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Upcoming Events

Communion Sunday

Sun. Dec. 3

Retreat Christmas Brunch

& Cookie Distribution

Sun. Dec. 3, after worship

Liberty Pole Methodist Women

Tue. Dec. 5, 5:30 p.m.

New Hope Board Meeting

Sun. Dec. 10, 11:30 a.m.

Liberty Pole Board Meeting

Mon. Dec. 11, 6 p.m.

Retreat Board Meeting

Sun. Dec. 17, 2 p.m.

Youth Christmas Sunday

Sun. Dec. 17

Sunday Bible Study

Sun. Dec. 3 & 17,
8:30 a.m. @ Liberty Pole

Wednesday Warriors

Each Wednesday, 3:30 p.m.
@ New Hope

Food Pantry Open

Wednesdays: 5 – 6:30 p.m.
Thursdays: 9 – 11 a.m.

Prepare the Way!

The season of Advent is here! Advent is the season of preparation for Christians as we prepare for Christ's coming. For the next four weeks, we are going to begin *preparing a way* for Jesus.

With the excitement and joy of the Christmas season, we often forget that Advent is a time to prepare a place for Jesus within our hearts, our homes and our lives. How many of us rush through the season, eager to participate in all the fun activities and commercial hype of Christmas that we neglect to prepare a way for Jesus? Think about it. Christmas decorations are popping up in the stores earlier and earlier each year. As soon as the calendar turns to November, we are bombarded with ads that entice us to devote our time and treasures to boosting sales. The list of *stuff* that we cram into our Christmas season seems endless.

However, among the joy of Christmas and clutter of commercialism is the quiet voice of Jesus telling us to "make straight the path" and to prepare a place, to make ready our hearts for the Good News.

This Advent season, we invite you to pause with us. Let us slow down and prepare a way for Jesus. You know why? He has already prepared a way for us. Long before Jesus became a man, God began preparing a way for you and me.

Each Sunday during Advent, we will be *preparing the way* through special worship services in each of our churches. Together we will light the Advent candles, reflect on the events leading up to that first Christmas, and prepare our hearts, souls, and minds for the Good News that comes with Christmas.

In addition to our weekly services, Christmas Eve will be unique this year. Since Christmas Eve falls on a Sunday, all three of our churches have opted to only have one service each that day so that families can spend more time together without having to drive back and forth to church! We invite you and your family to join us for one of our special Christmas Eve services being held at our regular worship times that day. Come, and let us reflect on the message and prepare the way for the Lord!



Christmas Eve Worship Services

8 a.m. at Retreat Methodist Church

9:15 a.m. at Liberty Pole Methodist Church

10:30 a.m. at New Hope Methodist Church

Worth the Wait

It was Christmas morning in 1986. My grandmother, Ida, drove to be with us and share the holiday traditions. I was super excited to see her, open presents, eat our dinner, and all around enjoy the day.

I woke up early that morning, but it wasn't to open presents. I woke in the wee hours of Christmas because I was sick. I am not sure if it was my continual ear infections that plagued my childhood or a stomach bug. I remember waking, not feeling well, and returning to sleep. Dozing off and on throughout the morning, I heard the family opening presents. Finally, I felt a little better, and I came out of my room to find my father off playing with my brother and his new toy and my mother in the kitchen making brunch. However, my grandma was in the living room. She was tidying up and at the end of the couch was a pile of presents.

It was then that I realized I had missed everyone else opening their presents, but I had all mine to open. But there was a catch, I couldn't open all the gifts until everyone who had given them to me was there. My grandma was there, so she let me open a few of them from her. The gift I remembered the most and had for years was a blanket with the head and shoulders of a lion on it. You know, the ones that were super trendy in the mid-'80s. Over the next hour, as my mom had time from brunch prep and my brother could be pulled away from his new toys, I got to open my presents.

I had not intended to wait that long to open my presents, but it was worth the wait. It was a lot of fun sitting on my lion blanket with my grandma opening all my gifts at once, playing with my new toys, and reading my new books.

