



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 Forty-first year of Ministry.

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

"Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." (Matt. 6:10,33)

April Struhm, Moderator

**** April Struhm passed into Paradise on July 4, 2024 after a long battle with cancer. In this worship event of Sunday, July 7, 2024 we celebrated her life, her Membership, leadership, and friendship with us at Ray Of Hope Church.**

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

We extend a special welcome to our visitors.

You are as welcome here as Jesus Christ Himself.

Scripture exhorts us: "Welcome one another, then, as Christ welcomed you, for the glory of God" Romans 15:7 (NABRE – 2011)

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

Today is 7-7-24 Independence Day Weekend,

60th Anniversary of the Civil Rights Act, and

celebrating April Struhm's entrance to Paradise. 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."

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: Wisdom 1:13-15; 2:23-24 NOT in our edition of the NRSV Bible

Psalm: 23 with response

Second Reading: Romans, Chapter 8, verses 1,2, 8-11 NRSV 2nd Test. pg. 157

Third Reading: Gospel: John 5:24,25 NRSV 2nd Test. pg. 96

***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 the bell rings, please find your seat and pray silently for the next few minutes. Please refrain from conversations as these disturb those trying to pray.

The St. Francis and St. Clare of Assisi bell at Ray Of Hope Church, 380 W. 1st St. in Elmira, NY, was a gift from Michael Quinnell of Syracuse, NY, in September 2005. The bell rings out 39 joyful rings, in contrast to tolling the bell in single rings. The 39 joyful rings honor the 39 lashes Jesus endured, and we now celebrate in Victory and gratitude for our Salvation. "The chastisement for our peace was upon Him, And by His stripes, we are healed." (Isaiah 53:5) We ring the bell before worship and Bible Enrichment sessions. Listen carefully and see if you can hear all 39 rings.



WE GATHER TO PRAISE THE LORD AND GIVE THANKS

+ Pastoral Welcome

Leader – 1: Hello. My name is _____. 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. You may participate in some or all parts of this worship event as you are comfortable. We announce all instructions, page, and song numbers and use a psalm response verse to assist people with various stages of visual impairment.

Leader-2: Hello. My name is _____. I am in_(city) _____,

_(State)____. Good morning, and welcome ■ (** Reader, stop, look up at the people, and smile.**)

Everyone is welcome to receive Holy Communion with us during the second part of this worship event. We celebrate the Lord's open table where Membership in this or any church is not required to receive Communion.

People participating on the Internet, please bring the following items to your table at this time so you are prepared: 1) a cup with some wine or grape juice, 2) a small piece of bread, cracker, or matzo on a plate, 3) a second cup with some water, and 4) a side napkin.

Leader-1: Today's bulletin order of worship and music supplement are available on Facebook Live; right-click the "Featured Links" icon. On Skype, 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. Take a moment now and gather these items. We will start shortly; thank you.



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.

Leader – 2: (** Reader, look up at the people and smile.**)

Thank you for spending time

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with us. In Romans, Chapter 15:7, the Scriptures instruct us to:

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

Leader -1: You are as welcome here as Christ Jesus himself. (** Reader, stop, look up 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, Christ Jesus Our Lord and Saviour, and in the name of the Holy Spirit. Amen

Pastor:

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

June 1, 2024, was the TWENTY-FIRST ANNIVERSARY OF THE OPENING OF THE ELMIRA CHAPEL.

Today is 7-7-24 Independence Day Weekend, the 60th Anniversary of the Civil Rights Act, Year B. We are also celebrating the faith and friendship of our sister, April Struhm, who went home to Paradise this last Wednesday, July 4, 2024, at 11:00 PM.



Psalm 116:15-19 O precious in the eyes of the Lord is the death of the faithful. Your servant, Lord, your servant am I; you have loosed my bonds. A thanksgiving sacrifice I make; I will call on the Lord's name.

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I want to answer the question right up front and boldly, the question that is on many people's minds: why didn't God heal April of her cancer?

Jesus said He did not speak on his own authority but only what God directed. (See John 12:49) Then Jesus said when the Holy Spirit has come, the Spirit will not speak on its own authority but only on what Jesus directs the Spirit to speak and teach. (See John 16:13). Here, this is Interdependence at work. It is safe to say that God intended to establish the Church of Jesus Christ to remain present in the world, working in the power of the Holy Spirit to the end of this age. It is also safe then to say that God, through Christ, through the Holy Spirit, never intended that every person who prayed for healing would receive their perfect resurrection bodies when they prayed during the Church Age. Think about this a moment: if everyone who has ever been anointed with oil for healing or who has received the Bread of Life and the Cup of Salvation were instantly transformed to their resurrection bodies, we would have a restored human race functioning alongside the fallen human race. Millions of people would already be healed and restored, and their resurrection bodies are on Earth now, which sounds like a great plot for a sci-fi thriller movie. It has probably been used often for such works as books and films.

We learn here that sometimes we are healed enough to continue our service of God for a time. However, ultimately, we are not healed because it is time to move on to the next chapter. Living and then dying is God's will for us, as evidenced by all the great believers who have already gone ahead of us. Unless we are alive and remain at the coming of the Lord (see 1 Thessalonians 4:15-18 and 1 Corinthians 15:51-57) and are thus changed into our resurrection bodies without dying, we will all die and be sown like the grain of wheat that first must die to live. We die in Christ and rise in Christ (see Romans 6:8 +).

