

**"My House shall be a house of prayer for All People."
(Isaiah 56:7)**

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

MISSION: Love God, Love your neighbor, and make disciples
of every person everywhere. (Matthew 22:37-39; Matthew 28:19)

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

We extend a special welcome to our visitors.
You are as welcome here as Jesus Christ Himself.
In Romans 15:7 the Scriptures exhort us to:

"Welcome one another, then, as Christ welcomed you,
for the glory of God" (NABRE – 2011)

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

Today is 3-15-26, Lent WK IV, Women's History Month Wk III, 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."

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

Scripture Readings for this worship event:

First Reading: 1 Samuel 16:1-13a NRSV 1st Test. Pg. 259

Psalm: 23 - responsorial in this bulletin.

Second Reading: Ephesians 5:8-14 NRSV 2nd Test. Pg. 194

Gospel: John 9:1-41 NRSV 2ND Testament page 102

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

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CALL TO WORSHIP

Visit and greet one another until the bell rings.

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

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



WE GATHER TO PRAISE THE LORD AND GIVE THANKS

+ Pastoral Welcome

Veronica Floyd: Hello. My name is _____. I am in_(city) _____, __(State)_____. Good morning. Welcome to Ray Of Hope Church Of Our Lord Jesus Christ, the faith community founded in Central New York and now all across the World through the Internet, where everyone is welcome. This church is your Spiritual Service Station, and Faith Repair Shop, where our Loving Creating God is C.E.O., the owner of record is Jesus, the Christ, and the Operations Manager is The Holy Spirit. Our Congregation is a franchise location of the Body Of Christ, the Church. The Members and Friends are the working staff here today to facilitate your worship experience. Today is March 15, 2026. We announce all instructions, pages, and song numbers and use a

psalm response verse to assist people with various stages of visual impairment.

To all who are online or may view this recording later, to facilitate your participation, please look for today's bulletin, Order of Worship, and the Music Supplement on Facebook Live by right-clicking the "Featured Links" icon. On Zoom, look in the Chat window for two document icons. On our website, look at the large gold box labeled SUNDAY WORSHIP INFORMATION at www.rayofhopechurch.com. The Zoom link is also posted on the webpage.

Katrina Lourdiane: Hello. My name is _____. I am in_(city) _____, _(State)_____. Good morning, and welcome. (** Reader, please remember to look at the people and smile.**) We invite you to participate in as many or as few parts of this worship event as you feel comfortable. To people watching online, you may receive Holy Communion with us during this worship event. To participate in Communion, please bring to your table 1) a cup with some wine or grape juice, 2) a small piece of bread, cracker, or matzo on a plate, and 3) a second cup with some water and a side napkin. We will use these in the second half of the worship service. Now, gather all these items, and we will start shortly.



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

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



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

event.

Katrina Lourdiane: (**PLEASE wait for the second bells to ring, and remember to look up at the people and smile.**) Good morning, my name is Katrina Lourdiane. Thank you for choosing to spend time with us today. In Romans, Chapter 15, verse 7, the Scriptures instruct us to:

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

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

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

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

Brother: The grace of Our Lord Jesus Christ, God's love, and the Holy Spirit's fellowship is with you. (2 Corinthians 13:14)

ALL: And also with you, praise the Lord.

Brother: Welcome to your Spiritual Service Station and Faith Repair Shop, where we promise to do our best to help everyone worship God in Christ, through the powerful ministry of the Holy Spirit. At Ray Of Hope, we embrace a free-thinking standard, meaning, in part, that what you believe is between you and God. You are welcome here from any faith tradition, and even if you have no faith at all. God will take care of the relationship between God and you. We are here to welcome, love, and affirm all of who you are.

Today is March 15, 2026, Lent Wk IV - Laetare Sunday, and the third week of Women's History Month, 2026. Other names for Laetare Sunday include

"Refreshment Sunday," "Rose Sunday," and "Rejoice Sunday." Today is the counterpart to Gaudete Sunday, the third Sunday of Advent; however, we are confronted with the reality of terribly difficult circumstances in our world today that did not exist on Gaudete Sunday, December 14, 2025. Today is a Joyful pause in a penitential season. The entrance verse used to be Rejoice, O Jerusalem..... Isaiah 66:10 LATIN

Rejoice with Jerusalem, and be glad for her,
all you who love her;
rejoice with her in joy,
all you who mourn over her—(NRSVUE)

¹⁰ Laetamini cum Jerusalem et exultate in ea, omnes qui diligitis eam;
gaudete cum ea gaudio, universi qui lugetis super eam:

[Read full chapter](#) (Biblia Sacra Vulgate)

(<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Isaias%2066%3A10&version=VULGATE>) (background: <https://www.biblegateway.com/versions/Biblia-Sacra-Vulgata-VULGATE/>)

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

Ray Of Hope Church officially began on Reformation Day, October 31, 1983, the vigil of the Feast of All Saints. October 31, 2024, marked our forty-first anniversary, and we are now in our forty-second year of ministry.

The first public worship event in the Southern Tier was held on Saturday, September 14, 1996, The Feast of the Triumph Of The Cross. September 14, 2025, was the twenty-ninth anniversary of the first worship event. We are in our 30th year of ministry in the Southern Tier.

Sunday, June 1, 2025, was the twenty-second anniversary of the opening of the Elmira Chapel. We are in our 23rd year at 380 W. First Street, Elmira, NY.



Lisa: 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.

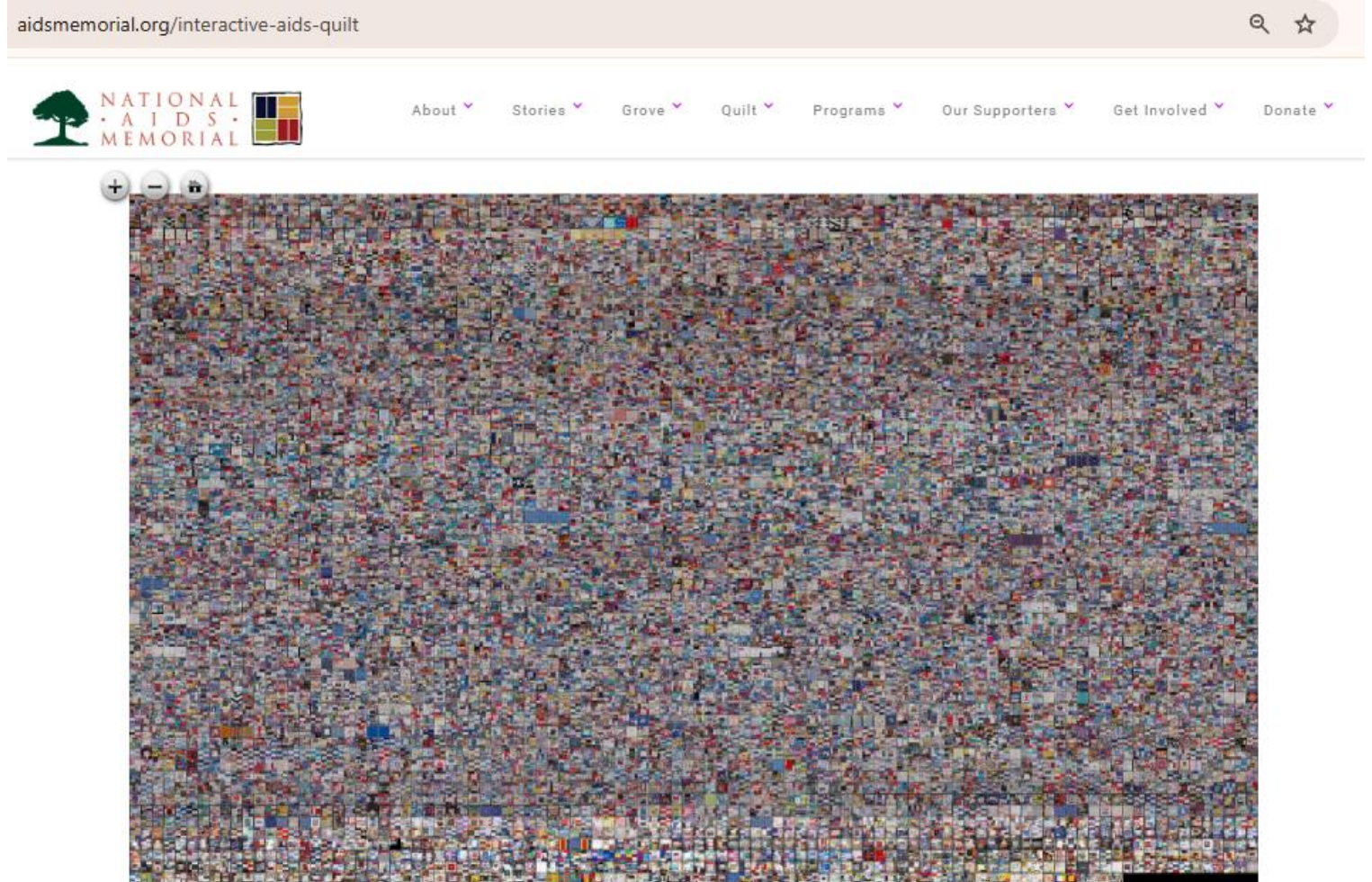
Lisa: Our first song today has the twenty-third psalm in the verses. Psalm 23 is our psalm for today, between the first and second readings. Our first song is "Come To Me" in the green Glory and Praise hymnal (number 629) and in the

