



**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 they feel comfortable. We are building a wonderful Christ-centered Community here, and we invite you to share in our joy! After the Worship Service, please join us for a time of refreshments and sharing.

July 18, 2021 16<sup>th</sup> Sunday of the Church Year B

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: Gospel:** Mark. 6:30-34 NRSV 2<sup>nd</sup> Test. pg. 41

**Second Reading:** Revelation 2:1 - 7 NRSV 2<sup>nd</sup> Test. pg. 245

Special series: The state of the Church according to the seven letters of Revelation.

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



## **CALL TO WORSHIP**

**Visit and greet one another for a social time before the Bell is rung.**

**Bells 1<sup>st</sup> ring.** Once the bell rings please find your seat and spend the next few minutes in silent prayer. Please refrain from conversations as these disturb those trying to pray.

The St. Francis and St. Clare of Assisi bell at Ray Of Hope Church, 380 W. 1<sup>st</sup> St. in Elmira, NY was a gift from Michael Quinnell of Syracuse, NY in September 2005. The bell rings out 39 joyful rings, in contrast to tolling the bell in single rings. The 39 joyful rings 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. We extend a special welcome to our visitors and guests. We invite you to participate in some or all of the parts of this worship event as feel comfortable. We are glad you have chosen to spend this time with us. 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 across the room and into the camera for 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\*)**



Lisa Frost celebrated her birthday on the 17<sup>th</sup>, yesterday. Happy and blessed birthday, Lisa.

Finally, today we are continuing in our special series on the story of the Church as seen through the seven letters to the seven churches in the Book of Revelation.

**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 Church's One Foundation G&P 573**

**+ 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**

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

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

## **SECOND SONG: Sing A New Church G&P 572**



### **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 -2:** Almighty and Eternal God, creator of the Heavens and Earth, you give us times and seasons by which we realize time is moving forward. Help us to respect the movement of time, space, and energy so we may experience them with devout awareness. Lord, have mercy.

**ALL: Lord, have mercy.**

**Leader -2:** Christ Jesus, Wonderful Counselor, Prince of Peace, Forgiver of sins, you are with us at all times. Help us be aware of your intimate presence, knowing our thoughts, our desires, and our decisions. Christ, have mercy.

**ALL: Christ, have mercy.**

**Leader -2:** Holy Spirit, you are with us as the Helper, the Comforter, our Advocate, our Intercessor, our Counselor, our Strengthener, the one who will always stand by us. Help us to choose to put this relationship into action so ministry becomes reality.

**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**

**We read to recall, reflect on, and rejoice in the action of God in life.**

**+ 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 41 in the back of the NRSV Bible. The reading is in the Gospel of Mark, chapter 6, verses 30-34.

**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.**

<sup>30</sup>The apostles gathered around Jesus, and told him all that they had done and taught. <sup>31</sup>He said to them, “Come away to a deserted place all by yourselves and rest a while.” For many were coming and going, and they had no leisure even to eat. <sup>32</sup>And they went away in the boat to a deserted place by themselves. <sup>33</sup>Now many saw them going and recognized them, and they hurried there on foot from all the towns and arrived ahead of them. <sup>34</sup>As he went ashore, he saw a great crowd; and he had compassion for them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd; and he began to teach them many things.

**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

The musical score is written in 4/4 time and consists of five staves of music. The lyrics are: "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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### + Thoughts on Today's Gospel.

Jesus affirms the importance of stepping away and getting out of the rush of society with each day's list of those things we think must be done. A popular term for this today is self-care. The Gospel indicates things were moving at such a fast pace the apostles "had no leisure even to eat." (Mark 6:31) Notice, they do go aside to be alone with Jesus in a place not even disclosed to us; "a deserted place by themselves." (Mark 6:32). I have pointed out time and time again that the Bible never claims to give a minute-by-minute account of all that Jesus did. Deuteronomy 29:29 reads "The secret things belong to the Lord our God, but the things revealed belong to us and our children forever, that we may follow all the words of this law."

Here, the Word reveals there are other "things" not revealed in this book. Can you imagine the size of a "book" that would contain the entire story of God's interactions with the human race? Even the Internet is not capable of that, or at least I doubt it is.

Wouldn't it be wonderful to know what the Apostles and Jesus talked about while away from the crowd? Jesus gave a "Master Class" or a

“private group lesson” to those charged to take his message at the beginning of what would become the Church.