April was not punished; she did nothing wrong. Her work here was done, and it was time to move on to her work in Paradise. I will say more about this in today's Sermon.



We are here to give God thanks and praise for the glorious truths we have been educated in by the gifts of the Holy Scriptures, the Tradition of the Church, the deposit of faith, and the teaching power of the Holy Spirit. We thank God for Christ among us. (see 2Timothy 1:13-14:

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2+Timothy+1%3A13-14&version=NRSVUE>)(see John 1:14:

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+1%3A14&version=NRSVUE>)

FIRST SONG: The Strife is O'er. Type: Words and Music; First Line: Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia! The strife is o'er, the battle done Text: Latin, c. 1695; trans. Francis Pott, 1861, alt. Music: Giovanni Perluigi da Palestrina, 1591; arr. William H. Monk, 1861. Contributors: VICTORY, Giovanni da Palestrina. Glory and Praise Second Edition #384 Onelicense song# 84528 Used with Print Permission and Streaming License A-741278.

+ The Candle Of Hope

Leader -1: Please be seated. Today, we light our Candle Of Hope to celebrate our faith and trust in the promised "Blessed Hope," also known as "The Rapture," the return of Christ who will transform the living faithful and raise all to new life. Jesus said: (John 5:25 and Titus 2:13)

ALL: "I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die." (John 11:25, 26)

Leader -2: In 1983, Ray Of Hope Church was started in part to form a unique ministry to persons affected by and infected with HIV/AIDS. Forty-one years later, some churches, religions, and even some countries continue rejecting the sick, lonely, and dying people with HIV/AIDS who need spiritual guidance. In a letter from amfAR, The Foundation for AIDS Research, we learn every minute someone somewhere contracts HIV. In the year 2023, 1.5 million people became newly infected, and 650,000 people, including some from the United States, died of AIDS-related causes.

HIV/AIDS is still with us; therefore, we continue to read aloud over **110,000** names sewn into the AIDS Memorial Quilt to keep HIV/AIDS in the conscious prayers of people.

(for more information about amfAR: <https://www.amfar.org/about-amfar/>)

Leader -3: Hello. My name is _____. I am in_(city) _____, _(State)_____. Scroll the page to see the panel names on Block # 120.



Names on Block #120

- Stephen (1)
- Walfa Scott (2)
- Dayna Jo Lynn (3)
- Gregory Catlow (4)
- Richard Renelleman (5)
- John Crocker (6)
- George Watson (7)
- Danny Villa (8)

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

Leader -2: In silent prayer, we also remember the names of family and friends who have died from COVID-19-related and other illnesses. We pray that those who feel left behind in the face of death experience a blessing from the Holy Spirit when they remember their loved ones. Today, we pray for comfort and strength for everyone who knew our Member, April Struhm, and we thank God

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for the friendship and faith April shared with us. (**pause for silent prayer.**)
May this 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 "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>)

Second Song: Like A Shepherd. Words and Music by Robert J. Dufford, SJ. Text: Based on Isaiah 40:9ff; Ezekiel 34:11ff; Matthew 11:28ff. Text and music © 1976, Robert J. Dufford, SJ, and OCP. All rights reserved. Glory & Praise second edition #708. Onelicense Song #80672. Used with Print Permission and Streaming License A-74127.



WE PREPARE OUR HEARTS

+ Confession and Forgiveness of our sins.

Veronica Floyd: Please be seated. (wait) So far, we assembled, greeted one another, and praised God in song. Now, Ray Of Hope Church provides another service: Christ forgiving our sins through the powerful ministry of the Holy Spirit. In the Gospel of Luke, Chapter twenty-four, verse forty-seven, Jesus instructed the Church "that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem."

Lisa Frost: Hear the Word of God in First John, Chapter One, verses eight and nine: "8 If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. 9 If we confess our sins, Jesus, who is present, faithful, and just, will forgive and cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

(Source: <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=i+John+1%3A8-10&version=NRSVUE>
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notice above announcements in this bulletin.) (modified for clarity by Br. Benedict)

Lisa Frost: At this time, in silent prayer, we consider our relationship with God and others, confess faults, sins, and failures to Christ, and receive immediate forgiveness.

(silent prayer for time to confess our sins.) (**Leader, please count to 20**.)

Lisa Frost: Now, we pray together:

ALL: I confess to Almighty God, and to you, my brothers and sisters, that I have sinned through my own fault in my thoughts and in my words, in what I have done, and in what I have failed to do. I declare in the midst of this assembly of believers that I am truly sorry for having offended **anyone, and God**, in any way. Therefore, I ask you, my brothers and sisters, all the angels and the saints, to forgive me and pray for me to the Lord our God. Amen.

Leader -1: Hello. My name is _____. I am in_(city) _____, _(State)_____.

O Loving God, you give us all the tools to proclaim the Truth of resurrection to eternal life. Sometimes, we are afraid to speak and share what we know, Lord, have mercy.

