

# **HOPE LUTHERAN CHURCH ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2011**

## **2011 President's Report January 23, 2011**

2011 has turned out to be one of our best years yet at Hope Lutheran Church. Another successful Vacation Bible School. A great turn out for the youth mission trip to Houston. And, all of the continuing Sunday morning and Wednesday evening programs challenging Sunday school programs once again help us grow in our faith.

After a fantastic job in 2010 with the budgeting and tight finances, we found ourselves in what seems to be a quite stable position. Though we continued to look for ways to cut costs, the addition of Faith Tabernacle has helped us greatly. And now with Rock of Faith Family Church on Sunday Mornings and Dr Lezlie Pender's office in the old music room, we find ourselves able to help those who have needed our help and were unable to do so. Briarwood, Cedar Hill Food Pantry, Compassion International, Debbie Buenting, the Gaultney family, the Gerharts, TLU, Sierra Leone, and Lutheran World Relief are just a few.

Matt Cleaver has cut his hours to one quarter time, but still, as always, provides more than expected. With this reduction in pay and the additions of the other churches, we find ourselves able to present to the congregation, well deserved raises for the staff and the addition of Andrew Trites as our choir director to compliment what Cathy Peterson and Steve Hawkins have done for so many years.

It has been a pleasure to work with this Church Council. Pastor Joel, Matt Cleaver, Ty Roberson, Carrie Hamilton, Tammy Hill, Barbara York, Brian Pender and Kristine Clark, I thank you for all your hard work and dedication to Hope Lutheran Church.

I pray for continuing growth and love within Hope's family and those we touch.

Dwight Bengtson

President 2011-2012

## 2011 Pastor's Report

On January 9, 2011 Hope took its first vote to leave the ELCA at a specially called congregational meeting. The vote was merely to answer the question, "Should we leave the ELCA?" Seventy-five voting members were present and 88% voted to leave the ELCA.

The second vote took place May 1 at a specially called congregational meeting. Three votes were cast that day. The first was whether we should leave the ELCA or not. Sixty-three people were present. 97% voted to leave the ELCA.

A second vote was taken to determine which Lutheran body we would join. We voted to join both the *North American Lutheran Church* and the *Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ*. NALC is a growing Lutheran Denomination. LCMC is an association of Lutheran congregations, not a denomination. Hope voted 97% to join both NALC and LCMC.

The third vote was to adopt a provisional constitution, which was our former constitution minus any mention of the ELCA or any ELCA administrative provisions. It passed unanimously.

With those votes Hope Lutheran Church was voting not to change. The ELCA changed. The majority of Hope did not want to be associated with those changes. So we voted to associate with Lutheran churches that were in step with what the ELCA was previously.

The truth that we were voting not to change is evident in our life together. If one would have missed the votes and hearing about the votes, one would hardly be able to tell anything had happened. Our worship is the same. All of our gatherings together are the same. Our constitution didn't change significantly. Almost all things go on as they did before.

Several things are different, however. Number one, now I, as pastor, do not need to be responding to the ELCA's move to put sexuality on the front burner. (Sexuality issues, largely, are best dealt with pastorally, and in private.) Secondly, some families are now not present. This is painful to us. We would have hoped that since we do not have a different policy now than when we did before the ELCA changed they would still feel comfortable here. Some do not. Our doors and hearts and love are open to them. We would love to see them again present as they were before. (As I write this eleven new members are joining Hope. We continue to move ahead.)

With this report, this is probably the last we will be speaking of the ELCA. We throw no stones. We wish them God's blessing wherever they stand with the Word of God. We are simply moving on.

And moving we are. There IS change.

First, part of this change is the natural kind of change which comes with normal rhythms of life. Some people have moved. Some have died. Some people's calls have ebbed and flowed as is natural with the normal dynamics of call.

Matt's call changed this year. He felt moved to begin a business outside of Hope called *Cleaver Solutions* (a web design service). He changed his status from full-time to ¼ time.

Matt is present at church for the weekly Sunday morning and Wednesday evening youth gatherings. This makes it feel, to many, like not much has changed. But it is a change. We are working out the details of this as we move on.

Matt's status means ¾ of his salary opens up. As you look at the budget you will see we have applied this largely to missions. The *Gaultneys*, the *Gerhearts*, and *Debra Buenting*, our past missionaries are all getting more money from us. We are pleased to do this. We are also adding *China Services Venture* and our local *Hope Mansion* to our giving list. Both of these are fabulous ministries. CSV makes a difference in China, and Hope Mansion is responding to the fastest growing homeless population in the US, homeless singles who are pregnant or with young child.

