

## **“But Pastor Annie, Can We Celebrate Halloween??” A Theological Reflection**

The best questions come from confirmation students and this one was no different. Recently shamed by their Christian peer at school for “participating in the Devil’s holiday” this young saint wanted reassurance that they were not, in fact, in cahoots with Satan himself.

Of course I’ve also heard similar inclinations from Christian adults. Some even share dismay that we as a church would dare don our trunks in festive decorations and sport costumes to entertain the children in our midst while passing out generous portions of treats...instead of...I suppose kneeling at our altars and praying fervently for the safety and protection of our children, or doing something else....more holy?

My facetiousness aside, reality is that what we commonly know as “Halloween” is actually rooted in Christian tradition! As you may know we are about to celebrate All Saints Sunday this coming weekend. Actual “All Saints Day” is Friday, November 1. October 31 is “All Hallow’s Eve” or “All Saints Eve.” This was a carnival-like inversion celebrating the shadow side of life — ghosts and ghouls and such — just before the great festival celebrating the saints. It was a mockery of death in light of Christ’s Resurrection! Katherine May, in her book, “Wintering,” writes that Halloween celebrates an “overturning of the natural order and has its lineage in old traditions of reversing the roles: having the poor become rulers and bringing the rich low.” You may recall Mary’s Magnificat at the announcement of the coming of Jesus:

*He has brought down the powerful from their thrones  
and lifted up the lowly;  
he has filled the hungry with good things  
and sent the rich away empty.*

Halloween then is an emboldened act of those without power to mock those who *think they are charge, because it is indeed Christ who has robbed the powerful of their most evil threat- the very threat of death! These festivals were often tolerated because there has always been a feverish link between monsters and mockery where those without power have often been given permission to play on the edges of civility in order for the powerful to quell their possible more dangerous lurches toward actual riot and rebellion.*

Interesting, eh?

Now, some of its pagan roots may well include folk traditions of honoring the dead, appeasing evil spirits, and marking the end of the summer harvest and the beginning (in the Northern hemisphere, at least!) of the darkest days of the year. There are strong echoes of the Gaelic pagan festival of *Sauin*, which too, marked the arrival of the dark half of the year with bonfires and the scattering of ashes, and was when many believed the veil between the two worlds of the living and the dead was at its thinnest. This is often when Gaelic fairies were thought to be at the peak of their mischief. It was a celebration of limbo. It spoke to our desire not to be forgotten when we die or to be forgotten by those who die.

As Christianity evolved and usurped some of these pagan traditions, this festival was given new meaning and became a complete mockery of death or its supposed hold on us. Today our decorating of our homes and trunks, and very bodies in costumes is a special act of Christian rebellion against death! Or as our baptismal liturgy calls for, this act is an embodiment of our public renunciation of “the devil and all the forces that defy God!”

I also dare say that in our current climate, where plenty of neighbors are turning against neighbors over any variety of ideologies or opinions, the act of opening our doors wide, greeting neighbors with generous gifts of hospitality, welcoming every person, monster, goblin, or character that crosses our doorstep is darn near *sacramental- as in a means of grace. Now, don’t go telling on me to the bishops here, I am well aware Christ’s Holy Table and Font are exquisitely purposed for that- but I do think that we and our neighbors are hungry for gifts of welcome and sharing and joy together in these days, all of which are Christlike. These next couple of days are a holy invitation into that kind of being in our world and I say we unabashedly delve into it with arms full of candy and grace for our neighbors!*

Nanny-nanny-doo-doo to the devil, death, and all the powers of this world who so blatantly try to rebel against God and draw us away from Christ’s divine love. (Insert raspberry blowing face here).  
Pastor Annie Ladnier

**This Week at HOPE October 30, 2024**



**VOLUNTEERS  
NEEDED**

**THIS SUNDAY WE NEED:  
READER/PRAYER LEADER, COMMUNION  
ASSISTANT, ACOLYTE, AND ALTAR FLOWERS  
PLEASE CONSIDER A ROLE AND [SIGN UP HERE!](#)**