ALL: Lord, have mercy.

Leader -1: The Church should lead by example to a society built upon unity, peace, and the celebration of the gifts of all people. We pray: Christ, have mercy.

ALL: Christ, have mercy.

Leader -1: The Body of Christ, the Church, should lead society to celebrate all sexual orientations and gender expressions; Lord, have mercy.

ALL: Lord, have mercy.

L-1: Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the World; have mercy on us.

ALL: Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the World, grant us peace.

Lisa Frost: We pray that all of God's people may one day be reunited in God's Kingdom without the loss of anyone. Therefore, we ask Almighty

God to have mercy on all of us, forgive all our sins, and keep us in everlasting life.

ALL: Amen.

Leader-3: Jesus told the Church to forgive sins in His Name. Jesus said:

ALL: If you forgive people their sins, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive people their sins, neither will your Father forgive your sins." (Matt. 6:14-15) Jesus also told us to forgive our brothers and sisters from the heart. (Matt. 18:35).

Therefore, we, the faith community of Ray Of Hope Church, openly declare 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.

Leader - 3: The Church now provides the service of praising God in thanksgiving together. Please rise as you are able to sing "The Gloria."

Dedication:
Ray Of Hope Church
Of Our Lord Jesus Christ, Inc.
40th Anniversary

The Gloria

"Music for Worship"

Words and Music
Gaude! Liturgical Arts
7/25/19-1/21/24
Br. Shawn F. Benedict, O.S.B.

Refrain

Glo - ry to God in the high - est, and

4
peace to all peo - ple on earth — Glo - ry to God in the high - est —

8
We give you thanks — and praise. Al - le - lu — ia

10
We give you thanks — and praise.

Verse 1

12
You are the One God, Sov - ereign of the Un-i-verse, On - ly

16
Ho - ly God, — we wor - ship You, — we

18
give you thanks, we praise You for Your great glo - ry!

Refrain

21
Glo - ry to God in the high - est, — and peace to all peo - ple on earth —

25
Glo - ry to God in the high - est — We give you thanks — and

2





85 Verse 4: Amen

A men;- We
We give You thanks and praise!
Lord we praise You, Lord we bless You, We

4

87

give You thanks and praise!

We give You thanks and praise!

give You thnks, We give You praise We give You thnaks and praise

89

A men men. Al - le - lu - ia.

Lord we praise You, Lord we bless You men. Al - le - lu - ia.

+ Opening Prayer

Leader-5: Come Holy Spirit, and open our minds to understand and apply what we will hear in the Holy Scriptures today. We ask this in the Name of God, the Christ, and the Holy Spirit.

ALL: AMEN.

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

ALL: We read God's Word to recall, reflect on, and rejoice in the action of God in life.



THE SERVICE OF THE WORD OF GOD

Reader: Hello. My name is _____. I am in_(city) _____, _____(State)_____. The first reading is in the Book of Wisdom, chapter 1, verses 13-15, and Chapter 2, verses 23-24. The reading is not in our 1989 edition of the NRSV Bible. The following is a paraphrased setting of the text by Brother Benedict. Here begins the reading:

¹³God did not make eternal death a mandatory final destiny,
God does not rejoice when living things are destroyed.

¹⁴God designed all living creatures to have being
and they are therefore, good and whole.

There is no destructive drug, potion, or curse among God's creatures,
and they have no dominion from the dwelling of the wicked dead.

¹⁵The just plan of God is immortal, eternal, and everlasting.

^{2:23} God formed humanity to be eternal;
for we are made in God's own image.

^{2:24} Satan was envious of eternal humanity; therefore, Satan
introduced sin, and consequently, death entered the world.

Satan remains the original sinner, and he spreads eternal death to
those who aligned with him against the will of God.

Reader: This is the Word of the Lord!

ALL: Thanks be to God!

(Source: <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+corinthians+12&version=NRSVUE>)
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+ Psalm Today's Psalm is number 23, sung with a responsorial verse.

Psalm 23: My Shepherd Is the Lord

Antiphon I



My shep-herd is the Lord, noth-ing in-deed shall I want.

Text: Psalm 23; The Grail
Music: Joseph Gelineau, SJ
© 1963, The Grail, GIA Publications, Inc., agent

Lord, you **are** my **shep-herd**;
there is **noth-ing** I shall **want**.
Fresh and **green** are the **pas-tures**
where you **give** me re-**pose**.

Near **rest-ful** **wat-ers** you **lead** me,
to re-**vive** my **droop-ing** **Spir-it**.
You **guide** me a-**long** the right **path**;
You are **true** to your **name**.

If I should **walk** in the **valley** of **dark-ness**
no **ev-il** **would** I **fear**.
You are **there** with your **crook** and your **staff**;
with **these** you **give** me **com-fort**.

You have prepared a **ta-ble** be-**fore** me
in the **sight** of my **foes**.
My **head** you have an-**ointed** with **oil**;
my **cup** is **over-flowing**.

