_\_\_\_

**Leader:** 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.**



**Leader:** 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. 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. 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.

Finally, 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.\*) )

**OFFERTORY SONG: "I Worship You Almighty God" Words and Music by Sondra Corbett.** ©1983 Integrity's Hosanna! Music (Admin. by Integrity Music). CCLI Song # 20807 Used with permission through our Christian Copyright License Incorporated License Number 706121 and Christian Copyright License Incorporated Streaming Plus License 21787152.

**Leader -2:** (\* **Improvise a prayer for the offerings received, 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**

**Leader:** 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 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

The musical score is written in treble clef with a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#) and a 4/4 time signature. 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.

©1993 by Gaude! Liturgical Arts. All Rights Reserved. International Copyright Secured. Reprinted here under CCLI#706121

### **+ 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** wellbeing. 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**

**(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!

©1993 by Gaude! Liturgical Arts. All rights reserved. International Copyright Secured. Reprinted here under CCLI#706121

### + Sign Of Peace

**Leader:** 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.

### 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](#).

**Communion Song: Alleluia composed by Jerry Sinclair**

- 1) Alleluia
- 2) Lord, we praise you.
- 3) Lord, we thank you.
- 4) Alleluia

**Alleluia composed by Jerry Sinclair** © 1972 Manna Music, Inc. (Admin. by Gaither Copyright Management). CCLI Song #16811. All rights reserved. International copyright secured. Used with permission through our Christian Copyright License Incorporated License Number 706121 and Christian Copyright License Incorporated Streaming Plus License 21787152.



**General Offering** for the week of August 27 \$568.00 (some people give monthly rather than weekly) Attendance 10

**General Offering** for the week of September 3 \$943.00 (some people give monthly rather than weekly) Attendance 5

**General Offering** for the week of September 10 \$488.00 (some people give monthly rather than weekly) Attendance 9

**General Offering** for the week of September 17 \$468.00 (some people give monthly rather than weekly) Attendance 9

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

April Struhm exchanged a computer and installed a new one in the Frasier Room so the social times can now be broadcast on Skype. Thank you April.

Ed Askins donated \$160.00 to the Liability Insurance account line. Thank you Ed.

Lisa Frost donated altar wine for Holy Communion in thanksgiving for the life of Rodney Brewer. Thank you Lisa.

**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

Copyright Information

"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. All rights reserved worldwide. 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."

**New Revised Standard Version – 1989**

Scripture quotations are from the New Revised Standard Version Bible, copyright © 1989 National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide. Up to 500 verses of the R.S.V. or NRSV may be quoted in any form (written, visual, electronic or audio) without charge and without obtaining written permission...

**UPCOMING EVENTS ON OUR CALENDAR**

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

Sunday, September 24 Worship 10:30 a.m. followed by the Semi-Annual Meeting of the Congregation with election of Council Members at 1:00 p.m.

Sunday, September 24th is Cheryl Allen's Birthday. Happy and blessed birthday, Cheryl.

Friday, September 22 was Whitney Tipton's birthday. A blessed Birthday, Whitney.

Tuesday, September 26, 6:30 - 8:00 .m. Bible Enrichment. Sacraments, Ordinances, and Rituals part 3.

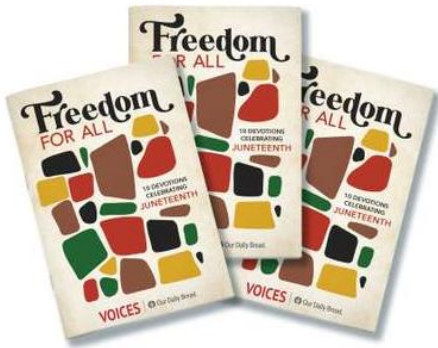
Sunday, October 1, **WORLD COMMUNION SUNDAY**

The series on Judgments will resume soon.

The series on Judgments will resume soon.

October 12, 2023, is the 25th Anniversary of Matthew Shepard's murder in Laramie, Wyoming, in 1998. The Southern Finger Lakes Pride presents The Laramie Project, a play by Moises Kaufman, and The Tectonic Theatre Project on October 11 (National Coming Out Day) and October 12 at the Rockwell Museum. For more information go to

<https://facebook.com/events/s/the-laramie-project/1977687032573315/?mibextid=RQdjQZ>



[https://odb.org/page/freedom-for-all-day-1?utm\\_source=reading-plan&utm\\_medium=unbounce&utm\\_campaign=juneteenth-23](https://odb.org/page/freedom-for-all-day-1?utm_source=reading-plan&utm_medium=unbounce&utm_campaign=juneteenth-23)

June 1, 2023, was the TWENTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF THE OPENING OF THE ELMIRA CHAPEL.



<http://www.rayofhopechurch.com/P2023-Bookmark.htm> In celebration, we launched the new mobile-friendly version of our website.

This online presentation is covered by our Onelicense Print Permission and Streaming License A- 741278, our Christian Copyright License Incorporated License Number 706121, and Christian Copyright License Incorporated Streaming Plus License 21787152.

**NOTE: Whitney Tipton** recommended the 2016 Documentary "13th" which may be found on Netflix. The caption reads; "In this thought-provoking documentary, scholars, activists and politicians analyze the criminalization of African Americans and the U. S. prison boom. I have watched it and found it to be very informative and I recommend it as well. Thank you, Whitney.



**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.**

**Last Song: Once We Were Not A People Ntbk #44**

POSTLUDE: Organ How Great Thou Art.

**BROTHER:** All of our freedom of Scientific inquiry, social studies, psychological research, Biblical research, and laws came to us by voting. All of it can be overturned by vote; that is how a democracy works.

Religion is invoked in the presentations of the rationale for reversing rights gained in social, educational, healthcare, and even religious settings. The only way to protect what we have is to stay informed and involved in the process. (Br. Benedict 8-5-23)

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

**We have to EDUCATE and ACTIVATE the young adult LGBTQSINAE2ss+ Electorate! This is an Electorate Emergency. This is not a drill!** (Br. Benedict 8-6-23)

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/@rayofhopechurchlgbtqgia? t=8UgoVv5ekqg& r=1> Thank you, Heather and Michael for making this project possible and producing our videos.

=====

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.

---

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)