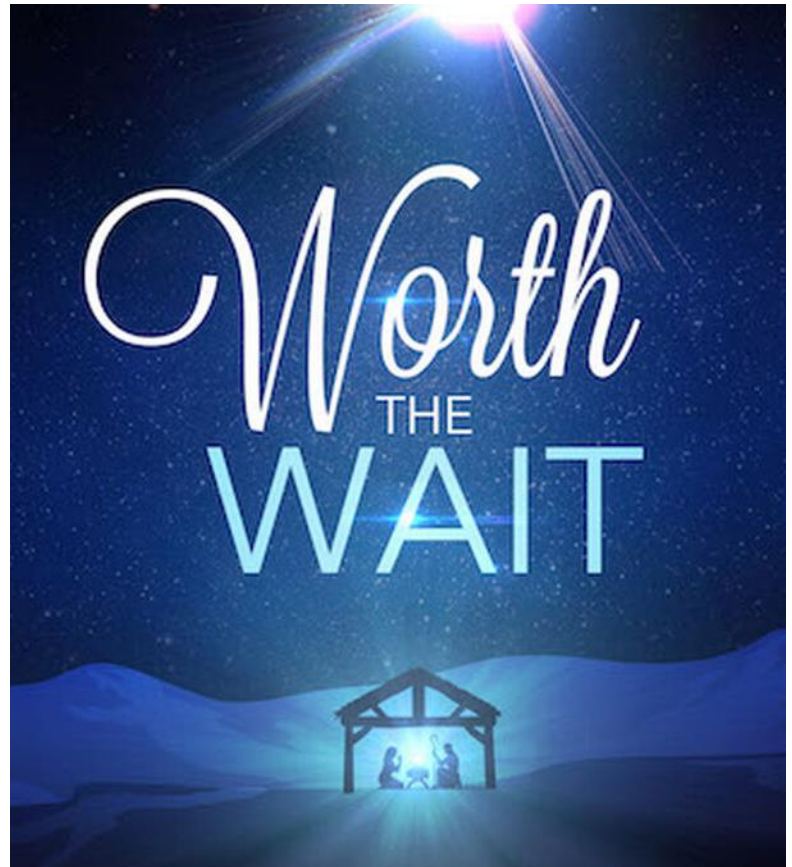
Some say that waiting is the hardest part. And it can be when you are waiting in line at the grocery store or the post office. We dread this kind of waiting. It is tedious. It is boring. One minute feels like an eternity.

But when we are looking forward to an event or day, waiting can be half the fun. There is excitement in the waiting. Thinking and imagining all the possibilities. There is often a nervous energy that allows us to focus on what is to come with hope.

Advent is a time of year when we are asked to wait, to be patient. We know the story of Christmas. We know what will happen, but we must wait until Christmas Eve to get to the event. For me, this isn't about the dread of waiting in line to get to the front of the store but rather a joyful time of remembering Christmas past and imagining the one to come. It is forcing ourselves to be patient even when we are not. It is slowing down because we cannot do anything to get Christmas to come any quicker. (Unless you have invented time travel, which in that case can you tell me the year the Lions will win the Super Bowl?)

Sometimes, situations in our lives make us slow down, much like me on the Christmas morning back in 1986, and when we slow down and wait, we find beautiful moments. My hope for all of us during this Advent season is that we are patient and wait, and as we wait, we may find unforgettable transcendent moments of joy, peace, and love. And I would say that it is worth the wait.

Grace and Peace,
Pastor Drew





We invite you to renew your spirit as we jump into God's Word, grow in our faith, and discover how it applies to our lives today! Everyone is invited to join us for our Sunday Bible study at 8:30 a.m. on Sunday December 3rd and 17th at the Liberty Pole church. This Bible study is open to everyone, so come as you are and be ready to dive into the Living Word!

Sunday Morning Bible Study

Sundays, December 3rd & 17th @ 8:30 a.m. at Liberty Pole



Three cartoon angels with halos and wings, each holding a red book. The angel on the left has brown hair, the middle one has blonde hair, and the one on the right has black hair. They are all wearing light blue robes and pink shoes.

