



**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)**

**Guests are 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 February 26, 2023 Black History W.K. 4**

**Lent Week 1, 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: Genesis 2:7-9; 3:1-7 NRSV 1st Test. Pg. 2**

**Psalm: Psalm 32 with responsorial in this bulletin.**

**Second Reading: Romans 5:12-19 NRSV 2<sup>nd</sup> Test. Pg. 156  
Universal Salvation**

**Gospel: Matthew 4:1-11 NRSV 2<sup>ND</sup> Testament page 3**

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



## 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 spend the next few minutes in silent prayer. 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 \_\_\_\_\_. We welcome you 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. We extend a special welcome to our visitors and guests here in the Chapel and online through Skype and Facebook. 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.

In this Church, you decide to participate in some or all the parts of the worship event as you 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.

**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. 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 LGBTQ5IA2ss+ 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))**



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

**Leader – 2:** Thank you for choosing to spend this 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. \*\*During COVID, 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 an observer's activity where people come to hear some good music and then hear a message. Instead, we are here as active participants in every part of the worship event. The primary responsibility is to actively pray during each portion of the "service." 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 God. The people are actively praying and serving each person present and God.

Today is the fourth Sunday of Black History Month. Today is also the first Sunday of the Season of Lent. The second reading today is the featured

reading we had on January 22, the Sunday of our Annual Meeting. The subject is Universal Salvation.

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

Today we are celebrating the eighteenth 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, the definition of "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 on these ideas.

Right Click Here:

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

Our prayers for Ukraine, Turkey, and Syria will be at the Prayers of the People this morning. Friday was the one full year of the war on Ukraine. Monday, February 20, there was another earthquake, this one being magnitude 6.3 on the border of Turkey and Syria. 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: Every Praise**

words and music Hezekiah Walker | John David Bratton

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## **+ The Candle Of Hope**

**Leader -1:** Please be seated. Now, we light our Resurrection Candle Of Hope in honor of the "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:** While lighting the Candle Of Hope, it is our custom to read panel entries from the Names Project Aids Memorial Quilt to remember those who died of AIDS. Unfortunately, some churches 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 Block we are reading today.

The names on Block # 64

- Jon Heddu (1)

- Joe Olea (2)
- Ailekxis Chew (3)
- Ron Yeates (4)
- Charlie Case (5)
- Dave (6)
- Jay Brewster (7)
- Larry David Thompson (8)

We remember them here and pray for their families.

**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 also pray for their family members as they remember their loved ones. May this candle's flame remind everyone of 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: He Is Exalted words and Music Twila Paris**

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**WE PREPARE OUR HEARTS**

## + Confession and Forgiveness of our sins.

**Leader -2:** Please be seated. (wait) After gathering, greeting one another, and praising God in song, we prepare our hearts to accept renewal when we listen to the Word, the Holy Scriptures. Now the Church invites us to reflect on our relationships with others and with God. Christ is present and actively listening to receive the sins we are about to confess in silence. He will immediately forgive us as He promised.

(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 has created and is sustaining one Human Race. We have divided ourselves into groups instead of enjoying the entire spectrum of this Human Race, we pray, Lord, have mercy.

**ALL: Lord, have mercy.**

L-4: Through the ministry of Christ, we should study in our schools and celebrate every ethnic and cultural identity; Christ, have mercy.

**ALL: Christ, have mercy.**

L-4: We pray that pastors and congregations lead the way to correcting discrimination; 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.**

## + Opening Prayer

**Leader 5:** O Loving, Eternal, and Holy God, our hearts and minds are open to being led into your truth. So, Word of God, cause action and change in our lives. Word of God, transform and equip us for many more years of ministry, we pray.

**ALL: AMEN.**

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

**ALL: We read the 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 Book of Genesis, chapter 2, verses 7-9; Chapter 3, verses 1-7.

