



**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 Thirty-eighth year of Ministry.

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

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

“This is the time we need to shine.”

“We are standing in Faith and Expecting Victory.”

Veronica Floyd, Moderator

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

*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 you 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 a time of refreshments and sharing.

February 28, 2021 – Lent Week II Year B

Black History Month 4th Sunday

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

***“what has been believed always, everywhere, and by all.”***

Scripture Readings for this worship event:

**First Reading:** Genesis 22:1-2, 9A, 10-13, 15-18 NRSV 1<sup>st</sup>

Test. pg. 17

**Psalms:** 116 selected verses with responsorial in this bulletin.

**Second Reading:** Romans 4:13-25 NRSV 2<sup>nd</sup> Test. Pg. 155

**Gospel:** Mark 8:31-38 NRSV 2<sup>ND</sup> Testament page 44

**\*We use the term 1st for the “Old” Testament and 2nd for the “New” Testament. The NRSV Bible 1st Testament numbers are found in the front portion 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

**Bells 1<sup>st</sup> ring.** 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 are in honor of 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 always ring the bell before worship and Bible Enrichment sessions. Listen carefully and see if you can hear all 39 rings.

\*\* We will welcome the Facebook Live guests before the second bells are rung.\*\*

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



## WE GATHER TO PRAISE THE LORD AND TO 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. You are as welcome here as Christ Jesus himself. In Romans Chapter 15:7 the church is commanded:

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

**Leader -1:** Please take a moment now to welcome one another, and introduce yourself to those around you for the glory of God. \*\*During COVID we may simply wave into the camera across the Internet.

**Pastor:** We begin in the name of God, Christ Our Saviour, and the Holy Spirit.

**ALL: Amen**

**Pastor:** Grace, peace, and fellowship be with you from God, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit. (1 Corinthians 1:3, 2 Corinthians 13:14, 2 Peter 1:2-4)

**ALL: And also with you.**

**Pastor: (\*\*introduction of the theme of the day\*)**

Never confuse position with power. Pharaoh had a position, but Moses had the power. Herod had a position, but John had the power. The cross had a position, but Jesus had the power. Lincoln had a position, but Douglass had the power. Woodrow Wilson had a position, but Ida B. Wells had the power. George Wallace had a position, but Rosa Parks had the power. Lyndon Baines Johnson had a position, but Martin Luther King had the power. We have the power. Don't you ever forget. —THE REVEREND OTIS MOSS III, Pastor of Trinity United Church Of Christ in Chicago, Ill.

Gates Jr., Henry Louis. The Black Church (pp. xiii-xiv). Penguin Publishing Group. Kindle Edition.

**Pastor:** We begin now to worship God in the beauty of holiness, in spirit, and in truth. (Psalm 96:9; John 4:23-24)

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

**FIRST SONG**

**+ The Candle Of Hope**

**Leader -1:** Please be seated. At this time we light our Resurrection Candle Of Hope. This is a testimony to our anticipation of the resurrection of all the dead, and the transformation of the living faithful, when Christ returns.

**ALL: Jesus said: “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 -1:** Our faith community is looking forward and waiting “for the blessed hope and the manifestation of the glory of our great God and Saviour, Jesus Christ.”(Titus2:13 NRSV) We named this candle the Candle of Hope in honor of the “Blessed Hope,” the return of Christ who will raise all to new life. (John 5:25)

**Leader -2:** Hello. My name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I am in the City of \_\_\_\_\_ in the State of \_\_\_\_\_. It is our custom to read panel entries from the Names Project Aids Memorial Quilt to help us remember those who died of AIDS, especially since many who were very sick and dying were rejected by the churches, were very much alone, and needed spiritual guidance. We remember them here and pray for their families.

**Leader -3:** Hello. My name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I am in the City of \_\_\_\_\_ in the State of \_\_\_\_\_. (Names are read at this time.)

**Leader -2:** We also remember in our hearts the names of our family and friends who have passed. May the candle’s flame remind us of the joy and happiness known in life, the comfort offered us 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**

**SECOND SONG**



## **WE PREPARE OUR HEARTS**

### **+ Confession and Forgiveness of our sins.**

**Leader -2:** Please be seated. (wait) At this time we prepare our hearts to be renewed by receiving God in Word and Sacrament by confessing our sins to Christ in silent prayer.

(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 God in any way. I ask you, my brothers and sisters, all the angels and the saints to pray for me to the Lord our God.