We learn from this little section of the Gospel of Mark, God wants us to recreate. God wants us to take time off. God wants us to take a nap in the tall grass of a field in the summer sunlight. God wants us to come aside, to come out of the busy world to listen.

The Greek word for Church is ekklesia (these are English letters for phonetic pronunciation of the Greek letters. This word translates as a called-out assembly. Called out, called out of what? Out of the busy world of those “things I have to do today, tomorrow, next week, next month” that are so important. How much time do we set aside for the voice of God in our lives? Last week we read that St. Benedict’s original intention was to divide twenty-four hours a day into 8 hours for sleep, eight hours for prayer, and eight hours for work. Study probably came under prayer in the division of time. The sixteen hours on one’s feet would include all the necessities of keeping house, taking care of one’s body, working at something that brings financial security, 8 prayer services plus Mass (all varying in length from 10 minutes to just over an hour each), a daily “chapter meeting” where a chapter of the Rule was read and then the work of the corporation was discussed, and recreation. Those eight hours of sleep were deeply cherished and needed.

Some denominations offer morning and evening prayer (Lauds and Vespers) daily and the full Holy Communion Service (Mass) daily. There are people who do not live in monasteries who attend one or two or three of those services most days, if not every day of their lives at the local worship center. Others do their best to carve out one Sunday worship event and one Bible Enrichment event a week.

Whenever the church gathers, you and I are coming out of the world to come aside to be with Jesus. This is why it is called the ecclesia – the “called out assembly.”

## **+ 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 Revelation chapter 2, verses 1-7. Here begins the reading:

2 “To the angel (messenger) of the church of Ephesus write,

‘These things says He who holds the seven stars in His right hand, who walks in the midst of the seven golden lampstands: 2 “I know your works, your labor, your patience (perseverance), and that you cannot bear (endure) those who are evil. And you have tested those who say they are apostles and are not, and have found them liars; 3 and you have persevered and have patience, and have labored for My name’s sake and have not become weary. 4 Nevertheless I have *this* against you, that you have left your first love. 5 Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works, or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lampstand from its place—unless you repent. 6 But this you have, that you hate the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.

7 “He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes I will give to eat from the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God.” ’

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

**ALL: Thanks be to God!**

+ **Sermon: Series: The state of the Church according to the seven letters to the seven churches in the Book of Revelation; Part 2, the first letter to the first church.**



**Part 2 – the first church, Ephesus 11 points of Notice**

## Introduction to part 2

In this study of the seven letters we will make a chart that has four parts:

- a) Commendation: What Christ approves about this church.
- b) Condemnation: What Christ disapproves about this church.
- c) Counsel: What Christ suggests to this church.
- d) Challenge: What Christ offers to those who accept the instruction and act upon it.

When the study is over, we will look at the chart and use it for a starting place of our own self-evaluation to how we might improve and to celebrate our successes.

“The seven periods are generally given approximately as follows:

1. Ephesus-Apostolic church (A.D. 30-100)
2. Smyrna-Persecuted church (A.D. 100-313)
3. Pergamos-State church (A.D. 313-590)
4. Thyatira-Papal church (A.D. 590-1517)
5. Sardis-Reformed church (A.D. 1517-1790)
6. Philadelphia-Missionary church (A.D. 1730-1900)
7. Laodicea-Apostate church (A.D. 1900-)”

LaHaye, Tim. Revelation Unveiled (p. 36). Zondervan. Kindle Edition.

“Although this time-honored belief that Christ’s message to the seven churches includes a prophecy of the seven stages of church history has never been unanimous, it is held by most premillennialists. Even Phillip Schaff, the writer of the classic eight-volume set History of the Christian Church, accepts that position.”

LaHaye, Tim. Revelation Unveiled (p. 36). Zondervan. Kindle Edition.

**1)** The Church of Jesus is His own establishment and is founded on the testimony of Jesus being the divine Son of God, the same being as God, the Christ of God. Matthew 16:16-18

<sup>16</sup> Simon Peter answered and said, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.”

<sup>17</sup> Jesus answered and said to him, “Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed *this* to you, but My Father who is in heaven. <sup>18</sup> And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.”

For further study see Scofield, III notes; “The Keys Of The Kingdom” pg. 1332; “Christ Is The Rock (or Stone)” pg. 1693; “Christ As the Stone” pg. 1341.

a) Commendation: What Christ approves about this church.