Surely **good-ness** and **mer-cy** shall **fol-low** me
all the **days** of my **life**.
In the **Lord's** own **house** shall I **dwell**
for **ev-er** and for-**ev-er**.
Give **praise** to the **Liv-ing** **God**.
To God's **Son**, Jes-sus **Christ**, Our **Lord**.
To the **Spi-rit** who **reigns** in our **hearts**.
Both now, and for **ev-er**. A-**men**.

Psalm 23 - My Shepherd Is the Lord. Refrain text and music by Joseph Gelineau, SJ, Copyright ©1963, 1986, 1993 The Grail (England). Text of Psalm 23 (inclusive language - 1993) ©1963, 1986, 1993 The Grail (England). Onelicense song #79358 All rights reserved. Reprint from Gather 3rd Edition #34. Published through exclusive license agreement by G. I. A. Publications, Inc. Used with Onelicense Print Permission and Streaming License A-741278. Doxology by Br. Shawn Benedict.

+ Second Reading

Reader: **** **If an introduction is needed:****** Hello. My name is _____, and I am in the City of _____ in the State of _____. The second reading is in the

Book of Romans, Chapter 8, verses 1,2, 8-11. The 1989 NRSV Bible has this reading on page 157 in the second testament. I will be reading from the updated edition of 2021. Here begins the reading:

8 Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. ² For the law of the Spirit^[a] of life in Christ Jesus has set you^[b] free from the law of sin and of death. ⁹ But you are not in the flesh; you are in the Spirit,^[h] since the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. ¹⁰ But if Christ is in you, then the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit^[i] is life because of righteousness. ¹¹ If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus^[j] from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also through^[k] his Spirit that dwells in you.

Reader: This is the Word of the Lord!

ALL: Thanks be to God!

[Read full chapter](#)

Footnotes

- a. 8.2 Or *spirit*
- b. 8.9 Or *spirit*
- c. 8.10 Or *spirit*
- d. 8.11 Other ancient authorities read *Christ or the Christ or Jesus Christ*
- e. 8.11 Other ancient authorities read *on account of*

(Source: <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+8&version=NRSVUE>) Scripture quotations are taken from the New Revised Standard Version Updated Edition. Copyright © 2021 National Council of Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. See notice

+ 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 John, Chapter 5, verses 24 and 25, on page 96 in the back of the 1989 NRSV Bible. I will read the 2021 updated version.

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.**

²⁴ Very truly, I tell you, anyone who hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and does not come under judgment but has passed from death to life.

²⁵ "Very truly, I tell you, the hour is coming and is now here when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live.

Reader: This is the Gospel of the Lord!

ALL: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ!

[Read full chapter](#)

(Source: <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+5%3A24-25&version=NRSVUE>
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Gospel Acclamation

Forever, We Are Yours!

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

"Music For Worship"

Music by: Gaude! Liturgical Arts
December 31, 1995

The musical score is written on five staves in 4/4 time. 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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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 40 years. October 31, 2023 - 40th Anniversary now in our 41st year in Ministry.

But by the grace of God I am what I am, and God's grace toward me

has not been in vain. 1 Cor. 5:10

+ Sermon

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

"what has been believed always, everywhere, and by all."

2 Corinthians 4:5-6 ⁵ For we do not proclaim ourselves; we proclaim Jesus Christ as Lord and ourselves as your slaves 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)

As always, there are many layers to a brief recall of the past week's events as they relate to these Scripture readings this morning. There are many themes in these readings that a sermon or homily could be given on. One theme I see is Independence and Freedom are dependent on Interdependence.

It seems to me that God makes us humans to be in community with each other. It seems to me God has created us to be social creatures, interdependent, and able to manage just about anything if we come to it with a common interest and effort.

Our Country celebrated the Fourth of July as the day in 1776 when the Second Continental Congress ratified the "Declaration of Independence," thereby establishing the Thirteen Colonies were no longer subject to the monarch of Britain. By declaring independence, the Congress established the United States of America. Do notice this independence was built upon the Interdependence of many people who had worked together to form something new two hundred forty-eight years ago. The independence was made possible only through Interdependence, community, and established purpose.

This week also saw the sixtieth anniversary of the Civil Rights Act, signed into law on July 2, 1964. The Civil Rights Act has been expanded many times over the years as we have grown in understanding the spectrum of gifts, talents, philosophies, theories, and every other area of Anthropology here in the United States of America. In its original form, the Civil Rights Act established and provided the instrument to enforce the right to vote without facing discrimination in public accommodations, public facilities, public education, employment, and other facets of public life based on "race, color, religion, sex, and national origin." (source:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Civil_Rights_Act_of_1964#:~:text=The%20Civil%20Rights%20Act%20of,%2C%20sex%2C%20and%20national%20origin.)

The freedom from discrimination, the right to practice religion, to freely associate with persons of any ethnicity, to declare all genders equal, and to see all immigrants equally guarantees protection to the individual, but the enforcement of this equality of opportunity

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requires the cooperation of the entire community. Again, the independence that freedom from discrimination can provide depends upon the Interdependence of community citizens working in agreement toward one Country that works equally well at providing every opportunity to each person in this Country. Independence is dependent on Interdependence.

