



HOPE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

5278 N HOPE RD.

HOPE, MI 48628

PASTOR – BILL CLELAND

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WEBSITE - <https://hopeumchopemi.org/>

December, 2022

God's Plan

It was Christmas Eve in the Austrian Alps. At the newly constructed Church of St. Nicholas in Oberndorf, a Tyrol village in Salzburg, Father Joseph Mohr prepared for the midnight service. He was distraught because the church organ was broken, ruining prospects for that evening's carefully planned music. But Father Joseph was about to learn that our problems are God's opportunities; that the Lord causes all things to work together for good to those who love Him.

It came into Father Joseph's mind to write a new song, one that could be sung organless. Hastily, he wrote the words, "Silent night, holy night, all is calm, all is bright..." Taking the text to his organist, Franz Gruber, he explained the situation and asked Franz to compose a simple tune.

That night, December 24, 1818, "Silent Night" was sung for the first time as a duet accompanied by a guitar at the aptly named Church of St. Nicholas in Oberndorf. Shortly afterward, as Karl Mauracher came to repair the organ, he heard about the near-disaster on Christmas Eve. Acquiring a copy of the text and tune, he spread it throughout the Alpine region of Austria.

The song came to the attention of the Strasser Family, makers of fine chamois-skin gloves. To drum up business at various fairs and festivals, the four Strasser children would sing in front of their parent's booth. Like the Von Trapp children a century later, they became popular folk singers throughout the Alps.

When the children began singing “Silent Night” at their performances, audiences were charmed. It seemed perfect for the snow-clad region, and perfect for the Christian heart. “Silent Night” even came to the attention of the king and queen, and the Strasser children were asked to give a royal performance, assuring the carol’s fame.

Were it not for a broken organ, there would never have been a “Silent Night.” In the midst of what we perceive as brokenness, our Lord has a plan in mind. It’s not a quickly thought up plan or hastily assembled plan but a plan that he has had in mind for all time.

Brokenness in our lives and in the lives of those around us can seem like God is abandoning us in our time of greatest need but in reality, any distance experienced between us and God is our own movement away from him.

This Christmas, as we sing “Silent Night” please remember the greatest of all possible gifts has been given to you and Christ offers to you a peace that passes all understanding.

A very Merry Christmas to you,

Randy & Gale

PS. Attendance Sundays has been fantastic. We’ve been averaging over 55 each Sunday with a large number of youth in attendance (18 last Sunday). We are so glad that people are coming out to hear the happy and exciting Word of God.

UPCOMING EVENTS IN THE LIFE OF HOPE UMC

Bible Study ~ Tues. 10:00 am to Noon Hope UMC

Wed. 10:00 am to Noon Dale UMC

Hope UMC ~ collecting mittens, hats and scarves for area schools.

Hayride and Caroling ~ During the week before Christmas we will be spreading the Christmas cheer in our community. We have procured the use of a trailer with sides and some hay/straw to sit on while we do Christmas caroling through out the community. Adults and children welcome.

Choir Practice ~ **Hope UMC** Thursday evening 7:00 pm and Sunday morning 9:45 am.

Electronic Tithing ~ **Hope UMC**, contact Curt Alexander 989-948-9413. If you bill pay electronically this may work for you. Contact Curt for help with setup.

Pot luck luncheon ~ We will be having our monthly luncheon immediately following the 11:00 service. Please bring your pot luck tastiest and join us for the end of the year celebration.

Hope UMC Children's program December 18 at 11:00 am.

Christmas Eve Services ~ 5:00 pm at Hope UMC Candle light service with Choir.

Sunday Christmas morning ~ normal Sunday service times. We will have cupcakes to celebrate the birth of our living Christ.

Hope UMC December Liturgist ~ Lynsey Crego

Hope UMC ~ Serving our Lord: ~ *Greeters /Ushers ~ December*

12/4/22	Jan Holzinger	12/11/22	Darlene Davis & Joyce Colvin
12/18/22	Phil & Chris Leigeb	12/25/22	Who will fill-in?

FYI TITHING AND GIVING

September	October	November
Budget \$8,775	Budget \$9,058	Budget \$9,058
Giving \$10,149	Giving \$6,759	Giving \$8,991



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DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

12 Ryan Holzinger
18 Heather Leuenberger
27 Wes LaCourt
28 John Mickle

ANNIVERSARY

22 Steve & Shirley Morrison
?? Duff & Judy Sova

JANUARY BIRTHDAYS

20 Meko Price
24 Curt Alexander
26 Joanne Lyon

2 Dave & Caryn Leuenberger



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ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED



Christmas 2022

Merry Christmas!

Once again we have entered the season of Advent, such a wondrous and special time of year. We all have our treasured memories of Christmas past. We all have our perfect idea of what makes Christmas special. In fact this time of year can be difficult for some people who have suffered loss or trauma. It is a season filled with so many emotions that it can be a tough ship to navigate.

Deb and I share in so many of those feelings. We have both lost our parents so, we are both orphans, and have run away from home as adults where we have found a wonderful home with the Hope United Methodist Church. What a huge blessing that has been. Serving the three church charge of Hope, Edenville and Dale UMC's makes for a busy Sunday morning, but I look forward to every Sunday morning like its Christmas.

God introduced himself to the world as a precious "Baby Boy" who lived among us as one of us.

As we begin this festive time of celebration, remember to include your family and friends in this joy that we feel. The birth of the world's baby boy is such an amazing event, that it simply must be shared with the world. So let me personally invite you to spend Christmas with us at Hope UMC.

Our monthly Pot Luck will be held on **December 11th** after the service. Our children's program will be held on **December 18th** at 11:00 am. A **Hay-Ride/Christmas Caroling** event will be the week before Christmas with our youth and adults as we spread Christmas cheer throughout Hope Township. **Christmas Eve Candle Light Service** will be at Hope UMC at 5:00 pm. This will be a joint service with all three churches of our charge. **Then Christmas Day** (Sunday) our regular service is at 11:00 am where cupcakes will be the order of the day as we sing Happy Birthday to Jesus.

My focus is on our precious Lord Jesus. Our current bible study is titled "Who Needs Christmas?" Amazingly the world needs Christmas. We all need to hear the "Good News," we all need Christmas. "Turn your eyes upon Jesus, look full in his wonderful face, and the things of earth will grow strangely dim, in the light of his Glory and Grace." Page 349 UMC Hymnal "Turn Your Eyes upon Jesus."

Come, let us share God's gift to the world, "Jesus Christ."

Blessings Always,
Pastor Bill Cleland