**2) Rev. 2:1a** To the angel (messenger / pastor / guardian angel?) of the church of Ephesus write,

Here, John is instructed that the following letter is to go to this specific church as mentioned above. What John likely did not know, is the description of this church would be a prophecy of the first stage of the Church Age; the Apostolic Period of the Early Church.

**This week’s study:** Ephesus-Apostolic church (A.D. 30-100)

**3) Rev. 2:1b** ‘These things says He who holds the seven stars in His right hand, who walks in the midst of the seven golden lampstands:

In Revelation 1:20 Jesus identifies the seven stars as the angels (pastors or messengers or possibly actual angels) of the seven churches. Jesus identifies the seven lampstands as the seven churches. Jesus is seen in the vision standing or being in their midst because He is present to the end of the age in through and with the Church, which is His body present in the world. (Matthew 28:20)

**4) Rev. 2:2a** <sup>2</sup>“I know your works, your labor, your patience (perseverance), The first seventy years of the church is considered to have been full of the fire of the Holy Spirit, with many willing witnesses for Jesus. The Church that was at Ephesus seems to have been one of the largest and most successful of the early congregations. This church was started by St. Paul (Acts 18:19-20).

There are seven churches referred to in chapters 2 and 3. This one at Ephesus is the only one that mentions the Apostles. This supports the theory that here we have a message to the local church and to the church of the “apostolic period” usually thought to be from Pentecost to about the year 100 with the death of John, the Beloved Apostle.

Even the name Ephesus means “desired one.” LaHaye notes; “This was the most desirable of all the churches or church ages.” (See Revelation Unveiled, pg. 44)

This was a working church that labored against many odds to take the Gospel as far as they could to the known “world” of their time. Additionally, this church age produced the entire Second Testament, the New Testament, the Christian Testament of the Bible.

**5) Rev. 2:2b** and that you cannot bear (endure) those who are evil.

The topic of separation comes up here. How to be in the world but not of the world. How to be the “called out assembly” the ecclesia, mentioned in the notes on the Gospel reading today. The first seventy years of the church were perilous times as the established religion and the state government did everything within their earthly powers to eliminate this new religion of the risen Christ from the earth. Most of the messengers were martyred for their testimony.

Today we have to ask ourselves all the time how far are we willing to “compromise” on Doctrines, Dogmas, Teachings, and yes, even Practices to fit in with the momentum of contemporary religious movements. When are we more concerned with winning some kind of approval from church or state then doing the really powerful work of telling everyone about Jesus and what He has done, is doing, and will do for us?

**6) Rev. 2:2c** And you have tested those who say they are apostles and are not, and have found them liars;

The early church really struggled with how to be an organization that is also a living organism. Try to imagine going forth with an oral Tradition

of the Gospels before they and the other books of the New Testament are written down. Remember, there were no printing presses, no email, no websites, no Internet. This was a real commitment of time and effort to discern the Word of God and to write and distribute it. Unfortunately evil set out immediately to derail the early church with false teachers with false ideas and false goals.

Today we have 2,000 years of Tradition that have expanded according to culture, time, and politics. Perhaps it is more difficult now to discern what is true.

**7) Rev 2:3** and you have persevered and have patience, and have labored for My name's sake and have not become weary.

The Roman Empire was instrumental in spreading the Gospel in that it was already mapped out and one could move about within it. There were Roman roads, there was the unifying language of Greek, and the Roman army kept the peace. There were very established religions throughout the Roman Empire. At first, the Christians were thought to be a branch of the established Judaism and basically ignored. However, as Christians began to challenge other religions they lost popularity. Emperor Nero blamed a tragic fire of July of 64 a.d. on the Christians. Nero, therefore, vowed to hunt down the Christians and have them executed and their movement destroyed. "The first wave of Roman persecutions lasted from shortly after the fire until Nero's death in 68. With barbaric bloodthirstiness, he had Christians crucified and set afire. Their bodies lined the Roman roads providing torchlight."

(Pg. 14 of the book: "Dates with Destiny the 100 most important dates in Church History" by A. Kenneth Curtis, J. Stephen Lang, and Randy Petersen. © 1991 by Christian History Institute: Fleming H. Revell. Hereafter referred to as Dates with Destiny.)

