Stepping Into Our Next Chapter: Lessons from Acts for a Changing Season

Dear Friends in Christ,

As we enter the month of November, many of our fields have been harvested, the leaves have turned, and our thoughts naturally turn toward thanksgiving. It is a season of reflection, but for our congregation, it is also a season of profound anticipation. With Pastor Steve's retirement approaching, we are standing on the threshold of a new chapter in our shared ministry. Yet, even in a time of transition, we do not face the unknown with anxiety, because living up to our name— we hold a **Good Hope** for the future God is preparing for us.

Change can bring uncertainty, but as we learned during our recent cottage meetings, we have a timeless blueprint for times like these: the Book of Acts.

Over the past few weeks, many of us gathered in small groups to study how the Holy Spirit moved in the early Church. We planted seeds of ideas, shared our hopes, and discussed what it means to be the body of Christ today. If there is one overshadowing lesson from Acts, it is that the Church has never been defined by a single leader. The early Church thrived because ordinary people—farmers, fishermen, tax collectors, tradespeople, and homemakers—stepped forward to use their unique, God-given gifts.

Through my work with the Northwest Ohio Synod, I have a front-row seat to the broader landscape of the ELCA today. The reality is that the environment for calling a pastor has fundamentally changed. There is a widespread shortage of ordained clergy. Many congregations are finding new life through the leadership of retired supply pastors, Synod Authorized Ministers (SAMs), and dedicated lay leaders. Furthermore, the role of a modern pastor is shifting. The days of a single pastor handling every administrative task, committee meeting, and program are giving way to a more collaborative model.

This isn't a crisis; it is an invitation. It is exactly how the church operated in the Book of Acts. When the apostles found themselves stretched too thin, the community didn't falter. Instead, they raised up leaders from within the congregation to oversee finances, care for the needy, and manage daily operations so that the ministry could continue to flourish.

The seeds we planted in our cottage meetings are ready to grow. As we prepare for this transition, we are all being called to step up and become more deeply involved. A healthy, vibrant church depends on the shared hands of its members. We need Sunday school teachers, committee members, deacons, elders, and friendly faces to visit our homebound neighbors.

My wife Jill and I joined Good Hope back in 1983, and over the last four decades, we have watched this community weather changes, raise families, and continuously proclaim the Gospel. Our commitment to Good Hope and to each other is what keeps us strong.

As we look toward the future, I challenge each of you to reflect on the stories we read in Acts. Where is the Holy Spirit nudging you to serve? What unique talent or fraction of time can you offer to help tend the garden of our faith community?

We do not know exactly what the future holds, or what our next pastoral leadership configuration will look like. But we do know who holds the future. God is already preparing the path ahead for Good Hope Lutheran Church, and He is calling each of us to walk it together. Thank you for your continued faith, your dedication, and your willingness to serve.

May God's Peace be with you,

David J. Seitz
Financial Secretary

This isn't a crisis; it is an invitation.

Thank You

Thank you to all hosts and members who attended cottage meetings. Many good questions and discussions were shared about our future. Please pray to use your talents and gifts to support our church as we move forward. God is good! The best days of our congregation are ahead of us, and not behind.

Judy Krout
Cottage Meeting Committee

First Communion



First Communion classes for our 5th graders have begun, and will wrap up in time for All Saints Sunday, November 1. At the 10 am worship that morning, our students will receive communion for the very first time!

Please lift up our young people in your prayers this month. They include Oliver Beach, Grayson Glick, Spencer Lauck, Cora Lortz, Harper Ramsey, Grace Rone, Tatum Steffan, and Sydney Taylor. God bless them always!

Thanksgiving



Caught between Halloween and Christmas, and all too easy these days to overlook, is the very important holiday known as Thanksgiving. On Thanksgiving, we pause to do what honestly we ought to do every day of our lives—we take stock of the all the many gifts God has bestowed upon us, thanking Him for them, and offering up our lives to His service.

