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## Upcoming Events

### Communion Sunday

Sun. Jan. 7<sup>th</sup>

### Retreat Cleaning Day

Sat. Jan. 13<sup>th</sup>, 10 a.m.

### New Hope Board Meeting

Sun. Jan. 14<sup>th</sup>, 11:30 a.m.

### Liberty Pole Board Meeting

Mon. Jan. 22<sup>nd</sup>, 6 p.m.

### Annual Church Conferences

Sun. Jan. 28<sup>th</sup>

Retreat @ 8 a.m.

Liberty Pole @ 9:30 a.m.

New Hope @ 11 a.m.

### Sunday Bible Study

Sun. Jan. 7<sup>th</sup> & 21<sup>st</sup>

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.

## Preparing for the Future!

2024 is a new year filled with bright, shiny, and new possibilities and opportunities for the ministry of our churches! We're excited to continue growing in faith as our new-found independence allows us to do ministry in new and exciting ways. Plus, one of our churches will be celebrating an amazing milestone this year! I encourage you to look deeper in the newsletter to discover a sneak peek glimmer of what will be happening!

With all of the excitement that the new year brings, it is also vital that we take care of the "business" end of the church. While the "business" might not be the most exciting part of church life, it is vital to take care of it now so that we can focus on our mission, ministry and the people we serve the rest of the year! To take care of the "business", each of our churches will be holding an Annual Church Conference on Sunday, January 28<sup>th</sup>.

Similar to the "charge conferences" of the past, these church conferences will be held to vote and approve vital parts of the church business like roles, budgets, etc. However, unlike previous conferences, these will be more engaging as they will actually be incorporated into our Sunday morning worship! Please note that each worship service may run a little bit longer. As a result, the Liberty Pole service will begin at 9:30 a.m. and the New Hope service will start at 11:00 a.m. on the day of the conference (Sunday, January 28<sup>th</sup>).

Conference booklets for your respective church will be available for attendees to take, keep, and review at their leisure. We encourage everyone to come and participate in these vital services, however only members of our churches will have a vote in the business of their respective church conference. Please join us for these important services and help us prepare for our future ministry in the Driftless Region!



## 2024 Annual Church Conferences Sunday, January 28<sup>th</sup>

8 a.m. – Retreat Methodist Church

9:30 a.m. – Liberty Pole Methodist Church

11:00 a.m. – New Hope Methodist Church

*And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.*

~ Hebrews 10:24-25 ~

## Expectations...

I remember all the hype leading up to the year 2000! There was a lot of worry about what might happen as we hit midnight that night. Will our computers still work? Yup. Will our financial system plummet because there is now a 2 at the front of our year instead of a 1? I don't think so. Will robots rise up and take over the world? I haven't seen it yet, but the computer is making me type that.

As 2022 came to a close, I saw a recycled meme from the few years previous. We could all agree that it has been a little odd on planet Earth since March of 2020. And I understood the sentiment behind this meme. Let's not claim this next year as "our year," let's just see if we can make it through a year without having five things that will end up on a history test in fifty years happen.

But as we close out one calendar year and another one is about to start and probably given the fact that we all have a little more down time, we tend to take stock. Stock of what happened last year and begin to dream (or dread) about what the next year. We often come with all kinds of expectations of what the next year will bring. What we hope will happen in this next year.

What we want for our family, ourselves, or even the world. Some will even set a list of resolutions that they are going to do in the new year. It might be things that we want to do more of or things that we would like to do less.

Expectations are wonderful in that they get us to think about the future. They get us to think about what we hope and dream for in the coming weeks, months, and years. But far too often in my experience, we don't always get what we expected. And sometimes, we find that we get something far better than what we expected.

