



Bits from Blayne

A book was recently suggested to me: Commentary on the Lutheran Book of Worship by Philip H. Pfatteicher. It walks carefully through the services of the Lutheran Book of Worship and explains not only what we do in worship, but why we do it.

I have always appreciated that our liturgy is not assembled randomly. It is shaped by Scripture. It has been formed and refined through centuries of Christian reflection. It teaches us, even when we do not realize we are being taught.

That reflection led me to think differently about a word we often hear during this season of Lent: fast.

When most of us hear the word, we think about what we give up. A food. A habit. A comfort. And while those practices can be helpful, I recently heard it explained in a way that truly settled in my heart. A season of fasting is not only about what we omit. It is about what we hold fast to.

To be steadfast.

As I reflected on that yesterday, I thought about the things I tend to omit during Lent. This year, I decided that certain beverages would be good for me to give up. And when those beverages are offered, I try not to dwell on what I am not having. Instead, I let the small act of restraint redirect my attention to the One who gave His life for me. What I surrender is minor. What He gave was everything. And in that remembering, there is gratitude.

That is the heart of this season.

Lent is not a forty day self improvement plan. It is a season of clinging. We will be tempted. We will suffer. We will grow tired. Following Christ does not remove hardship. Scripture tells us plainly that there will be crosses to bear.

But we hold fast to the One who goes to the cross for us.

That is what our worship quietly forms in us week after week. We begin with confession because we need mercy. We hear absolution because forgiveness is not something we generate. We listen to the Word because faith comes by hearing. We come to the Table because Christ does not simply inform us. He gives Himself to us.

The rhythm does not change when life feels unstable. The promises do not shift when our emotions do. In that steadiness, the Spirit anchors us again and again in Christ.

As this newsletter reaches your mailbox, March 12 will mark three years since my ordination. I mention it only as a marker of how far we have come together. We have walked through joys and sorrows. We have adjusted service times. We have gathered in seasons of uncertainty and in seasons of celebration. Through it all, the center has remained the same.

Word. Sacrament. Christ crucified for sinners. That is what we hold fast to.

We are not chasing novelty. We are not trying to impress the world. We are being formed, slowly and faithfully, by the steady gifts of God. Especially in Lent, that steadiness is a gift. It clears away distractions and brings us back to what does not move.

We are dust. But we are dust for whom Christ died.

So we continue this journey together. Not anxious. Not frantic. Simply steadfast. Holding fast to Jesus.

And trusting that He is, and always has been, holding fast to us.

Grace and peace,
Pr. Blayne

Worship Schedule

Date	Time	Minister	Lector	Readings
March 1 Food Bank Sunday School	4PM	Pastor Blayne	Frank Wright	Genesis 12:1-9 Psalm 121 Romans 4:1-8, 13-17 John 3: 1-17
March 4 Soup Supper	6PM	Pastor Blayne		
March 8 Communion Potluck	4PM	Pastor Blayne	Joel Haynie	Exodus 17: 1-7 Psalm 95: 1-9 Romans 5: 1-8 John 4: 5-26 (27-30, 39-42)
March 11 Soup Supper	6PM	Pastor Blayne		
March 15 Council Meeting	10AM	Pastor Blayne	Teri Ann Vejtasa	Isaiah 42: 14-21 Psalm 142 Ephesians 5: 8-14 John 9: 1-41
March 18 Soup Supper	6PM	Pastor Blayne		
March 22 Communion	4PM	Pastor Blayne	Duane Nelson	Ezekiel 37: 1-14 Psalm 130 Romans 8: 1-11 John 11: 1-45 (46-53)
March 25 Soup Supper	6PM			
March 29 Palm Sunday First Communion	4PM	Pastor Blayne	Thomas Fritz	Isaiah 50: 4-9a Psalm 118: 19-29 Philippians 2: 5-11 Matthew 26: 1-27, 66

Contacts

Mailing Address

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Email

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Church Council

Duane Nelson, President - 406-485-2423
Thomas Fritz, Vice President - 406-974-3336
Denise Haynie, Secretary - 406-939-3856
Wanda Robinette, Treasurer - 406-939-3404
Ron McFarland - 406-853-3348
Frank Wright - 406-974-2042
Peter Ferm - 406-529-3478

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 - Jan 2026

1/1/2026 through 1/31/2026

Category	1/1/2026- 1/31/2026
INFLOWS	
Div Income	6.11
Offering	2,488.00
Thrivent Donations	170.00
TOTAL INFLOWS	2,664.11
OUTFLOWS	
Building Maintenance	149.03
Donation	
Worship Building	750.00
TOTAL Donation	750.00
Internet Expense	21.75
Pastoral	
Continuing Ed, Conventions, Travel	1,644.00
Contract Pastor	1,500.00
TOTAL Pastoral	3,144.00
TOTAL OUTFLOWS	4,064.78
OVERALL TOTAL	-1,400.67

Financial Report submitted by Wanda Robinette.