On Sunday evening, November 22nd, there will be a community Thanksgiving worship service, to be held at St. Paul Lutheran Church. The worship begins at 7, and a time of fellowship will follow.

We invite you (and your out-of-town family too!) to join this brief service of praise and prayer. Happy Thanksgiving everyone!

CHRISTMAS BASKETS FOR AREA FAMILIES

Again this year we are planning to put together Christmas baskets for area families in need.

April Beach has been in contact with the school, and we have a list of approximately 16 names. If you want to help fill these baskets, sign-up sheets for various food items will be available shortly. Our target date for deliver is the week of Monday, December 14th.

Thank you to April, and to the whole congregation for your generosity.





THE LIVE NATIVITY

A Live Nativity at the church has become something of a tradition for Good Hope the last several years, and we are planning to offer one again this year.

We have scheduled the Live Nativity for Sunday evening, December 6th from 5-7:30pm. Please mark this date on your calendars, and plan to invite your neighbors and friends!

As always, this event is an immense amount of work, involving actors, costume coordinators, set designers, and food preparation, and we're just getting started. It really does require the whole congregation, which to be honest is part of the fun!

A signup sheet is posted on the bulletin board in the narthex. Please take a look this week, and find out how you can help; and thank you to Daphne Bower for taking the lead and organizing the nativity this year.

POSTPONED TILL LENT –

The Silent Auction

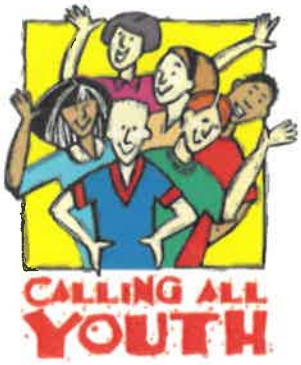
The Silent Auction in support of our preschool and daycare has been postponed till Lent. Some old time members of Good Hope may recall that in years gone by, the Silent Auction was always held during Lent, but it got moved to Advent, thinking church people would like to purchase handmade crafts for friends and family, in time for Christmas.

Having the Silent Auction in Advent worked well for a long time—but that was before we had 15 to 20 Christmas baskets to prepare each year, and a Live Nativity to put on for the community as well. The Fellowship Hall in December has gotten *very* crowded, so to ease the congestion the Preschool Board has decided to shift the auction back to Lent (which btw begins this winter on Ash Wednesday, February 10).



THANK YOU to everyone who has faithfully supported the Auction during Advent the past several years—thank you for the crafts and the puzzles and everything else that has been donated, and for the purchases that have been made. The Auction hasn't gone away, it's just been pushed back a bit, to Lent; and thank you for your understanding.

Outreach Ministries Coordinator



Pizza & Jesus

This month we are meeting only once - at 7pm on **November 8th**

This year we are inviting 6th graders to join. We will be discussing "Jesus in our Generation."



Teen Breakfast



Teen Breakfast has started back up! Gather for a hot breakfast, fellowship, and to hear from a speaker every Thursday morning during the school year. **We are inviting 6th graders to join this year!**

If you ever feel called to speak at Teen Breakfast on Thursday mornings during the school year, please reach out to Lizzy.

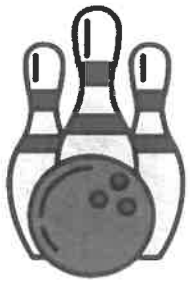
5th Quarter

The last 5th Quarter will be on **Friday, October 23rd** (9:30 to about 11:00 pm.) The church will provide food, drinks, and games.



THANK YOU to all the parents who have volunteered to spend their Friday nights watching over the kids!

Bowling in Bluffton



For Grades 6-12: On **Sunday, November 22nd**, we are heading to Southgate Lanes in Bluffton! We will meet there at 1 o'clock and bowl until 3. Lane and shoe rental will be paid for by the church. Bring $ for anything extra. Please RSVP to Lizzy if your child will attend.