**Leader -4:** Almighty and good God, you continuously give us your presence in our living. You are with us in every aspect of our lives. Help us to be more loving and more appreciative of your presence with us. Lord, have mercy.

**ALL: Lord, have mercy.**

**Leader -4:** Christ Jesus, Our Lord, you are present in your church. You challenge us to love our neighbors as we love and respect ourselves. You challenge us to love our enemies too. Christ, have mercy.

**ALL: Christ, have mercy.**

**Leader -4:** Holy Spirit, you give us the ability to discern God's will. You stir up within us the gifts we need to be the living and loving church present in the world. Help us to listen and respond to your lead. Lord, have mercy.

**ALL: Lord, have mercy.**

**Pastor:** May Almighty God 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 thanks and praise to God for the forgiveness of our sins by praying the Gloria.

**Song:**

**Glory be to the one God, and to the Christ, and to the Holy Ghost. As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen. Amen.** (Traditional Gloria Patri hymn with inclusive language.)

**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**



## THE SERVICE OF THE WORD OF GOD

### + First Reading

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

God put Abraham to the test.  
He called to him, "Abraham!"  
"Here I am!" he replied.  
Then God said:  
"Take your son Isaac, your only one, whom you love,  
and go to the land of Moriah.  
There you shall offer him up as a holocaust  
on a height that I will point out to you."

When they came to the place of which God had told him,  
Abraham built an altar there and arranged the wood on it.  
Then he reached out and took the knife to slaughter his son.  
But the LORD's messenger called to him from heaven,  
"Abraham, Abraham!"  
"Here I am!" he answered.  
"Do not lay your hand on the boy," said the messenger.  
"Do not do the least thing to him.  
I know now how devoted you are to God,  
since you did not withhold from me your own beloved son."  
As Abraham looked about,  
he spied a ram caught by its horns in the thicket.  
So he went and took the ram  
and offered it up as a holocaust in place of his son.

Again the LORD's messenger called to Abraham from  
heaven and said:

"I swear by myself, declares the LORD,  
that because you acted as you did  
in not withholding from me your beloved son,  
I will bless you abundantly  
and make your descendants as countless  
as the stars of the sky and the sands of the seashore;  
your descendants shall take possession  
of the gates of their enemies,  
and in your descendants all the nations of the earth  
shall find blessing—  
all this because you obeyed my command."

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

**ALL: Thanks be to God!**

**+ Psalm**

**Reader:** Hello. My name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I am in the City of \_\_\_\_\_  
in the State of \_\_\_\_\_. The Psalm today is 116, with selected verses. The  
response is; **"I will walk before the Lord, in the land of the living."**

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

I believed, even when I said,

"I am greatly afflicted."

Precious in the eyes of the LORD

is the death of his faithful ones.

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

O LORD, I am your servant;

I am your servant, the son of your handmaid;

you have loosed my bonds.

To you will I offer sacrifice of thanksgiving,

and I will call upon the name of the LORD.

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

My vows to the LORD I will pay

in the presence of all his people,

In the courts of the house of the LORD,

in your midst, O Jerusalem.

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

### **+ Second Reading**

**Reader:** Hello. My name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I am in the City of \_\_\_\_\_ in the State of \_\_\_\_\_. The second reading is in the Book of Romans, chapter 4, verses 13-25. It is on page 2155 in the second testament, in the back of the NRSV Bible. Here begins the reading:

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

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

was handed over to death for our trespasses and was raised for our justification.

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

**ALL: Thanks be to God!**

## + 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 on page 44 in the back of the NRSV Bible. The reading is in the Book of Mark, chapter 8, verse 31 through 38.

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

**ALL: And also with you.**

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

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

**Reader:** Jesus began to teach his disciples that the Son of Man must undergo great suffering, and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. He said all this quite openly. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. But turning and looking at his disciples, he rebuked Peter and said, "Get behind me, Satan! For you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things."

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

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

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

**Gospel Acclamation**

# Forever, We Are Yours!

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

"Music For Worship"

Music by: Gaude! Liturgical Arts  
December 31, 1995

Glo-ry to the One God! Glo-ry to our Sa - vior Je - sus the

Christ! And, to the Ho - ly Spi - rit, for - ev - er You're Our God!

You brought us out of dark - ness, in - to Your mar - ve - lous Light! Your Word is our

joy! For this we give You glo - ry, both now and ev - er more!

For - ev - er we are Yours! For - ev - er we are Yours!