This Week at HOPE October 30, 2024



# Trunk or Treat

30  
OCTOBER  
2024

ALL ARE WELCOME!!  
HOPE LUTHERAN CHURCH

WEDNESDAY  
5:30-7 PM  
NIGHT

3337 KINGSBARN AVE, RIVER FALLS, WI



**TONIGHT! RAIN OR SHINE!  
ALL TRUNKS STILL WELCOME:**

**TRUNK HOST SIGN-UP**

**For those hosting a trunk, please be set and ready to go by  
5PM TONIGHT!**

**If it is raining at start time we will shift to tables in WOTS.**

**Please set up along the perimeter of the parking lot with  
your trunk facing in and leave the middle clear for decora-  
tions and walking families.**

# This Week at HOPE October 30, 2024



## The Ministry of HOPE's Council: Naming Our Values

The HOPE Ministry Council has been faithfully exploring HOPE's values over the last six months. This has been diligent, engaging, and meaningful work and we are excited to share what the Holy Spirit has helped us discover! Our work was rooted in our current mission statement:

*HOPE is called by God to look beyond ourselves.  
We walk together in faith, treasuring all people and sharing with them  
the love, hope and acceptance that is in Christ.*

We agreed that this mission has served us well and continues to be the centerpiece of who God calls us to be in and through this community of faith. But we also acknowledged that it left some ambiguity on how best to live into that statement moving into the future. Over the last few years, including during the pandemic, we noticed that some of our decision making had become increasingly difficult and many of our ministry teams expressed feeling disconnected from one another. During last fall's Cottage Meetings many of you shared similar feelings and named beautiful hopes for our future together! Understanding that it is the council's primary role to make sure that HOPE has a vision and all teams are moving in the same direction toward that vision, naming our values has been a central focus for the 2024 HOPE council as we prepare for our next phase of ministry together!

In fact, HOPE will celebrate our 20th anniversary in 2026! As we continue to identify our goals and hopes for the next generation of our ministry, it is our hope that these values can inform just *how we live into our mission in the coming years. Utilizing the feedback we received from our Cottage Meetings, especially the values that were named during that process, our council distilled down the long list of values into our top four. This required scripture-centered, thoughtful, and at times, passionate, conversation. While we will massage out the final details during the November council meeting, we would love to share the four main values:*

### HOPE Values...

- All people without exception
- Serving generously
- Spiritual Nourishment
- Our connection with creation

Next week I will share more about each of those values, how we arrived at them, and how we hope they will shape our next steps! As always, we are a body of faith doing ministry together. If you have questions or feedback about these values, please contact me or a member of HOPE's council for further conversation!

May these values empower us to go out in peace to serve Jesus,  
Pastor Annie Ladnier

This Week at HOPE October 30, 2024



FOREVER

*thankful*

ALWAYS

*grateful*

ABUNDANTLY

*blessed*

**GRATITUDE BRUNCH NOVEMBER 17th!**

Mark your calendar for a time celebrating God's many blessings and all we have to be thankful for! We will share in fellowship with one another while enjoying a delicious catered meal and naming our blessings together!

# Carols and Candles

Sunday, December 8, 4pm

## Carols and Candles Choir Rehearsals

Monday, Nov. 11, 6:30pm

Monday, Nov. 25, 6:30pm

Monday, Nov. 18, 6:30pm

Monday, Dec. 2, 6:30pm

Saturday, Dec. 7, 9:30am

The Carols and Candles Choir welcomes all singers of all abilities, high school age and up. Attend as many rehearsals as your busy schedule allows. Join the choir this year, bring a friend, and enjoy Christmas in song!



## Conversations with Hope for Earth

Hope for Earth would love to meet you! Please come share your passions and imagine how you can be part of Hope for Earth's energizing sustainability work. Members of Hope for Earth will be waiting to meet you at these dates and locations in downtown River Falls:

- ⇒ **Monday, November 4 at 7 p.m.** at Junior's Restaurant & Tap House, 414 S. Main Street
- ⇒ **Wednesday, November 6 at 1:30 p.m.** at Selah Vie Bistro and Coffee Cottage, 208 N. Main Street
- ⇒ **Thursday, November 7 at 8:30 a.m.** at Waystone Coffee Co., 115 E. Walnut Street

Enjoy a free beverage and conversation. Let's get to know one another. Drop us a line if you have any questions: [hopeforearthrf@gmail.com](mailto:hopeforearthrf@gmail.com)

See you there!