electronic Music Edition. Please rise as you are able for our first song, "Come To Me."

FIRST SONG: Come to Me. Words and Music by Gregory Norbet Tune: Text based on Matthew 11:28–30; Psalm 23. Original text and music: Gregory Norbet, OSB; © 1971, 1994 (revised text), The Benedictine Foundation of the State of Vermont, Inc. All rights reserved. Glory and Praise, Second Edition, number 629, GIA. Used with permission. Onelicense Song #81269 Used with Print Permission and Streaming License A-741278.

+ The Candle Of Hope

Kaiden: Please be seated. Scroll down on this page to see a picture of the National AIDS Memorial Quilt on one screen. We turned this picture into a link for you to use at home to visit the virtual search tool for the Quilt. People may still add 3-foot-by-6-foot panels to the Quilt in someone's honor.





Kaiden: Now we light our Candle Of Hope to celebrate the Truth Jesus promises us. 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)

Kaiden: Please look over and watch as the Candle of Hope is lit. When the flame flickers, we pray our proclamation of Faith.

Kaiden: Together:

ALL: Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again.

Kaiden: Ray Of Hope started in part to form a Church with an intentional ministry to persons affected by and infected with HIV and AIDS. It is forty-three years later, and still, some churches, religions, and, yes, even some countries continue rejecting the sick, lonely, and dying people with HIV and AIDS who deserve comfort and spiritual guidance. The World Health Organization reported nearly 40 million people were living with HIV globally in 2023. In 2024, the United Nations AIDS organization, UNAIDS, reported that the number had risen to 40.8 million people, and we are confident the number will continue rising in 2026. Therefore, to keep HIV and AIDS in the conscious prayers of people, we continue to read aloud over **110,000** names sewn into over 50,000 panels of the AIDS Memorial Quilt at the National AIDS Memorial. Please scroll the page to see the panels on block number 182.



These are the names on Block # 182

- Stuart White (1)
- Clifford Stone (2)
- Dan Borotrager (3)
- Tom Donovan (4)
- Forrest Duke (5)
- Kenneth Vittatoe (6)
- David R. Burkhart (7)
- Jason James Lazzeri (8)

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

Kaiden: In silent prayer, we also remember the names of family and friends who have preceded us in death. **(**pause for silent prayer.**)** May our candle's flame help bring to mind the Joy and happiness known in life, the comfort offered by the Holy Spirit in our loss, and the promise of the "Blessed Hope" we have in the Resurrection of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

ALL: Amen

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

Katrina Lourdiane: Our second song is "Blessed Assurance" in the Electronic Music Edition. The words are also below. Please rise as you are able to sing, "Blessed Assurance."

Second Song: WORDS ONLY

Blessed Assurance, written by Fanny Jane Crosby and Phoebe Palmer Knapp

Verse 1

Blessed assurance Jesus is mine
O what a foretaste of glory divine
Heir of salvation purchase of God
Born of His Spirit washed in His blood

Chorus

This is my story this is my song
Praising my Savior all the day long
This is my story this is my song
Praising my Savior all the day long

Verse 2

Perfect submission perfect delight
Visions of rapture now burst on my sight
Angels descending bring from above
Echoes of mercy whispers of love

Verse 3

Perfect submission all is at rest
I in my Savior am happy and blest
Watching and waiting looking above
Filled with His goodness lost in His love

Blessed Assurance written by Fanny Jane Crosby and Phoebe Palmer Knapp

Text: 9 10 9 9 with refrain; Fanny J. Crosby, 1820-1915, alt. Music: ASSURANCE; Phoebe P. Knapp, 1839-1908.

Contributors: ASSURANCE, Phoebe Knapp, Fanny Crosby Onelicense Song#94239 Used with Print Permission and Streaming License A-74127.



WE PREPARE OUR HEARTS

+ Confession and Forgiveness of our sins, our failures.

Ed Askins: Please be seated. (wait) Now, Ray Of Hope Church provides another service: Christ is truly present among us and forgives our sins through the powerful ministry of the Holy Spirit. In silent prayer, we consider our relationship with God and others, confess faults, sins, and failures to Christ, who is present in this room and our bodies, and receive His immediate forgiveness.

(**Please wait to provide some silence for private prayers and confession.**)

Veronica: Loving, Creating, and Eternal God, all life in the Universe comes from You. When we become self-absorbed, we close ourselves to seeing your beauty in all its forms. Lord, have mercy.

ALL: Lord, have mercy.

Veronica: Christ Jesus, you call us to present the Love of God to everyone we meet. The governments of the world compete with conflicting ideas, agendas, and systems, even to the point of war. Broaden our concern for each other. Christ, have mercy.

ALL: Christ, have mercy.

Veronica: Holy Spirit, you desire to help us understand our circumstances and the world systems we live in. Society would have us prioritize everything over time to come together for worship, time for private prayer, and devotional study of the Word. Holy Spirit, with you living in us, and with all the resources we have available, you have set out a feast of prayer and the Word, even in the presence of our enemies. Lord, have mercy.

ALL: Lord, have mercy.

Lisa Frost: We pray for forgiveness and renewal together.

ALL: Lord Jesus, hear our confession, and receive our sins. Touch our hearts and shape our desires so that we will seek your Will daily in our lives. Send your Holy Spirit now to heal the wounds in our memories.

Inform our conscience with the fire of your divine love so we will follow you without reservation. Draw us closer to you with your gentle voice and loving arms. We accept your forgiveness and restoration, in the Name of God, the Christ, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Lisa Frost: The Lord has heard our confession and has granted forgiveness, and so we declare together:

ALL: The faith community of Ray Of Hope Church openly declares the forgiveness of all your confessed sins in the Name of Jesus Christ. He forgives you, we forgive you, and God rejoices over your restoration in Christ. Amen.

Lisa Frost: The Church now provides the service of praising God together in thanksgiving. Please rise as you are able to give thanks and praise to God for the forgiveness of our sins by praying the Gloria.

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.

Wayne Harris: Please remain standing for the opening prayer.