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## + Sermon

### NOTES

Matthew 24:6-8

<sup>6</sup> And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not troubled; for all *these things* must come to pass, but the end is not yet. <sup>7</sup> For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in various places: all this is but the beginning of the birth pangs.

Jesus said: "And you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free." John 8.32 -----

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

(Isaiah 56:7)

Isaiah 25:7, 8 The Lord will destroy on this mountain  
the shroud that is cast over all peoples,  
the sheet that is spread over all nations;  
8 he will swallow up death forever.

with

Hebrews 2:14 and 15 <sup>14</sup> Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, <sup>15</sup> and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.

with

1 Corinthians 15:26 The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.

\*\*\* 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.

=====  
**Prathia Hall: I have a dream. <https://www.pbs.org/video/prathia-halls-inspires-mlks-i-have-a-dream/?continuousplayautoplay=true>**

**IN THE WORLD: Nigerian Authorities Searching for 317 Schoolgirls Kidnapped by 'Armed Bandits' 2-26-21 <https://www.npr.org/2021/02/26/971796088/nigerian-authorities-searching-for-317-schoolgirls-kidnapped-by-armed-bandits>**

**IN THE UNITED STATES:**

**THE EQUALITY ACT passed 2-25-21  
<http://www.rayofhopechurch.com/PRIDE%20PAGES.htm>**

To:you [Details](#)

**TOM REED**  
23RD DISTRICT, NEW YORK

**COMMITTEE ON  
WAYS AND MEANS**

SUBCOMMITTEE ON SOCIAL SECURITY, REPUBLICAN LEADER

SUBCOMMITTEE ON HEALTH

SUBCOMMITTEE ON WORKER FAMILY SUPPORT



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**House of Representatives**  
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[www.Reed.House.gov](http://www.Reed.House.gov)

PROBLEM SOLVERS CAUCUS, CO-CHAIR

MANUFACTURING CAUCUS, CO-CHAIR

DIABETES CAUCUS, CO-CHAIR

Dear Shawn,

Thank you for contacting me regarding H.R. 5, the Equality Act. I appreciate hearing from you, and I care about your thoughts. They are important to me and they help me better represent you.

We care about ensuring all Americans are treated equally and fairly. I do not support discrimination of any kind, and throughout my tenure in Congress my voting record has reflected that sentiment. In 2016, we supported Rep. Sean Patrick Maloney's amendment to the Energy and Water Development and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, prohibiting LGBTQ discrimination by federal contractors receiving funds from that bill. This Congress we supported H. Res. 124, expressing opposition to banning service in the Armed Forces by openly transgender individuals. We believe that all Americans who bravely volunteer to serve our country should be given full and fair consideration.

We firmly oppose those who would discriminate against others when providing housing accommodations. Last Congress, we cosponsored the Fair and Equal Housing Act of 2017 to amend the Fair Housing Act and include sexual orientation and gender identity as protected classes. We remain committed to eliminating housing discrimination. On April 10, 2019, we secured a Fair Housing Initiative Program (FHIP) grant for Chautauqua Opportunities to support the victims of housing discrimination.

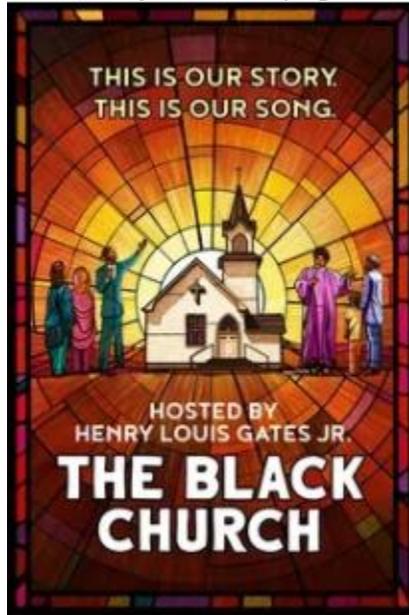
H.R. 5, the Equality Act, passed the House of Representatives with my support and now awaits consideration in the Senate. Should any other legislation regarding this issue come before the full House of Representatives for a vote, I will be sure to keep your views in mind.

