



A Season of Change, A God Who Never Changes

Dear Hope Family,

September has always felt like a month of transition. Here in southern Michigan, we begin to notice the changes all around us. The days are getting a little shorter. The evenings become cooler. Before long, the green leaves will begin turning brilliant shades of red, orange, and gold. Children are returning to school, summer schedules are winding down, and many of us are settling back into familiar routines. There is something beautiful about the changing seasons. They remind us that life is constantly moving forward. Yet in a world where so much changes, Scripture gives us this wonderful promise:

"Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever." Hebrews 13:8

What comforting words! Our circumstances change. Our communities change. Our families change. Churches experience change. We ourselves change as the years pass. But **Jesus Christ does not change.** His love remains. His grace remains. His promises remain. His invitation to follow Him remains.

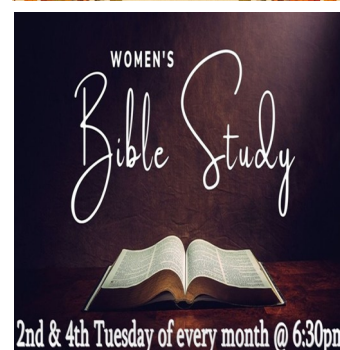
Growing in Grace As Global Methodists, we stand in the Wesleyan tradition with a strong emphasis on the transforming grace of God. John Wesley understood that the Christian life isn't simply about making a decision for Christ and then remaining where we are. God desires to continually work within us. God's grace meets us before we even recognize our need for Him. His grace brings us to repentance and faith in Jesus Christ. And His sanctifying grace continues working in us, shaping our hearts and lives so that we increasingly reflect the character of Jesus. In other words, **God loves us enough to meet us where we are, but He also loves us too much to leave us there.** That means change can be a very good thing when God is the One changing us.

Paul writes: **"Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind." Romans 12:2**

That's the kind of change I pray for at Hope of Edwardsburg. I pray that we become more like Jesus. I pray that our love for God grows deeper. I pray that our knowledge of Scripture becomes stronger. I pray that our compassion for our neighbors becomes greater. I pray that we become increasingly willing to share the good news of Jesus with people who desperately need hope.

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DID YOU KNOW? The August 23 Community Picnic at Hope drew over 100 people from several churches including Edwardsburg Seventh Day Adventist, Morris Chapel, Edwardsburg Presbyterian.



CROP WALK
Sunday, October 4

member spotlight

September's Member Spotlight focuses on Cheryl and Gary Atwater. Cheryl, youngest of a family of five (she has 2 brothers and 2 sisters) spent her early years in Massachusetts. As a teenager she moved with her parents to Florida where she graduated high school and moved on to college at Florida State in Tallahassee. That's where she met her previous husband who was from Michigan.



The young couple moved to Michigan where they owned and operated the Italian Connection restaurant in Bridgman for four years. Cheryl then moved on to several new occupations, as well as a new location in the Michiana area. She has worked as a real estate photographer, administrative assistant for the Edwardsburg Chamber of Commerce, commercial office designer, and kitchen designer for Lowe's and Menard's.

Gary is a life-long Michiana resident growing up on a farm west of LaGrange IN with 3 brothers and 3 sisters. After graduation from Westview High School he took a summer job with General Telephone in Elkhart. After a brief stint at IUSB Gary returned to the world of telephones, instrumental in setting up the 911 emergency centers in Northern Indiana, retiring from Frontier Telephone in 2012. Gary established communications set up for several visiting Presidents. That retirement didn't last long – Gary went to work at Menard's in 2018.

The next generation consists of 2 sons (Cheryl and Gary each have a son) as well as Gary's daughter, 2 step-daughters, 5 grandchildren and 2 great grandsons. Three of the grandchildren are in colleges in Michigan.

You've noticed that both Cheryl and Gary worked at Menard's and that brings us to the rest of the story. Gary's wife passed away in 2019; Cheryl had divorced 20 years ago. A mutual friend had been praying for Cheryl to find a soulmate. Gary says, "You can find anything at Menard's" and that's where he found Cheryl.