We are reading from the New Revised Standard Version Updated Edition of ©2021 (See the citation below the reading). The New Revised Standard Version pew bibles have a similar reading on page 2. Here begins the reading:

<sup>7</sup> then the LORD God formed man from the dust of the ground<sup>[a]</sup> and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being. <sup>8</sup> And the LORD God planted a garden in Eden, in the east, and there he put the man whom he had formed. <sup>9</sup> Out of the ground the LORD God made to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food, the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

Chpt 3:1-7

## The First Sin and Its Punishment

**3** Now the serpent was more crafty than any other wild animal that the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God say, 'You shall not eat from any tree in the garden'?" <sup>2</sup> The woman said to the serpent, "We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden, <sup>3</sup> but God said, 'You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the middle of the garden, nor shall you touch it, or you shall die.'" <sup>4</sup> But the serpent said to the woman, "You will not die, <sup>5</sup> for God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God,<sup>[a]</sup> knowing good and evil." <sup>6</sup> So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food and that it was a delight to the eyes and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate. <sup>7</sup> Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked, and they sewed fig leaves together and made loincloths for themselves.

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

**ALL: Thanks be to God!**

[Read full chapter](#) , [Read full chapter](#) (Source:

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+2%3A7-9&version=NRSVUE>

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis3%3A1-7&version=NRSVUE> )

### Footnotes

- a. 2.7 In Heb the word for *ground* resembles the word for *man*
- b. 3.5 Or *gods*

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### + Psalm

The Psalm today is number 32, verses one through twelve, with a

responsorial verse. The response today is "Happy are they whose transgressions are forgiven, and whose sin is put away!"

**Response: Happy are they whose transgressions are forgiven,  
and whose sin is put away!**

- 1 Happy are they whose transgressions are forgiven,  
and whose sin is put away!
- 2 Happy are they to whom the LORD imputes no guilt,  
and in whose spirit there is no guile!

**Response: Happy are they whose transgressions are  
forgiven,  
and whose sin is put away!**

- 3 While I held my tongue, my bones withered away,  
because of my groaning all day long.
- 4 For your hand was heavy upon me day and night;  
my moisture was dried up as in the heat of summer.
- 5 Then I acknowledged my sin to you,  
and did not conceal my guilt.
- 6 I said, " I will confess my transgressions to the LORD."  
Then you forgave me the guilt of my sin.

**Response: Happy are they whose transgressions are  
forgiven,  
and whose sin is put away!**

- 7 Therefore all the faithful will make their prayers to you in time of  
trouble;  
when the great waters overflow, they shall not reach them.
- 8 You are my hiding-place;  
you preserve me from trouble;  
you surround me with shouts of deliverance.

**Response: Happy are they whose transgressions are  
forgiven,  
and whose sin is put away!**

- 9 "I will instruct you and teach you in the way that you should go;  
I will guide you with my eye.
- 10 Do not be like horse or mule, which have no understanding;

who must be fitted with bit and bridle,  
or else they will not stay near you."

11 Great are the tribulations of the wicked;  
but mercy embraces those who trust in the LORD.

12 Be glad, you righteous, and rejoice in the LORD;  
shout for joy, all who are true of heart.

**Response: Happy are they whose transgressions are  
forgiven,  
and whose sin is put away!**

## + 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 5, verses 12-19. Again, we are reading from the New Revised Standard Version Updated Edition of ©2021 (See the citation below the reading.). The New Revised Standard Version pew bibles have a similar translation on page 156 in the second testament. Here begins the reading:

### **Universal Salvation: Adam and Christ**

<sup>12</sup> Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death came through sin, and so death spread to all because all have sinned— <sup>13</sup> for sin was indeed in the world before the law, but sin is not reckoned when there is no law. <sup>14</sup> Yet death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those who did not sin in the likeness of Adam, who is a pattern of the one who was to come.

<sup>15</sup> But the free gift is not like the trespass. For if the many died through the one man's trespass, much more surely have the grace of God and the gift in the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, abounded for the many. <sup>16</sup> And the gift is not like the effect of the one man's sin. For the judgment following one trespass brought condemnation, but the gift following many trespasses brings justification. <sup>17</sup> If, because of the one man's trespass, death

reigned through that one, much more surely will those who receive the abundance of grace and the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ.