+ Opening Prayer

Wayne Harris: The Lord is with you.

ALL: And also with you.

Wayne Harris: Together, we lift up our hearts.

ALL: We lift them up to the Lord.

Wayne Harris: We make this exhortation together:

ALL: Let us keep the Scriptures in mind and meditate upon them day and night, persevering in prayer, always on the watch. Let us beg the Lord to give us real knowledge of what we read and to show us not only how to understand it but how to put it into practice, so that we may deserve to obtain spiritual grace, enlightened by the law of the Holy Spirit, through Jesus Christ our Lord, whose power and glory will endure throughout the ages. Amen

Wayne Harris: Saint Origen, who lived from 185 – 254 A.D., wrote this prayer. His prayer is our prayer on this day. Please be seated now and listen with all your heart, soul, and mind as we open the Word of God.



THE SERVICE OF THE WORD OF GOD

+ First Reading

Ed Askins: Hello. My name is_____, and I am in the City of in the State of ____.

The first reading is in the Book of First Samuel, chapter 16, verses 1-13. We are reading from the NRSV Updated Edition of ©2021. The NRSV

pew bibles have a similar reading on page 259. Here begins the reading:

David Anointed as King

16 The LORD said to Samuel, "How long will you grieve over Saul? I have rejected him from being king over Israel. Fill your horn with oil and set out; I will send you to Jesse the Bethlehemite, for I have provided for myself a king among his sons." ² Samuel said, "How can I go? If Saul hears of it, he will kill me." And the LORD said, "Take a heifer with you and say, 'I have come to sacrifice to the LORD.'" ³ Invite Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will show you what you shall do, and you shall anoint for me the one whom I name to you." ⁴ Samuel did what the LORD commanded and came to Bethlehem. The elders of the city came to meet him trembling and said, "Do you come peaceably?" ⁵ He said, "Peaceably. I have come to sacrifice to the LORD; sanctify yourselves and come with me to the sacrifice." And he sanctified Jesse and his sons and invited them to the sacrifice.

⁶ When they came, he looked on Eliab and thought, "Surely his anointed is now before the LORD." ⁷ But the LORD said to Samuel, "Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him, for the LORD does not see as mortals see; they look on the outward appearance, but the LORD looks on the heart." ⁸ Then Jesse called Abinadab and made him pass before Samuel. He said, "Neither has the LORD chosen this one." ⁹ Then Jesse made Shammah pass by. And he said, "Neither has the LORD chosen this one." ¹⁰ Jesse made seven of his sons pass before Samuel, and Samuel said to Jesse, "The LORD has not chosen any of these." ¹¹ Samuel said to Jesse, "Are all your sons here?" And he said, "There remains yet the youngest, but he is keeping the sheep." And Samuel said to Jesse, "Send and bring him, for we will not sit down until he comes here." ¹² He sent and brought him in. Now he was ruddy and had beautiful eyes and was handsome. The LORD said, "Rise and anoint him, for this is the one." ¹³ Then Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the presence of his brothers, and the spirit of the LORD came mightily upon David from that day forward. Samuel then set out and went to Ramah.

Reader: This is the Word of the Lord!

ALL: Thanks be to God!

(<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Samuel+16%3A1-13&version=NRSVUE>)

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+ Psalm:

Marcus Coppola: (Introduction only if needed.) Hello. My name is _____ and I am in the City of _____ in the State of _____.

The Psalm today is number 23. The response is: "Lord, you are my shepherd today and forever."

R. Lord, you are my shepherd today and forever.

¹ LORD, you are my shepherd;
there is nothing I shall want.

² Fresh and green are the pastures
where you give me repose.

Near restful waters you lead me,

³ to revive my drooping spirit.

R. Lord, you are my shepherd today and forever.

You guide me along the right path;

You are true to your name.

⁴ If I should walk in the valley of darkness
no evil would I fear.

You are there with your crook and your staff;
with these you give me comfort.

R. Lord, you are my shepherd today and forever.

⁵ You have prepared a banquet for me
in the sight of my foes.

My head you have anointed with oil;
my cup is overflowing.

R. Lord, you are my shepherd today and forever.

⁶ Surely goodness and kindness shall follow me
all the days of my life.
In the LORD's own house shall I dwell
ever and ever.

**R. Lord, you are my shepherd today and forever.
Give praise to the Living God.
To God's Son, Jesus the Christ, Our Lord.
To the Spirit who reigns in our hearts.
Both now, and for-ever. A-men.**

Psalm 23. God, shepherd and host.

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+ Second Reading

Veronica Floyd: **** **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 Ephesians, chapter 5, verses 8-14. Again, this is the NRSV Updated Edition of ©2021. The NRSV pew bibles have a similar translation on page 194 in the second testament. Here begins the reading:

Brothers and Sisters:⁸ for once you were darkness, but now in the Lord you are light. Walk as children of light, ⁹ for the fruit of the light^[a] is found in all that is good and right and true. ¹⁰ Try to find out what is pleasing to the Lord. ¹¹ Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness; rather, expose them. ¹² For it is shameful even to mention what such people do secretly, ¹³ but everything exposed by the light becomes visible, ¹⁴ for everything that becomes visible is light. Therefore it says,

"Sleeper, awake!

Rise from the dead,
and Christ will shine on you."

Reader: This is the Word of the Lord!

ALL: Thanks be to God!

[Read full chapter](#) Footnotes

a. 5.9 Other ancient authorities read *of the Spirit*

(Source: <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ephesians+5%3A8-14&version=NRSVUE>)
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+ The Holy Gospel of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ

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

Gospel Acclamation

We Love Your Word!

To my friends in Christ at Ray Of Hope Church "Music for Worship" Music by: Gaude! Liturgical Arts
October 31, 1993
Revised 8/2013

We love Your Word, O Lord for it set us free. We know the

6 truth, O Lord; We are Yours e - ter - nal - ly. So we stand to hear Your

11 Word. We praise You for Your Word. Al-le - lu - a! for Your Word. It heals our

16 hearts, souls and minds. For Your Word, Al - le - lu - ia! Thank You Je - sus!

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

Reader: The Gospel reading is John, chapter 9, verses 1-41. We are reading from the NRSV Updated Edition of © 2021. The NRSV pew bibles have a similar translation on page 102 in the second testament.

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

ALL: And also with you.

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

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

A Man Born Blind Receives Sight

⁹ As he walked along, he saw a man blind from birth. ² His disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" ³ Jesus answered, "Neither this man nor his parents sinned; he was born blind so that God's works might be revealed in him. ⁴ We^[a] must work the works of him who sent me^[b] while it is day; night is coming, when no one can work. ⁵ As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world." ⁶ When he had said this, he spat on the ground and made mud with the saliva and spread the mud on the man's eyes, ⁷ saying to him, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam" (which means Sent). Then he went and washed and came back able to see. ⁸ The neighbors and those who had seen him before as a beggar began to ask, "Is this not the man who used to sit and beg?" ⁹ Some were saying, "It is he." Others were saying, "No, but it is someone like him." He kept saying, "I am he." ¹⁰ But they kept asking him, "Then how were your eyes opened?" ¹¹ He answered, "The man called Jesus made mud, spread it on my eyes, and said to me, 'Go to Siloam and wash.' Then I went and washed and received my sight." ¹² They said to him, "Where is he?" He said, "I do not know."

The Pharisees Investigate the Healing

¹³ They brought to the Pharisees the man who had formerly been blind. ¹⁴ Now it was a Sabbath day when Jesus made the mud and opened his eyes. ¹⁵ Then the Pharisees also began to ask him how he had received his sight. He said to them, "He put mud on my eyes.