Please stay in touch and share your views as we discuss these issues in Congress. Call one of our offices and visit our website, where you may find additional information on important issues. I encourage you to visit our [Facebook](#) page or follow us on [Twitter](#) where we can continue our conversation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tom Reed', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Tom Reed  
Member of Congress



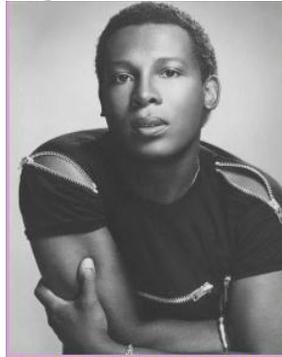
<https://www.pbs.org/show/black-church/>

**Trailer** <https://www.pbs.org/video/series-sell-black-church-a8zcqx/>

In this intimate four-hour series from executive producer, host, and writer Henry Louis Gates, Jr., we trace how this came to be in the 400 year-old story of the Black church in America, all the way down to its bedrock role as the site of African American survival and endurance, grace and resilience, thriving and testifying, freedom and independence, solidarity and speaking truth to power.

## DISCO'S GAY ANTHEMS

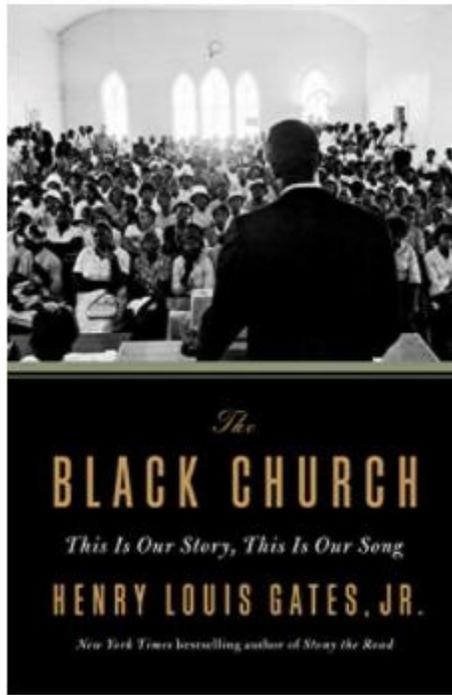
<https://www.pbs.org/video/church-welcoming-all/>



Sylvester James Jr. (September 6, 1947 – December 16, 1988), known mononymously as SYLVESTER, was an American singer-songwriter. Primarily active in the genres of disco, rhythm and blues, and soul, he was known for his flamboyant and androgynous appearance, falsetto singing voice, and hit disco singles in the late 1970s and 1980s.

Born in Watts, Los Angeles, to a middle-class African-American family, Sylvester developed a love of singing through the gospel choir of his Pentecostal church. Leaving the church after the congregation expressed disapproval of his homosexuality, he found friendship among a group of black cross-dressers and transgender women who called themselves The Disquotays. (Text condensed from a Wikipedia article) CONTINUE READING ABOUT SYLVESTER @ <http://www.rayofhopechurch.com/PRIDE%20PAGES.htm>

Henry Louis Gates, Jr. explores the roots of African American religion beginning with the trans-Atlantic slave trade and the extraordinary ways enslaved Africans preserved and adapted their faith practices from the brutality of slavery to emancipation. <https://www.pbs.org/video/the-black-church-episode1/?continuousplayautoplay=true>



[https://www.amazon.com/Black-Church-This-Story-Song-ebook/dp/B08H19NCCS/ref=sr\\_1\\_1?dchild=1&keywords=The+History+of+the+Black+Church+Henry+Louis+Gates&qid=1613857873&s=books&sr=1-1](https://www.amazon.com/Black-Church-This-Story-Song-ebook/dp/B08H19NCCS/ref=sr_1_1?dchild=1&keywords=The+History+of+the+Black+Church+Henry+Louis+Gates&qid=1613857873&s=books&sr=1-1)

**SEXISM AND SEXUALITY: THE CHURCH'S DOUBLE BIND** The Reverend Peter Gomes, a dear friend of mine, once remarked that the whole foundation of the Black Church was propped up by women and gay men, though the leadership of the church, he admitted, subjugated the former and was in denial about the latter. The issue of gender equality—or, more pointedly, gender inequality—had been an open wound for the Black Church since its inception. Change has been slow, but there is movement. The enrollment of Black women in seminary and divinity schools increased greatly in the 1980s, and Black women have risen to once unimaginable heights in the church, such as the appointment of Vashti Murphy McKenzie as a bishop in the AME Church in 2000. But a focus on leadership obscures the sexism Black women continue to face in their congregations. Amid the struggle over Black Power and Black theology, other internal frustrations burst to the surface in the early seventies. “The Black Church has been the place where so many of us have come to know a God of justice and a God of love,” says Eboni Marshall Turman. “But it has simultaneously been a place that has wounded so many of us.”<sup>4</sup> Douglas struggles with the contradictory message that comes from many Black Church denominations. “How is it that a church that emerged out of a struggle for freedom would then indeed oppress its own members? If the Black Church is going to survive, it is going to have to be welcoming to the whole entire Black community, because otherwise, there’s not going to be a church.”

