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## Bits from Blayne

### Don't Just Sit on the Bench

If you've been by New Hope lately, you've probably noticed the memorial benches out front. They sit quietly between the pots, recently planted with beautiful flowers: simple and inviting—a peaceful little space that says, “Come, rest for a while.” And that image has stuck with me. Because in many ways, those benches are a picture of where so many people are today in their faith. They've come close. They've stepped near enough to admire the beauty. But they haven't yet come inside.

We live in a time where many are drawn to something about Jesus—maybe through a podcast, a social media post, a speaker like Jordan Peterson, or even a hopeful message from Joel Osteen. Something stirs in them. They hear just enough to be curious. Seekers. They catch a glimpse of grace, or strength, or order in the chaos of life, and it draws them in. But often, they stop right there—on the bench, outside the door, unsure of what next. And sometimes what brought them that far is what I might call dime store theology—invitational, but lightweight, a little shallow, but just accessible enough to get picked up when deeper things feel out of reach. It isn't rich, but it isn't useless either. And that's important to recognize. Because sometimes, the flashy thing, is what leads someone to sit on the bench in the first place.

The mistake isn't starting there—but it is stopping there. The benches may be inviting, and the flowers beautiful, but they aren't the goal. They are not the church. They're not the means of grace. They're not the Gosepl. They're not the life, Christ came to give. They're only the beginning. And when someone arrives at our church having been drawn in by a glimpse—just a whisper—of who Jesus might be, we don't need to correct them; not yet anyway. We need to sit beside them. Listen. Walk with them humbly, and patiently, because what they truly need, is not a sharper argument or a better speaker, but someone willing to say, “I won't offer you a symbolic Christ. But I'll sit with you until you're ready to meet the real One.”

That is what it means to be faithfully present. And it's deeply tied to our mission. One of the words we chose in our new congregational mission statement—perhaps the one that matters most in moments like this—is humbly. That word isn't about playing small or speaking softly. It's about remembering the posture of the apostles—the ones who were sent not as polished experts but as servants of the Risen Christ. They were witnesses. They didn't have all the answers, but they had seen the Lord. And they walked with others until those others saw Him, too.

It is the essence of faithful presence—the cruciform shape of ministry. It's what Paul meant when he said, “We were gentle among you, like a nursing mother taking care of her own children” (1 Thessalonians 2:7), and what Peter meant when he said to make a defense “with gentleness and respect” (1 Peter 3:15).

So yes, sit on the bench. Smell the flowers. Take your time. But do not stay outside. Do not sit in the rain, thinking that was the destination. Come in. There's room at the table. And the One who waits for you is not a symbol or a pattern or a motivational idea. He is the Living Christ, crucified and risen, full of grace and truth, and He welcomes you not just to admire the porch—but to share in His life.

Grace and peace,  
Pastor Blayne

# Worship Schedule

Date	Time	Minister	Lector	Readings
<b>June 1</b> Sunday School Food Bank Sunday	9AM 10 AM	Pastor Blayne	Frank Wright	Acts 1:1-11 Psalm 47 Ephesians 1:15-23 Luke 24:44-53
<b>June 8</b> Communion Potluck to follow	6PM	Pastor Blayne	Joel Haynie	Genesis 11:1-9 Psalm 143 Acts 2:1-21 John 14:23-31
<b>June 15</b>	9AM	Tiffany Smotherman	Duane Nelson	Proverbs 8:1-4, 22-31 Psalm 8 Acts 2:14a, 22-36 John 8:48-59
<b>June 22</b> Communion	9AM	Pastor Blayne	Thomas Fritz	Isaiah 65:1-9 Psalm 3 Galatians 3:23 —4:7 Luke 8:26-39
<b>June 29</b>	9AM	Pastor Blayne	Teri Ann Vejtasa	1 Kings 19:9b-21 Psalm 16 Galatians 5:1, 13-25 Luke 9:51-62



It's time to change!!!

On the 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of the month, our church service will begin at 6 PM.



Please submit information for the monthly newsletter by the 24th of the month. Send it to [NewHopeLutheranNewsletter@gmail.com](mailto:NewHopeLutheranNewsletter@gmail.com) ready to cut and paste into the newsletter. Thank you!

~Cheryl

## Contacts

Mailing Address:  
P.O.Box 457  
Circle, MT 59215

Email: [NewHopeLutheran2020@gmail.com](mailto:NewHopeLutheran2020@gmail.com)

### Church Council

Duane Nelson, President - 406-485-2423  
Kim Murphy, Vice President - 406-974-2445  
Denise Haynie, Secretary - 406-939-3856  
Wanda Robinette, Treasurer - 406-939-3404  
Ron McFarland - 406-853-3348  
Frank Wright - 406-974-2042  
Kim Murphy - 406-974-2445  
Thomas Fritz - 406-974-3336

### Event Contacts

Baptisms - June Nelson - 406-485-2423  
Weddings - Wanda Robinette - 406-939-3404  
Funerals - Frank Wright - 406-974-2042

### Facebook Group

New Hope Lutheran Church

Location 1400 B Ave, Circle

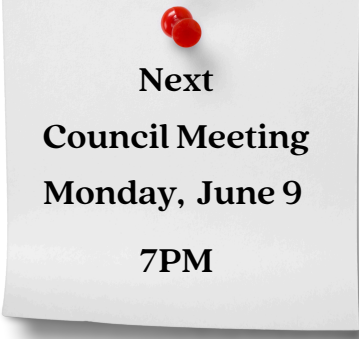
Cash Flow - Apr 2025  
4/1/2025 through 4/30/2025