**Join Us for a River Falls Community Diaper & Baby Wipes Drive!**

One in two families in River Falls struggle with providing diapers and wipes for their children. Lack of diapers can limit access to childcare and lead to health issues and discomfort for children, so we are asking for your help!

The United Way St. Croix & Red Cedar Valleys Diaper Bank, along with the River Falls Rotary Club and Ezekiel Lutheran Church, invite you to make a difference from **October 7th to November 15<sup>th</sup> by purchasing diapers and wipes.**

How to participate:

- **Drop off at: Ezekiel Lutheran Church:** 202 S. Second Street or **St. Bridget's Catholic Church:** 211 E. Division Street, River Falls, WI 54022
- **Scan the QR code** to purchase diapers and wipes at Walmart.com. Purchased items will be shipped directly to the United Way diaper bank.
- **Go to RF Rotary Club Facebook** page for the direct link to Walmart.



**All** diaper sizes and baby wipe quantities needed. Please ensure all donations are in unopened, original packaging for safety.

Thank you in advance for your generosity and making an impact on the families in River Falls!



## WITNESS TO FAITH:

The Biblical Art of Sadao Watanabe

First Congregational Church is delighted to present *Witness to Faith: The Biblical Art of Sadao Watanabe*, featuring original works of graphic art by Japan's foremost Christian artist of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Sadao Watanabe is a world famous artist who took his Christian faith and infused it with the ancient Japanese art of printmaking to create beautiful creations. Watanabe's art can be found in places like the Metropolitan Museum in New York, but seeing multiple copies of his work is unique!

As part of Pastor Stacy Johnson Meyers' sabbatical grant, she worked to bring this exhibit of over 30 pieces of his art to First for this season!

**A SPECIAL PRIVATE HOPE VIEWING IS SCHEDULED FOR:**

**Monday, November 25 at 6:30PM**

First Congregational Church, 110 North Third Street, River Falls

[RESERVE YOUR SPOT HERE](#)

We will meet in the lobby of First Congregational Church that night.



This Week at HOPE October 30, 2024



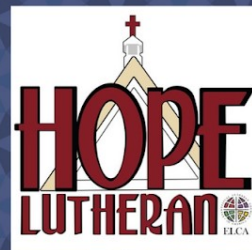
# ADVENT FAIR

Wednesday, November 20th

5:30-7:30pm

An Inter-Generational evening of art,  
creativity, & fellowship!

**NOW SEEKING  
PROJECT HOSTS!**



**Have a fun Advent/Christmas project idea and want to lead it?  
We are seeking projects for kids, teens/adults, and all ages!**

**[SIGN UP HERE](#)**



## ELCA Truth & Healing Movement Opportunities!

Last November, Rev. Sara Bishop, NWSWI Synod Advocate for Right Relationship, joined us for an Indigenous People's service and learning opportunity on a synod resolution for Land Acknowledgements. Since then we have been studying and learning more from our indigenous siblings. We have read and discussed *An Indigenous People's History of the United States*, have learned more about the *Doctrine of Discovery* and the ELCA's repudiation of it, and broadened our conversation to wider civic life and faith concerns as we explore how our past informs our present. All of these efforts are in line with the ELCA's wider work, "The Truth and Healing Movement," which serves to put legs onto our official repudiation statement.

This fall there are a number of opportunities for further exploration, learning, repentance, and hope. Book studies, online presentations, classes and even a symposium are at your disposal through the [ELCA's Truth and Healing Movement website!](#)

**Mark your calendars for these upcoming opportunities and learn more at the link above:**

1. GOING ON NOW: Reading Circle on *Custer Died for Your Sins* by Vine Deloria Jr.\* (*Standing Rock Sioux*) **HOPE ADULT FORUM ON THIS BOOK DATE HAS BEEN MOVED FROM NOV. 17 TO JANUARY 19, 2025!**
2. Sunday, November 10, 7-8:30PM: Presentation "Toward Truth and Healing: How Churches Face Accountability for their Indian Boarding Schools"
3. November 18-19th: Vine Deloria Jr. Theological Symposium\*- ONLINE ACCESS AVAILABLE

This Week at HOPE October 30, 2024



**WEDNESDAYS 5:45-7:15!**

**Fall Session: September 18th-November 20th**

Join us as we explore Old Testament stories, take a deep dive into the 10 commandments, and celebrate our Bible Milestone.