<sup>18</sup> Therefore just as one man's trespass led to condemnation for all, so one man's act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all. <sup>19</sup> For just as through the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so through the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous.

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

**ALL: Thanks be to God!**

Read full chapter (Source: <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+5%3A12-19&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.

## **+ 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 Matthew, chapter 4, verses 1-11. We are reading from the New Revised Standard Version Updated Edition of ©2021 (See the citation below the reading.). The New Revised Standard Version pew bibles have a similar translation on page 3 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 Matthew.

**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 Testing of Jesus

4 Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tested by the devil. <sup>2</sup> He fasted forty days and forty nights, and afterward he was famished. <sup>3</sup> The tempter came and said to him,

"If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread." <sup>4</sup> But he answered, "It is written,

'One does not live by bread alone,  
but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.'"

<sup>5</sup> Then the devil took him to the holy city and placed him on the pinnacle of the temple, <sup>6</sup> saying to him, "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down, for it is written,

'He will command his angels concerning you,'  
and 'On their hands they will bear you up,  
so that you will not dash your foot against a stone.'"

<sup>7</sup> Jesus said to him, "Again it is written, 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.'"

<sup>8</sup> Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory, <sup>9</sup> and he said to him, "All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me." <sup>10</sup> Then Jesus said to him, "Away with you, Satan! for it is written,

'Worship the Lord your God,  
and serve only him.'"

<sup>11</sup> Then the devil left him, and suddenly angels came and waited on him.

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=Matthew+4%3A1-11&version=NRSVUE> )  
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**Gospel Acclamation**



## Forever, We Are Yours!

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

"Music For Worship"

Music by: Gaude! Liturgical Arts  
December 31, 1995

Glo-ry to the One God! Glo-ry to our Sa - vior Je - sds 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 GLBTQSA2ss+ 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**

### + Sermon

Ray Of Hope Church teaches the same Christian faith of ancient ecumenical consensus. St. Vincent of Lerins, a fifth-century monk and theologian, described it as **"what has been believed always, everywhere, and by all."**

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

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

### Ray Of Hope Church, Inc. Statement on the Doctrine of Universal Salvation.

"We believe that Salvation is a gift that God has given to the entire human race. Romans Chapter Five explains this Doctrine of Universal Salvation. One's personal salvation is assured by believing in God as per John 5:24. Salvation is best known through the Gospel of Jesus the Christ, and through rebirth by the Holy Spirit." (Ray Of Hope Church Of Our Lord Jesus Christ, Inc By-Laws September, 2011 Lines 1141 - 1148)

A word about the supposed “first sin” in the Genesis reading today. The first sin in the Bible is in Ezekiel Chapter 28: 12b-17 +

You were the signet of perfection,<sup>[a]</sup>  
full of wisdom and perfect in beauty.

<sup>13</sup>You were in Eden, the garden of God;  
every precious stone was your covering,  
carnelian, chrysolite, and moonstone,  
beryl, onyx, and jasper,  
sapphire,<sup>[a]</sup> turquoise, and emerald;  
and worked in gold were your settings  
and your engravings.<sup>[a]</sup>

On the day that you were created  
they were prepared.

<sup>14</sup>You were a cherub;<sup>[a]</sup>  
I placed you on the holy mountain of God;  
you walked among the stones of fire.

<sup>15</sup>You were blameless in your ways  
from the day that you were created,  
until iniquity was found in you.

<sup>16</sup>In the abundance of your trade  
you were filled with violence, and you sinned,  
so I cast you as a profane thing from the mountain of God,  
and I drove you out, O guardian cherub,  
from among the stones of fire.

<sup>17</sup>Your heart was proud because of your beauty;  
you corrupted your wisdom for the sake of your splendor.

