



the anchor

Hope Lutheran Church
3295 Old Hwy 5 South, Ellijay, GA 30540

August 2026

From the Pastor...

This isn't goodbye - yet. I'll still be here for another month before I retire.

But lately I've been thinking a lot about these past twenty-seven years of my life that I've been here with you at Hope Church as your pastor. The sermons I've been blessed to preach; the baptisms and weddings I've helped preside; the funerals and memorial services; the meals we've shared and enjoyed together; the community service we've devoted our time, talents and treasures to; the bible studies; the Vacation Bible schools; the Sunday school classes; building handicap ramps together; building our building together; enjoying movie and game nights together; doing yard work together; taking youth bowling and going to National Youth Gatherings; taking in new members; helping young people prepare for the affirming of their faith...

Notice how often the word "together" was repeated above? It's all been wonderful!

And I'm going to miss it! Big time!

I'm going to miss all y'all!

These truly have been the best years of my life. I can't even begin to tell you how much my life has been blessed to have shared them with you.

My last Sunday will be August 30th. We'll just have one service that day at 10 AM. Normally - this would be Consecration Sunday - our end-of-the-fiscal-year service with a special time at the end of the service when families fill out their 2027-2028 Estimate of Giving forms, seal them in a self-addressed stamped envelope and place it in a basket on the altar where it will stay until the 1st of January - when it will be returned to you unopened.

Our Consecration Sunday service this year will be held the Sunday before - the 4th Sunday of August on the 23rd at one service - 10 AM.

I want to take time right now to praise and to thank our council president Steven Freese - our council and the folks on our Pastoral Transition team - who are all doing an amazing job of moving the Hope congregation through all the important steps required to get through this time of transition. They have established a wonderful relationship with our bishop and the synod office as they negotiate their way to identifying a transition pastor for the congregation through the next year.

In the next several months, they'll be working primarily with Pastor Matt Henning on behalf of the bishop as the transition process unfolds. Pastor Matt is filling in for Pastor Jonathan Hemphill - who will be on medical leave until the 1st of October. Later next year, a call committee will be chosen to begin working with the synod as they all move toward interviewing with and calling a permanent pastor for the congregation.

The council and Transition Team are good people for you all to talk with now. They've already met with Bishop Strickland, Pastor Matt Henning and with Pastor Paula Smith - whom the synod has identified as Hope's interim pastor over the next year. They all feel positive and good after these meetings about the direction things are moving in going forward.

This year's council includes: Steven Freese, Sylvia Negri, Carol Townsend, Billy Huff, Ann Buehler, Jim Sease, Carolyn Hill, Vicki Christensen and Doris Goplin. The transition team includes: Jan Austin, Mark Weber, Wayne Buehler and June Edgemon.

I'm looking forward to spending the next month with you. I'll save my goodbyes for a letter in the September newsletter.

In His service,

Pastor Dave



🌻 *A Blooming Blessing* 🌻

Have you noticed the beautiful sunflowers and colorful flowers blooming outside the church? A special thank you to Mark and Janice Weber (and Chester) for planting and caring for them. Their efforts have added a cheerful touch to our church grounds and are a wonderful reminder of God's beautiful creation.

Thank you, Mark and Janice, for helping our church bloom! 🌻

Bishop Strickland's Visit



On Sunday, July 19th, the Rev. Dr. Kevin Strickland, bishop of the Southeastern Synod of the ELCA, visited with the people of Hope Church - preaching, presiding at communion and visiting with Hope's congregation council the Pastoral Transition Team.

After the visit he wrote to Pastor Dave, saying, "It was a joy to be with you and the people of Hope. What a beautiful community and you have done such a phenomenal job in nurturing relationships and being gospel centered. I'm so grateful for you all!"

Honduras Mission Appeal

Every year in August – going back quite a few years – Hope Lutheran Church has hosted a community invited luncheon called - *La Buena Fe Café* – to raise money for the Beno family for their annual medical/educational mission trip to the mountains of Honduras.

The money primarily has been used to purchase medicine and medical supplies for Jim, Katy and Dr. Lucas Beno to take with them on their annual trip each Fall. The money also supplies educational scholarships for young women through Friends of Education-Honduras.

Before the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, Dr. Luke would hold a week-long health clinic – treating children and families in the various villages they visited. And Jim and Katy would visit schools in the villages over the two weeks they were in Honduras. Over the last several years, Dr. Lucas has been dropping off medicine and supplies and then holding a two-day clinic for children with the most serious needs.