The Liberty Pole Methodist Women group will be gathering for pizza and fellowship at Gassers in Viroqua. They will meet at 5:30 p.m. on Tuesday, December 5th. Come and join in the fun!



Congratulations to the winners of the raffle prizes from Retreat's Fall Turkey Bazaar! Thank you to all who supported the church through this event. Whether you simply purchased a raffle ticket, came and enjoyed the meal, purchased items off the bazaar bake and craft sale, or were one of our many fabulous volunteers, your support for our church is greatly appreciated! We look forward to serving and doing ministry with you in the future!



Similar to the annual charge conferences of the past, each of our churches will be hosting individual annual church conferences to review the previous year and plan for the year ahead. Currently, all three of our churches have each set a date for Sunday, January 28, 2024 for their church conferences. More information on these conferences will be coming in the next newsletter, so stay tuned. Until then, mark your calendars and make plans to join us as we prepare for our future ministry in our communities and beyond!



December Online Bible Study

Each year, we celebrate in a multitude of ways. We put up wreaths, Christmas trees, and twinkling lights. Delicious cookies, candies, and other dishes are shared. We greet friends and strangers with big smiles and Christmas blessings. The Christmas story is read and shared with those we love. These seasonal traditions and others are festive and fun, but they can also be a tool to keep us focused on the reason for the season.

This study will begin on Friday, December 1st, and utilize “Advent” by the Church of the Valley. To join the study, use the link below!

You can access this online study through the Bible App or [bible.com](https://www.bible.com) website. Both are free, easy to use resources. In addition to the devotional and reading plans, they provide a verse of the day and Bible reading tools. Several different Bible translations are also available. Bible App is available in your app store or accessible online at www.bible.com.


Please note that as of October 31st, 2023, Bible.com no longer supports Plans with Friends. To participate in our online Bible studies, you will need to open the Bible App on your mobile device.



Spreading Christmas Joy!

Let's gather together and spread some Christmas joy! Coming up on Sunday, December 3rd following the 8 a.m. worship at Retreat, the church will be having a Christmas potluck brunch and fellowship for everyone to come and enjoy (*this will take the place of the December Fellowship Sunday!*). All are invited, even if you don't come to worship! Please bring a dish to share to make the meal more enjoyable – and show off your cooking talent!

After brunch, cookie packages will be assembled for distribution to our area shut-ins, friends, and neighbors in order to give them a boost of Christmas joy! Because when you're overflowing with joy, you have to share it, right? If you would like to contribute to this festive Christmas ministry, we ask that you bring 3 to 4 dozen Christmas cookies for the distribution! And this is another opportunity to show off your Christmas baking skills – or better yet, make them together as a family project! Again, everyone is welcome to attend, even bring your friends and neighbors! Great fun is sure to be had by all! Hope to see you there!



Church Christmas Brunch & Cookie Ministry

Sunday, December 3rd
9 a.m. (after worship)
Retreat Methodist Fellowship Hall



“For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.”

~ Isaiah 9:6 ~

Thank You for Your Support!

Big, big thanks to the local churches, businesses, 4-H groups, and friends of the New Hope Food Pantry! Throughout 2023, the pantry has received monetary donations, canned and boxed food items, garden fresh fruits and vegetables, snacks, cleaning supplies, and toiletries. We even received food items, frozen chicken and pork, and freezers full of bread from dedicated supporters on the other side of the state; also totes heaped with frozen meals and desserts from our Iowa neighbors. It would have been interesting to know how many thousands upon thousands of pounds of food passed from your hands, through our hands, and into the kitchens of those in need. Thank You!

Because of today's economy, the need in the community has nearly tripled since the beginning of 2023. The New Hope Food Pantry does not receive state/federal funding, so this giving is only possible because of you. We anticipate a challenging 2024 but will continue to work hard to steward your generous gifts and provide for local families. Again, thank you for supporting this important mission!



The New Hope Food Pantry

Charlie & Debbie Groves
Robbin Henchen
Linda Kunert
Forrest Herr



Words of Thanks

The New Hope Food Pantry has received many words of thanks from those who utilize the many resources offered. The staff wanted to relay some of these precious thank you notes!