Fall session ends with our cross-gen Advent Fair on November 20th!

All K-10+ children and youth are encouraged to register and attend!

Friends are always welcome!

3 Sessions throughout the year:

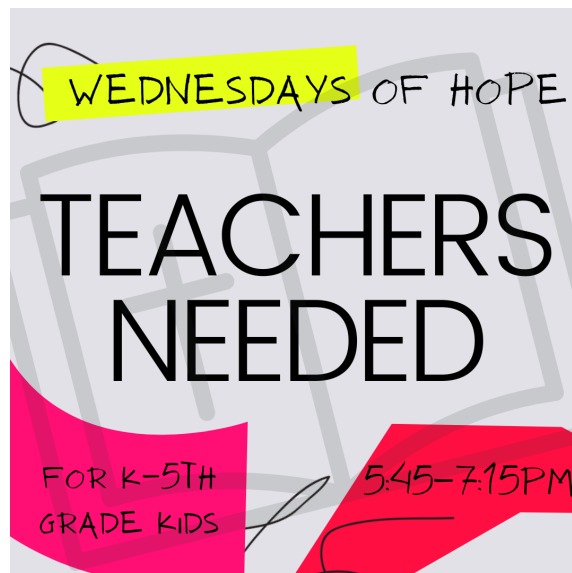
Winter Session: January 8- Feb 26

Spring Session: April 30-May 21

**MEALS NOW PROVIDED EVERY WEEK!**

Click below for more info & to register:

**[2024-2025 WEDNESDAYS OF HOPE REGISTRATION](#)**



**[TEACHER SIGN UP HERE](#)**



River Falls  
**Community Dinner**

**DINE-IN  
OR TO-GO**

*A Community  
Non-Denominational  
Event*

*Thanksgiving Day*

**November 28, 2024**

**11am - 1pm**

*Held at*

*Saint Bridget  
Catholic Church*

*We would like to invite you to join us for Thanksgiving Dinner. Everyone is Welcome, young, old, home alone, shut ins, travelers or just because you want to. We offer take-out or delivery for those unable to attend. FREE, or free will offering. We would be pleased to have you attend. Thank You*

*Please register between Oct 23 - Nov 25  
in spotlight area on [saintbridgets.org](http://saintbridgets.org)*

Designed by:



## This Week at HOPE October 30, 2024



### **WEDNESDAYS OF HOPE MEAL HOSTS NEEDED! SIGN UP HERE AT THIS NEW LINK!**

This year we would like to provide a SIMPLE, kid-friendly meal each Wednesday evening for our Wednesdays of HOPE ministry. This helps families participate in our ministry with one less thing to worry about on a busy weeknight, helps our youth and mentors connect over a meal, and provides an opportunity for other HOPE adults to engage with our children and youth!

Meals need to be ready at 5:45 and we expect to serve 15-20 people total. *Free Will donations will be collected to offset expenses. Donations of money for pizza nights are also being accepted.*

Please prayerfully consider if you/your ministry team would like to host a meal this year! Fall session is currently our biggest need!

### **Elementary Bible Milestone**

All current 3-4th grade youth will receive a special, age-appropriate Bible during worship on Sunday, November 10th. As part of that milestone they will also participate in a special workshop on Wednesday, November 6th at Wednesdays of HOPE. Please make sure your child is present for this special Faith Milestone!