The third event, arguably the most important event of the week, was the once-in-a-lifetime experience of April passing out of her failing, worn down, miserable, and almost useless body into the waiting arms of Christ, the Good Shepherd. April was a very independent person, surpassing all the odds usually faced by people who live blind. April also knew that independence meant she had to be interdependent and work closely with the community in every aspect of life, including the church. April found her church home with Ray Of Hope for many reasons. According to her, the first reason was that she experienced the Truth, Christ our Lord here. April has had a vast religious and denominational experience during her life on Earth. Her story is fascinating, and I will just highlight a few high points. April was trans before the WPATH Standards of Care started in 2007. April knew she was trans and lived as trans during the previous Benjamin Standards, which were much more strict with rules and standards to access hormone therapy, even counseling, and certainly surgery, which led to many bearded and big women all across this Country. Living as a Trans person for April was never about dressing up, makeup, or looking like someone or some appearance standard. April knew she was trans from the inside out, not the outside in. At Ray Of Hope, she found the Biblical Theology that is not based on outward appearance but on an inward experience.

At Ray Of Hope, April found published scholarship that extends back to the early 1950s, which shows that we have known all this time that God blesses all gender expressions and all sexual orientations. Here, she found the Sacraments, Sexuality, the Sciences, Society, and the Bible to work very well together. At the end of her life, April was serving as the Moderator, the president of Ray Of Hope Church

The Church is also set up to secure independence through Interdependence. It is God's design that most of us, if not all of us, will die a human death, and most of us, if not all of us, will die individually, what will appear to be by ourselves. However independent or even lonely such a time may seem to those observing, one fact will never change: Jesus said, "I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Matthew 28:20c, the final words of Christ in the Gospel of Matthew. We are, therefore, never alone. Walter Hawkins wrote a gospel piece that has been sung by thousands of people all over the world, titled

"Never Alone."

The refrain: Never alone! I don't have to worry 'cause I'm never alone.

Never alone! I don't have to worry 'cause I'm never alone. Never alone!
He walks beside me all the way; He guides my footsteps every day.

Never again will I be insecure anymore! Never again.!

© 1978 Words and Music by Walter Hawkins and Libbris Music

(listen here on YouTube

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&v=xbBujVNZEPM>)

(listen here on Spotify

<https://open.spotify.com/track/3ZTLA5TXQZHXl0relq4ht2>)

I have noticed many people seem to arrange the time of their death to be at a moment when they appear to be alone, by themselves. Though it may appear to be a solo act, there will always be another present, God in one of God's many "persons," including but probably not limited to the Creator, Christ, and Holy Spirit. God has made the promise that we will never be alone.

In the email I sent out early Saturday morning, July 6, I quoted St. Paul in 1 Thessalonians Chapter 4:13-18, where we have the Doctrine nicknamed "the Rapture" in verses 15 - 18, also known as The Blessed Hope. From my email:

1 Thessalonians 4:13 and 14, where Paul writes;

"We do not want you to be uninformed, brothers and sisters, about those who have died, so that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope. For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have died."

So, Friends and Members of Ray Of Hope, let us not grieve like those who have no hope, for we have the Blessed Hope, as we wait for the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ when he will transform the living and raise the dead to new life. 1 Thessalonians 4:18: "Therefore encourage one another with these words."

As your Pastor, I, too, do not want you to be uninformed concerning those who have died, and to that end, every Sunday is Resurrection Sunday in this Congregation.

In the first reading, we hear these verses from the Book of Wisdom for the second week in a row, where God tells us humans are created for eternal life, and that God never intended for us to know the ways that lead to eternal separation from God and a miserable emptiness forever. No, God intended us to live joyfully and forever. Unfortunately, humanity chose, and perhaps arguably continues to choose, the ways that lead to division, destruction, and death. There is nothing inherent in creation that leads to eternal death. The love of God has overcome

God took the matter of human failure into God's own hands, giving Christ flesh, bone, and blood. Jesus repaired the wound of the rebellion by dying in our place, and then God raised him and restored humanity to its eternal state. Again, here, we see the Interdependence between God and humanity, which is used to accomplish the independent will of God and to save all.

Wisdom 1:15 "The just plan of God is immortal, eternal, and everlasting."
Wisdom 2:23 "God formed humanity to be eternal; for we are made in God's own image.

Imagine the number of people it has taken to bring these eternal words to us, from the original authors to my typing on this computer. It took the Interdependence of the Holy Spirit working with people for thousands of years across cultures, continents, and Countries to bring us these eternal truths so we can learn from studying them and grow together as we all move toward the hour of our death.

Since we are made for eternal life, God has established the Beloved Community of believers. In our age, the Church, the people of Jesus, listen to the Holy Spirit and each other as we move together toward the fullness of God's eternal plan. In the second reading, we are promised that as Christ died and was raised, we too shall die and be raised. God has given all authority over our death and resurrection to Jesus. So, the truth is we live, and even when we die, we do so within the Body of Christ on Earth and in Paradise. I spent a few minutes in prayer thinking about what a glorious moment it is (yes, eternally in the present) as April was instantly in Paradise, able to see fully and to know all things in Christ. I told the Council it was with certainty that I could report April as finally a Benedictine, which she had wanted for so long. It is pretty clear to me that St. Benedict was early to greet her and grant her this desire. There are so many souls to meet, experience, and then welcome into the great assembly of prayer and praise.