"The food pantry helps me out a lot when I need it. When the end of the month comes it helps a lot."

"May God bless the food pantry! I have a very large family of seven. Four members of the family are disabled from Autism. The food pantry helps our food stamps last all month. Without the food pantry, we would be without a few meals. Thankful for the food pantry."

"Everyone here is so friendly. Having a little extra help with groceries is very beneficial. All good usable foods. [We're] never made to feel bad about needing extra help. 😊"



Food Pantry Needs

The New Hope Food Pantry welcomes your generous donations to help those in need in our communities. This month the pantry is seeking donations of peanut butter, jelly, quick oatmeal, diced tomatoes, and monetary donations. If you wish to donate items or funds, feel free to drop them off at any of our three churches. You may also drop them off during the pantry's open hours: Wednesdays, 5 – 6:30 p.m. and Thursdays, 9 – 11 a.m.

*The New Hope Food Pantry is located at
E2286 State Highway 82, De Soto, WI 54624*



Keeping Area Youth Warm



This December, the Retreat Methodist Church is working to gather items to help keep youth at Prairie View Elementary School warm and dry throughout the cold winter months. The church is accepting donations of new or gentle-used waterproof mittens, hats, jackets, socks, etc. that will be donated to the school and distributed as needed to the students. The need is great as there have been many instances of students coming to school without the necessary winter clothing to keep them warm and safe during our cold winter season. Donations will be accepted through Sunday, January 7th and can be dropped off at the church during worship or other church events. We greatly appreciate your help in supporting our area's youth! Thank you!



Retreat Cleaning Day

After a busy autumn and Christmas season, the Retreat Methodist Church is planning to have a special cleaning day on January 13th. Together, the church plans to organize and tidy up the fellowship hall to prepare for what is sure to be a busy new year! All are invited to come and participate as many hands make light work! Work will begin around 10 a.m. with a break for lunch. Come and help us prepare for a new year of ministry together!



Youth Christmas Sunday



On Sunday, December 17th, the worship services in our three churches will be extra special! Pastor Drew has special parts lined up for our youth where they can be leading us in worship! All area youth are welcome and encouraged to come and participate in any of the three worship services.



Hope Night La Crosse

Are you needing HOPE in your life? Do you need healing in your body or freedom from addiction, depression, anxiety, or hopelessness?

Join us for this FREE EVENT where we will have live music and a life-changing message! Our heart is to see God move across the city of La Crosse and release HOPE!

Come if you need:

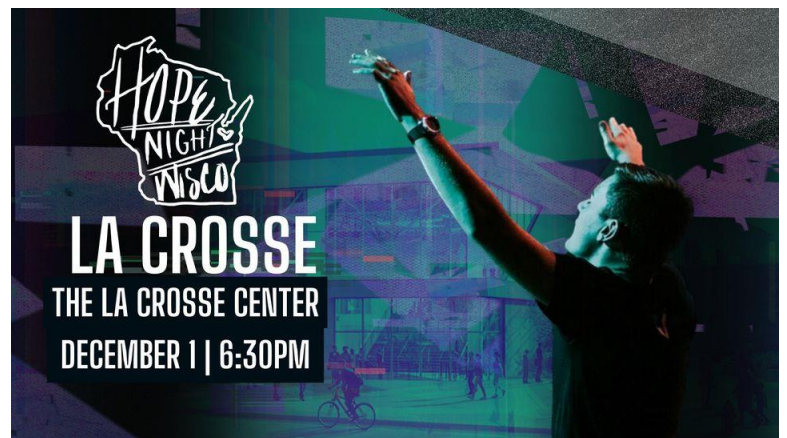
- Hope
- Healing
- Deliverance
- Freedom

Date: December 1st

Time: Doors open 6PM, Event starts 6:30PM

Location: The LaCrosse Center | Riverside Ballroom
300 Harborview Plaza, La Crosse, WI 54601

For more information, or to watch Recaps from past Hope Nights, head to www.hopenighttwisco.com or check out their Facebook Event page!



Shining Celebrations!

