

The Connection

Messages of Hope



A Weekly Online Newsletter: Edition 763

December 27, 2023

“Let the Light Shine”

Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life.” John 8:12

Pastor Donna Jackson – a writer for Presbyterian Today tell this story: “I was never one for ringing in the New Year by attending boisterous parties. Nor was it my idea of fun to be in a jostling crowd in New York’s Time Square to watch a ball drop — even though I lived just blocks away from that crazy scene. I preferred a quiet, contemplative start to the New Year: light a candle, finish off the last of the holiday eggnog, or watch an old movie.

When I moved to Vermont as a pastor, I had the opportunity to offer others my dream contemplative New Year’s Eve celebration: snowshoeing through the woods at night. With a friend on board, encouraging my crazy idea, we plotted the trail we would take, opting for a shorter one as temps would be in the single digits. We would have flashlights that strapped to our heads to help illumine the snowy path. When we emerged from the woods, we would start a large bonfire in the field and ring in the year with hot cocoa.

Later I added to the evening’s festivities. Along the path itself, I planned on hanging battery operated lanterns. When we got to the first tree with a lantern, we would stop, and I would read Scripture or an inspirational poem about letting go of the old and welcoming the new.

New Year’s Eve came, and a fresh snow had fallen that was perfect for snowshoeing. We entered the woods and found ourselves being enveloped by darkness. The lights from our flashlights were feeble, and I soon began to feel a bit nervous about being in the woods at night. It was darker than I thought it would be.

But then, I saw it: a tiny speck of light way in front of us. It was the most beautiful speck of light that I had ever

seen. With each step I took, that speck grew larger and brighter until we were standing at the first tree with a lantern, listening to God’s promises of guiding us always, of being with us always, of always providing light on our paths. And so it continued. After the readings and a moment to reflect on what it was that we wanted to leave behind in the old year, we stepped forward back into the darkness until the light of the next lantern appeared.”

Pastor, Author, and Professor, Howard Thurman observed that “to continue one’s journey in the darkness with one’s footsteps guided by the illumination of remembered radiance is to know courage — the courage to demand that light continue to be light even in the surrounding darkness.”

My HOPE Family and Friends, a new year is about to begin, and while we pray earnestly for it to be better than this past year, we can’t help but feel apprehension about the unknown. Many have been walking through thick, scary woods ahead of them. But remember this: To walk in the light while darkness invades, envelops and surrounds, is to wait on the Lord. Folks, Let the Light Shine!!! He is and always will be “The Light of the World.”

This simple prayer is one we all can pray:

God, you hold my days in your loving hands. As I say good-bye to a year that has been trying in so many ways and for so many people, I thank you for being there by my side always. I know you are guiding me. I know that there is a divine Light burning brightly along my unknown path. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

Blessings in this New Year,
Pastor Marty - HOPE Church Raleigh
Worship . Grow . Serve

HOPE Calendar

Wednesday, December 27

NO Wednesday Night Devotion & Prayer Tonight

Thursday, December 28

NO Worship Team Rehearsal

Sunday, December 31

Worship Team Rehearsal @ 8:00 a.m.
Worship @ 9:30 a.m.
Fellowship Time @ 10:50 a.m.

Monday, January 1
Happy New Year

Wednesday, January 3

Wednesday Night Supper, Study, & Prayer Time @ 6:15 p.m.

Helping Hands Ministries

Fellowship - December 31
Church is Providing

ProPresenter - December 31
Elizabeth Floyd

Soundboard - December 31

Live Streaming - December 31
Al Floyd

Communion - December
Elizabeth Floyd

Greeter - December 31
Joan Rollinson

Nursery Volunteer - December 31
Volunteer Needed

Scripture Text and Sermon
This Sunday

Luke 2:21 - 35
"Jesus Presented to His Father"



Outreach Ministries

"Food of the Month"
for the Raleigh Dream Center
Food Pantry

Pop Top Soups

We have a collection bin in the foyer

HOPE Meal Ministry

Take a meal from the freezer if needed for you or someone else.

The Computer Lab is on "Pause"

TLC Devotion

4th Wednesday each Month
@ 11:00 a.m.

Spiritual Growth Ministries

Women of HOPE

Saturday, January 13
@ 1:00 p.m.

NO Wednesday Night Supper until January

There will be no Wed. Night Supper until January. Wed. Night Supper, Study, and Prayer resumes 1/3/24

There will not be Sunday school on the following Sundays:

December 31 (New Years Eve)
January 7 (Covered Dish Meal)

Quote of the Week

"...if we walk in the Light as He Himself is in the Light..."

1 John 1:7

Prayer Requests:

Reville & Mary Lane Mallory, Jamie Baldwin, Donna Williams, Diane Williams, Carol & Colin (Kathy Herriman's Sister & Brother-in-law), Loretta (Sandi Underwood's daughter), Joan Summers, Shelley, Diane Mack's Sister-in-law, Jordan & Cinnamon (son and daughter of Lynn Joyner's family members), Tommy and Billy Lanphere (Lynn Joyner's brothers), Gene & Becky Hale, Dave & Dot Geil, Carlyle and Cynthia Franklin (Sandra Pierce's dad and stepmom), Brian Adam's dad, our Military, our Missionaries, our Nation, and the world. If you have those you would like added to our prayer concerns, please email me those names.

NO Wednesday Night, Devotion & Prayer TONIGHT - December 27

Upcoming Dates

16th Anniversary
Sunday, January 7

Come Join us as we Celebrate 16 Years. A Covered-Dish following Worship. Bring enough food to share.

There will be a time of sharing following our meal.

HOPE - REBOOT
50 - Days to Vitality

BEGINS ON JANUARY 14TH
GET READY
EVERYONE!!!

HOPE Church Raleigh
An Evangelical Presbyterian Church
4911 Green Rd
Raleigh, NC 27616
919-508-6827

Worship Time: 9:30 AM

www.HopeChurchRaleigh.org

www.facebook.com/HOPEChurchRaleigh

Twitter: @HopeChRaleigh

YouTube.com (type "HOPE Church Raleigh" in the search box)

Daily Devotions For This Coming Week

Dec.	31	Hosea	7
Jan.	1	Hosea	8
Jan.	2	Hosea	9
Jan.	3	Hosea	10
Jan.	4	Hosea	11
Jan.	5	Hosea	12
Jan.	6	Hosea	13