One of my favorite verses that challenges expectations in all of scripture comes in the fifth chapter of Revelation. The Author is watching this vision unfold before him and this is what he records,

*"Then I saw in the right hand of him who sat on the throne a scroll with writing on both sides and sealed with seven seals. And I saw a mighty angel proclaiming in a loud voice, 'Who is worthy to break the seals and open the scroll?' But no one in heaven or on earth or under the earth could open the scroll or even look inside it. I wept and wept because no one was found who was worthy to open the scroll or look inside. Then one of the elders said to me, 'Do not weep! See, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has triumphed. He is able to open the scroll and its seven seals.'"*

*"Then I saw a Lamb, looking as if it had been slain, standing at the center of the throne, encircled by the four living creatures and the elders."*

The one who witnesses this scene expected to turn and see this majestic lion coming into the scene but turns to find a lamb. The Author's expectations were disrupted and flipped upside down but it gives him and us a better picture of what is to come. The people the Author is writing to are being oppressed and persecuted. They are looking for a mighty warrior to come and slay the oppressor but the picture they get is one who will work to transform the hearts and minds of people through the embodiment of a lamb instead of a lion. The Author wants people to know that something powerful can happen through this lamb even though no team would make their team mascot a lamb over a lion.

My question for us as we enter the new year is, "are we going to follow the meme's advice and come in slowly, not touch anything, or are we going to come in expecting big and great things?" I know for myself; I am coming into 2024 with great hopes for Driftless Ministries. I have great hopes that you will find a wonderful new pastor who will lead you and bless this community for many years. I have great hopes that we will continue to be a place of compassion and caring for the whole community and the people who join us in worship. And most of all, I trust that God will take our expectations and show us something far greater and powerful than we can even imagine.

I don't know about you, but I am looking forward to 2024! May we experience unexpected blessings this year!

Grace and Peace,  
Pastor Drew

Nobody claim 2022 as  
"your year". We're all  
going to walk in real slow.  
Be good. Be quiet. Be  
cautious and respectful.  
Don't touch anything.



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, January 7<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> 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!

[illegible]

## A cute, smiling snowflake character with rosy cheeks. The snowflake is light gray with a central circle containing a simple face with two black dots for eyes and a curved line for a smile. Two red circles represent rosy cheeks. The snowflake has six main branches, each with smaller sub-branches, giving it a classic six-pointed star shape.

[illegible]

'Tis the season of giving, for sure! Recently, the New Hope Food Pantry received numerous monetary donations, as well as boxes of groceries and toiletry/cleaning items. Individuals from the Wheatland Fire Department and the Chad Wild Memorial Fund personally delivered donations given by their wonderful supporters.

Local cooperatives, churches, companies, schools, and individuals have also contributed generously. They have organized fundraisers, arranged food drives, and set up drop-off boxes at their facilities. A lot of hard work and commitment has gone into their efforts to support this pantry, along with other food pantries and causes in the area.

The faces of those who stop by to donate always have smiles; they show pride, excitement, and a sense of fulfillment when they give. We have no doubt that they are receiving just as much as they are giving.

We are so thankful for the big hearts of those in our communities, both local and those beyond! With everyone's generosity, we have been truly blessed and have great hope for 2024 and beyond!

Many thanks from our grateful and love-filled hearts,





*Each day of the week, use this simple prayer starter as part of your conversation with God.*

Heavenly Father, thank You for making all things new! As another new week begins, help me live each day for You. May I continually have a new song in my heart to sing to You, no matter what comes my way.

Mighty God, at the start of each day, help me to recognize you above all else. Enlighten the eyes of my heart that I might see you and notice how you're at work through my life. Let your Spirit and power breathe in me, through me, again, fresh and new.

Dear Lord, I look to You for my hope, joy, and peace. Grant me the courage to do all that You ask of me. Please also make me brave to not do what isn't from You. Show me how to walk in grace and embrace Your love for me even more.

Lord, moving in a new direction, opposite my comfort, is hard. I need Your strength, Your wisdom, Your confidence. I believe You will empower me as I step out in faith.

Lord Jesus, I thank You that You are with me, that You are in me. Open my ears today, so that I can hear You and enjoy You at every junction, when You tell me to turn right or left.

Eternal God, You gave me the greatest gift: the gift of life. Help me to use it wisely. May I grow in generosity, kindness and forgiveness, hope, faith and love.