Then I washed, and now I see." ¹⁶ Some of the Pharisees said, "This man is not from God, for he does not observe the Sabbath." Others said, "How can a man who is a sinner perform such signs?" And they were divided. ¹⁷ So they said again to the blind man, "What do you say about him? It was your eyes he opened." He said, "He is a prophet."

¹⁸ The Jews did not believe that he had been blind and had received his sight until they called the parents of the man who had received his sight ¹⁹ and asked them, "Is this your son, who you say was born blind? How then does he now see?" ²⁰ His parents answered, "We know that this is our son and that he was born blind, ²¹ but we do not know how it is that now he sees, nor do we know who opened his eyes. Ask him; he is of age. He will speak for himself." ²² His parents said this because they were afraid of the Jews, for the Jews had already agreed that anyone who confessed Jesus^[c] to be the Messiah^[d] would be put out of the synagogue. ²³ Therefore his parents said, "He is of age; ask him."

²⁴ So for the second time they called the man who had been blind, and they said to him, "Give glory to God! We know that this man is a sinner." ²⁵ He answered, "I do not know whether he is a sinner. One thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see." ²⁶ They said to him, "What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?" ²⁷ He answered them, "I have told you already, and you would not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you also want to become his disciples?" ²⁸ Then they reviled him, saying, "You are his disciple, but we are disciples of Moses. ²⁹ We know that God has spoken to Moses, but as for this man, we do not know where he comes from." ³⁰ The man answered, "Here is an astonishing thing! You do not know where he comes from, yet he opened my eyes. ³¹ We know that God does not listen to sinners, but he does listen to one who worships him and obeys his will. ³² Never since the world began has it been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a person born blind. ³³ If this man were not from God, he could do nothing." ³⁴ They answered him, "You were born entirely in sins, and are you trying to teach us?" And they drove him out.

Spiritual Blindness

³⁵ Jesus heard that they had driven him out, and when he found him he said, "Do you believe in the Son of Man?" ^[e] ³⁶ He answered, "And who is he, sir?" ^[f] Tell me, so that I may believe in him." ³⁷ Jesus said to him, "You have seen him, and the one speaking with you is he." ³⁸ He said, "Lord, ^[g] I believe." And he worshiped him. ³⁹ Jesus said, "I came into this world for judgment, so that those who do not see may see and those who do see may become blind." ⁴⁰ Some of the Pharisees who were with him heard this and said to him, "Surely we are not blind, are we?" ⁴¹ Jesus said to them, "If you were blind, you would not have sin. But now that you say, 'We see,' your sin remains.

Reader: This is the Gospel of the Lord!

ALL: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ!

Footnotes

- a. 9.4 Other ancient authorities read *I*
- b. 9.4 Other ancient authorities read *us*
- c. 9.22 Gk *him*
- d. 9.22 Or *the Christ*
- e. 9.35 Other ancient authorities read *the Son of God*
- f. 9.36 Or *Lord*
- g. 9.38 Or *Sir*

(Source: <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+9&version=NRSVUE>)

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(NEW REVISED STANDARD VERSION UPDATED EDITION (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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+ Sermon

Ray Of Hope Church Of Our Lord Jesus Christ, Inc.
 The LGBTQSIAN2ss+ Pride Activities, and Social Events Center of Elmira, NY.
 The only Church in Central New York founded and fostered by the GLBTQSIAN2ss+ community for 43 years. October 31, 2025 - 42nd Anniversary now in our 43rd 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. 15:10

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

RED for Martyrs; dry martyr, wet martyr. People feel crushed under the weight of massive firings across the United States, a result of the new President and his Administration. **Good news: Federal Judges ordered the Executive Administration to reinstate all Federal Employees who have been fired since the start of this Administration. (Source: <https://www.cnn.com/2025/03/13/politics/judge-opm-probationary-employees-fired-hearing/index.html>)

=====SERMON NOTES: Brother ===3-15-26=====

=====READINGS =====

Spiritual wisdom is available to anyone who asks God for it.

In the first reading, First Samuel, chapter 16, verses 1-13, we see the first part of God's plan that David of Bethlehem, of the house of Jesse, would become King of Israel.

"David was around 15 years old when Samuel anointed him king in the midst of his brothers. How much time passed after David was anointed and the killing of Goliath is not clear." (source: [The Sentinel, 3-16-23](https://www.lewistownsentinel.com/news/religion/2019/07/david-the-shepherd-boy/#:~:text=David%20was%20around%2015%20years,of%20Goliath%20is%20not%20clear.), "David, the shepherd boy" by Lyndon Stimeling July 13, 2019, <https://www.lewistownsentinel.com/news/religion/2019/07/david-the-shepherd-boy/#:~:text=David%20was%20around%2015%20years,of%20Goliath%20is%20not%20clear.>)

Eventually, David would be brought into the royal household by King Saul to play the harp and soothe Saul's anxieties. Then, after the killing of Goliath, the Prince, Jonathan, would love and respect David and take him as his own in a public ceremony, setting off terrible jealousy from the King. When both the King and the Prince are killed in battle, the people do what seems obvious to them and call the partner of the Prince, David, to the throne. God had pre-ordained this to happen. It was through the relationship with Jonathan that the will of God to make David King of Israel came about.

Bringing David to the throne through his relationship with Jonathan exemplifies how God can see above and beyond our comprehension of situations. God frequently executes a plan that surprises us and is not something we would typically think of.

The Psalm speaks to God, guiding us in the image of God as our shepherd.

The second reading brings our attention back to Romans 5. This time, using the metaphors of light and darkness, Paul tells us to choose. Paul writes, "walk as children of the light".. "Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness." "Try to find out what is pleasing to the Lord.." STAY AWAKE, or STAY WOKE! by our current social discussion.

The Gospel reading takes up the testimony of the healing of a well-known local man born blind. Jesus first establishes that people are not born with bodily difficulties because of their personal or family sins. The world is not whole because of sin in general, but no person or family is struck with punishment from God due to sin.

Jesus declares he is "the light of the world." (verse 5) The clergy tried to distract the people by publicly charging Jesus with doing work on the Sabbath day. They hoped to distract the people with religiosity, clericalism, and what I like to call "churchianity."

The established professional clergy could not accept a miracle from someone not on their established list of educated and certified teachers by their standards. They declare, "²⁹ We know that God has spoken to Moses, but as for this man, we do not know where he comes from."

Jesus accepts worship in verse 38. By accepting worship in a public showing of his divinity, Jesus begins setting the stage for being charged with blasphemy.

³⁵ Jesus heard that they had driven him out, and when he found him he said, "Do you believe in the Son of Man?" ³⁶ He answered, "And who is he, sir?" ³⁷ Tell me, so that I may believe in him." ³⁷ Jesus said to him, "You have seen him, and the one speaking with you is he." ³⁸ He said, "Lord, I believe." And he worshiped him. ³⁹ Jesus said, "I came into this world for judgment, so that those who do not see may see and those who do see may become blind." ⁴⁰ Some of the Pharisees who were with him heard this and said to him, "Surely we are not blind, are we?" ⁴¹ Jesus said to them, "If you were blind, you would not have sin. But now that you say, 'We see,' your sin remains.

Here, Jesus teaches the Doctrine that anyone who wants spiritual wisdom through Him may have it. Later, Jesus will ensure that the Holy Spirit will guide the believers into all truth. **Our joy (Laetare Sunday) is standing and firm on promises such as this one, from Jesus.**

=====SOCIAL PIECE=====

NRSVUE and the NRSVUE-CA

(NEW REVISED STANDARD VERSION UPDATED EDITION (NRSVUE))

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(New Revised Standard Version Catholic Edition (NRSVCE))

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https://catholicbibletalk.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/10/NCC-Catholic-Imprimatur-for-NRSVue_Press-Release.pdf

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Imprimatur Granted for the New Revised Standard Version Updated Edition, Catholic Edition.