I could write about this forever and someday I will, just not tonight.
Before concluding, let me answer boldly the question that is on many people's minds, why didn't God heal April of her cancer?

Jesus said He did not speak on his own authority but only what God directed. (See John 12:49) Then Jesus said when the Holy Spirit has come, the Spirit will not speak on its own authority but only on what Jesus directs the Spirit to speak and teach. (See John 16:13). Here, this is Interdependence at work. It is safe to say that God intended to establish the Church of Jesus Christ to remain present in the world, working in the power

of the Holy Spirit to the end of this age. It is also safe then to say that God, through Christ, through the Holy Spirit, never intended that every person who prayed for healing would receive their perfect resurrection bodies when they prayed during the Church Age. Think about this a moment: if everyone who has ever been anointed with oil for healing or who has received the Bread of Life and the Cup of Salvation were instantly transformed to their resurrection bodies, we would have a restored human race functioning alongside the fallen human race. Millions of people would already be healed and restored, and their resurrection bodies are on Earth now, which sounds like a great plot for a sci-fi thriller movie. It has probably been used often for such works as books and films.

We learn here that sometimes we are healed enough to continue our service of God for a time. However, ultimately, we are not healed because it is time to move on to the next chapter. Living and then dying is God's will for us, as evidenced by all the great believers who have already gone ahead of us. Unless we are alive and remain at the coming of the Lord (see 1 Thessalonians 4:15-18 and 1 Corinthians 15:51-57) and are thus changed into our resurrection bodies without dying, we will all die and be sown like the grain of wheat that first must die to live. We die in Christ and rise in Christ (see Romans 6:8 +).

April was not punished; she did nothing wrong. Her work here was done, and it was time to move on to her work in Paradise. The Sisters used to tell us children to unite our suffering with Christ's suffering, and Christ shall raise us. Indeed, they were correct, 2 Timothy 2:12: If we suffer with him, we shall also reign with him.

In short, April had her Gethsemane as she saw the cancer winning. Even Jesus prayed, saying this is almost too much, let this cup pass from me, "yet not as I will, but as you will." (See Matthew 26:39). There comes the moment of truth that we are going to face death, and Jesus experienced that moment. In his experience and his triumph over death, he showed us how to prevail, and he consecrated and gave us permission to express our doubts, too. Finally, April also experienced her moments of suffering and pain, but not right up to the end of her life. Her pain was temporary, and with the help of medication, she did not suffer very long. She was at peace in her final hours. I was told her final breaths came after the last booms of the Corning fireworks display on Fourth July, Independence Day, and Freedom Day.

If you have ever been present at the end of a fireworks show, there is the anticipatory silence when everyone wonders if the show is really over. The silence is filled with expectation and then resolve. April commended her spirit to God moments before that silence, as Christ did when he said, "Father, into your hands, I commend my spirit." Jesus was at full acceptance of his imminent death, and we all will arrive at that same place when we surrender our will and

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unite our final breaths to His and follow His example and say, into your hands, Lord Jesus, I commend my spirit.

The Good Shepherd knows the path to the Father's House. He was standing by and resting within April even through what seemed like the Victory of this disease. After the last breath, April saw Him face to face, and he said what He always says: "Follow me, and I will show you the Way, the Truth, and now Abundant Life."
So, from this Church community, the "church militant on earth" she was immediately translated to the "church triumphant" in Paradise.

Even the journey that gained April her independence and freedom on the Fourth of July was accomplished with the help of the Blessed Trinity, the church on Earth, and the church in Paradise. Her freedom from disease and suffering, her independence day came through, with, and in Interdependence and community.

It took a Community to declare independence from Britain, and it takes a Community of awake and aware citizens today to maintain the health of that new Country that was formed 248 years ago.

It took a Community of protesters, writers, ministers, educators, and politicians to produce the Civil Rights Act of 60 years ago. Going forward, it will take an equally active Community to maintain and grow the vision of civil rights for all.

It took the Community of the Eternal God, and the Community of the Church on Earth and the Church in Heaven to raise April and bring her through a lifetime journey to find herself in grace as a Trans woman Christian at Ray Of Hope and elected to leadership in Ray Of Hope, to prepare her for her final journey through the garden with its doubts and questions, through the passion with its inherent suffering, through the death and surrender that gives way to Victory. We join Christ the Good Shepherd in saying to April: "Well done, good and faithful servant. Come now into the kingdom which has been prepared for you since before the foundations of the earth." (See Mathew 31:34)

It is Interdependence, Cooperation, Community, what we hold in common, and in Holy Communion that matters eternally and will give us true freedom.

With these words comfort one another. 1 Thessalonians 4:18
Remarks by Rev. Br. Shawn F. Benedict, O. S. B.

=====

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

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WE RESPOND TO GOD'S WORD

+ The Prayers of the People

Leader – 4: Having heard the Word Of God, speaking of the Holy Trinity, we pray to God in Christ through the powerful ministry of the Holy Spirit. Today, we are using communal prayers. After each petition, please respond with, "Lord, hear our prayer."