Cheryl's church background is varied – it includes a nondenominational church, a Presbyterian, Church of Christ, Baptist and Hope. Gary attended a Church of God and a Lutheran Church in the past. Cheryl's friend who brought her to Hope started a chain reaction. Cheryl met Pastor Rob; she introduced Gary to Pastor Rob; Gary felt appreciation and connection with Rob's preaching and teaching and Pastor Rob officiated at their wedding in August of 2022. They attended Rob's church, New Journey in Niles, and followed him when he was called to Hope.

Cheryl and Gary have become active members of Hope regularly providing coffee fellowship and helping with many church housekeeping and maintenance projects. That Menard's connection has resulted in blessings for Cheryl, Gary and Hope!

DID YOU KNOW?

Seventeen Way Finders welcomed Julie Stack and Jan Pollitt to their August meeting. Next meeting will be at Copper Creek on Friday, September 18 at 11:30. Donated item will be dryer sheets. More info? See Dee VandeVeire or Ann Gustafson.



HEATHER & CHRIS MORGAN	9/07
LYDIA & JACK GOULD	9/12
RHODA & DON WESTFALL	9/13
AMBER & CLANCY MILLER	9/17
SANDY & LARRY ACKELS	9/26
KACEY & JOSH FENNER	9/29



AMY HARRIS	9/03
SADIE BENTZER	9/05
SONNY MEADOWS	9/05
EMERY GORDON	9/06
MICHELE BARNHART	9/06
JIM RALPH	9/11
DALE WESTFALL	9/11
DON WESTFALL	9/11
RYAN ACKELS	9/12
SHIRLEY ANDREWS	9/12
WYATT BENTZER	9/12
RHODA WESTFALL	9/13
ED GARDNER	9/16
LAURA BLOUGH	9/17
HARRY STEMPLER	9/18
JAMESON FENNER	9/18
MARK WERNER	9/19
BRYNNLEIGH GINERIS	9/20
BILL FAHEY	9/21
DON SOALES	9/21
JILL BLOUGH	9/24
LILLIANA GINERIS	9/27
ROBIN ENGLISH	9/28
KATIE HENDRICKS	9/29

**Visitor Reach,** at

its heart, is a recruitment tool that allows churches to more effectively leverage the modern online environment in an effort to connect more people with the church. This works by focusing our efforts to attract new members via the web on our geographical region.

By making initial connections, and then serving as a communication platform whereby we can build on those initial connections in a more personal fashion, Visitor Reach serves as a unique approach to growing our congregation.

However, in my experience, Visitor Reach has become a point of ministry for Hope in and of itself. This is because the platform gives us a link to our community that goes beyond simply recruiting new members. It allows us to identify those in our community who may never set foot in our church, but are still in desperate need of spiritual and physical help.

Overall, I believe that our use of Visitor Reach has given us the opportunity to share God's love with people who would have been difficult, if not impossible, to reach otherwise.

Douglas J. Schauer



SEPTEMBER 7, 2026



Messy Church is open to families of all shapes and sizes, and folks of all ages!

Come join in on the fun!

Sunday, September 27th 5-7pm!



On September 14
MONDAY NIGHT BIBLE STUDY
 will begin a new study,
You Belong, by Candace Payne.
 More info?
 Bonnie Morgan 574-847-4479
 Or see Laura Proctor

Hope's Prayer Shawl Ministry

was started several years ago by Judy Christner. The ministry gifted shawls to new mothers, those undergoing medical treatments, those suffering loss, those who are weary, suffering, in pain. The ministry lapsed because of Judy's death and the Covid pandemic. Jackie Boone has been moved to bring the shawl ministry into being once again. For more information call the Hope office (269-663-5321) or Jackie Boone (269-663-8238).

PRAYER SHAWL MINISTRY
*3rd Thursday of every
 month*



10AM Reese Hall



**As Hunger, Disease, and
 Disasters Climb
 Church World Service
 Responds
 In the U.S. and Around
 the World**



Across the world **Church World Services** (CWS) is battling challenges facing people today: hunger, poverty, disasters, and displacement (refugees). Area church leaders are inviting all Cass County residents to join that battle by supporting the 38th annual **CROP Walk** being held **Sunday, October 4th** at 2:00 p.m. at the Council on Aging pavilion and walking track in Cassopolis.