Gates Jr., Henry Louis. *The Black Church* (pp. 158-159). Penguin Publishing Group. Kindle Edition.

On the West Coast in particular, those who felt marginalized within their own churches boldly broke with tradition and developed righteous new ways to express their beliefs. In 1968, the Edwin Hawkins Singers from Oakland, California, debuted their gospel song “Oh Happy Day.” The group was one of several Pentecostal choirs emerging in the late sixties to bring a youthful energy back to the church, but this song was a dramatic break from the past. It not only became an international hit, it also won a Grammy, and the choir members were treated like rock stars. But Pentecostal church leaders criticized the

singers, branding the song's crossover success as too worldly to be properly religious. "I was so enthralled in the way that they presented the Gospel, Miss Shirley with her beautiful, regal-looking self," the gospel singer Yolanda Adams recalls, referring to the singer Shirley Miller. "And I'm like, oh, my gosh. This is what I can aspire to? And then to also look cool doing it." But what about the tension between Saturday night and Sunday morning? Adams minimizes the distinction. "Entertainment shouldn't be in the church? What do you think the preacher does? But when the church makes the indictment that you don't serve God anymore, it hurts." And sometimes that indictment can drive people away from the church. In 1972, building on the success of "Oh Happy Day," the Hawkins family opened a storefront church in Oakland. They called it Love Center. Unlike mainstream Pentecostal churches, Love Center adopted the Bay Area's counterculture approach to sexuality. Its choir and pews became a haven for gay and lesbian singers, among them the gospel musician Bishop Yvette Flunder, the daughter and granddaughter of Church of God in Christ pastors. Flunder felt deeply alienated from the Pentecostal church in which she'd been raised. "I came from the church that was just—don't. You just don't," she says. "I never had to leave church to be a same-gender-loving woman. I didn't have to leave the church of my birth, because that's where I learned that I was a same-gender-loving woman. What made me an exile was because I decided to tell the truth. There's an awful price to pay. There are people who are very afraid. They're afraid to lose their churches. They're afraid to lose their positions. They don't want to harm their parents and their legacy. And so they remain deeply closeted." Flunder left the Church of God in Christ and focused less on religion and more on her work with older people and HIV-positive people. She recalls with laughter the call she received from Love Center, asking her to fill in for Hawkins while he was away: "I said yes with my mouth, but my whole body said no. But I had said yes with my mouth by that time. I hung up the phone. I had to go find my Bible. I didn't know where it was. And I had my Bible. I rolled myself a joint and got a glass of red wine. So I want you to get that in your mind: a Bible, a joint, and a glass of red wine! I preached my own self free that day and joined the church." What had been repressed would find a novel way to be expressed, when sacred, churchy vocals fused with secular club rhythms to form disco's gay anthems. The genre's divas, like Sylvester, anointed the "Queen of Disco" in the late 1970s, had all been raised in the church. "Sylvester, who was raised in the Church of God in Christ, just like me," Flunder says, "had that tune, had those licks, had that sound, had that vibe"—and also that alienation from the church. "He said to me that the same people that turned me out turned him out. I'll never forget it. And I told him, I said, there's a lot of people that have that testimony. We didn't have to leave church to be sexualized. The truth of the matter is that sometimes the same atmosphere that sexualized you is the atmosphere that puts you out." Or, as West bluntly states, "Homophobia and transphobia are as evil as white supremacy, but most Black churches have not embraced this prophetic witness." The arrival of HIV/AIDS in the early 1980s led to a range of disappointing responses from the Black religious community. Many initially dismissed the disease as a plague that affected only gay white men. Even as it ravaged the Black community, the AME Church maintained that the disease was contracted through sinful acts and promoted abstinence as its official position on the crisis.

Gates Jr., Henry Louis. *The Black Church* (pp. 160-163). Penguin Publishing Group. Kindle Edition.

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**+ (optional) Profession Of Faith**

**Creed #1: The Apostles' Creed**

I believe in the One Eternal, Loving, Life-Giving,  
Forgiving, Good, and Gracious God,  
Creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus the Christ, the only Begotten Son of God,  
our Lord and Saviour.