Leader – 4: We give God thanks and praise for the progress made in protecting the rights of all people, and we pray that our leaders will make responsible decisions to protect those rights. We pray to the Lord.

ALL: Lord, hear our prayer.

Leader – 4: We pray for all the people in the world where wars are being fought, and we pray that our leaders will choose diplomacy over weapons of war. We pray to the Lord.

ALL: Lord, hear our prayer.

Leader – 4: We feel empathy and compassion for people who feel left behind, alone, and abandoned in institutions where they are required to live. We pray that institutionalized people will experience the real presence of Christ, the comfort of the Holy Spirit and be encouraged by the promises of God. We pray to the Lord.

ALL: Lord, hear our prayer.

Leader – 4: We thank God for the privilege of having April Struhm in our Congregation for many years. We thank God that April taught us to see the truth about people and situations with her unique gifts of insight. We are grateful that she is finally free of disease and death. We thank God for her continuous prayers and ask the Holy Spirit to tell her that we are thinking of her today. We pray to the Lord.

ALL: Lord, hear our prayer.

Leader – 4: In silent prayer, we now lift to God those people we know who are ill and in need of healing, those who are facing poverty and need

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guidance, and anyone who comes to mind who needs God's grace. We pray together silently now. (**Silent prayer begins.** **Leader, please mentally count to about twenty.**) For all the people we have just prayed for, we pray to the Lord.

ALL: Lord, hear our prayer.


Leader – 4: Lord Jesus, we lift our spoken and unspoken prayers, and we ask you to intercede for us as our High Priest at the right hand of God.

ALL: Amen.

Leader - 5: Hello. My name is _____. I am in_(city) _____, _____(State)_____. At this time, we show our gratitude to God and our dedication to the Church of Jesus Christ, His Body present in the world, by offering our financial gifts and support for this ministry.

There are many convenient ways to participate with your donation, including



this QRCode , 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 can be mailed, [Right-Click Here](#) for our contact information.

Also, at this time, we will set our altars and communion tables at home and in the chapel. Those viewing at home, please turn to the highlighted text on page three of this bulletin to review the instructions for items needed for Holy Communion. In the Chapel here, everyone may assist in setting the Table of the Lord together. We begin now.

Offertory Song: Hail Mary: Gentle Woman by Carey Landry, G&P 426 Text based on Luke 1:28, 42. Text and music © 1975, 1978, Carey Landry. Published by OCP. All rights reserved. Onelicense song# 81283 Used with Print Permission and Streaming License A-74127.

A prayer of thanksgiving for the offering is said here.

(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

Kaiden: Please gently hold the communion kit in your hands for the next two prayers. Those at home with bread please lift it now.

Veronica: 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.

Kaiden: Please set down your bread. In the chapel, please continue to hold your communion kit. For those at home, pour your wine or grape juice into your cup if you have not already done so. Then add a small amount of water to the cup. With this water, we remember Jesus is human. With this fruit of the vine, we remember He is divine forever.

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.

Kaiden: Please set down your cup.

Lisa Frost: Truly present and risen among us; **SAINTS** the Lord is with you!

ALL: And also with you!

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

ALL: We lift them up to the Lord!

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

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

Lisa: It is truly right and just, our duty and our salvation, always and everywhere to give you thanks, Lord, almighty and eternal God. We praise You in the company of all the Faithful from every time and every place. We thank you for every person who shared in this ministry, especially our Foundresses, Founders, and those visionaries who dared to step up and form a church where everyone is welcome when AIDS was causing a great deal of fear, even in the churches. We thank you today for our sister, April Struhm, for her example that no situation, and no disease has the power to break our faith and Covenant with You, Eternal God. By the way they lived their lives, you offer us an example. By our Communion with them now in Paradise, you give us companionship. By their intercession, we experience sure support so that, encouraged by so great a cloud of witnesses, we may run as victors in the race before us, and win with them the imperishable Crown of Glory through Christ our Lord.

(Based upon the New Roman Missal (prayer book) Eucharistic Prayer #66, Preface I Of Saints (page 598))

May our voices be one with all the fabulous Faithful from every time and place as we sing our song and join in their unending hymns of praise.

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

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

ALL: O God, in the Name of Jesus, we, your faithful people, ask your Only One and Holy Spirit to bless and separate this bread and fruit of the vine for Christ's purpose. Through the powerful ministry of the Holy Spirit, give to us the Body and Blood of Jesus

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

Leader: You may relax your arms and hands.

+ The Words Of The Institution Of The Holy Eucharist

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

Leader -4: Having heard the Word of God and remembering the sacrifice of the Cross, we invite everyone to pray together the prayer of Jesus.

**ALL: Our Father, who Art in Heaven,
hallowed be thy name,
thy kingdom come,
thy will be done,
on Earth as it is in Heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread;
and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those
who trespass against us; and
lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
and the power, and the glory,
forever and ever. Amen**

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

+ Final Doxology

Pastor: Please lift the Holy Communion Bread of Life and Cup of Salvation.
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

Lisa: 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.

Lisa: 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.

Kaiden: Please open your kit and receive Holy Communion at this time. 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, be raised by Christ to new life, and live forever.

ALL: Thanks be to God.

PRIVATE PRAYER FOR A SPIRITUAL COMMUNION.