Lord, I fight against change so often. Settle into what's comfortable and what's known. But I know You are doing something new. Thank You that even when everything changes around me, you always remain the same —faithful, true, trustworthy, and full of grace. Please help me to know where to go and what to do. Show me when to say goodbye to the old and how to welcome new seasons and opportunities. Please remind me of your presence and help me be strong and courageous, knowing that You are with me.



Being an active part of your church is **vital** to the life of your church! We encourage everyone to come and participate in the discussions at your respective church board/council meeting. All church members have a vote, and all ideas are welcome. Join us at your next church meeting and make a difference!

Sun. Jan. 14<sup>th</sup> @ 11:30 a.m.

Mon. Jan. 22<sup>nd</sup> @ 6 p.m.



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 **applesauce, pork 'n beans, snack crackers, ketchup, and body wash**. 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.



- ✓ Applesauce
- ✓ Pork 'n Beans
- ✓ Snack Crackers
- ✓ Ketchup
- ✓ Body Wash



After a busy autumn and Christmas season, the Retreat Methodist Church is planning to have a special cleaning day on January 13<sup>th</sup>. 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!



The Basement Quilters at Liberty Pole are taking a winter break. Everyone is encouraged to continue working on their own projects in the comfort, warmth, and safety of their own homes. The group will meet again in March, and we welcome you to come then and show off what you've been working on during the cold, snowy winter months. Keep an eye out in future newsletters for the date of the next gathering!



Folks, mark your calendars for Sunday June 30, 2024. That's the date the Liberty Pole Methodist Church will be celebrating its 150th anniversary! This is a remarkable milestone. A committee is in the process of developing a plan for a good time. Watch each newsletter to find out how you can be a part of a very special day.

If you are willing, interested, and able to provide input or assistance, please contact Barb Robson, Pastor Drew, or Debbie Gardener. Watch for further updates! Hope you will come celebrate with us!



On December 3<sup>rd</sup>, the people of the Retreat Methodist Church met to celebrate the Christmas season and to spread their Christmas joy out to the surrounding community. Brunch and fellowship was shared and then the church got to work packing approximately 35 to 40 packages of homemade Christmas cookies. These cookies were then distributed to local individuals, shut ins and nursing homes. Thank you to all who came, helped, and/or donated cookies for this fun and wonderful ministry. You helped to make the Christmas season a bit brighter for others in our community!





Here's a little wintertime fun for you to enjoy on a cold, snowy, or lazy winter day! Enjoy!

# Winter Wonderland

This monster word search includes more than 50 winter words going in every possible direction. Can you find them all?



avalanche	gloves	January	slippery
blanket	hail	Kwanzaa	slush
blizzard	Hanukkah	lunar new year	snowball
chimney	heater	melt	snowboard
Christmas	hibernate	migrate	snowdrift
coat	hockey	mitten	snowflake
cold	holidays	New Year's Day	snowman
December	hot chocolate	quilt	snowmobile
earmuffs	ice fishing	scarf	snowplow
February	ice skates	shovel	snowstorm
fireplace	icicles	skiing	sweater
freeze	igloo	sled	vacation
freezing rain	Jack Frost	sleet	Valentine's Day
frigid	jacket	sleigh	

## Shining Celebrations!

### Birthdays

Joyce Funk – Jan. 1<sup>st</sup>  
 Frank Hammond – Jan. 1<sup>st</sup>  
 Vicki Newsome – Jan. 1<sup>st</sup>  
 Sheryl Haakenson – Jan. 3<sup>rd</sup>  
 Nancy Cox – Jan. 4<sup>th</sup>  
 Alma Robertson – Jan. 6<sup>th</sup>  
 Oscar Johnson – Jan. 7<sup>th</sup>  
 Casey Funk – Jan. 9<sup>th</sup>