He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit  
and born of the Virgin Mary.

He suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, died, and was buried.

He descended to the dead.

On the third day, God raised Jesus from the dead.

He ascended into heaven,  
and is seated at the right hand of God.

Christ will come again in glory to judge the living and the  
dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, Who is equal with God and the Son.

I believe in the one, holy, Christian Church, the Body of Jesus  
Christ that is universal/catholic, and apostolic.

I believe in the communion of saints,  
the forgiveness of sins,  
the resurrection of the body,  
and life everlasting. Amen

(Revised 10-31-20 Br. Benedict)

**+ The Prayers Of The People: Shared Prayer**

**Leader – 4:** Hello. My name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I am in the City

of \_\_\_\_\_ in the State of \_\_\_\_\_. Having heard the Word Of God we bring our prayers to God in Christ, through the powerful ministry of the Holy Spirit. Everyone is welcome to pray out loud for themselves, for others, prayers of praise and thanksgiving, or whatever is on your heart. Please keep the prayers brief so as many people as possible may participate in the given time. We invite you to speak your prayers loud enough so everyone may hear your prayer and join you in spirit and in truth. So, we begin with \_\_\_\_\_

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

**Leader – 4:** (when all prayers have been heard) Lord Jesus, we lift our spoken and unspoken prayers and we ask you in 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 - 5:** Hello. My name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I am in the City of \_\_\_\_\_ in the State of \_\_\_\_\_. At this time we show our gratitude to God and our dedication to the Church of Jesus Christ, which is His Body present in the world, by offering our financial gifts and support for this ministry. During our COVID Infection Prevention procedures, we have many ways you can continue to support this ministry. To be directed to our website where you may make a secure Paypal donation using any debit or credit card, and you do not have to have a Paypal account to use this, [Right Click Here](#). Those in the chapel may use the

offering plate, or you may send your donation to Lisa Frost directly or to Ray Of Hope Church, 380 W. 1<sup>st</sup> St. Elmira, NY 14901. We always say give what you can, but never give your last.

At the same time, we will prepare our Holy Communion Altars and Tables at home and in the chapel. Bring to your table at home some wine, or grape juice, a small piece of bread, a little bit of water in a side cup, and a side napkin. The ideal situation is you are celebrating with us during the live webcast. We do understand you may be viewing this video at another time. We do not encourage private practice and reception of Communion as your normal, weekly worship routine. 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 will be able to join us in a live virtual worship event **SOON**. (\*This practice policy was changed on Gaudete Sunday, December 13, 2020.\*)

(\* The offering is received. The Altar and Tables are set. A song may be sung or silent prayer is maintained. \*)

**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**

**Pastor:** Lord God, we ask you to receive our worship this day. We pray that you will be pleased with our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving we offer you with humble and contrite hearts.

**ALL: May the Lord accept our lives as a sacrifice for the praise and glory of God's name, for our good and the good of all God's people. Amen**

**Pastor:** Please lift your bread at this time as I pray this prayer.

**Pastor:** Blessed are you, Lord, God of all creation. It is through your goodness that we have this bread, 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), the Bread of the Angels (Psalm 78:25), the Bread of God (John 6:33), the Living Bread (John 6:51), the Bread Of Life (John 6:35, 48, 58), the Bread of the New Covenant (John 6:32, 49, 50,51, 58), the Sacrament of the Eucharist, the very Body Of Christ (John 6:52-56, 1Corinthians 10:16).

**ALL: Blessed be God forever.**

**Pastor:** Please set down your bread.

Now pour your wine or grape juice into your cup, if you have not done so already. Then add a small amount of water to the cup. With this water, we remember Jesus is human, and with this fruit of the vine we remember He is divine forever.

Now, please lift your cup with me at this time as I pray this prayer.

**Pastor:** Blessed are you, Lord, God of all creation. It is through your goodness that we have this 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 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), the Cup of the New Covenant (Matthew 26:28, Luke 22:20, 1 Corinthians 11:25), the very Blood Of Christ (John 6:54-56; 1Corinthians 10:16).

**ALL: Blessed be God forever.**

**Pastor:** Please set down your cup.

**Pastor:** We offer ourselves, with our whole heart, our whole soul, and our whole mind unto you Almighty God. Accomplish your desires for us in our lives. Mold us to be more like you every day. Receive us along with these gifts of bread and fruit of the vine to be made holy, and through them make us into a perfect offering to you, One and Only Holy God. We ask this in the name of Jesus, Our Lord.