Both LCMC and NALC encourage this kind of direct mission giving. They both believe this is healthier than sending the money off for someone else to decide what to do with it. As we actively stay in touch with these ministries we will both see the fruit and know we have a part in it.

Secondly, our former bishop, Bishop Kanouse, mentioned in his last visit with us that main-line Christianity in the US is decreasing in size and by 2050 (or was it 2025?) main-line churches will be practically gone. This is a change we see all around us and we feel it here as well. Four % of people under the age of 30 attend church in the US. This is not a natural change. This is a spiritual change. And we must respond. Responding we are.

Last February Wendy and I took in a 3dm Taster. (3dm is short for Three Dimensional Movement: the three dimensions are UP (God focused) IN (relationships within the Christian gathering) and OUT (relationships on the outside of the Gathered Church). 3dm has developed ways to keep all three of these dimensions (up, in and out) happening at once. (Often churches have two of these dimensions functioning but rarely do you see the three thriving at once in churches.)

I have known about this organization since the mid-nineties and have been following their concepts ever since. (They minister in many Lutheran churches but also in all main-line churches as well. They are Anglican in root, having begun in England.) But it was in the Taster that I realized how in step 3dm is with our Call-driven approach. 3dm has boiled down much of what we have been presenting at Hope into Eight Shaping concepts.

I sensed the Holy Spirit speak to me that February day in Houston, "This is what Jesus wants us to do now." 3dm is an effective way to "make disciples who make disciples." In so doing we will be responding effectively to the spiritual change in our nation and even in our Bible-belt culture around us.

We are proposing a significant amount of money to train people in this three-dimensional movement. A few years back we spent a significant amount of money painting the church and putting in new carpet. Surely spending money investing in spiritual ministry is more important than our physical facilities. I hope we all see the wisdom of spiritual priorities and rejoice we have the money to do this now and that it is money well spent when we invest in the Kingdom Ways of our God.

We do not have to give in to the spiritual decline of our nation. We can and will meet the challenge prayerfully and with great hope and joy. I strongly believe Jesus' hand is in this.

Let us "Go forth and serve the Lord." And all God's people said, "AND WE WILL!"

Pastor Joel

## Call Inc. Annual Report 2011

Call Inc. is a non-profit teaching mission (501 c 3) supported by generous donations (and also fees), and is a teaching mission. As a teaching mission (not a business), its mission is to mobilize ordinary people in Jesus' call to transform the world in the mission fields of their own lives... family, work, community/world, and the gathering of believers. We teach through seminars, retreats and resources. We train leaders and partner with like-minded organizations. I am its missionary, similar to other missionaries. Call Inc. has a similar evolution as most Christian teaching missions, slow and gradual. I see this continuing. Gaining credibility and trust in the faith world takes a great deal of time. I see the Lord increasing our influence, particularly in the two new Lutheran bodies with which Hope Lutheran has affiliation. Though, what we do is a central part of the Lutheran Reformation heritage and is the Scriptural vision for church, we live in a day and age where there is a great deal of need for renewal, reformation and reclaiming of the church's real focus; therefore, though we are unique, this also contributes to a slow development process. Jesus worked one by one by one in developing his disciples and their callings and life of discipleship, having these people's attention largely 24/7 for three years. We don't have that opportunity. Below is a list of the provision and work of our Lord in 2011 with plans and possibilities for 2012. We had opportunity to minister and teach many people.

Submitted by Pastor Wendy Berthelsen

### Events 2011:

- North American Lutheran Church (NALC) Discipleship Event, Boerne, (breakout intro workshops)
- ALOA Seniorfest, Austin, TX (breakout introductory workshops)
- ALOA National Elderhostel, Orlando, FL (full call seminar for senior adults)
- Listening Women's Retreat (weekend, Lufkin United Methodist: planned, led and taught full retreat)
- Star of Hope Mission, Mosaic & First Evangelical Lutheran Church, Houston (full call seminar)
- Vacation Bible School (3 churches): full call seminar for both children and adults
- "Call" Family Camp, Heartwood Conference Center, Trego, WI (full call seminar for all ages)
- National Lutheran Men in Mission Gathering, Denver, CO (breakout introductory workshops)
- AVID students, Tulsa Public Schools (middle school introductory workshops)
- Freedom at the Crossroads, Cokato MN (full call seminar)
- Two other regional events that were cancelled or postponed.