October 3, 2025

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) has granted an imprimatur for the Catholic Edition of the New Revised Standard Version Updated Edition (NRSVue) Bible translation. The NRSVue, Catholic Edition is now approved for publication and "permitted for private use and study by the Catholic faithful."

Dr. Hugh Page Jr., chair of the **NCC's Bible Translation and Utilization Committee (BTU)**, said, "I am delighted that the NRSVue, Catholic Edition has received the imprimatur from the USCCB. Such ensures even wider engagement of this update as well as the intellectual and spiritual riches contained therein. We are deeply grateful to the USCCB for its careful review and endorsement."

The text of the NRSVue, CE will be the same as the base text of the NRSVue for those books regarded as Scripture by both Catholics and Protestants. The Catholic Edition will include the Deuterocanonical books of the Old Testament in the Roman Catholic canonical order.

The NRSVue was released in 2021 as a major update to the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV), published in 1989. The translation prioritized meticulous research and sound biblical scholarship to deliver the highest quality and most accurate English-language Bible translation. The NCC partnered with the Society of Biblical Literature to initiate the review and update of the text. For questions, contact Friendship Press at info@friendshippress.org.

It also confirms that there are no differences between the NRSVue and the NRSVue-CE except for the inclusion of the deuterocanonical books in the Catholic canonical order (a detail that was originally reported in the comments here on the blog).

NOTE FROM BROTHER BENEDICT: The National Council of Churches and Friendship Press are PROTESTANT, not Roman Catholic organizations.

OLD TESTAMENT NRSVUE	OLD TESTAMENT NRSVUE-CE
Genesis	Genesis
Exodus	Exodus
Leviticus	Leviticus
Numbers	Numbers
Deuteronomy	Deuteronomy
Joshua	Joshua
Judges	Judges
Ruth	Ruth
1 Samuel	1 Samuel
2 Samuel	2 Samuel
1 Kings	1 Kings
2 Kings	2 Kings
1 Chronicles	1 Chronicles
2 Chronicles	2 Chronicles
Ezra	Ezra
Nehemiah	Nehemiah
Esther	Tobit
Job	Judith
Psalms	Esther
Proverbs	1 Maccabees
Ecclesiastes	2 Maccabees
Song of Songs	Job
Isaiah	Psalms
Jeremiah	Proverbs
Lamentations	Ecclesiastes
Ezekiel	Song of Solomon
Daniel	Wisdom
Hosea	Sirach
Joel	Isaiah
Amos	Jeremiah
Obadiah	Lamentations
Jonah	Baruch
Micah	Ezekiel
Nahum	Daniel
Habakkuk	Hosea
Zephaniah	Joel
Haggai	Amos
Zechariah	Obadiah
Malachi	Jonah
APOCRYPHA - MORE HERE	Micah
Tobit	Nahum
Judith	Habakkuk
Greek Esther	Zephaniah
Wisdom of Solomon	Haggai

Sirach	Zechariah
Baruch	Malachi
Letter of Jeremiah	
Prayer of Azariah	
Susanna	
Bel and the Dragon	
1 Maccabees	
2 Maccabees	
1 Esdras	
Prayer of Manasseh	
Psalms 151	
3 Maccabees	
2 Esdras	
4 Maccabees	

[Statement of Cardinal Blase J. Cupich, archbishop of Chicago, “A Call to Conscience”](#)

[March 7, 2026](#)

Calling up the Draft. On March 10, Karoline Leavitt, the White House Secretary, stated there is no "current plan" for a draft, but also noted the administration "wisely keeps its options on the table" for Operation Epic Fury.

(Source: [https://www.military.com/daily-news/2026/03/11/could-us-bring-back-draft-who-would-be-called-first-and-who-qualifies.html#:~:text=Comments%20From%20the%20White%20House,\(Archives.gov\)](https://www.military.com/daily-news/2026/03/11/could-us-bring-back-draft-who-would-be-called-first-and-who-qualifies.html#:~:text=Comments%20From%20the%20White%20House,(Archives.gov)). See also **People.com:** <https://people.com/karoline-leavitt-says-trump-not-ruling-out-military-draft-amid-iran-war-11921874>)

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) Chair threatens media organizations with revoking their broadcast licenses for writing unflattering things about the war. (Sources include: <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2026/mar/14/fcc-broadcast-permits-iran-war-news> <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/fcc-brendan-carr-threat-news-networks-broadcast-license/>) Brendan Carr, who President Trump appointed as the FCC Chair in November 2024 (having served as a commissioner since 2017), is the author of Chapter 28, "Federal Communications Commission," in Project 2025, Mandate for Leadership: The Conservative Promise.

The cost of the war for the first six days (3-14-26) is 11.3 billion dollars, yet healthcare cuts are far less to extend ACA subsidies.

Project 2025 Unitive Executive Branch

La Trappe possibly Closing <https://www.ncronline.org/news/after-900-years-monks-iconic->

[french-la-trappe-abbey-consider-leaving-historic-monastery](#)

Churches Closing

New Melleray <https://newmelleray.org/> not accepting new members

(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ODEoEyUzH0o>)

Lukewarm Church

Digital Pastors

"Love endures all things, believes all things, bears all things, and hopes all things. Love never ends." (NKJV 1 Cor. 13:7-8)

*)- CONTINUING REVELATION * * * **Keeping Watch** * * * On Sunday, January 19, 2024, I wrote the following in the bulletin. Finally, a hopeful thought to close with: on Friday, January 17, 2025, President Biden announced the Equal Rights Amendment to the Constitution is the law of the land because all of the required votes of the States have been received. The American Bar Association agrees that all requirements have been met. The National Archivist, Colleen Shogan, only has to certify and publish the 28th Amendment.

(Source:[https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2025/01/17/statement-from-president-joe-biden-on-the-equal-rights-amendment/#:~:text=The%20American%20Bar%20Association%20\(ABA,Constitution%20as%20the%2028th%20Amendment.\)](https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2025/01/17/statement-from-president-joe-biden-on-the-equal-rights-amendment/#:~:text=The%20American%20Bar%20Association%20(ABA,Constitution%20as%20the%2028th%20Amendment.))) NPR story on the ERA

<https://www.npr.org/2025/01/17/nx-s1-5264378/biden-era-national-archivist-constitution>

=====

*****OPEN MICROPHONE *****

=====

INTERCESSORY PRAYERS

Brother: Our Prayers of the People will each be followed by our common petition, "Lord, hear our prayer."

Katrina: We hold up to You, oh God, all who have asked us to pray for them and those for whom we have promised to pray. We pray to the Lord,

ALL: Lord, hear our prayer.

Katrina: We pray for all who are in danger because of acts of war, especially the children, the elderly, those in hospitals, nursing centers, and schools that the weapons of war have leveled or severely damaged. We pray to the Lord,

ALL: Lord, hear our prayer.

Kaiden: We pray that government leaders think beyond their own countries, or worse, their own personal ambitions for worldly power, wealth, and authority, and seek to understand the global crisis of approximately 304 million people who are migrating or are otherwise displaced. We pray to the Lord,

ALL: Lord, hear our prayer.

Kaiden: We pray for people who have lost access to employment, a home, or an apartment, especially those in despair. We ask the Holy Spirit to guide social agencies in finding practical solutions that help people regain their footing in society. We pray to the Lord,

ALL: Lord, hear our prayer.

Marcus: We pray for people who suffer oppression and discrimination, especially when it is based on poverty, social status, ethnicity, sexual identity, and gender expression. We pray to the Lord,

ALL: Lord, hear our prayer.

Marcus: We pray for all who are sick, all who are in any form of treatment, all who care for the sick, and all who support those delivering care and their families. We pray to the Lord,

ALL: Lord, hear our prayer.