Perhaps the greatest accomplishment during this first one hundred years is the writing of Scripture. The Second Testament that was developed during these first seventy years beginning with the Letter of James in the early middle 40's, the Gospel of Matthew around the year 64.

Book Name	Author	Date written	Place written
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James	James, brother of Jesus	c. 45-50 (early 60's)	Jerusalem
Galatians	Paul	c. 49 (52, 57)	Macedonia (Philippi?)
Matthew	Matthew	c. 50 - 64	Antioch
1 Thessalonians	Paul	c. 51	Corinth
2 Thessalonians	Paul	c. 51	Corinth
1 Corinthians	Paul	c. 54-56	Ephesus
2 Corinthians	Paul	c. 57	Macedonia (Philippi?)
Romans	Paul	c. 57-58	Corinth
Hebrews	Paul / unknown	c. 60 – 68	Cesarea
Colossians	Paul	c. 60	Rome
Ephesians	Paul	c. 60	Rome
Philippians	Paul	c. 60 – 62	Rome
Luke	Luke	c. 60 – 70's	Rome?
Acts	Luke	c. 60 – 70's	Rome ?
1 Peter	Peter	c. 63 – 65	Rome
2 Peter	Peter	c. 64 – 66	Rome
Mark	Mark	c. 68	Rome
Philemon	Paul	c. 66 - 67	Rome
1 Timothy	Paul	c. 66 - 67	Rome
Titus	Paul	c. 66 – 67	Rome
2 Timothy	Paul	c. 66 – 67	Rome
Jude	Jude	c. 68 – 80's	?
1 John	John	c. 80 – 90's	Ephesus
2 John	John	c. 80 – 90's	Ephesus
3 John	John	c. 80 – 90's	Ephesus
Revelation	John	c. 95-98	Patmos, Ephesus
John	John	c. 85-90 (98-110)	Ephesus

b) Condemnation: What Christ disapproves about this church.

**8) Revelation 2:4** Nevertheless I have this against you, that you have left your first love.

It is so often the case that original enthusiasm gives way to worldly routine and that gives way to apathy and death of the original idea. How many organizations have we seen or been part of that had a beginning, a period of growth, a period of success, a period of struggle

caused by the very membership, a period of decline, a period of death?

c) Counsel: What Christ suggests to this church.

**9) Rev. 2:5** Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works, or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lampstand from its place – unless you repent.

Here is a quotation from a website: “There is no longer a Christian church in Ephesus. Of course, there is no longer a city of Ephesus either. It is an archaeological site now, but that is beside the point. The point is that although there is no longer a city of Ephesus, the church in Ephesus used to be the strongest church in Asia Minor, and now there are hardly even any Christians to be found in all of Asia Minor, let alone a church of any strength or size. Turkey is 99.8% Muslim, leaving only .2% as Christian. And even this .2% is in rapid decline.” (source:

[https://redeeminggod.com/sermons/ephesians/ephesians\\_6\\_21-24/](https://redeeminggod.com/sermons/ephesians/ephesians_6_21-24/))

All we have to do to avoid this is remain faithful to Christian Gospel, made known to us first from Holy Scripture. Additionally, we have been given a unique message to share in this particular stage of the Church Age, the equality of persons of all sexual orientations and all gender expressions, and that these do not define one’s salvation. This is not a popular message among many Denominations today, but this is the particular message we are called to stand with. Will we remain faithful, or in a few years will be a memory of the early LGBTQSIA movement in Central New York State because we lost our enthusiasm, our “first love” like the church of Ephesus?

**10) Rev. 2:6** But this you have, that you hate the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.

One could argue this verse belongs in the commendation section. A summary of this problem, Nicolaitanism, is this; as time passed, within the first one hundred years of the church, people started using the church as a place for professional careers and thus authoritative status over other people. There is a difference between the established

offices of service for the church in Scripture, and professional power and authority over others as is appropriate in secular occupations. Even today, people enter the “clergy” as a career or a “second career” and do so for a financial package, etc. In our modern-day, this is one of the factors that is killing the church, the local church, from place to place as the clergy choke every last penny out of the people who built the buildings and then the professional clergy claim ownership over the buildings to sell or close or trade without the people’s consent. In the end the church that used to be in that building is now gone or dead. This is what happens when a church loses its “first love.” These are the deeds sometimes called the “doctrine of the Nicolaitans” prophesied here in this verse.

d) Challenge: What Christ offers to those who accept the instruction and act upon it.