**ALL: Amen.**

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

**ALL: And also with you!**

**Pastor:** Together we lift up our hearts!

**ALL: We lift them up to the Lord!**

**Pastor:** Together we give thanks to the Lord, our God!

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

**\*\*\*\*\* the people may be invited to offer prayers of thanks and praise.**

**\*\*\*\*\* the Pastor continues with a Eucharistic Prayer.**

## 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 three sharps (F#, C#, G#) 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.

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

**Pastor:** Here at Ray Of Hope Church, everyone prays together to ask the Holy Spirit to give to us the exact same gifts that Jesus gave when He instituted Holy Communion for His Church. At this time I 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 Spiritual and physical well-being. We ask this in the Name of Jesus. Amen**

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

**Pastor:** Please lower your hands now. Please lift at this time the Eucharistic Body Of Christ, the Bread of Salvation and together we will say aloud our Lord and Saviour's words of institution when he gave us the Blessed Sacrament.

**ALL: Before He was given up to death, a death He freely accepted, He took the bread and gave you thanks. He broke the bread, gave it to his disciples, and said:  
Take this, all of you, and eat it: This is my body which will be given up for you. Do this in memory of me.**

**(\*\* pause for adoration\*\*) (\*\*you may bow or genuflect if you choose to\*\*)**

**Pastor:** Please set down the Bread of Life. Please lift now, the cup of salvation. Now, for the cup we say aloud:

**ALL: When the supper was ended, He took the cup. Again He gave you thanks and praise, gave the cup to His disciples, and said:  
Take this, all of you, and drink from it: This is the cup of my blood, the blood of the new and everlasting covenant. It will be shed for you and for all so that sins may be forgiven. Do this in memory of me.**

**(\*\* pause for adoration\*\*) (\*\*you may bow or genuflect if you choose to\*\*)**

**Pastor:** Please set down the Cup of Salvation.

## + Optional Christological Canticale:

### #1 Philippians 2:6-11

Though He was in the form of God, Jesus did not deem equality with God something to be grasped at.

Rather, He emptied Himself and took the form of a slave, being born in the likeness of men.

He was known to be of human estate, and it was thus that He humbled Himself, obediently accepting even death, death on a cross!

Because of this, God highly exalted Him and bestowed on Him the name above every other name, So that at the name of Jesus every knee must bend

(optional\*\*genuflect or bow\*\*)

in the heavens, on the earth, and under the earth, and every tongue proclaim to the glory of God:

**JESUS CHRIST IS LORD!**

### #2 Colossians 1:15-20

Christ is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation. In Christ everything in heaven and on earth was created, things visible and invisible.

All were created through Him;  
all were created for Him.  
Jesus is before all else that is.  
In Him, everything continues in being.

It is Jesus who is head of the body, the Church!  
He who is the beginning, the first-born of the dead, so that primacy may be His in everything.

It pleased God to make absolute fullness reside in Christ and, by means of Him, to reconcile everything in His person, both on earth and in the heavens, making peace through the blood of His cross.

## + The Mystery Of Faith

a) Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again.

**b) Dying you destroyed our death, rising you restored our life.  
Lord Jesus, come in glory.**

**c) When we eat this bread and drink this cup, we proclaim your  
death, Lord Jesus, until you come in glory.**

**d) Lord, by your cross and resurrection you have set us free.  
You are the savior of the world.**

**+ Prayers of Dedication and/or Intercession for other Ministries.**

**Pastor (or other person designated):** While we are gathered here together we ask your blessing on all religious leaders of every religion known to humanity. We pray that religious leaders everywhere would recognize and act upon their obligation to guide all people to you, Almighty God. We also pray that religious leaders will guide people to work for liberty and justice for everyone. We ask your blessing, Almighty God upon every community of seekers, and those with no faith or formal Religion.

We also pray for all people who have been driven from faith because of the sins of those who have misused religion to hurt others. We pray for those who have been cast aside, excommunicated, and wrongly not included. May all people everywhere come to the knowledge that they too are the living light of God. We eagerly await your promised renewal of all creation when you shall be all in all. (1 Corinthians 15:28)

**+ Final Doxology**

**Pastor:** Please elevate the Holy Eucharist as a gesture of praise, thanksgiving, honor, gratitude, and the offering of the entire Church, the Body Of Christ, to God.