# This Week at HOPE October 30, 2024

## Continuing the Work of the Assistance & Resource Center (ARC) A joint statement from Our Neighbors' Place and Operation HELP

With the discontinuation of the Assistance & Resource Center, Inc. (ARC) this year, Our Neighbors' Place and Operation HELP are developing a partnership to continue ARC's work of "providing short term financial assistance to residents of River Falls and adjacent communities to help them meet their basic needs." By adjusting service areas and leveraging the existing experience and programs of Our Neighbors' Place and Operation HELP, the two partner organizations will continue ARC's tradition of offering:

- Housing Assistance – Rent matching, pay arrangements, mortgage payments
- Utilities – Budgeting Sessions, payments to utility providers
- Transportation – Repairs, gas cards, taxi vouchers, registration, license fees, etc.
- Miscellaneous – Laundry, haircuts, work clothing, phone, vital records
- Food – School meal assistance, formula, other supplementation
- Referrals – Referrals & assistance for other programs

Operation HELP has been providing emergency financial assistance throughout St. Croix County, including the city of River Falls, for more than 30 years. These services include payment assistance for rent, utilities, and major car repairs. In recent years, a temporary emergency housing program (motel vouchers) has been added. Moving forward, these services will be extended to the entire River Falls School District area and adjacent communities will be added as the need and funding support is demonstrated. Applications for emergency financial services are handled entirely online (<https://operationhelpstcroix.org/client-application>) or by phone allowing clients to apply anytime from any location. Operation HELP has a full-time staff person dedicated to vetting emergency financial applications and working with clients, landlords, utilities companies, and repair shops to work out payment arrangements.

Our Neighbors' Place has spent the past 15 years providing help and hope to anyone in Pierce and St Croix county who is struggling to meet their basic needs. Services are delivered through 4 distinct programs: Day Center, Closet Thrift Store, Backpack Program, and Transitional Housing. Through the Our Neighbors' Place Day Center, guests in the River Falls and Ellsworth School Districts will have access to the Helping Hands Fund. This fund can provide emergency financial assistance related to vehicle costs, vital records, laundry, work clothing, and more - with a focus on priorities that support housing security. Additionally, all guests are eligible for gas cards, taxi vouchers, motel vouchers, food, showers, laundry, phone, and side by side assistance from our full time case manager. Guests who call or visit the Day Center for help will find a safe, nonjudgmental environment where all are welcome.

Although Our Neighbors' Place and Operation HELP are experienced and well-equipped operationally to respond to the discontinuation of services resulting from ARC's departure, funding for these services will be a challenge. In 2023, ARC provided approximately \$125,000 in rent and utility payments assistance to clients and approximately \$50,000 in transportation and other assistance. The continuing generosity of River Falls and Pierce County churches, businesses, clubs and organizations, and individuals will be critical to sustain these resources for local residents who are experiencing financial hardship.

Please consider a donation to continue these important services in the River Falls community!

**To donate by check, mail to:**

Our Neighbors' Place  
122 West Johnson St River Falls, WI 54022  
Please write "Helping Hands Fund" in the memo line

Operation HELP  
1830 Hanley Road, Suite 100 Hudson, WI 54016

**To donate by credit card:**

[Donate to Our Neighbors' Place](#)

[Donate to Operation Help](#)

With gratitude,

Shelly Smith, Executive Director - Our Neighbors' Place  
Tim Puffer, Executive Director - Operation Help

This Week at HOPE October 30, 2024



Sunday, December 1, 6:30 PM  
Meet at Veteran's Park  
All are welcome!

.....

HOPE FOR EARTH INVITES YOU TO:

# Entering Advent

A CANDLELIGHT RIVER WALK

.....

We will gather by our beautiful  
Kinnickinnic River to walk,  
reflect, and greet Advent

Please bring a flashlight  
Check [www.hopeforearth.org](http://www.hopeforearth.org)  
in the event of bad weather

## This Week at HOPE October 30, 2024



### **Please lift up the following people in prayer**

John Hamilton

Ellen Roose

Andy Haugen (Relative of Ellen Roose)

Derrek Lettich (Relative of Karen Brohaugh)

The Family of Teresa Jonas (Friend of Kay & Bill Montgomery)

Connie Juaire

Scott Uring (Friend of Jeff & Karen Rodewald)

John Cain (Family friend of Olive Olson)