**11) Rev. 2:7** “Let those who have an ear, let them hear what the Spirit is saying to the churches. To those who overcome I will give to eat from the tree life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God.”

I could write an entire book on this verse. To be brief for today; Jesus indicates we do not have to die out like the church of Ephesus. It is possible to overcome and be alive and serving when He comes in the Blessed Hope. We may be here serving when He arrives or we may have our particular freedom from this bondage of this world of sin at the time of our particular death should it be before the Blessed Hope. Either way we know we are safe and going to the “Paradise of God” and this is why I always refer to those who have gone before us as being in Paradise. And in this physical place, which will someday be on the renewed earth is the Tree of Life that was once in the Garden of Eden.

The Spirit has just told you what the Holy Spirit has been saying this entire age, listen, understand, and follow to the faithful conclusion of this way of life, the Paradise of God. We can do this!

	 EPHESUS The Apostolic Church Rev. 2:1-7
	A.D. 30-100
COMMENDATION I know you. . .	Good works, labor, patience. Hated Nicolaitians.
CONDEMNATION	You have left your first love.
COUNSEL I counsel you. . .	Remember from where you are fallen and repent.
CHALLENGE To him that over- comes. . .	Will give to eat of the tree of life

Chart from page 24 of LaHaye, Revelation Unveiled referred to above in these notes. The book covers The Church of Ephesus on pages 43 through 50.

With that verse, we are done with the first stage of the Church Age and ready for the Second church, Smyrna- the Persecuted church (A.D. 100-313) next week.



**WE RESPOND TO GOD’S WORD**

**+ (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 with 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. Those in the chapel may use the offering plate, while those worshipping with us on the internet may go to our website and use the PayPal link or you may mail a check to Ray Of Hope Church, 380 W. First St. Elmira NY 14901. Please 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.\*)

Each of you in the chapel will find at your seat a small plate, communion wafer, plastic chalice of grape juice and a napkin. Please take the plate and wafer from the baggie and shake the chalice gently in case there has been settling of the contents. Please do not remove the top from the chalice until the Celebrant announces that Communion is served. Once you have received Communion, place the plastic chalice on top of the plate and someone will collect it while the Table of the Lord is being cleared.

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

### **SONG: I Really Love The Lord**

**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. (\*Another person may be invited to say this prayer out loud.\*)

**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. (\*Another person may be invited to say this prayer out loud.\*)

**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:** Truly present and risen among us, the Lord is with you!

**ALL: And also with you!**

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

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

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

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

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

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

It is right that we should give you thanks and praise always and everywhere through our Lord and Saviour, Christ Jesus. He is the image of you the invisible God, He is the first-born over all creation. In Him, all things consist and have their being. Christ has called us into this place, into his very Body, the Church. Christ continues to build His Church as He said He would, and be with us until the end of this Age.

We are grateful to celebrate Christ's Lordship over our lives and our deaths. In Christ, we have experienced the power of your love, Almighty God. Through that love, we are now able to join our voices with all the Beloved Community from every time and every place who have already passed through the valley of the shadow of death and are forever secure in your eternal presence. Accept our song as we join in their unending hymns of praise. We sing holy to You our God, holy to You our Christ, and holy to you the One Holy Spirit of God as we move and have our being in your Divine Presence.

## 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  
5 might. Hea-ven and earth are full of your glo-ry. Ho - san - na in the  
10 high-est. Ho - san - na in the high-est. Ho - san - na in the high est.  
16 Bless - ed is the One who comes in the name of the Lord.  
22 Ho - san - na in the high-est. Ho - san - na in the high-est. Ho -  
27 san - na in the high est.

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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 Canticle:**

**#1 Philippians 2:6-11  
Though He was in the**

**#2 Colossians 1:15-20  
Christ is the image of 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!**

**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.**

## **+ A Proclamation Of Our 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.**

**e) Keep in mind that Jesus Christ has died for us and is risen from the dead. He is our saving Lord. He is joy for all ages.**

**f) Jesus Christ has died for us, Christ our Lord is risen, Christ will come again someday. Oh deep in my heart, I do believe that Jesus Christ will come again.**

**g) Christ has spoken in times past. Christ is speaking to us today. Christ will speak and take us into the future.**

**+ 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 freedom, equality, and respect 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:

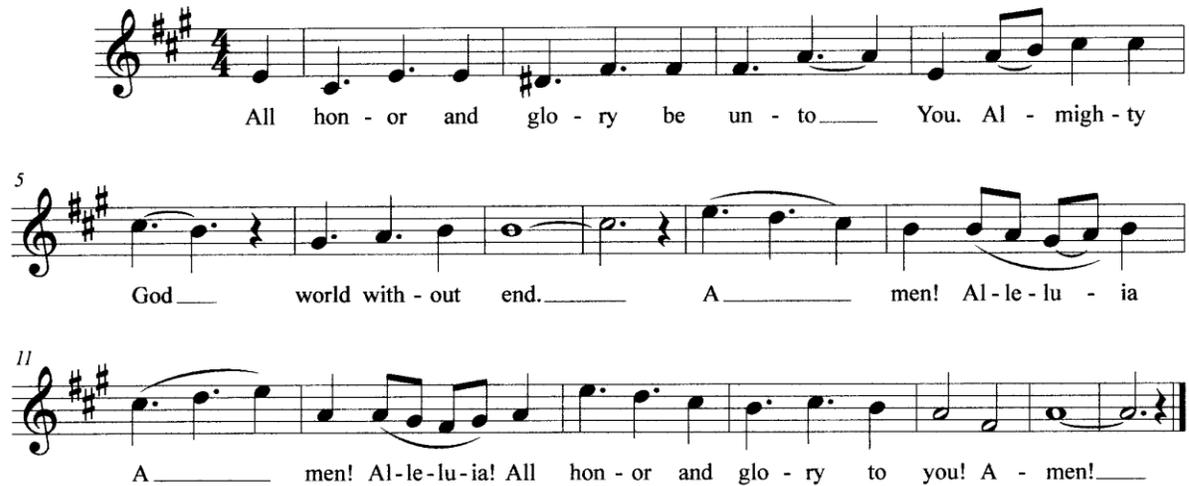
**ALL:** It is through Christ, with Christ, and in Christ, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, that all honor and glory is yours, Almighty God, forever and ever.

## 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.

**Veronica Floyd:** Please take a moment now to share a sign of Peace with those around you. \*\*During COVID we may simply wave across the room and into the camera for the Internet.

**+ 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 brings us 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 the promises of Christ, that anyone who receives this Holy Communion today will surely live forever and be raised by Christ to new life.

**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.

**Pastor Benedict:** 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.

**SONG: Let There Be Peace on Earth G&P 655**

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

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



**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.**

**SONG: Give Thanks NTBK #6**

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF GIFTS AND DONATIONS**

**General Offering** for the week of July 11 will be reported in a couple of weeks. Thanks to Cheryl for making a special \$170.00 donation toward the wheelchair lift maintenance budget. Thanks to Lisa, Veronica and Kaiden (\$150.00) for making special donations to the payment for the new airconditioner in the chapel. Thank you to Christina McLaughlin for a special donation to the building fund. Thank you to Kaiden for donating the new electric rainbow light display in the Davis St. window of the chapel. **We give God thanks and praise for all the gifts given.**

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."

**UPCOMING EVENTS**

<https://www.faithstreet.com/search>

The next Bible Enrichment will be on this Tuesday July 20, 2021 6:30 p.m.

July 30 Council

There will not be Bible Enrichment Tuesday, August 3. Brother is having surgery.

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

**Everyone has access to the Holy Spirit, the gift of God to us.**

Below is a rendering of John chapter 16, verse 7 by the translators of the Amplified Bible that I find particularly enlightening. This verse gives many of the attributes of the Holy Spirit, in English, that are all packed and hidden in the original Greek Word parakletos. Each of the capitalized words in the verse below tells us how the Holy Spirit is ready to help us. All we have to do is ask with a short prayer like this: "Oh God, give me the awareness to know you are with me in all these ways through the Holy Spirit, Amen."

Here is the verse in the Amplified Bible

Jesus taught, saying: "But I tell you the truth, it is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper (Comforter, Advocate, Intercessor-Counselor, Strengtheners, Standby) will not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him (the Holy Spirit) to you [to be in close fellowship with you]." John 16:7

Did you realize the Holy Spirit is with you to bring you all those actions of God? If we understand the Real Presence of God is with us in Christ through the powerful ministry of the Holy Spirit, we will experience more confidence, love of ourselves and our neighbors, and be able to feel better about our lived experience. You can have all this and more. Start with that simple prayer above.