Dr. Lucas indicated that the supported high school curriculum includes a health-care option that allows young women to graduate with an LPN degree that enables them to then serve their communities in a much-needed new way.

This year – after consulting with Luke and Katy – Hope’s congregational council has agreed – instead of the luncheon – to hold an appeal like we did for our youth summer campers last year. Between now and Sunday, August 16th you’re being asked to contribute money for Dr. Luke to bring with him this year to help buy medicines and fund scholarships for the young women.

If you put a check in the offering plate, please write “Honduras Mission” on the memo line. If you’re preferring a cash offering – put it in one of the envelopes in the pews and write “Honduras Mission” on the envelope.

This is a wonderful ministry and your help is deeply appreciated!

Choir Retreat
Sing. Worship. Fellowship. Grow.

The choir will take a well-deserved break from regular rehearsals during most of July and early August.

THEN, ON SATURDAY, AUGUST 1ST, FROM 10:00 AM TO 3:00 PM, choir members will gather for a special retreat as they begin preparing music for the fall season and—believe it or not—Christmas!

If you've ever considered joining the choir, now is the perfect time! Whether you're an experienced singer or simply enjoy making music and worshipping through song, we'd love to have you join us.

Let's lift our voices and hearts in praise!

Make a joyful noise!

For more information about the retreat or becoming a member of this fun-loving group that enriches our worship each week, please contact

Sandy Hunter, DIRECTOR OF MUSIC

AUGUST CELEBRATIONS



BIRTHDAYS

- 2 Pat Buchanan
- 3 Libby Fakier
- 3 Noah Newton
- 9 Lynn Buchanan
- 9 Ellen Hancock
- 10 Steven Freese
- 10 Margarete Hendricks
- 14 Brett Smith
- 15 Judy Farmer
- 15 Fred St. John
- 16 Eileen Below
- 16 Frank Fordham
- 16 Sue Marler
- 16 Terry Snipes
- 18 Chris Cleberg
- 19 Charlie Brown
- 22 Jim Peterson
- 24 Logan Ranfone
- 25 Carolyn Hill Clark
- 28 Donna Wren
- 31 TJ Prisco

ANNIVERSARIES

- 1 Janice & Mark Weber
- 16 Robin & John Hanson
- 16 Penny & Tom Strickland
- 19 Eileen & Jerry Below
- 20 Sandy & Jim Peterson
- 29 Ann & Jim Berman

Annual Reports Due

Individual annual team reports are due by August 13th. If you are responsible for one of Hope's ministry areas, please email your report to the church office by that date so we can distribute the complete Annual Report of the Congregation by September 1st. If you would like to see a copy of last year's report for your area as a guide for this year's report, let us know in the church office.

2026 Annual Meeting

This year's Annual Meeting of the Congregation will be held on Sunday, September 20th. There will be one worship service that day and the meeting will follow. Reports will be given, Council members for the coming year will be elected, and the 2027 budget will be presented for approval.

Shoes for Orphan Souls Report

As of this writing, you have donated 192 pairs of shoes and 35 pairs of socks that will be sent to children here in the U.S. and around the world. For many, it will make it possible for them to attend school. Thank you for your generosity! The collection box will remain outside the church's front doors until the third week of August.

Returning Thanks Sunday

August is our Stewardship month here at Hope Church in preparation for the new church year which begins on September 1st. We'll have Temple Talks at each service on the second and third Sundays of the month, and on August 23rd - a week earlier than usual - we'll celebrate Consecration Sunday with a special stewardship message and our traditional Returning Thanks Offering as the benedictory close to each of our services. We're doing this a week earlier this year since August 30th will be Pastor Dave's last Sunday with us. Each family will be asked to fill out an "Estimate of Giving" sheet, place it in a self-addressed envelope and place it sealed in the basket on the altar. The first time your envelope is opened will be after the first of the year when it has been returned to you still sealed.

Ladies Gathering

The next Ladies Gathering will be Saturday, August 8th, at 11:30 in Founders Hall.