I cast you to the ground;

I exposed you before kings,

to feast their eyes on you. (<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ezekiel+28&version=NRSVUE> )

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The reading of Jesus' temptation in the desert is way out of chronology. Reading the temptation event at the start of Lent is an example of the Church using the "spiritual interpretation," the one Phillipa told me she "likes the best." Why do I say this is the spiritual interpretation? The temptation of Jesus in the desert happened immediately after his baptism and, thus, before His public ministry, not six weeks before His crucifixion. There are six weeks in Lent, and we will be figuratively, metaphorically, and spiritually in Holy Week at the foot of the cross on Good Friday, April 7, 2023. So why does the Church schedule the story of the Temptation of Jesus in the desert now?

Thinking about the Temptation of Jesus can be a spiritual exercise. We may draw from Jesus' experience of 40 days and 40 nights and use it for our spiritual, introspective journey through the church Season of Lent. We do spend 40 days and 40 nights, not counting Sundays, in this season. We can understand how long Jesus prayed and fasted to know God's will in His life. So, we draw from his historical experience and apply it to our

individual and collective spiritual experience.

Recently a person told me I am using your time to teach elementary things, the basics of Christianity. Well, I would agree, and my reason is that most adults under 50 years of age had very little religious education other than Sunday morning services. Significantly few adults under 50 went to a Sunday School, a Religious Education Program, a C.C.D. Program, or even a Bible Study anytime in their lives. So, why would I waste your time on critical theories of deconstructing a faith tradition you were never brought up in anyway? Instead, I know I provide a foundational education in the faith, the Church, and the Bible for a very high percentage of our community. Where else would we get this information; the store, the post office, or the Internet? AHHH, the Internet. We will discuss the powerful information disseminators online and in the media in a few minutes. For now, back to the basics, the building blocks, the fundamental foundational, ancient, Apostolic pieces of education that come to the surface in today's Scripture readings. Four readings are universally scheduled for today, three, and a psalm. These are planned in the Revised Common Lectionary for churches of every major and most smaller denominations. I trust you can handle the full serving of Scripture scheduled for today, so I do not reduce it to only one Scripture reading. Instead, I aim to educate and familiarize anyone who will listen with the working knowledge of the Holy Bible.

The other day, Ian and I discussed world governments, and Ian said, "well, Adam and Eve gave it all away. They gave everything to Lucifer." Yes, and that is where we start our discussion today. Notice Jesus did not spring to his feet and say: Get behind me, Satan, you do not own the world governments; my Father in Heaven owns them." Instead, Jesus offers no resistance to the claim that Lucifer can hand over all the world governments to Jesus if Jesus would worship Lucifer and declare Lucifer as the god.

Satan is only an Archangel, not a god of darkness.

Prince of the powers of the air: Ephesians 2:2 - head of a vast host of demons (Matt. 7:22 note Scofield). god of this age 2 Corinthians 4:4 ruler of this world by Jesus John 12:31. Note on "world" Kosmos "...present world system, the ethically bad sense of the world ....under which Satan has organized the world of unbelieving mankind upon his cosmic principles of force, greed, selfishness, ambition, and pleasure..." (Scofield note Rev. 13:8) Satan, Summary Scofield Revelation 20:10

\*\* I have been wanting to mention these various State Laws regulating what discussion is allowed in the classroom, both in the curriculum and daily conversation, regarding sexual orientation and gender. In some States, the consideration is aimed explicitly at preschool through third or fourth-grade classrooms. Anyone can understand the concern about discussing sexual practices and activities with little children. All would agree this is out-of-bounds. However, what about the student who is four through eleven years old and comes from a home with two mommies or two daddies? The child

is not allowed to share stories about their family; this education law silences their family story. The child will sense there is something inherently disordered about their family. The child is starting school pushed outside the group and only allowed to look through a window of hopeful acceptance. Perhaps the family structure is not two same-gendered parents. Suppose a six-year-old student is from a family where a 17-year-old brother or sister has just come out somewhere on the LGBTQ spectrum. This child's parents are telling the youngster to accept their older sibling but also told not to tell anyone at school, not to tell their teachers, or talk about this on the playground. The child might be told everyone will be in trouble if this is discussed at school. Let's ask ourselves what messages are we grinding into that child's formation of their understanding of the world they live in. What if, after all this silence, the child identifies as trans or something else the State deems abnormal? We are back to pre-1973 when both the American Psychological and Psychiatric Associations removed homosexuality from the list of mental illnesses. It seems we are on a slippery slope in some States that will return to the concept of mental disorders.