Lisa: 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 upon a prayer in a Prayer Book at 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 that anyone can pray at any time to express their desire to receive Holy Communion at that moment. Still, circumstances impede them from actually receiving Holy Communion.

+ Sign Of Peace

Veronica Floyd, Moderator: The Peace of the Lord Jesus Christ is with you.

ALL: And also with you.

Leader: Please take a moment to share a sign of Peace with those around you.

****During COVID, we wave across the room and into the camera for the Internet.**

Leader: Now, we clean our tables and altars. Please be sure all of the crumbs are in your cup. Add some water and swirl it around inside the cup. Drink the water. Dry the cup with the side napkin.

Clear your worship table and altar.

COMMUNION SONG: You Are Near Words and Music: Dan Schutte. Text based on Psalm 139. Text and music © 1971, OCP. All rights reserved. Glory and Praise Second Edition #619. Onlicense Song # 80528. Used with Print Permission and Streaming License A-741278.

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New Revised Standard Version – 1989

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General Offering for the week of June 23 \$339.00 Attendance 11 on Sunday;
Wednesday, June 26, Attendance 2

General Offering for the week of June 30 \$498.00 Attendance 12 on Sunday;
Wednesday, July 3, Attendance 6

(some people give monthly rather than weekly)

****In Addition to the General Offering, we received the following Special Gifts.****

Kaiden Benedict donated \$400 to the Building Fund this week, thank you Kaiden.

On Wednesday, July 3, Cam, Gary, and Annie came up from Millerton and worked from 2:00 - 7:30 PM with Brother to reduce shrubs, trees, and brush from the side yard and removed the cuttings to a compost pile at Gary and Annie's house. We are very grateful to the three of you, and Kaiden managed the monastery hospitality during these hours. Christina and Annie spent some good ministry and visiting time together too.

Ian and Christina donated \$450.00 to the Building Improvement Fund this week, thank you both.

****Recent Special Gifts****

Brother Benedict donated \$700 to the Building Fund last week.

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

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

***** <https://www.christiansagainstchristiannationalism.org/> Christians
Against Christian Nationalism

July 8, Monday 3:00 - 4:30 PM By-Laws Revision Committee.

July 9, Tuesday, 6:30 - 8:00 PM Bible Enrichment.

July 10, Wednesday, Noon Traditional Mass in English - in person.

July 14, Sunday Worship will be at 10:30 AM, in-person and online.

Hello Friends and Members,

Here is a very exciting program that will be presented this **Sunday, July 7, 2024 at 4:00 PM** at North Presbyterian Church (Pastor Evan Hansen) 921 College Ave, Elmira NY. The concert is free to the public and a goodwill donation offering will be received to benefit the choir. This looks really good and worth seeing and inviting friends to attend. There is more information about the choir attached to this email.

Blessings,
Brother



MATSIKO

WORLD ORPHAN CHOIR



Music, dance, and story that inspires educational sponsorships for our world's most vulnerable children

DATE: Sunday, July 7, 2024

TIME: 4:00 PM

LOCATION: _____

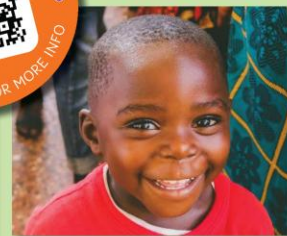
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921 College Ave, Elmira NY

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Through
Education

\$40
PER MONTH



www.matsiko.org

EMAIL: choir@matsiko.org PHONE: 253-632-8181



We Are Sent Forth To Serve

Leader - 2: **SAINTS:** The Lord is with you!

ALL: And also with you!

Leader - 2: We bless you 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

Leader - 2: 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)

Leader-4: We go forth in peace and Love to serve all people and the Lord ...

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

LAST SONG: "How Great Thou Art" Stuart Wesley Keene Hine

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7-7-24 Independence Day, 60th Anniversary of Civil Rights Act, & thanksgiving for April Struhm, Yr. B Page 39 of 41
The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this. Isaiah 9:7 This is all God's fault, God's design, God's doing from start to end.

Br. Benedict at the time of Renewal of Vows, June 20, 2021: "Looking forward, I like to say the first twenty-five years were spent on **stabilization, survival, and sustainability**. The second twenty-five years will be spent on growth to help Ray Of Hope **thrive, train, and transplant** this Congregation to new leadership. The founders and foundresses successfully transferred the leadership to a new generation, us, and now we must do the same. I plan to fade into the Congregation and continue providing support to the new leadership. My goal is to leave the Congregation with new leadership, in good standing, and thriving."



We never held a vote to decide if we would be an **INCLUSIVE** church for you.

We are not an **OPEN AND AFFIRMING** church for you.

We are not a **RECONCILING CHURCH** or
RECONCILING CONGREGATION for you.

We are not an **OPEN MINDED** or **ACCEPTING** or **WELCOMING**
Church where you can attend as long as you blend in quietly and discretely.

WE ARE YOU!

THIS is the Church where YOU belong.

Ray Of Hope Church is the Church by us, for us, and made by You.

The Third Sunday of Pride, 2019

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 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 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 AM to 11:59 PM 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)

