



the anchor

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

March 2026

From the Pastor...

St. John's gospel is filled with questions that Jesus asks that form the theme for this year's Lenten preaching series. Questions that start with his – *what are you looking for?* – on the day after his baptism in the Jordan River, up to his question of Mary Magdalene at the tomb – *woman – why are you weeping? Whom are you looking for?*

These often were questions he asked of his disciples and the people around him. In one instance, he's speaking to Nicodemus who has come to visit him at night. There's the man he asks by the pool on the sabbath – *do you want to be made well?*

After leaving the seder meal of the Last Supper, Jesus reproaches Peter who has just promised that he would lay down his life for the Lord. *WILL – you lay down your life for me – Jesus asks?* And then he goes on to tell Peter that he – Peter - will deny Jesus three times before dawn breaks.

These are all questions Jesus was asking those around him then. St. John writes them though in a way that lets us know that they are questions he could be asking each of us now!

What are you looking for? Whom are you looking for? Why are you weeping? Do you want to be made well? Will you lay down your life for me?

Folks? God in Jesus became human for our sake! It was his way of letting us know that he created us that we might be in face-to-face relationship with him. It was his way of assuring us that he always wanted to be - and forever would be - with us. In spite of our transgressions against him? He would never abandon us!

It was those very transgressions indeed that Jesus would take to the cross with him. Them? Our sins? Taken off our backs and placed on his – that they might forever die with him as he himself died on the cross.

We do well I think when we place ourselves right into the middle of the action and the events of our Holy Scripture. As Jesus speaks to Peter and the others? Know in your mind that you're right there in their midst and he's speaking to you, too!

Jesus in his resurrection? Is letting us know of the glorious resurrection that waits for each one of us if we but accept his gift of mercy and grace. If we but commit our lives into his hands and walk with him into his eternity!

Each Lenten season – like the season of Advent – offers us a time to step back and reflect. Reflect on our lives – where it is we've been and where it is we're going. It offers a time to reflect on who we are and it gives us opportunity to decide on whose we want to be. The questions Jesus asks will help guide us through that reflection.

God in Jesus is making it clear that we're living in a world of his making – not our own making. In his death and resurrection, the Lord has cleared aside all the obstacles that could possibly stand between us and him.

It's only left for us to decide whether we're going to live on God's terms or our own.

Many thanks to all who pitched in to the soup pots on Super Bowl Sunday! We were able to send \$730 to the Gilmer Community Food Pantry to help feed hungry folks in Gilmer County. We take up our *Souper Bowl of Caring* offering each year on this day to pass on to either the Gilmer Food Pantry or to Cares in Pickens County.

Have a quiet and blessed Lenten journey.

Peace,
Pastor Dave

Diaper Drive and Outreach Report

Happy Spring Everyone!

Thank you all so much for your generous donations for Safe Choice Pregnancy Center! Your generous support of our Annual \$\$ for Diapers Drive was near \$2300. The food was delicious! A huge THANK YOU to all the people who cooked, decorated and cleaned up on Sunday! We are so Blessed to have a congregation like ours!

The Outreach Team will be filling the snack bags for the Elderly Shut-ins in Gilmer co. mid-April. All of you are welcome to join us we meet in Founders Hall an hour before choir. Many hands make easy work!

The Outreach Team!!

New Beginnings for Gilmer County

P.O. Box 2402 Ellijay, GA 30540 - Contact Phone (706)-515-4663

January 29, 2026

James Sease
Hope Lutheran Church of Gilmer County
3295 Old Highway 5 South
Ellijay GA 30540

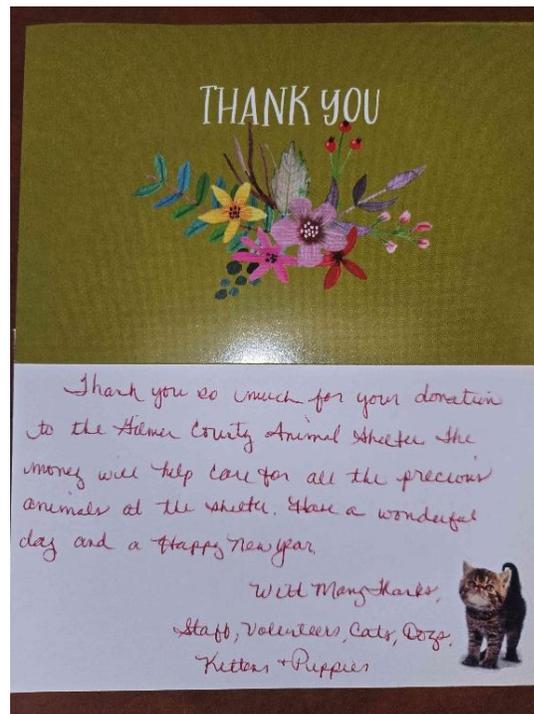
Dear James,

Thank you and your church for donating \$150.00 for the Warming Center in Ellijay. We use the funds to refresh our supplies at the Center and help our guests with things they may need like gas, a car repair, filling their propane tank, meals during the day, and movie passes when it is extra cold during the day, but not cold enough for us to be open.

We appreciate your concern for those who may not have shelter or heat during these times of very cold weather.

Sincerely

Rachel Tarr
New Beginnings/Warming Center Trustee



Lenten Services and Suppers

Through Wednesday, March 25th, our soup, sandwich and salad suppers continue at 5:30 PM, and the evening Lenten Service of Light will begin at 7:00. There will also be a Lenten mid-day service each Wednesday at noon for those who prefer not to be out at night.