Sunday School

March 1

Next

**Council Meeting
Sunday, March 15
following service**

Bible Studies

- Wednesdays at the Sr. Center at 6:30PM with Mabel



Find information, resources, online small group study sessions, Daily Prayer and Readings, and more!
www.theNALC.org



Find information, resources, and more!
www.lcmc.net

Council Meeting Minutes from January 18th, 2026

The council meeting of New Hope Lutheran Church was called to order at 11:00 a.m. by President Duane Nelson. The members attending were Frank Wright, Duane Nelson, Wanda Robinette, Denise Haynie, and Blayne Watts, Ron McFarland joined us in via phone. June Nelson was also in attendance as a congregation member.

Correspondence: We received a thank you from the Institute of Theology for our support. We received a offering from Anaconda, MT from Vonnie Wagner. We received a nice thank you and a monetary donation from Philip & Karen Gibbs for all the help we provided for Thomas & Cynthia Fritz's wedding.

The LCMC Northern Plains District is working on a youth gathering per Pastor Mike Smith, he is a volunteer from the group committee with Northern Plains District. Blayne is the Vice President for the group. The LCMC sent their "By the Word" magazine. The NALC disaster response newsletter for 2026 has also arrived for anyone interested to read.

The minutes from the previous meeting were reviewed. Frank made a motion to approve the minutes, Wanda seconded.

The **treasurer's report** was presented by Wanda. Frank made a motion to approve the treasurer's report; Denise seconded the motion. Wanda gave the end of year reports, also.

Committee reports:

Worship: Our annual meeting will be February 1st , following worship. We will have breakfast potluck following the meeting. On February 8th , we will have worship at 2:00 p.m. with communion. Ash Wednesday will be on February 18th at 6:00 p.m., the Lenten evenings will start at 6:00 p.m. with soup and then worship following at 6:30 p.m. Our Good Friday service will be at 6:00 p.m. The Easter service will be April 5th at 9:00 a.m. with breakfast potluck to follow. On Sunday, April 12th, we will have Tiffany Smotherman fill in for Pastor as he goes on a retreat.

Finance: Wanda presented the proposed budget for 2026. Frank made a motion to approve the budget and to present it to council at the annual meeting, Denise seconded.

Education: There was no Sunday School in January due to the power outage. Our Revelation bible study will be completed this week on Tuesday night. It has been fun! We hope to start another couples bible study soon.

Building: We have a hum coming through the speakers and we believe it is caused by the fluorescent bulbs in the basement. There are 52 bulbs to be replaced with LED bulbs, this would entail removing the ballasts, as it will save some energy, if we are going to do it correctly. We will take this to the annual meeting for discussion. We have no new news on the Lift for the basement.

Nominating Committee: Frank, Lee and Jessica are on the nominating committee. They will be meeting to gather names for new council members.

Old Business:

A big thank you to Wanda for getting the pew cushions measured and ordered. She and Rick also placed them in the sanctuary before the Christmas Eve service, thanks Rick and Wanda. Annual meeting agenda: Duane is putting together the annual meeting agenda and needs anything brought forward that needs to be listed. The audit committee will be doing and audit before the annual meeting. Wanda will have everything ready for them.

New Business: None.

Pastor's Report:

- Blayne baptized Philip Murl Haynie this morning, with a good message of "Come and See".
- Blayne is preparing for Lenten Services.
- Blayne purchased a new device to make our sound system work better.

Next meeting, February 15th at 10:00 a.m. with Zoom offered for those who can't make it to the church.

Newsletter items are due by the 20th of each month!

The meeting was adjourned at 11:30 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Denise Haynie



Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a
new creation; old things have passed
away; behold, all things have become new.

~ 2 Corinthians 5:17



New Hope Lutheran Church
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