Birthdays

Jane Gianoli – Dec. 1st
Rachel Gianoli – Dec. 1st
Taylor Newsome – Dec. 1st
Julie Stalsberg – Dec. 2nd
Carol Snitker – Dec. 4th
Stephanie Taylor – Dec. 6th
Beverly Bankes – Dec. 7th
Madison Kumlin – Dec. 8th

Arlene Lingren – Dec. 8th
Dale Long – Dec. 8th
Debbie Groves – Dec. 9th
Elsie McDowell – Dec. 12th
Ron Slack – Dec. 12th
Ann Adams – Dec. 14th
Eldon Gardner – Dec. 14th
Casey Johnson – Dec. 16th

Lloyd Hardy – Dec. 19th
Amanda Baker – Dec. 22nd
Alan Matson – Dec. 23rd
Bill Lepke – Dec. 26th
Nancy Wakefield – Dec. 27th
Carol Gilman – Dec. 28th
Marlene Springborn – Dec. 29th
Tom Zitzner – Dec. 29th

Anniversaries

Brian & Carole Funk – Dec. 5th
Maynard & Nancy Cox – Dec. 6th
Patrick & Kerri Busteed – Dec. 24th
Loren & Marlene Springborn – Dec. 29th

Did we miss your birthday, anniversary, or other special day?

Let us know! E-mail us at newsletter@driftlessministry.org.

Church Contacts

Interim Pastor: Rev. Drew Filkins

(517) 899-3408

pastor@driftlessministry.org

SPRC Chair – Barb Robson: (608) 606-5809

Lay Leaders – Debbie Groves: (608) 648-3684

Barb Robson: (608) 606-5809

Jeffery Nelson: (608) 379-2933

Food Pantry – Debbie Groves: (608) 648-3684

Robbin Hennen: (608) 804-0314



December 2023

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p>Join us for our <u>Christmas Eve Services</u> 8 a.m. @ Retreat 9:15 a.m. @ Liberty Pole 10:30 a.m. @ New Hope</p> 		<p>Driftless Ministries Rev. Drew Filkins (517) 899-3408 pastor@driftlessministry.org</p>		<p>LP: Liberty Pole NH: New Hope R: Retreat</p>	1	2
<p>3 LP Bible Study: 8:30 a.m. Christmas Brunch & Cookie Distribution 9 a.m. @ Retreat Communion Sunday</p> 	<p>4 LP Board Meeting 6 p.m.</p>	<p>5 LP Women – 5:30 p.m. @ Gassers in Viroqua</p>	<p>6 Wednesday Warriors 3:30 – 5 p.m. @ New Hope Food Pantry Open 5 – 6:30 p.m.</p>	<p>7 Food Pantry Open 9 – 11 a.m.</p>	8	9
<p>10 NH Board Meeting 11:30 a.m.</p>	<p>11 LP Board Meeting 6 p.m.</p>	<p>12</p>	<p>13 Wednesday Warriors 3:30 – 5 p.m. @ New Hope Food Pantry Open 5 – 6:30 p.m.</p>	<p>14 Food Pantry Open 9 – 11 a.m.</p>	15	16
<p>17 Youth Service at all three churches LP Bible Study: 8:30 a.m. Retreat Board Meeting 2 p.m.</p>	<p>18</p>	<p>19</p>	<p>20 Wednesday Warriors 3:30 – 5 p.m. @ New Hope Food Pantry Open 5 – 6:30 p.m.</p>	<p>21 Food Pantry Open 9 – 11 a.m.</p>	22	23
<p>24 CHRISTMAS EVE Special Services 8:00 a. @ Retreat 9:15 a. @ Liberty Pole 10:30 a. @ New Hope</p> 	<p>25 MERRY CHRISTMAS</p> 	<p>26  Submission Deadline</p>	<p>27 Food Pantry Open 5 – 6:30 p.m.</p>	<p>28 Food Pantry Open 9 – 11 a.m.</p>	29	30

Shine

Liberty Pole, New Hope & Retreat Methodist Churches
c/o Jeff Nelson
120 Rosewood Ln N
West Salem, WI 54669

Return Service Requested

Address Label Here