**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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## The Reception of Holy Communion

### + The Lord's Prayer

**Pastor:** Having heard the Word of God and having remembered 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**

**+ Sign Of Peace**

**Pastor:** The peace of the Lord Jesus Christ is with you.

**ALL:** And also with you.

**+ The Lamb Of God**

**Pastor:** Please break the bread as we pray together:

**ALL: Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world:  
have mercy on us.**

**Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world:  
have mercy on us.**

**Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world:  
grant us peace.**

**Pastor:** You may set the bread down and pray silently as I pray this prayer.

**+ Priestly Prayer For All People**

**Pastor:** Lord Jesus Christ, trusting in your love and your mercy we now partake of your body and blood as you commanded. We pray that our participation does not bring us condemnation as St. Paul warned, but sanctification and healing in mind, body, soul, and spirit. We pray that all God's people will one day be reassembled without the loss of anyone in your kingdom of love and glory. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

**ALL: AMEN**

**+ Invitation to the Lord's Table**

**Pastor:** At this time I ask you to lift with me the Blessed Sacrament.

**Pastor:** Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world. Behold Jesus truly present in the Bread of Life, and the Cup of Salvation. Behold Him who said whoever eats of this Bread and drinks

of this Cup though they die they shall live forever. (John 6:50, 51, 54)  
Blessed are those who come to His Table. All are welcome.

**ALL: Lord, you make me worthy to receive you, and by your  
Word I am healed.** (This prayer is credited to Fr. James Callan, Spiritus Christi of Rochester, NY.)

**Pastor:** Please set down the Bread and Cup at this time.

**Pastor:** I assure you, by His promises, that anyone who receives this Holy Communion today will surely live forever and be raised by Christ to new life.

**Leader-1:** Communion is now served. Everyone is invited to receive Holy Communion at Ray Of Hope Church. It is not required that you be a member of this church or any other church to receive Holy Communion. This is the Table of Jesus Christ, He invites you to come and receive Him in this Eucharistic banquet.

When you come forward, the person serving you will say; “The Body and the Blood of Jesus Christ for you.” Respond with “Amen” or “Alleluia” or some other acclamation of appreciation or faith. Then take a piece of the bread and dip it into the cup and serve yourself. If you are here with family or friends you may come to Holy Communion together and serve each other. Please wait after you receive Holy Communion because the person serving you will pray with you before you return to your seat.

Serving Holy Communion today will be: \_\_\_\_\_  
We sing during Holy Communion and maintain our worship. We begin.  
The Table of Christ is served.

**PRIVATE PRAYER FOR A SPIRITUAL COMMUNION.** 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.

**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.



## **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)

**Pastor:** We go forth in peace and love to serve the Lord ...

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

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF GIFTS AND DONATIONS**

**General Offering** for the week; Worship February 21, 2021 Offering \$88.00. Attendance - 6.  
**Special Gifts** **We give God thanks and praise for all the gifts given.**

**UPCOMING EVENTS**

Visit our Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/lgbtqgia2ssByYou/>

MARCH IS WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH. Next week we look at ministry of Bishop Yvette Flunder and her influence on women in the church, women's rights, women of color, and lgbt women in the church.

March 2 Tuesday **Bible Enrichment 6:30 p.m.**

March 14, 2021 Laetare Sunday, Rose Sunday in Lent Wk 4

March 26 Friday Council 2:00 p.m.

March 28, 2021 Palm Sunday

April 1, 2021 Holy Thursday

April 2, 2021 Sacrifice of the Cross

April 3, 2021 Vigil of the Resurrection



## Ray Of Hope Church Weekly Schedule

**Elmira Worship-** Sunday 10:30 AM – 380 W. First St. Parsonage/Monastery .

Join us live on SKYPE: rayofhope26 is our contact name. Sign on by 10:15 AM.

**Syracuse Worship-** looking for a host in Syracuse. For more information

[Click Here.](#)

**Bible Enrichment-** Tuesday 6:30-8 PM-380 W. First St. Parsonage /Monastery.

Or Join us live on SKYPE: rayofhope26 is our contact name. Sign on by 6:15

PM. [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 web site;

[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. All of our regular services will be available live on Skype and we are adding Facebook Live. To get the information on how to use Skype to participate with us [Click Here](#).. Visit our Facebook page [Click Here](#). As soon as it is reasonably safe and prudent the chapel will be reopened. Call for an appointment if you want some time to come in and pray.

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*.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

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

I would like to schedule an appointment with the Pastor.

Other \_\_\_\_\_



## 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 on line:

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

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

—————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)