Signed: Pastor Benedict, 3-6-21. Read this on our website.

[Right Click Here.](#)



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

We begin by inviting those who are on the fringe of society, those who have been pushed aside, those who are poor, who are not accepted, who are sick, who need God's help in special ways.

We welcome and bring the Eucharist to everyone who has been told they cannot receive it by other Denominations. In conclusion, to all persons who have ever been told “no you cannot” go to Communion in any other church, hear us, “yes you can” at Ray Of Hope. All are welcome. Or as we like to say as one of our mottos, when we quote Fr. Bartholomew J. O’Brien; “You are as welcome here as Christ Himself.”

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

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

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



The following information, published by the Secular Coalition for America, is included by me, personally, as part of my response to the Ray Of Hope Church Statement of Purpose. Ray Of Hope has not endorsed the Secular Coalition For America in any way, officially or implied. I am including this information here to assist people who may want to take action now to encourage their members of the Senate of the United States to know the facts and identify the false information being put forth in the hearings that are happening now on the Equality Act. SIGNED: Rev. Br. Shawn F. Benedict, Pastor, 3-20-21 7:00 p.m.



Dear Friend,

Last month the House passed the [Equality Act \(H.R. 5\)](#). For those unaware, this important legislation would amend existing civil rights laws, such as the *Civil Rights Act of 1964*, to include sexual orientation, and gender identity as protected characteristics under law. The bill also expands federal non-discrimination protections regarding discrimination based on race, color, national origin, **religion**, sex, sexual orientation or gender identity in public settings, and protects against sex-based discrimination in government services and federally-funded programs.

This week, the Senate held its first ever hearing on the [Equality Act](#) and as expected, the debate was heated. It seems opponents of the bill (Senate Republicans) are promoting [several misconceptions](#) about its purpose and scope which include:

- *“The Equality Act would destroy religious freedom in this country.”*
  - **NOT TRUE.** Freedom of religion is already protected by the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution. Nothing in the *Equality Act* would change that. The bill simply extends those rights that most vulnerable groups are already afforded to those who have been denied them, such as the **LGBTQ community**. In fact, the bill actually protects freedom of religion by preventing the imposing of one’s religion upon another.
- *“The Equality Act will make athletics unfair for females.”*
  - **NOT TRUE.** Schools across the nation already have policies in place to ensure a level playing field for all students, and they are working. Additionally, except for a very small percentage, most students who participate in high school sports do not continue on with their athletic endeavours after high school. The possibility that perhaps one or two transgender students in an entire student body would ruin that opportunity for another is [almost nonexistent](#). *Title IX* is extremely important in regards to girls athletics, and the bottom line is that **nothing in the Equality Act changes that**. Instead, we should be calling for increased funding for girls athletics.
- *“The Equality Act will allow men to harass women in public restrooms.”*
  - **NOT TRUE.** We already have laws in place to prevent such acts, and the *Equality Act* does

July 18, 2021 16<sup>th</sup> Sunday of the Church Year B page: 38

nothing to change that. Additionally, **21 states** have had similar nondiscrimination laws on the books for decades now and they have worked, as there have been no increases in public safety incidents in bathrooms since they were codified.



[Tell the Senate to Support the Equality Act - Secular Coalition for America](#)

It is important that we dispel these untrue myths about this legislation, which seeks only to provide the same protections that most of us already are afforded to those who are not. We must always push back against these false narratives whenever they are presented. Only by doing so will we be able to do away with the myths and focus on the facts of the issue, which is equal treatment under the law for everyone, regardless of race, religion, gender, sexual identity, or sexual orientation.

If you would like to contact your Senators in Washington to tell them that you would appreciate their support of the *Equality Act*, you can do so by clicking the link provided below. We are closer than we have ever been before, and now is the time to voice your support!

[\*\*Please click here to tell your Senators in Washington to support the Equality Act!\*\*](#)

To be a part of our team, and celebrate with us when we secure the passage of the Equality Act in the Senate, please click the **"I want to help"** button below. Every dollar goes to representing you on Capitol Hill, and strengthening the wall of separation between religion and government. With *your* help, we can make even greater progress on the issues we care about!

[\*\*I want to help!\*\*](#)

Your advocate on the Hill,



Casey C. Brinck

*Director of Policy & Government Affairs*  
**Secular Coalition for America**



## 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.

\_\_\_\_\_



## 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: <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)