Category	4/1/2025- 4/30/2025
<b>INFLOWS</b>	
Div Income	915.73
Offering	4,025.00
<b>TOTAL INFLOWS</b>	<b>4,940.73</b>
<b>OUTFLOWS</b>	
Building Improvements	
Flooring	12,075.00
<b>TOTAL Building Improvements</b>	<b>12,075.00</b>
Donation	
Good Neighbor	100.00
Worship Building	750.00
<b>TOTAL Donation</b>	<b>850.00</b>
Internet Expense	20.75
Music	150.00
Pastoral	
Contract Pastor	1,500.00
<b>TOTAL Pastoral</b>	<b>1,500.00</b>
Repairs	
Building	290.27
<b>TOTAL Repairs</b>	<b>290.27</b>
Supplies	
Education	102.21
Newsletter	600.00
<b>TOTAL Supplies</b>	<b>702.21</b>
Yard Maintenance	0.00
<b>TOTAL OUTFLOWS</b>	<b>15,588.23</b>
<b>OVERALL TOTAL</b>	<b>-10,647.50</b>

Financial Report submitted by Wanda Robinette.

## Sunday School

June 1  
Adults & Kids



Next  
**Council Meeting**  
**Monday, June 9**  
**7PM**

## Bible Studies

None scheduled at this time



Find information,  
resources, online small  
group study sessions,  
Daily Prayer and Readings,  
and more!  
[www.theNALC.org](http://www.theNALC.org)



Find information,  
resources, and more!  
[www.lcmc.net](http://www.lcmc.net)

### New Hope Lutheran Church Council Meeting – April 14th, 2025

The council meeting of New Hope Lutheran Church was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by President Duane Nelson. Council members present were: Frank Wright, Thomas Fritz, Wanda Robinette, Ron McFarland, Kim Murphy, Duane Nelson, and Denise Haynie. Pastor Blayne joined us via Zoom for the meeting, also. We will continue to use Zoom for those who have a distance to drive or just can't join the meeting in person, due to weather or other related reasons.

**Correspondence** – The CD at Grassland FCU will renew again, if we would like. LCMC is forming a district around the Dakotas, calling it the Northern Plains District. It will cover ND, SD, Eastern MT and Western MN. There will be a meeting at Charity Lutheran Church in Bismarck, ND, Saturday, May 10th at 10:00 a.m. If anyone is interested in going, please let Blayne know. Church Mutual proxy vote coming up soon. MacAtac the senior party on graduation night, to keep the seniors in a safe and fun environment, is asking for donations. The party will be May 18th at the Memorial Building with 22 seniors graduating. We received the Thrivent magazine and the Living Grace catalog, they will be upstairs on the table, in the entry, if anyone is interested in reading them.

Minutes from the last meeting were read and a correction needs to be made to the communion Sundays, only April 13th and 20th, not the 27th. Ron made a motion to approve the minutes as corrected, Thomas seconded.

Wanda presented a bill from Circle Hardware for \$290.27 and Sunday School materials, paid for by Wanda, for \$102.21. She can go ahead and pay these. Wanda gave the treasurer's report.

Frank made a motion to approve the treasurer's report, Kim seconded.

#### **Committees**

**Worship** – Olivia will be here to play the piano for Good Friday and Easter Sunday. May 4th Tiffany Smotherman will fill the pulpit while Blayne is gone. We will have our 6 p.m. service with potluck to follow on May 11th. We will have communion May 11th and 25th. Baccalaureate will be Tuesday, May 6th at the Baptist Church.

**Finance** – CD is earning 3.75% and the Thrivent choice dollars have reached \$1,321. Thank you to all who direct their Thrivent Choice Dollars to us.

**Education** – VBS, anyone interested?

**Building** – Thomas and Duane used the thermal imaging camera and found the walls of the church are leaking the heat out. The windows weren't leaking near as bad. Ron will be installing a watering system for the flower pots out front so we won't have to constantly decide who will water the flowers. Lane Richardson will be doing the mowing this year and Ron is going to try some salt on the flat areas around the church to get rid of weeds as the chemical didn't work so well last year.

#### **Old Business:**

Solar window film

By-Law Changes

#### **New Business:**

Frank made a motion to give \$100 to MacAtac, Denise seconded.

#### **Pastor's Report:**

~Lent season and Easter went well. Thanks to Duane Nelson for filling in for the last Lenten service when Blayne had to be gone.

~Next Tuesday, Blayne is headed to South Dakota for NALC meeting

~Blayne will be filling the pulpit on Easter Sunday in Jordan, as well as here.

~The next newsletter article will be about our new Mission Statement "We listen to Christ, respond in faith, are humbly sent in love."

~Blayne started pre-marital counseling with Thomas Fritz and Cynthia Gibbs for their September 27th wedding.

Next meeting will be Monday, May 12th, at 7:00 p.m., with Zoom offered for those who can't make it to the church.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:13 p.m.

Newsletter items due by the 20th of each month!

Respectfully submitted, Denise Haynie



*Fathers, do not provoke your children to  
anger, but bring them up in the discipline  
and instruction of the Lord.  
Ephesians 6:4*



New Hope Lutheran Church  
PO Box 457  
Circle, MT 59215

—HAPPY—  
**FATHER'S**  
—DAY—