Natural disasters are in the news now more than ever, including wildfires, drought, hurricanes, and flooding. Across five continents, CWS is addressing immediate needs like shelter and warmth, clean water supplies, and buckets of cleaning or hygiene products. In the United States, CWS has helped over 62,000 people in recent disasters.

Food is a critical part of CWS work. To begin with, 25% of funds raised in the CROP Walk will go to five food pantries serving communities in **Cass County**, many of them feeding two hundred families monthly. In countries around the world, CWS works with communities to develop sustainable food practices, such as planting gardens and building greenhouses, that not only feed people, but provide products to sell at local markets. Another important program is WASH, supplying people with clean water, sanitation, and hygiene to prevent disease. CWS continues to provide refuge support here and abroad.

The theme for this year's walk is seeds, since they are the beginning of most food sources. You are invited to join in the **CROP WALK** knowing whatever funds you bring will be well spent. There is no requirement for walking a distance. Walkers find comradery and shared purpose in meeting the needs of neighbors near and far, not to mention the fun and informative activities planned. For further information, contact the Edwardsburg Presbyterian Church at 269-663-6815 or Shirley Andrews 269-228-1161.

DID YOU KNOW?

Hope has reached 400+ individuals and 14 families have visited church through our use of Visitor Reach!



Faith and works are like the light and heat of a candle; they cannot be separated.

—Joseph Beaumont

FINANCES

CURRENT HOPE FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Month of July Ministry Fund Summary

Ministry Fund Donations: \$ 11,339.62

Ministry Fund Expenses: \$-19,171.63

Shortfall for the Month: \$ -7832.01

Year to date shortfall = \$ -26,088.29

Monthly Budget amount: \$ 18,541.92

All July bills have been paid. Our Ministry Fund balance is \$72,358.53.

Thank you for your continued support!

July Mortgage & Mission Fund Allocation

\$ 132.72 Missions

\$ 962.80 Parsonage Mortgage

\$ 231.68 Capital Improvements

\$ 1,327.20 Total Donations

Mortgage & Mission Monthly Budget amount: \$3,481.25

Mortgage balance after payment due July 1 is \$184,534.63



HOPE OF EDWARDSBURG COOKBOOK

Please submit your recipes (s)cards are available in Reese Hall in the table under the clock. Please put your name on the card along with your recipe and then place in the binder on the table. When we get enough submissions we will try to get this long overdue cookbook published.!



September 2026

7 – Labor Day

11 – Patriot Day

October 2026

4 - Crop Walk

Trunk or Treat

November 2026

Thanksgiving Basket

Packing / Distribution

26 – Thanksgiving

December 2026

Stuff A Bus

Christmas Basket

Packing / Distribution

24 – Christmas Eve

25 – Christmas Day



Pastor, continued

Our Community Is Our Mission Field

As we move into the fall, I want us to remember that God has placed Hope of Edwardsburg in this community for a reason. Our mission field isn't somewhere far away.

It begins right outside our doors.

There are people around us who are lonely. There are families struggling. There are people carrying burdens we know nothing about. There are people who haven't been inside a church for years. Some have been hurt by the church. Others simply don't believe church has anything meaningful to offer their lives. But every one of them matters to Jesus. And if they matter to Jesus, **they must matter to us.**

Sometimes evangelism begins with something very simple: an invitation. "Would you like to come to church with me?" Those few words could change someone's life.

This September, I challenge each of us to think of **one person** we can pray for, encourage, and invite to Hope. Don't worry about having all the right words. You don't need to be a theologian. You don't need to know the answer to every question. Simply tell people what Jesus means to you and invite them to come and see.

A New Season at Hope

As the leaves begin changing this fall, perhaps we should ask God to show us what He wants to change in us. Maybe there is something we need to surrender. Maybe there is someone we need to forgive. Maybe our prayer life needs to be renewed. Maybe our Bible needs to be opened more often. Maybe God has been calling us to serve, and we have been putting it off. Or maybe there is someone in our life who needs to hear about Jesus, and God is asking us to be the person who reaches out. Whatever it may be, my prayer is simple:

"Lord, begin with me."