### Other:

- Connections Magazine: Published four articles in summer edition which was distributed to everyone at the NALC national gathering for 800 participants
- Boards for Networking: St. Paul Seminary Advisory Board
- Wrote first draft for Lutheran Forum theological journal
- Addition of Matt Cleaver as a teacher

#### Ongoing work:

- Spiritual Gifts inventory download/copying rights... completed
- E-newsletter sent out 3 times in 2011
- Website updating: constant
- Website Redesign in progress
- Call Seminar Session redesign or custom designing for the unique context of various events
- Details: financial details, event planning details, reports, intercessors contact
- Networking (Email, Phone or in person)
- Networking Events: North American Lutheran Church (NALC) National Gathering (900 people present), Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ (LCMC) National Gathering (1200 people present): display table plus several arranged appointments with key people; Please note that all of the keynote presentations at the LCMC gathering were pointing very emphatically to the need for what we do.
- Fundraising

#### Plans 2012:

- Completion of Website: addition of more downloadable resources (free single copy/copying rights purchase)
- Networking//Preparation for 2012 events: Boerne, Appleton, Houston breakouts plus new opps
- Continued revision of Call event sessions/ppt
- Networking for 2012/2013 events
- Possible Ethiopia trip in April (with personal funds)
- Video processing (from Jan 2012 event)
- Online video intro to Call Inc.
- Video "call" Course: conversational format

#### Writing Projects 2012:

- Reflection Guide reprint
- Lutheran Forum magazine article focusing on the training of pastors
- "We, the Christian Church" booklet series (four shorter volumes)
  1. Content will be first Lutheran Forum draft
  2. First half of Custom Designed Church
  3. Second half of Custom Designed Church (The Resource section of Custom Designed Church will be made available for download.)
  4. Spiritual Gifts Emphasis (for use by congregations)
- KFS primer
- Call Daily Devotional
- Wise Economy reprint with teaching guide
- Kindle versions of the above
- Blog... lesser priority

# Membership Record for 2011

	Baptized	Confirmed
<b>1. Membership end of 2010</b>	414	306
<b>2. Members received during 2011</b>		
a. By Baptism: Children 15 + under		
b. By Baptism: Children 16 + older		0
c. By affirmation of faith		
<b>Juan Rodriguez</b>	1	0
<b>Stepanie Rodriguez</b>	1	0
<b>Sydni Rodriguez</b>	1	0
d. By transfer		
<b>Joe Liberatore</b>	1	1
<b>Delores Liberatore</b>	1	1
<b>Raymond Luster</b>	1	1
<b>Lori Luster</b>	1	1
<b>Chloe Luster</b>	1	0
<b>John Kuzma</b>	1	1
<b>Cathy Kuzma</b>	1	1
<b>Gail Riggins</b>	1	1
g. From other sources & statistical adjustment		
h. Total members received is 2011	11	7
<b>3. Baptized youth - confirmed- 2011</b>		
<b>Reilly Bengtson 5/8/2011</b>		1
<b>Kaitlyn Emmons 5/8/2011</b>		1
<b>Reed Giunta 5/8/2011</b>		1
<b>Johnathan Jarrett 5/8/2011</b>		1
<b>Ashley Johnson 5/8/2011</b>		1
<b>Victoria Kilguss 5/8/2011</b>		1
<b>Drew Slayton 5/8/2011</b>		1
<b>Total add by baptized &amp; confirmed</b>	11	14
<b>Sub-totals</b>	425	320

**6. Members removed during 2011**

a. By death

<b>Robert Kelsey (6/11)</b>	1	1
<b>Robert Sparr (12/11)</b>	1	1

b. By transfer

<b>Mike Weiss</b>	1	1
<b>Erica Weiss</b>	1	1
<b>Caelan Weiss</b>	1	0
<b>Marcus Weiss</b>	1	0
<b>Robert Kuhn</b>	1	1
<b>Doris Kuhn</b>	1	0
<b>Brian Sague</b>	1	1

e. For other reasons & statistical adjustment

<b>f. Total members removed</b>	9	6
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<b>6. Membership, end of 2011</b>	416	314
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