The Internet:  
WHAT MESSAGES ARE STILL OUT THERE ONLINE, AND INCREASED EVERY DAY?

John MacArthur <https://tms.edu/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/tmsj19f.pdf>

## **For Black LGBTQ Christians, storytelling is a tool of resilience**

Christian Science Monitor 1-27-22

( [https://www.csmonitor.com/USA/Society/2022/0127/For-Black-LGBTQ-Christians-storytelling-is-a-tool-of-resilience?cmpid=mkt:ggl:dsa-np&gclid=Cj0KCQiAgOefBhDgARIsAMhqXA5usfm3tssn1FrM2CIQdyJqP1\\_z0NeYT5siW3cYhRDKQk4moSQd8AEaAgvmEALw\\_wcB](https://www.csmonitor.com/USA/Society/2022/0127/For-Black-LGBTQ-Christians-storytelling-is-a-tool-of-resilience?cmpid=mkt:ggl:dsa-np&gclid=Cj0KCQiAgOefBhDgARIsAMhqXA5usfm3tssn1FrM2CIQdyJqP1_z0NeYT5siW3cYhRDKQk4moSQd8AEaAgvmEALw_wcB) )

## **Florida College Cancels Concert Over Gay Singer, Drawing Backlash**

Pensacola Christian College called off an appearance by the King's Singers, citing the "lifestyle" of a member. (<https://offthepress.com/florida-college-cancels-concert-over-gay-singer-drawing-backlash/> )

## **Evangelical group says church 'not in friendly cooperation with the convention' following appointment of Stacie Wood**

( <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2023/feb/22/southern-baptist-saddleback-church-stacie-wood#:~:text=Southern%20Baptists%20expel%20Saddleback%20megachurch%20over%20female%20pastor,-Evangelical%20group%20says&text=The%20Southern%20Baptist%20Convention%20has,appointment%20of%20a%20female%20pastor.> )

## **S.B.C. reaffirms resolution for history of racism in the denomination**

The Southern Baptist Convention The measure also affirmed a 1995 resolution apologizing for the history of racism in a denomination that was founded in 1845 in support of slavery and for "condoning and/or perpetuating individual and systemic racism in our lifetime". (<https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2021/jun/16/southern-baptist-convention-president-ed-litton> )



### **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. Today we will offer communal prayers and shared prayers. Our response after each prayer will be: Lord, hear our prayer.

**Leader – 3:** Lord Jesus, we intercede for all the people, animals, and land affected by the earthquake in Turkey and Syria on Monday last week. We pray for the families of the more than 50,000 confirmed deaths. The grief, shock, and sorrow these families are experiencing must be immeasurable. We also pray for the medical professionals as they treat tens of thousands who sustained bodily injury and are trying to recover and hundreds of thousands of people displaced throughout the region. We also pray for workers tasked with restoring utilities and facing the realities of the destroyed infrastructure. With all of these concerns in mind, we pray to the Lord;

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

(source: <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/2/25/death-toll-climbs-above-50000-after-turkey-syria-earthquakes#:~:text=In%20Turkey%20alone%2C%2044%2C218%20people,toll%20in%20Syria%20was%205%2C914>)

**Leader – 4:** We continue to pray for the children and people of all ages whose lives have been changed forever by war anywhere in the World.