Marcus: We pray that all people throughout the world, especially the lukewarm of faith, and those in most need of your mercy, O God, would turn to You and accept your guidance. We pray to the Lord,

ALL: Lord, hear our prayer.

Marcus: God, give us the grace to bear with each other's burdens and to be instruments of your peace. We pray to the Lord,

ALL: Lord, hear our prayer.

Pastor concludes the Prayers of the People.

(For more information on government statistics regarding some of the populations mentioned above, see the following source: [https://www.samhsa.gov/newsroom/press-announcements/20250728/samhsa-releases-annual-national-survey-on-drug-use-and-health#:~:text=Among%20people%2012%20or%20older%2C%2016.8%25%20\(or%2048.4%20million,2021%20to%209.8%25%20in%202024](https://www.samhsa.gov/newsroom/press-announcements/20250728/samhsa-releases-annual-national-survey-on-drug-use-and-health#:~:text=Among%20people%2012%20or%20older%2C%2016.8%25%20(or%2048.4%20million,2021%20to%209.8%25%20in%202024)).




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

Veronica Floyd: Worship is our primary activity as a church. We are grateful to all the people over the last forty-two years of ministry who have given their help and assistance so that Ray Of Hope is here in 2024. Thank you to everyone who has contributed with your gifts "seen and unseen," may God bless you.

We are an independent organization founded and funded by anyone who appreciates what we offer. Your support is one way to give God thanks and praise for this unique ministry for all people. There are many convenient ways



to participate with your donation, including this QR Code , this link in the bulletin: [Donate to Ray Of Hope Church Of Our Lord Jesus Christ](#); other live links on [our website](#), the envelopes and donation box next to the door, always available in the Chapel. Checks sent in the mail are also accepted. [Right-Click Here](#) for our contact information, including our street address. We always say, "Give what you can, but never give your last."

Katrina Lourdine: As we set the Table of the Lord here in the chapel and in your homes, we are going to sing: "Hosea." The music is available in the Glory and Praise green hymnal (number 471) and in the electronic Music Edition. Please sing along as we set the Table of the Lord.

OFFERTORY: Hosea Text and Music Weston Priory and Gregory Norbet

Contributors: Gregory Norbet, Weston Priory

Tune: Text: Based on Hosea. Text and music, Gregory Norbet, OSB, © 1972, The Benedictine Foundation of the State of Vermont, Inc. All rights reserved. Used with permission. Glory and Praise, Second Edition, number 471. Onelicense # 81048 Used with Print Permission and Streaming License A-741278

Ed Askins: (**You may improvise a prayer or use this one.) God, we bless you and praise you for all the gifts we have received to support this ministry. We thank you for those who can give financially and by sharing their skills, prayers, talents, volunteering, and other forms of support. We bless you, Lord, for those who could not give at this time, and we pray that all their needs will be met. We dedicate all this to the Name of Jesus, Amen. Please rise as you are able **to sing and pray**

the conclusion of the Service of the Word with the Doxology.

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

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



WE CELEBRATE THE SACRED MEAL OF CHRIST

Pastor or?: Blessed are you, Lord, God of all Creation. Through your goodness, 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.

Brother Benedict: Now, please lift your cup with me as I pray this prayer. Blessed are you, Lord, God of all Creation. Through your goodness, 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.
Truly present and risen among us, **SAINTS**, the Lord is with you!

ALL: And also with you!

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

ALL: We lift them up to the Lord!

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

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

Pastor: (An improvised prayer is said here.)

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

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

ALL: O God, in the Name of Jesus, we, your faithful people, ask your Only One and Holy Spirit to bless and separate this Bread and fruit of the vine for Christ's purpose. Through the powerful ministry of the Holy Spirit, give to us the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ in precisely the exact same manner that He gave them, and

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

Brother: You may relax your arms and hands. Kaiden, please show the Bread today, and Wayne, please show the cup. **Today, we pray together in song the words of Institution.**

+ The Words Of The Institution Of The Holy Eucharist

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

+ The Lord's Prayer

Wayne Harris: 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**

Music setting information: **The Lord's Prayer Composed by Albert Hay Malotte.** ©1935 G. Schirmer, Inc. (Admin. by Music Sales Corporation) CCLI Song#1534 Used with permission by our Christian Copyright License Incorporated License Number 706121, and Christian Copyright License Incorporated Streaming Plus License 21787152.



The Reception of Holy Communion

Pastor: Please raise the Blessed Sacrament as a sign of praise and pray together:

ALL: Behold the Lamb of God. Behold the Christ 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, and I will raise them up on the last day.

Pastor: Blessed are those who come to this table; everyone is welcome.

ALL: Lord, you make me worthy to receive you, and by your Word, I am healed. 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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Ed Askins: Please open your kit and receive Holy Communion now. Receive now the Body and Blood of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, the Gift of God for the People of God. Receive these gifts of love to strengthen your resolve to serve others and God, and to fortify your Salvation. 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, and will be raised by Christ to new life, and live forever.

ALL: Thanks be to God. (Please pause here to give people time to receive.**)**

PRIVATE PRAYER FOR A SPIRITUAL COMMUNION.

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

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

Spiritual Communion Prayer from the Episcopal National Cathedral Prayer Book.

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

+ Sign Of Peace

Marcus: In Romans, chapter five, verse one, we read: 5:1 "Therefore, since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." Friends in Christ, since we have this peace, we

can share it with one another. Therefore, I proclaim, the Peace of the Lord Jesus Christ is with you.

ALL: And also with you.

Marcus: 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.

Marcus: 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, and clear your worship table and altar.

Katrina Lourdiane: We continue our prayers now by singing together: "Reflections on a Central Commitment," words and music by Deacon Ray Defendorf. The words are printed below. Please rise as you are able to sing "Reflections on a Central Commitment."

COMMUNION SONG: REFLECTIONS ON A CENTRAL COMMITMENT

Words and Music by Ray Defendorf – Celebrate Life Songs

Verse 1

Sometimes it seems that we've lost track of
The reason we were put upon the earth.
Is it to have never – rocked a boat or never tried?
Is it just – to exist – until we die?

Refrain 1

That's not my way. Not why I suffered.
To change the world – I died.
I gave my life for – a new way of living.
My way is love. My way brings peace.

Verse 2

If success and wealth – are the only goals.
That give this life its worth.
Tell me why the flowers – and the little child delight.
In simply living in this world – and resting by the night.

Refrain 2

Sing a new song. Live a new life.
To change the world – I died.
I gave my life for – a new way of living.
My way is love. My way brings peace.

Verse 3

Life is change. The youth becomes an elder.
Youth is spring – and spring is but a day.
But if in spring the seeds of brotherhood are sown . . .
Your life will grow in love – and that's my way.

Refrain 3

Spread the Good News. Tell my story.
To change the world – I died.
I gave my life for – a new way of living.
My way is love. My way brings peace.
Peace. Peace!

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From Deacon Ray's CD – "Gentle Spirit". Deacon Ray Defendorf on Apple Music:

<https://music.apple.com/us/artist/deacon-ray-defendorf/64895995>

Deacon Ray Defendorf <https://deaconray.com/>

Reflections performed by Celebrate Life 2004 <https://deaconray.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/02-Reflections.mp3>

Deacon Ray on Spotify:

<https://open.spotify.com/album/6VdFJaJejlkKc4bbg2d4X>

Treasurer's Report for the month of January 2026

Once again, I'm very grateful to you all for your generous donations. You will see in this report we definitely have some financial challenges. Please pray as we navigate through these challenges that God will direct, lead and supply.