City Mission

There will be a sign up sheet in the narthex for any students or parents who would like to volunteer at the City Mission. The first date we have scheduled is **Saturday, November 21st** during the lunch shift, 10:30 am to 1 pm. This is a very rewarding experience.

Board of Parish Education

Lesson Plans

Date	Grades 1-3	Grades 4-6
November 1st	God Rejects Saul 1 Samuel 15	Elijah's Faith 1 Kings 18
November 8th	David Anointed as King 1 Samuel 16	Consequences of Idolatry 1 Kings 20
November 15th	David and Goliath 1 Samuel 17	Elisha the Prophet 2 Kings
November 22nd	David & Jonathan's Friendship 1 Samuel 18-20	Divided Kingdoms 1 & 2 Kings
November 29th	Advent Sunday – Intergenerational Activity in Fellowship Hall	

Advent Sunday

Please join Parish Ed in the Fellowship Hall at 9:00 AM during Sunday School as we kick off the Advent season with a special intergenerational activity! All ages are welcome as we come together to prepare our minds and hearts for the birth of Jesus. We look forward to kicking off celebrating this meaningful season with you!





Christmas Program

Parish Ed is finalizing script for this year's Christmas Program. Look for more information to come in the upcoming weeks. Practice will begin on Sunday, November 22nd during the Sunday School hour. The board will be reaching out to individuals to sing up for speaking parts. If you are interested in helping make this years' program a success, please reach out to a member of Parish Ed. Program scheduled to take place on Sunday, December 13th during 10AM service.

Teachers Needed

We are in need of Sunday School teachers from pre-K to 6th grade. If you are interested in teaching or being a classroom helper, please sign up on our board in the fellowship hall. If you sign up to teach, please take the correlating lesson from the hanging file to the left of our board. If you have any questions, please reach out to Abby Windau or Taryn Hartman.



2026 Fall Ballot

Church Council:

President (2 year term) – Mark Russell

Recording Secretary (1 year term) – Lou Ann Nagy

Financial Secretary (2 year term) –

Deacons (2 Year term) 4 positions – 1. Brandon Kisseberth
2. Sean Crossmon
3. Luke Richard
4. Peg Whitmer

Elder (2 year term) – Robin Munck

Trustee (3 year term) 2 positions – 1. Luke Richard
2.

Woman's Representative (1 year term) – Lizzy Rone

Youth Representative (1 year term) – Declan Gillespie

Parish Education Board:

Parish Ed. Asst. Superintendent (2 year term) –

Parish Ed. Secretary (1 year term) – Kari Hagemeyer

Parish Ed. Treasurer (1year term) – Amy Glick

Parish Ed. Board (2 year term) 2 positions – 1. Katie Goodwin
2. McKenzie Glick

Pre-School/Daycare Board:

Member (2 year term) 3 positions – 1. Lori Russell
2. Cathi Kisseberth
3. Cari Taylor

Our ballot is not completed. It is not ready for our Congregational meeting in November. Your name is missing. As the focus of the cottage meetings reminded us, the early church members in ACTS shared the task of leading *their* church. This is where *our* church members need to share their abilities to help lead *our* church. Good Hope people serving Good Hope membership.

At the request of the Church Council, and in cooperation with the Hancock County Sheriff's office, a security audit has been performed on the church for procedures to have in place in the event of an emergency during a church event, such as Sunday morning worship, Sunday school, Saturday services, or other weekly services. Possible emergencies discussed included medical, fire, tornado, and even an individual looking to cause harm to members of the congregation.

Procedures are already in place for most of these possible emergencies, and have been updated within the last ten years. Additionally, a list of church parishioners with medical and other emergency experience and training is available at the entrance of the sanctuary should the need arise.