Ben Hanson – Jan. 10<sup>th</sup>  
 Olive Brinkman – Jan. 10<sup>th</sup>  
 Adam Caley – Jan. 11<sup>th</sup>  
 Jim Taylor – Jan. 18<sup>th</sup>  
 Debra Solverson – Jan. 18<sup>th</sup>  
 Diane Suiter – Jan. 20<sup>th</sup>  
 Connor Frank – Jan. 21<sup>st</sup>  
 Bill Nummerdor – Jan. 21<sup>st</sup>

Judy Gardner – Jan. 21<sup>st</sup>  
 Debora Hornby – Jan. 21<sup>st</sup>  
 Cheyenne Fedler – Jan. 22<sup>nd</sup>  
 Darwin Kumlin – Jan. 23<sup>rd</sup>  
 Roger Hanson – Jan. 24<sup>th</sup>  
 Marian Whitney – Jan. 26<sup>th</sup>  
 Chris Baker – Jan. 27<sup>th</sup>  
 Mark Arneson – Jan. 28<sup>th</sup>

### Anniversaries

Dewey & Jodi Waddell – Jan. 1<sup>st</sup>  
 Paul & Ann Adams – Jan. 19<sup>th</sup>



Did we miss your birthday, anniversary, or other special day?  
 Let us know! E-mail us at [newsletter@driftlessministry.org](mailto:newsletter@driftlessministry.org).

### Join Us for Fellowship Sundays!

The next Fellowship Sunday at the Retreat Methodist Church is coming up on Sunday, January 7<sup>th</sup> and everyone is welcome to stick around after worship and join in the wonderful fellowship. This month's hosts at Retreat are **Carol Gilman and Marla Withey**. We hope you can join us after worship on Sunday, January 7<sup>th</sup> for some wonderful fellowship time!

This month's Fellowship Sunday at the Liberty Pole Methodist Church will be held on Sunday, January 21<sup>st</sup>. Be sure to join us following worship as we enjoy some snacks and have great fellowship together.

These Fellowship Sundays are a great way to catch up with your faith family. Be sure to check them out and enjoy some quality time with your family and friends at the church!



### Church Contacts

Interim Pastor: Rev. Drew Filkins  
 (517) 899-3408  
[pastor@driftlessministry.org](mailto: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 Henchen: (608) 804-0314





# January 2024

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<b>1</b> LP: Liberty Pole NH: New Hope R: Retreat	<b>1</b> 	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b> Wednesday Warriors 3:30 – 5 p.m. @ New Hope Food Pantry Open 5 – 6:30 p.m.	<b>4</b> Food Pantry Open 9 – 11 a.m.	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>7</b> LP Bible Study: 8:30 a.m. Fellowship Sunday (R) Communion Sunday 	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b> Wednesday Warriors 3:30 – 5 p.m. @ New Hope Food Pantry Open 5 – 6:30 p.m.	<b>11</b> Food Pantry Open 9 – 11 a.m.	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b> Retreat Cleaning Day 10 a.m.
<b>14</b> NH Board Meeting 11:30 a.m.	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b> Wednesday Warriors 3:30 – 5 p.m. @ New Hope Food Pantry Open 5 – 6:30 p.m.	<b>18</b> Food Pantry Open 9 – 11 a.m.	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>21</b> LP Bible Study: 8:30 a.m. Fellowship Sunday (LP) PST Meeting 12 p.m. @ Liberty Pole	<b>22</b> LP Board Meeting 6 p.m.	<b>23</b>  Submission Deadline	<b>24</b> Wednesday Warriors 3:30 – 5 p.m. @ New Hope Food Pantry Open 5 – 6:30 p.m.	<b>25</b> Food Pantry Open 9 – 11 a.m.	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>28</b> Church Conferences 8 a.m. @ Retreat 9:30 a.m. @ Liberty Pole 11 a.m. @ New Hope	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>31</b> Wednesday Warriors 3:30 – 5 p.m. @ New Hope Food Pantry Open 5 – 6:30 p.m.	<b>1</b>	<b>Driftless Ministries</b> Rev. Drew Filkins (517) 899-3408 <a href="mailto:pastor@driftlessministry.org">pastor@driftlessministry.org</a>	

*Shine*

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

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