The schedule of topics and scripture for our Wednesday services is on the next page of this newsletter and printed copies will be available in the narthex.

MARCH CELEBRATIONS



BIRTHDAYS

2	2-Mar	Mary Engels
2	2-Mar	Mary Leyden
4	4-Mar	Lori Herndon
5	5-Mar	Marc Ranfone
7	7-Mar	Gordon Hunter
7	7-Mar	Leda Lee
9	9-Mar	Jerry Below
10	10-Mar	Liz Christensen
14	14-Mar	Mike Christensen
16	16-Mar	Sharon Smith
20	20-Mar	Jim Smith
21	21-Mar	Kristie Shepherd
21	21-Mar	Annette Schwall
22	22-Mar	Judy Kruger
24	24-Mar	Barbara Polk
27	27-Mar	Kim Smith
31	31-Mar	Austin Cook

ANNIVERSARY

7	Laura & Ron Rogne
25	Barbara & LeRoy Polk

Daylight Savings Time Returns!



Be sure to move your clocks forward 1 hour before you go to bed on Saturday, March 8th. Daylight Saving Time is almost here!

Hope Lutheran Church's 2026 Lenten Schedule...

"The Questions of Lent"

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

On the Wednesdays of March 4th through March 25th, we will also celebrate a **Service of the Word** liturgy at noon in the sanctuary.

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 20th, and will continue from 5 to 7 PM each Friday through March 27th, the Friday before Holy Week.

Ladies' Gathering



**Save the date! April 25th, 2026
Detail will be provided later.**

March Worship Assistants

8:15 Lectors

- 1 Duane Northrup
- 8 Ann Buehler
- 15 Carole English
- 22 Charlie Brown
- 29 Jan Austin

10:45 Lectors

- 1 Aaron Engles
- 8 Janet Smedley
- 15 John Hiscox
- 22 Judy Kruger
- 29 Barbara Fail

10:45 Greeters

- 1 Ann & Jim Berman
- 8 Maureen & Ted Grener
- 15 Pan Guenther & Luis Santiago
- 22 Ann & Jim Berman
- 29 Wand & Art Dodge

10:45 Ushers

- 1 Judy & Rudy Kruger
- 8 Jeannine Sieck & Janice Weber
- 15 Amy & Steven Freese
- 22 June & Leon Edgemon
- 29 Leroy Polk & Jack O'Donavan

10:45 Communion Assistants

- 1 Aaron Engles
- 8 Janet Smedley
- 15 John Hiscox
- 22 Judy Kruger
- 29 Barbara Fail

Counters

- 1 Sylvia Negri & Barbara Mefford
- 8 Kari Rench & Karen Baker
- 15 Sylvia Negri & Mike Hoover
- 22 Kari Rench & Barbara Mefford
- 29 Sylvia Negri & Steven Freese

Mid-Week Altar Guild

- 1 Ann Berman
- 8 Micky Northrup
- 15 Ann Buehler
- 22 Doris Goplin
- 29 June Edgemon

Remember in Prayer



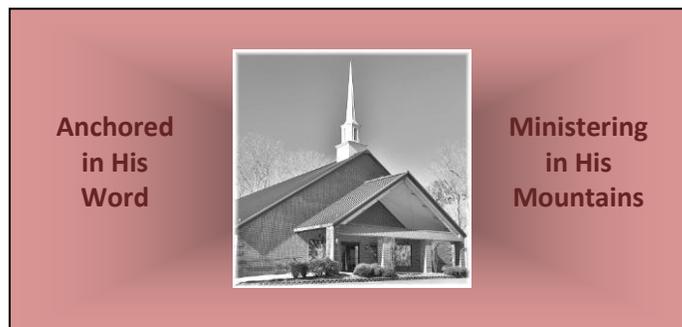
Hope family: Rich Hein, Beverly Hiscox, Joe Orlando, Keith Bell, Paul & Patsy Schmidt, Pam Whitsell, Bob Mefford, Katy Beno, Leda Lee, John Owens, Connie Dewey, Joan Blomquist, Lynn Buchanan, Barbara Polk, Alexandra Givens, Caitlin & Peyton Mathis, Frank Quido, Art Dodge, Diana Barbato, Char Grewe, Mike Hoover, Caitlin & Peyton Mathis

Relatives & friends: Susan Enrietto, Maureen Collins, Isaac Breland; Liam Tuten (*Negri*); Nick Fleischer (*Ashworth*); Gabi Poteet, 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 (*Blomquist*); Matthew Orlando, Pat Bogan, John Schafer (*Orlando*); Hunter Kruger; Janet Zieno (*Quido*); Brenda Hunter, Susan Castillo (*Hunter*); Wylie family, Jack & Crystal Payne, Daniel Richardson, Julie Eastham, Christopher Castellano (*Barbato*); Doug Wix (*Hunter and Barbato*); Fred Partik (*Crawford*); Joseph Bennett (*McCurdy*); Garrett Anderson (*Dahlberg*), Courtney Hendricks, Casey Card, Jack Payne, Mike Gondak, Steve Gondak, Sommer Dingler, Crystal Rice, Greg Richardson, Frank Holden, Teresa Perez, Rachel Renner, Donna & John Beausoliel, Larry McCaskie, Fran Pease

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
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Director of Music: Sandy 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

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.