General Fund opening balance at the beginning of January was \$1,618.80. Regular donations to the General Fund were \$1,961.33. I transferred into the account from savings \$200.00. Payments out of this account were: Pastoral compensation of \$2,575.00 Verizon \$62.75, One License for copyright \$200.00, Rainah Barnes \$70.00 for reimbursement for the QR code on Pride bookmarks. Larger bills monthly allotment was moved to savings in the amount of \$153.00 and Paypal charges were \$23.33 and I transferred \$83.34 to savings for January Self-Employment tax for the Appointed Pastor. After these were paid the balance of this account at the end of the month was \$612.71. There were no undeposited funds for January.

Building Fund opening balance was \$334.59 Donations to the Building fund were as follows: Ian and Christina McLaughlin \$450.00, Brother Shawn Benedict \$710.00 and Ed \$40.00 and Marcus \$400.00. I transferred in from Building Improvement Fund \$2,510.00. Bills that came out of the fund this month was the Credit Card bill with Key Bank of \$48.44, electric bill \$132.42, gas bill \$445.00 Isaac's Heating and Air Conditioning for laundry room boiler repair \$2,510.00 and also \$ \$373.71 for basement water repair, Sewer tax \$36.66 and I transferred \$246.00 to saving toward the large bill allotment. Ending balance of this fund was \$652.36.

Building Improvement Fund opening balance on this account was \$2,587.36. Deposits to this account were Katrina \$60.00, Deanna Caputo \$360.00 and Wayne and Glenn \$50.00. I transferred \$2,510.00 to Building Fund for the Isaac's bill. The ending balance in the account was \$547.36.

Savings (Council) Account opening balance in this account was \$1,454.53. Transfers to this account were \$153.00 from General Fund for large bills, \$83.34 from General Fund for the Appointed Pastor's self-employment tax for January and \$246.00 from Building fund for large bills. Transfers out of this account were \$200.00 to the General Fund towards One License bill. The balance at the end of the month was \$1,736.87.

Our donations for this month were \$4,031.33 and our expenses were \$6,477.31. The higher expenses were a result of the \$2,510.00 paid to Isaac's in the beginning of January which was funded by the money in the Building Improvement Fund. If you remove that our expenses would have been \$3,967.31... so within \$64.02. January donations in 2025 were \$4,512.28 about \$500 more than this year. That could simply be a timing issue. To explain this, some people might give me a donation the last week of January for their February giving. We record it when we receive it, regardless of what month it is intended for.

Upcoming bills: Bills due before the end of February: Transfer to savings for General fund large bills \$160.00, Appointed Pastor's self-employment tax for February \$83.34, transfer to savings for Building Fund large bills \$246.00.

Just a note of explanation. On the large bills, I have done a small spreadsheet on the large bills. From the General fund we have \$1,900.00 a year that is extra expenses from our regular monthly expenses and the Building Fund we have \$2,950.00 in extra expenses. So that is why I set this aside every month.

We have received our new NYSEG bills that are due March 8th. February as you know, was a bitterly cold month. February was also our last month of our current budget. With the payment I made in January, we were even with the budget. However, our Gas bill for February was \$812.86 due to the extreme cold. With this being the last month of the budget, it is all due on March 8th. I called them yesterday and they were very good to deal with. They said whatever we could not pay, we could enter into a 10 month

payment agreement. It would be \$122.00 down and then 9 equal payments until it's paid in full with no interest. She did say they have already calculated our new budget and that is going to be \$367.00 per month. Any payment plan would be in addition to the \$367.00. So here is challenge #1. Our electric budget is \$352.92 each month, our gas without extra payments is \$367.00, our Liability insurance is \$307.00, the credit card runs about \$50.00 a month and the water bill about \$35.00 and our large bills transfer with water is \$246.00. The total of these monthly operating expenses without any extra building repairs or payment plan payments is \$1,357.92 Our current monthly donations for a 4 week month are \$1,138.00. That means a shortage of \$219.92 each month. Our giving to the Building fund has to increase in order to cover basic bills. Also, the NYSEG and insurance bills are all due before the 8th of each month. So we have \$1,026.92 coming out of the building fund that first week each and every month. Challenge #2 is how to pay this large electric bill, when we are already in a deficit with our current monthly bills. Discuss credit card here.

Credit Card

The balance on the credit card as of the last statement is \$2,107.89. I did pay CCLI today online, which requires a credit card. That bill was \$453.00, so the church credit card was used. The balance on the card would now be \$2,560.89. There is available credit of \$1,439.11. Our interest rate on this card is 14.74% and we did receive an annual statement on the credit card, that we paid \$353.07 in interest on this card during 2025.

Balances as of February 20, 2026

General fund: \$958.72 (we have Rainah's check still outstanding from the end of January)

Building fund: \$197.04

Building Improvement fund: \$697.36

Savings: \$1,736.87

Savings breakdown is: Appointed Pastor's self-employment tax for January \$83.34, Dishwasher \$150.00, Building fund large bills, \$922.53, General fund large bills \$551.00, Water bill \$30.00.

NOTES OF THANKS TO EVERYONE FOR GENEROSITY GIVEN TO THE LORD THROUGH RAY OF HOPE

General Offering for the week of February 15, \$523.00 Attendance 16 on Sunday
Tuesday February 17 - 8, Ash Wednesday, February 18, Noon Mass -9 Ash Wednesday evening - 13

General Offering for the week of February 22, \$800.00 Attendance 10 on Sunday
Tuesday February 24 - 8, Wednesday, February 25, Mass - 8

General Offering for the week of March 1, \$1,925.00 Attendance 10 on Sunday
Tuesday March 3 - 5, Wednesday, March 4, Mass - 6

General Offering for the week of March 8, \$50.00 Attendance 11 on Sunday
Tuesday March 10 - session not held, Wednesday, March 11, Mass - 8

THANK YOU, EVERYONE, for all the donations made to date on our building improvements. You are making change happen with your generosity. CELEBRATE the accomplishments!!!!!!
Donations that cause change and growth are not always in cash; many thanks to everyone who donates time and talent, cooking, cleaning, transporting, calling, reminding, making copies, and so many other examples of donated help. Thank you.

DISHWASHER / APPLIANCE ROOM: MARCH:

Building Improvement Fund: MARCH: \$50.00 donated by Marcus 3-8-26, thank you Marcus.

Exterior Building Improvement Summer, 2026 Fund: Inaugural Donation \$100.00 by Katrina Lourdiane in honor of Jane Mc Dermott's birthday on March 12, when she would have been 89 years old.

Donations to the Building Improvements are still welcome as we have insulation, drywall, dryer vent, and finishing to do.

We are very grateful to the **Novant Community Benefit Fund (Robinson)**, a donor-advised fund of The Winston-Salem Foundation for a gift grant of \$500.00 we received at the beginning of March, 2026. Thank you **Dr. Elwood Robinson and Denise Robinson** for remembering the work of Ray Of Hope in this kind and very helpful way. We truly appreciate this gift.

**** Special Gifts made this week:** \$50.00 donated to the Building Fund by Marcus on 3-8-26, thank you Marcus.

**** Recent Special Gifts made in addition to offering plate gifts.** Thank you to Brother Benedict for a gift of \$350.00 received for the Building Fund on 3-8-26.

In the week of February 22 through March 1, we received a total of ****\$2,480.00**** including the following: Ed Askins donated \$340 to the Building Improvement Fund, thank you, Ed. Wayne and Glenn donated \$350.00 to the Building Improvement Fund, thank you both. Ian McLaughlin made a \$1,000.00 donation to the Building Improvement Fund, thank you Ian. Marcus made a \$100.00 donation to the General Fund, thank you Marcus. Ian and Christina made a \$450.00 donation to the Building Fund, thank you both. Katrina Lourdiane made a \$100.00 donation on February 27, to the Building Improvement Fund for the building exterior projects, thank you Katrina - see the

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

UPCOMING EVENTS ON OUR CALENDAR



MARCH BIRTHDAYS

Marcus Coppola - March 7
Brother - March 7

The single, and I suggest, the most effective way to help grow our Congregation at this time is to join the Music Ministry. I sincerely believe that every person's participation in the Music Ministry will enhance every aspect of our service to people who are not in this room today but will want to participate as they witness the growth the ministry in worship music will bring. 2-6-26 Br. Benedict.