August Worship Assistants

8:15 Lectors

2 Charlie Brown
9 Wayne Buehler
16 Duane Norhtrup
23 Ann Buehler
30 TBA

10:45 Lectors

2 John Hiscox
9 Sylvia Negri
16 Carol Townsend
23 Barbara Fail
30 Karen Baker

10:45 Greeters

2 Pam Guenther & Luis Santiago
9 Fred & Sandi St. John
16 Art & Wanda Dodge
23 Maureen & Ted Grener
30 Ann & Jim Berman

10:45 Ushers

2 Leon & June Edgemon
9 Jeannine Sieck & Janice Weber
16 Steven & Amy Freese
23 Rudy & Judy Kruger
30 Barbara Fail & Jack O'Donavan

10:45 Communion Assistants

2 John Hiscox
9 Sylvia Negri
16 Carol Townsend
23 Barbara Fail
30 Karen Baker

Counters

2 Sylvia Negri & Barbara Mefford
9 Karie Rench & Karen Baker
16 Mary Leyden & Mike Hoover
23 Sylvia Negri & Barbara Mefford
30 Karie Rench & Mike Hoover

Mid-Week Altar Guild

2 June Edgemon
9 Ann Berman
16 Micky Northrup
23 Ann Buehler
30 Doris Goplin

Remember in Prayer



Hope family: Rich Hein, Beverly Hiscox, Joe Orlando, Keith Bell, Paul & Patsy Schmidt, Pam Whitsell, Bob Mefford, Katy Beno, Leda Lee, John Owens, Joan Blomquist, Lynn Buchanan, Barbara & LeRoy Polk, Alexandra Givens, Frank Quido, Art Dodge, Char Grewe, Mike Hoover, Rena Ashworth, Arthur Trimble,

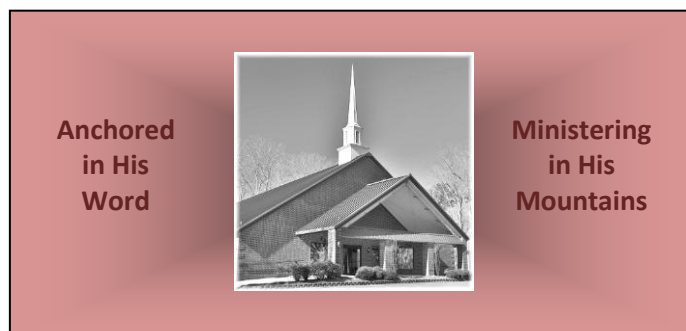
Relatives & friends: Susan & Jeff Enrietto, Maureen Collins, Isaac Breland; Liam Tuten (*Negri*); Nick Fleischer (*Ashworth*); Zach Ourada, Don Iiams, Pastor Rick Barger (*Smedley*); Daviya (*Deloney*); Eli Harkins, Bruce Duke (*Austin*); Robin Leonard (*Hoover*); Graham Krieker; Harry Archer (*Strickland*); Kiersten Blomquist, Eva Stephens, Megan Stephens, Sarah

Blomquist, Fred & Linda Ratterree, James Blomquist (*Blomquist*); Matthew Orlando, Pat Bogan, John Schafer (*Orlando*); Hunter Kruger; Janet Zieno (*Quido*); Brenda Hunter, Susan Castillo (*Hunter*); Jack & Crystal Payne, Daniel Richardson, Beth Richardson, Sommer Dingler (*Barbato*); Doug Wix (*Hunter and Barbato*); Fred Partik (*Crawford*); Joseph Bennett (*McCurdy*); Garrett Anderson (*Dahlberg*), Courtney Hendricks, Casey Card, Jack Payne, Mike Gondak, Crystal Rice, Greg Richardson, Teresa Perez, Rachel Renner, Donna & John Beausoliel, Larry McCaskie, Margaret Dugan, Devin Landry, Ed Greve, Ellie Murphy, The Schule Family, Eli Brinkman, Joyce Witzenberger

In the military: Mason Cunningham (*Negri*); Isaiah Watts (*Smedley*); Ryan Hiscox; Zachary Beno, Ben Gilley, Tyler Dalton (*Beno*); Casey Dugan, James Motes, Andy Stephens, Zachary Motes, James Blomquist, Jr., Robert Blomquist (*Blomquist*)

The Hope Staff

Church Office	706.636.HOPE (4673) hope.elca.ellijay@gmail.com
Pastor Dave Smedley	404.226.6833 davesmedley@hotmail.com
Administrative Asst: Amanda Brookshire	706.889.4498 hope.elca.ellijay@gmail.com
Director of Music: Sandra Hunter	404.729.1244 smbnotes@aol.com
Custodian: Jeannine Sieck	contact the church office
Website	www.hopeonthehill.church



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

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

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 5:30 PM.