



# the anchor

Hope Lutheran Church

3295 Old

Hwy 5 South, Ellijay, GA 30540

## February 2026

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### From the Pastor...

The church calendar has always felt pinched to me. We've just gotten through the Advent and Christmas season and now Lent is hard upon us with the rush as it seems to our Lord's date with the cross on Good Friday. Then we have a nine month stretch of the "Ordinary season" of the year which is a more relaxing stroll through our Lord's ministry. His birth and his death are all covered in a compact four months that just feels too rushed!

I suppose it has to be that way since Easter is tied to the Jewish feast of Passover and that all happens in the first third of the calendar year.

Having said all that, Lent starts with our Ash Wednesday service at 7:00 PM on Wednesday, February 18<sup>th</sup> - with Holy Communion and the imposition of Ashes. Which all reminds me of the Ash Wednesday we observed five years ago when we broadcast our service over ZOOM and imposed ashes through the window of all y'all's cars as you drove through the drive at the front of the church.

Anyway, On each of the following Wednesdays after Ash Wednesday up and through March 25<sup>th</sup> - we'll be having a mid-Week Lenten service at 7 PM. The theme for this year's sermons on each of those nights is: *The Questions of Lent*. Our readings will come from the gospel of St. John - each of which address a question our Lord asks: *What are you looking for?; Are you a teacher and yet you don't understand?; Do you wish to go away?; Will you lay down your life for me?; and, Am I not to drink the cup?*

The 2026 Lenten schedule is printed in this newsletter.

On each of these nights, there will be a Lenten soup and sandwich supper downstairs in Founders Hall starting at 5:30 PM. Choir practice will be at 6 PM downstairs so choir members can arrive early and eat before practice.

On Ash Wednesday evening, the men of the church will provide our traditional pancake supper in Founders Hall starting at 5:30 PM.

On the Wednesday following Ash Wednesday and on each Wednesday through March 25<sup>th</sup> - we will also have a Lenten Service of the Word liturgy in the sanctuary at noon for those who can't be with us in the evening.

Just a reminder: the Knights of Columbus will be having their Fish Fry dinner at Good Samaritan Catholic Church (just off the square in Ellijay) each week from 5 to 7 PM on the Friday after Ash Wednesday (2/20) through the Friday before Holy Week (3/27). Lutherans are always well represented at this delicious fete! All proceeds support church ministries in our community.

Of course this month we'll have our *Souper Bowl of Caring* offering taken up following each of our services on Sunday, February 8<sup>th</sup>. This year the money raised will go to the Gilmer Community Food Pantry which does such blessed work in our community.

Hope's Community Outreach team is hosting its annual \$\$ for Diapers Drive for the Safe Choice Pregnancy Center in Ellijay on Sunday, February 15<sup>th</sup>. Following the late service that day there will be a soup, sandwiches and dessert lunch provided by the team in Founders Hall. See the note in this newsletter - the team is doing things a little differently this year in terms of the help they're asking of you.

It's a busy and blessed season coming up in the next weeks. I pray you stay safe and warm. Please know if you ever need to reach me - you can call me at - 404-226-6833.

Peace,

Pastor Dave

**February 15<sup>th</sup>, 2025  
Annual Diaper Drive**



Hope's Outreach Team will host its annual \$\$ for Diapers Drive on February 15th. Join us for lunch in Founders Hall, featuring soup, sandwiches, and desserts.

We are asking for a cash or check donation to benefit Safe Choice Pregnancy Center, which will use the funds to purchase diapers. While we've collected diapers in the past, Center Director Rhenda Booth has shared that Safe Choice is able to secure diapers at significantly reduced prices through their suppliers, allowing every dollar donated to go even further.

We invite everyone to join us for fellowship and to support this meaningful cause.

If you would like to donate by check, please make it payable to Hope Lutheran Church and write "Diapers" in the memo line.



Ladies gathering Saturday,

January 10<sup>th</sup>, 2026



Ladies' Gathering



Save the date! April 25<sup>th</sup>, 2026  
Detail will be provided later.