Robb Scott

Jerry Sather Family (Brother of Karen Hamilton)

The Family of Woody Fangmeier (Friends of Jeff & Karen Rodewald)

Family of Kermit Paulson

Marcus Stack (Friend of Steve & Karen Kaste)

Jeremy Martinson (Brother-in-Law to Elise Forward)

Family of Teajai Schmidt (relative of the Boocks)

Jacob Dan and family (Friends of Jeff Rodewald)

Karen Hamilton

Patricia Miller (Sister of Carl Warren)

Rhiannon Bondhus (Niece of Bondhus family)

Lori Snyder (Friend of Nancy & David Peters)

Ed and Gwen Paulson

Randy Dopkins (Family friend of Olive Olson)

Eden Annoye (Relative of Debra James)

Fatma Aljarrah (Friend of Faye Perkins)

Beth Lindgren Family (Dan Malaney)

Michael Jacobson (Brother of Linda Jacobson)

Barb Carmichael (Friend of Nancy Sailer)

Dennis & Sandy Schultz (Friends of Bill & Kay Montgomery)

Nancy Miller (Friend of Paula & Phil Klacan)

Linda Shurden (Friend of Nancy Sailer)

Hannah Forward

Ella Conover (Phil & Paula's Klacan's Niece)

Daryl Kleeman (brother of Darcy Boock)

David Boock (Relative of the Boocks)

Lee Hill (friend of Naomi)

Gary Siebold

David Hendrickson



# This Week at HOPE October 30, 2024



## **November Birthdays**

Dianne H-Robinson	1-Nov
Linda Yde	1-Nov
Greta Wunrow	3-Nov
Diane Meyer	5-Nov
Linda Jacobson	7-Nov
Grace Hansen	8-Nov
Heathley Neuhaus	8-Nov
Charles Bricton	16-Nov
Mallory James	16-Nov
Mikey Langlois	16-Nov
Karen Rodewald	21-Nov
Phillip Klacan	22-Nov
Deb Tokheim	29-Nov



## **November Baptisms**

McKenna Brill  
Karen Brohaugh  
Russ Jiskra  
Jane Terkelsen  
Dan Rodewald  
Linda Yde



## **November Anniversaries**

Steve & Diane Meyer  
Nick & Stacia Johnson  
Annie & Lucas Ladnier

**Date**  
25-Nov  
08-Nov  
07-Nov

**Years to Celebrate**

46  
16  
9

# This Week at HOPE October 30, 2024



All are invited & needed to participate in the leading of worship! Please prayerfully consider sharing your time and talents!

**SIGN UP HERE**

Want to help but not sure what the job entails? Learn more in our [Worship Volunteer Guide](#)



All are invited to join Pastor Annie for this weekly small group conversation and Bible study! This is a great chance to grow in relationship with God and one another.

Discussion time includes group check-in, opening meditation, and study of the week's worship texts.

We meet via Zoom so all can join from wherever you are!

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88419155061?pwd=di9hUXlraeDdzM0dCK0pPMDNtbHczZz09>

# This Week at HOPE October 30, 2024



## Bakken-Young

Funeral & Cremation Services

Bakken-Young Funeral & Cremation Services sponsors an in-person six-week grief support groups for adults who are grieving the death of a loved one. We ask that you participate in all 6 sessions, as you are able.

**Group in River Falls: Mondays, 6:00-7:00pm**

October 21, 28, November 4, 11, 18, 25, 2024

at St. Bridget Catholic Church

*Garden View Room*

211 East Division Street, River Falls, WI, 54022

All adults are welcome to participate in the group and the sessions are free.

Group Facilitator:

Julia Rajtar, M.A.P.S., BCC

Bakken-Young Grief Support Coordinator

To register please rsvp by October 18th, with your name, phone number, and email at: [julia@bakken-young.com](mailto:julia@bakken-young.com)

For more information, call or text Julia at 715-781-4003.

Visit "Grief Support" at [www.bakken-young.com](http://www.bakken-young.com)  
for additional groups and other grief support resources  
or join us on Facebook: [www.facebook.com/bakkenyoung](https://www.facebook.com/bakkenyoung)