For example, the war in Ukraine has raged on for 367 days. So, again we pray and ask You, God, to heal and strengthen the people traumatized by the loss of loved ones and the destruction of their homes, schools, hospitals, power sources, places of worship, and towns. For these intentions, we pray to the Lord.

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

**Leader – 4:** Black History Month ends this week. We pray that churches do not forget the importance of addressing the truth regarding racism and continue to teach people to show respect for all ethnicities; we pray to the Lord.

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

**Veronica:** We pray for people we know who need healing, support, and encouragement as they go through stages of healing. We especially pray for people fighting cancer, including Heather's mother, Henrietta Bower, our Ray Of Hope member Cheryl Allen, and others we are thinking of right now. We pray for the Holy Spirit to guide their doctors, medical teams, and scientists as all seek healing and wholeness. 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/)

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

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

**Veronica:** We pray for people who are healing, including Ed Askins, Philipa, and who else????\_\_\_\_\_. We ask God to assist in the healing process; we pray to the Lord.

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

**Veronica:** We also pray for all the other people in our Congregation who have requested our prayers; we pray to the Lord.

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

**Veronica:** At this time, we will add our shared prayers. Please speak your prayer loud enough so everyone may hear you. Your prayers may be for yourself or others, thanksgiving, praise, or whatever is on your mind. We begin with \_\_\_\_\_

**Veronica:** We invite you to add your petitions in silent prayer.  
**(silent prayer)**

**Veronica:** We pray to the Lord for these silent prayers.

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

**Leader – 3:** 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. Use the donation box next to the door before, during, or after this worship event in the Chapel. 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 our website. So please give what you can, but never give your last.

We also prepare our Holy Communion Altars and Tables at home and in the Chapel. Folks viewing on the Internet, please turn to page three and follow the instructions under leader two.

We are using the small Communion set at your seat in the Chapel. Shake the kit gently in case the contents have settled. After receiving Communion, someone will collect the cup.

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, then 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:** **Let The Church Say Amen** words and music Andraé Crouch

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**Leader -2:** (\*Pray a prayer over the offering, giving thanks and praise.\*) Please rise as you are able to conclude the Service Of The Word Of God with a doxology.



**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 in your hands 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

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.

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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. 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: "Forever Friends"

Authors Clair Cloninger, Kathy Frizzell ©1989 Curb Word Music (Admin. by W.C. Music Corp.)/CATALOG Curb Word Music. CCLI Song# 154429. 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](#).

**General Offering** for the week of February 5 \$1,556.00 (some people give monthly rather than weekly) Attendance 9

**General Offering** for the week of February 12 \$93.00 (some people give monthly rather than weekly) Attendance 6

**General Offering** for the week of February 19 \$118.00 (some people give monthly rather than weekly) Attendance 12

Ash Wednesday February 22 Attendance: 11

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

Anonymous Gift for the Liability Insurance: \$751.75. We are very grateful. Thank you.

Thank you to April Struhm for a \$100 donation toward the 2023 Pastor Self-Employment Tax line in the budget.

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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**UPCOMING EVENTS**

**OUR CALENDAR**

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

Sunday, March 19 Laetare Sunday, Rose Sunday in Lent, 4<sup>th</sup>  
Sunday of Lent, celebration day.

**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 the 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/@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, and a larger project day for removal of carpet and replacement with new carpet. 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 is invited to 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.

It is not required that you 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 really 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 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 would 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.

I have thought about this extensively and have decided to 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 teach people about this gift. I have stated in other places, **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 in that life.

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

We begin by inviting those who are on the fringe of Society, those who have been pushed aside, those who are poor, who are not accepted, who are sick, who need God's help in special ways. We welcome and bring the Eucharist to everyone who has been

told they cannot receive it by other Denominations. In conclusion, to all persons who have ever been 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)

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

See this in a PDF format from our website and 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 at this time 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. All of 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](#). As soon as it reasonably safe and prudent the Chapel will be reopened.

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/rayofhopenyqlbtqs](http://www.youtube.com/rayofhopenyqlbtqs)

—————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)