**FEBRUARY  
CELEBRATION  
S**



**BIRTHDAYS**

- 2 Kathy Orlando
- 6 Danika Godfrey
- 8 Juanita Littleton
- 8 Zach Ourada
- 9 Jan Austin
- 11 Merilee Bennett
- 11 Sonya Cook Dotson
- 12 Mike Marler
- 13 Natalie Engels
- 18 Leah Teague
- 19 Mark Weber
- 20 Charlie Kruk
- 22 Mike Wren
- 23 Janice Weber
- 24 Julie Barrs
- 25 Ella Duncan
- 25 Julie Ourada
- 26 Keith Bell
- 26 Leon Edgemon

**ANNIVERSARY**

- 2 Nadine & Jim Sease
- 14 Eileen & Frankie Ashley

**Hope Lutheran Church's 2026 Lenten Schedule...**

*"The Questions of Lent"*

February 18 <sup>th</sup>	7:00 PM	Ash Wednesday Service with Holy Communion/the Imposition of ashes <b>Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21</b>
February 25 <sup>th</sup>	7:00 PM	<i>What Are You Looking For?</i> <b>John 1: 35-42</b> Pastor Dave Smedley
March 4 <sup>th</sup>	7:00 PM	<i>Are You a Teacher &amp; Yet You Don't Understand?</i> <b>John 3: 1-21</b> Pastor Dave Smedley
March 11 <sup>th</sup>	7:00 PM	<i>Do You Wish to Go Away?</i> <b>John 6: 60-71</b> Pastor Dave Smedley
March 18 <sup>th</sup>	7:00 PM	<i>Will You Lay Down Your Life for Me?</i> <b>John 13: 31-38</b> Pastor Dave Smedley
March 25 <sup>th</sup>	7:00 PM	<i>Am I Not to Drink the Cup?</i> <b>John 18: 1-11</b> Pastor Dave Smedley
April 1 <sup>st</sup>	7:00 PM	Service of the Word for Healing <b>John 5: 1-15</b> Pastor Dave Smedley
April 2 <sup>nd</sup>	7:00 PM	Maundy Thursday Service with Holy Communion/Stripping of the Altar <b>John 13:1-17, 31b-35</b> Pastor Dave Smedley
April 3 <sup>rd</sup>	7:00 PM	Good Friday Tenebrae Service <b>Isaiah 52:13-53:12;</b> <b>John 18:1-19:42</b>

On the Wednesdays of February 25<sup>th</sup> through March 25<sup>th</sup>, we will also celebrate a **Service of the Word** liturgy at noon in the sanctuary.

## Souper Bowl Sunday

February 8<sup>th</sup>, is the Super Bowl, and we will again be taking a *Souper Bowl of Caring* offering to benefit local food pantries. This year your donations will go to the Gilmer Community Food Pantry.

Someone will be standing at the door with a soup pot after each service as you leave worship – please consider throwing in a dollar or two (or more) to support this wonderful ministry!

## Knights of Columbus Fish Fry

As always, each year, we look forward to enjoying the fish fry that the Knights of Columbus put on each Friday of Lent at Good Samaritan Catholic Church just off the square in downtown Ellijay. All proceeds support church ministries in our community. Everyone is welcome! The price of the dinners will be the same as last year - \$12 for a dinner, \$14 for a combo dinner (fish and shrimp), and \$6 for children.

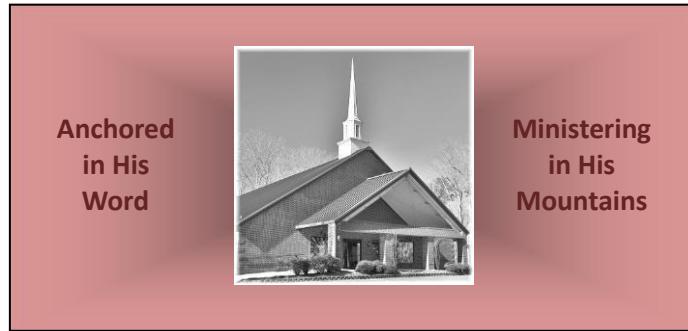
The dinners will start on Friday, February 20<sup>th</sup>, and will continue from 5 to 7 PM each Friday through the Friday before Holy Week.

## Lenten Season Starts February 18<sup>th</sup>

Ash Wednesday is on February 18<sup>th</sup> this year and marks the beginning of the Lenten season. We will have our traditional pancake supper that evening with the men of our church preparing pancakes, sausage, and juice for all of us. We will start serving at 5:30 PM so choir members can eat before their 6:00 rehearsal. The Ash Wednesday service will begin at 7:00 in the sanctuary.

Details about the remaining Lenten schedule can be found in this issue of *the anchor*





***Our Mission Statement:***  
***Making Christ known through reaching, welcoming, praising, equipping and sending***

### Officers & Congregational Council

President	Steven Freese
Vice President	Sylvia Negri
Secretary	Carol Townsend
Treasurer	Jan Austin
Financial Secretary	Amy Freese

### Council Members

Carolyn Hill	James Sease
Ann Buehler	Doris Goplin
Billy Huff	Vicki Christensen

Please contact any council member if you have any suggestions, questions, or concerns. Council meetings are held on the third Thursday of each month at 5:00 PM.