As for the last one–an individual looking to cause harm within the building–no plan is currently in place. To begin crafting one, a walk through of the building was performed with a Hancock County sheriff officer, who advised us on steps to take that would have the greatest impact on the safety of those attending a worship service.

The most effective thing we can do is limit access points to the church. Currently, there are five doors open at all times Sunday morning, which are not actively monitored, and are located all over the building. "Open doors" of course help contribute to our church's welcoming atmosphere, and limiting access diminishes this. So instead of simply keeping these doors locked, the idea is to keep them open right up to the time the worship service actually starts, at which point it's suggested that several be locked. People could of course still exit the building, but entrance would be limited to two doors, namely, the main sanctuary doors, and the parking lot entrance in the fellowship hall (South door). At the early service, after service concludes, the doors would again be unlocked so that the church is open to all, in preparation for Sunday school. At late service or other services that stand alone, the doors would remain locked after the service, and can be used to exit the church, but cannot be used to re-enter.

The second most effective thing the church can do is to have more eyes focused on the doors. Currently, deacons are tasked to be aware of needs of those in attendance at the service, including the pastor or other staff. They are not tasked with monitoring who is entering or exiting the building, nor should they be. So it is recommended that we establish a volunteer security team, two persons per service, to not attend service but instead to monitor the rest of the building. They would be aware of people exiting or entering, and of any other type of activity taking place. These are unarmed volunteers tasked with only alerting the congregation should something occur that would warrant such an action.

Beyond these two procedures, it would also be possible to bar the sanctuary doors from the inside. In our worship space, this would include the main doors in the back, as well as the two doors by the acolytes' room. The main doors swing out to open, so would require hardware installation to keep them closed in case of emergency from the inside. They would be closed during service, unlocked so that people may pass through them to use the restroom, but otherwise shut till the end of service.

Other suggestions were made as well, but with greatly diminished returns on the safety and security they would provide. The core of the implementation is to limit unmonitored access, and to have eyes on everything occurring in and around the building. The measures mentioned above would greatly increase the security of the church moving forward.

No actual work is planned yet; council is open to input and discussion.

Submitted by Jacob Ramsey

NOVEMBER 2026

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 7:30 Worship 9 Sunday School 10 Worship/1st Comm. 6 Confirmation	2 7 Trustee Mtg	3 General Election 6:30 Bell Choir 7 Boy Scouts 7:30 Choir	4 1-3 Sewing Ladies 6 Parish Ed Mtg.	5 7 Teen Brkfst 10 Bulletin Deadline 6 Cub Scouts	6	7 5 Worship
8 Holy Land Ministries 7:30/10 Worship 9 Sunday School 6 Confirmation 7 Pizza & Jesus	9 7 Council Mtg	10 12-3 Religious Ed. 6:30 Bell Choir 7 Boy Scouts 7:30 Choir	11 1-3 Sewing Ladies	12 7 Teen Brkfst 9 Food Pantry 10 Bulletin Deadline 6 Cub Scouts	13	14 4 Bell (FH) 5 Worship
15 7:30/10 Worship 9 Sunday School 11 Congreg. Meeting 6 Confirmation	16	17 10:30 Visit. Comm. Mtg 12-3 Religious Ed. 6:30 Bell Choir 7 Boy Scouts 7:30 Choir	18 1-3 Sewing Ladies	19 7 Teen Brkfst 10 Bulletin Deadline	20	21 10:30-1 City Mission 5 Worship
22 7:30/10 Worship 9 Sunday School 1-3 LYO Bowling 7 St Paul'sComm. Thanks. Service	23 6:45 Discipleship Grp	24 1-6 G.H. Blood Drive 6:30 Bell Choir 7 Boy Scouts 7:30 Choir 6: Advent Decor.	25 9-10:30 Food Pantry 1-3 Sewing Ladies	26 Thanksgiving Day	27 12:30 News. Assembly	28 5 Worship
29 7:30/10 Worship 9 Sunday School 6 Confirmation	30					