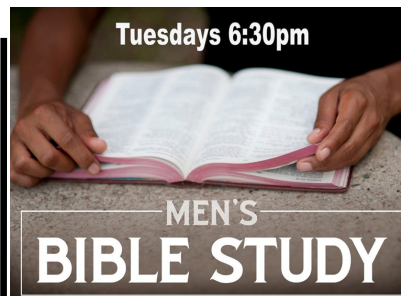
Before we ask God to change our church, our community, or our world, let us allow the Holy Spirit to change our own hearts. The seasons will continue to change. The leaves will fall. Winter will eventually come. Another year will pass. But through every season, we have an anchor that never moves:

Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever.

So let us enter this new season with confidence. Let us worship faithfully, pray boldly, serve joyfully, love generously, and share Jesus freely.

And may Hope of Edwardsburg continue to be exactly what our name says, a place where people discover the **Hope that is found in Jesus Christ.**

Grace and peace, **Pastor Rob**



Meijer helps Edwardsburg Food Pantry (EFP)

Meijer is collecting donations for their Simply Give program to assist area food pantries.

All pantry donations made from now until September 26th at the Meijer Grape Rd. store will go directly to the Edwardsburg Food Pantry.

Meijer will **DOUBLE** Match all donations made on Saturday, September 12th.

Pick up a square "Simply Give Card" located near the cash registers, or pick one up on the table in the back of the church, and let the cashier know how much you want to give to the pantry. At the end of the campaign, Meijer will give the EFP gift cards to use to restock the shelves of their food pantry.

Meijer is tracking the donation cards that come from the churches. Please let them know where you got the card when you check out.

On the first Sunday in October an annual **CROP Walk** is held in Cass County to support food programs offered by Church World Services (CWS).

Last year Christians from 13 churches in the county were able to raise over \$19,000; 25% of funds were distributed to pantries in the county. The rest of the funds support state, federal, and international programs aimed to provide sustainable food, clean water, support to refugees, and other programs. We are praying that this year's "harvest" will be even greater as food insecurity is on the rise here and across the world.

September 2026

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1 Office Hours 9am-12pm 6:00pm Reservation Reese Hall 6:30pm Men's Bible Study	2 Office Hours 9am-12pm 5:30pm Band Practice 5:30pm	3 Office Hours 9am-12pm 9:00am Ship Shape for Christ Exercise	4 6:00pm Euchre Night 6-8pm Reese Hall	5
6 8:30am & 10:30am Service	7 Labor Day office closed 9:00am Ship Shape for Christ Exercise 6:30pm Women's Monday Bible Study	8 Office Hours 9am-12pm 6:30pm Women's Tuesday Bible Study 6:30pm Men's Bible Study	9 Office Hours 9am-12pm 5:30pm Band Practice 5:30pm 6:30pm Leadership Team Meeting	10 Office Hours 9am-12pm 9:00am Ship Shape for Christ Exercise	11	12
13 8:30am & 10:30am Service	14 Office Hours 9am-12pm 9:00am Ship Shape for Christ Exercise 6:30pm Women's Monday Bible Study	15 Office Hours 9am-12pm 6:30pm Men's Bible Study	16 Office Hours 9am-12pm 5:30pm Band Practice 5:30pm	17 Office Hours 9am-12pm 9:00am Ship Shape for Christ Exercise 10:00am Prayer Shawl Ministry	18	19
20 8:30am & 10:30am Service	21 Office Hours 9am-12pm 9:00am Ship Shape for Christ Exercise 6:30pm Women's Monday Bible Study	22 Office Hours 9am-12pm 6:30pm Men's Bible Study 6:30pm Women's Tuesday Bible Study	23 Office Hours 9am-12pm 5:30pm Band Practice 5:30pm	24 Office Hours 9am-12pm 9:00am Ship Shape for Christ Exercise	25	26
27 8:30am & 10:30am Service 5:00pm Messy Church 5-7pm	28 Office Hours 9am-12pm 9:00am Ship Shape for Christ Exercise 6:30pm Women's Monday Bible Study	29 Office Hours 9am-12pm 6:30pm Men's Bible Study	30 Office Hours 9am-12pm 5:30pm Band Practice 5:30pm			