Monday, March 16, 1:00 p.m. Inquiries Class #5 Human Sexuality and the Bible. Veronica & Br. - abbreviated format

Tuesday, March 17, St. Patrick's Day, 6:30 - 8:00 p.m. Bible Enrichment - The Book of Revelation

Wednesday, March 18, 12:00 Noon ecumenical Mass

Wednesday, March 18, 6:30 p.m. Chapel Assistants change chapel to PURPLE

***** Friday, March 20, 2:00 - 3:30 p.m. Council Meeting online and in person

Friday, March 20, 7:00-8:30 p.m. *****Music Ministry Rehearsal****Come and join the Music Ministry, all are welcome. No previous music experience is required.**

Sunday, March 22, 2026, 10:30 a.m. Women's History Week IV, 5th Sunday of Lent

Monday, March 23, 1:00 p.m. Inquiries Class #6 Ed & Br. - abbreviated format

Tuesday, March 24, 6:30 - 8:00 p.m. Bible Enrichment - The Book of Revelation

Wednesday, March 25, 12:00 Noon ecumenical Mass The Annunciation of the Lord

Wednesday, March 25, 6:30 p.m. Chapel Assistants change chapel to RED

Friday, March 27, 7:00-8:30 p.m. *****Music Ministry Rehearsal****Come and join the Music Ministry, all are welcome. No previous music experience is required.**

=====PLANNING AHEAD=====

HOLY WEEK, 2026

Sunday, March 29, 2026, is Palm Sunday at 10:30 a.m.

****No Bible Enrichment Session planned for Tuesday, March 31
Tuesday, March 31, is Trans Visibility Day at Steele Memorial Library,
2:30 - 4:30 p.m.**

Wednesday, April 1, 2026, Noon ecumenical Mass during Holy Week

Thursday, April 2, 2026, 7:00 p.m. Holy Thursday -

**Friday, April 3, 2026, 7:00 a.m. Annual A.C.T.S. Good
Friday Celebration 7:00 a.m. Breakfast Buffet 8:00 a.m.
Program - Pastor Andy Pollock - United Methodist
\$10.00**



**52nd Annual A.C.T.S.
Good Friday Celebration**

IT IS FRIDAY ...

Clarion Inn
Elmira-Riverview
760 E. Water St.
Elmira, NY 14901

Friday, April 3, 2026 *
7:00 am ~ Served Breakfast ~ \$10 per person
8:00 am ~ Program
Breakfast Buffet (After Program) \$10 per person
Reservations required for Breakfast & Buffet

ACTS
www.ACTSTT.org

Guest Sharer: Pastor Andy Pollock
Pastor Andy serves at multiple locations of
Fresh Start Church including: Pine City, Miracle
Mile, Watkins Glen, and online. He will share his
passion relating to the phrase:
"It is Friday...But Sunday is coming"

* ACTS Good Friday event includes two breakfast options. We begin
with a traditional early served breakfast. Others may enjoy a breakfast
buffet after the program.
Please call Stephanie at 607-737-5280 Ext.207 prior to 5pm on
Tuesday, March 31st to register for Breakfast, Program, & Buffet.
No fee to attend the program without a breakfast meal.

Friday, April 3, 2026, NOON CHAPEL ASSISTANTS CHAPEL TO BLACK

**Friday, April 3, 2026, 7:00 p.m. Sacrifice of the Cross, Good
Friday The Stations of the Cross**

Saturday, April 4, 2026 NOON CHAPEL ASSISTANTS DECORATE FOR THE VIGIL

Saturday, April 4, 2026, 7:45 p.m. Vigil of the Resurrection - Membership

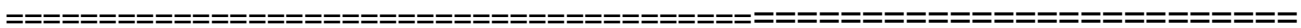
No events scheduled for Sunday, April 5, 2026

Music Ministry Schedule: 2/27/26 through 4/5/26

Friday, March 20, 7:00-8:30 p.m. 5 of 6 before Holy Week	Three of four Rehearsals before Holy Week Palm Sunday - The King of Glory Holy Thursday - songs about Eucharist Passion Friday - Music for the Stations of the Cross and Lift High The Cross Vigil Saturday - "The Easter Song," Psalms, Hymns, canticles, chant
Friday, March 27, 7:00-8:30 p.m. 6 of 6 before Holy Week	Final rehearsal for Holy Week We must rehearse songs that continue into the six weeks of the Season of the Resurrection. We will be singing all styles during this period.

- May 10, Sunday, Mother's Day and Foundresses Day
- May 17, Sunday, Ascension Sunday
- May 24, Sunday Pentecost
- May 31, Trinity, Memorial Sunday
 - June 6, Saturday, Pride Elmira
- June 7, Sunday, Corpus Christi - relicense Servants of the Eucharist
 - June 13, Saturday, Pride Corning
- June 14, Sunday, 30th Ordination Anniversary
 - June 20, Saturday, Juneteenth in Elmira E.O.P.
- June 21, Sunday, Father's Day, Juneteenth Celebration (19th), and 30th Ordination Anniversary
- June 29th PRIDE SUNDAY

There is a sign-up sheet on the table for desserts during the after-worship fellowship time, and we are seeking volunteers to sign up for desserts. Kaiden will text the volunteer during the week to remind them they have signed up to provide snacks that week.





We Are Sent Forth To Serve

Lisa Frost: **SAINTS:** The Lord is with you!

ALL: And also with you!

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

ALL: Amen

Kaiden Benedict: **We pray** Romans Chapter fifteen, verse thirteen together, saying:

ALL: Now may the God of hope fill you with all Joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. Amen (Romans 15:13)

Kaiden Benedict: We go forth in peace and Love to serve all people and the Lord ...

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

Lisa Frost: Please rise as you are able for our final song, "Turn To Me," available in the green Glory and Praise hymnal, number 342, and in the electronic Music Edition. Please rise as you are able to sing "Turn To Me."

LAST SONG:

CLOSING SONG: Turn To Me G&P 342

Turn To Me (G&P 342) Words and Music John B. Foley, S.J.

Text: Based on Isaiah 45:22–23; 51:12, 4, 6. Text and music © 1975, John B. Foley, S.J. and OCP. All rights reserved. Glory and Praise, Second Edition, number 342. Onelicense Song #81205 Used with Print Permission and Streaming License A-741278.

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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."

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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.
Made by you and for you, because we are

The Third Sunday of Pride, 2019

Ray Of Hope Church Weekly Schedule

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

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

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

Policy Concerning Minors at Events

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

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

The Chapel is not open to the general public, the way it used to be from 7:00 a.m. to 11:59 p.m. daily, 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 to pray, read, or visit The Blessed Sacrament. 1-607-280-0374 Our regular services will be blended with live participation in the Chapel, live on Skype and Facebook. To read the information on how to use Skype to participate with us, [Click Here](#).. Recordings of most of our Worship events are on our Facebook page, to see [Click Here](#). We will reopen the Chapel as soon as it is reasonably safe and prudent.

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

(Optional) Name: _____

(Optional) Phone: _____

Email Address: _____

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

I would like to schedule an appointment with the Pastor.



Ray Of Hope Church Statement Of Purpose

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

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

Visit us online:

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

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

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

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

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

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

"Behold, I am doing a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?"
(Isaiah 43:19 ESV)

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

