



LUTHERAN CHURCH

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA)



Welcome to River of Hope.

Our purpose for being a church is to see how the love lived through Jesus absolutely changes lives. It looks so normal some days and other days, not so much.

I'm so glad you found this community and hope you are curious about who we are and who God is shaping us to be through meeting you. Who knows, maybe you'll find yourself caught up in the future of River of Hope. God is good at bringing people together.

[Worship]

Sundays at 10:30 am

**Hutchinson Event
Center
1005 Hwy 15 S
Hutchinson, MN**

[Staff]

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[Office]

Mon -Thurs 9-Noon

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FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

River of Hope Lutheran Church

How do I join? Just keep showing up! There is a small group that is just for newcomers. Mark on the Connection Card that you want to join. Bring your questions and your whole life. You don't have to pass a test. It's a process of relationship building where you are free to say, "Yes, I'm staying" or "No, I'm leaving" at any time.



Is there a church council? There is a Vision Table and a River Table that guide the heart, mind, and vision of River of Hope. River Table leaders are elected. The Vision Table is whoever wants to serve. Requirements? Passion for the work. Commitment to read scripture, your financial support, your active participation in the life of River of Hope.



Isn't this the gay church? I'm glad you asked. Of course we are. But

then we're also the teacher church and the young family church and the professional church and the blue collar church. See where this is going? It just so happened that River of Hope's beginning in 2010 made a splash when we openly welcomed LGBTQ people. But splashes are common place in a river. We do our best to seek out and welcome all people that God loves, including you.



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What committee are you gonna stick me on when I join? Nope. Not gonna do it. We have Tables that are self-generating and self-sustaining. That means you must have a passion to serve, be willing to grow into reading scripture, financial giving, and be an active participant in the life of River of Hope.

What's a River Team? Well, that is one group we're gonna stick you on. :) It takes a committed group of hands and voices to make worship happen each week. Your river team will be up for doing that a few times each year. Make it a priority on your calendar. Help give voice and muscle to worship. We need introverts, extroverts, newbies and oldbies. Ultimately, you get to help clearly show God's love to those who might not have a clue about it.

You don't have Sunday School?

No. We do have GIFT (Generations in Faith Together) worship. That means we practice intergenerational worship with intentional teaching and learning for all age groups. Sort of a learn-by-doing approach. We believe that children of all ages help to lead worship and learn stories from the Bible and language for God by being participants in worship.

The most important place for a child's faith to grow? The home.

But don't worry - you are not alone! You have permission and even the authority (Yes, you!) to live out your faith with your kids. We are committed to giving you tools of faith to bring home and practice together.

A classroom simply cannot replace a life of faith in the act of being lived out. We'll walk with you in this. Pastor Janine is always available for conversation. Seriously. Call her.



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What is worship like? We call it G.I.F.T: Generations in Faith Together. We are committed and defined by engaging and interactive worship for all ages that communicates a clear message of God's love for you and for all. Worship at River of Hope is a safe place to practice a dangerous Gospel. Sometimes you'll be asked to talk to someone next to you or to participate in a way that gets you out of your seat. It can be downright awkward. Nothing is ever mandatory and participation is never meant to embarrass. We take seriously the notion that worship is practice for after we leave and go out into our daily lives. Practicing language and actions in worship prepares you for living your faith.

Worship also changes with whatever season we're in. So for 4-6 weeks, worship will be one particular way. Then the next 4-6 weeks will be another particular way. You'll learn to recognize things and you'll see patterns. Some of the seasons you'll love. Some of the seasons you won't love. This is what it means to be in community together – it's not about style or personal preference, it's about community.

Worship is a powerful gathering of regular people like you and me that is for the glory of God and in service to the neighbor, the stranger, the person who doesn't know God's love. If you're on board with that, then worship is definitely going to feel dangerous.

What's with the meeting new people thing? Every church swears they are friendly & welcoming. But when you're new, all bets are off. We cannot afford to be afraid of each other. We belong to each other. Make the first awkward move.



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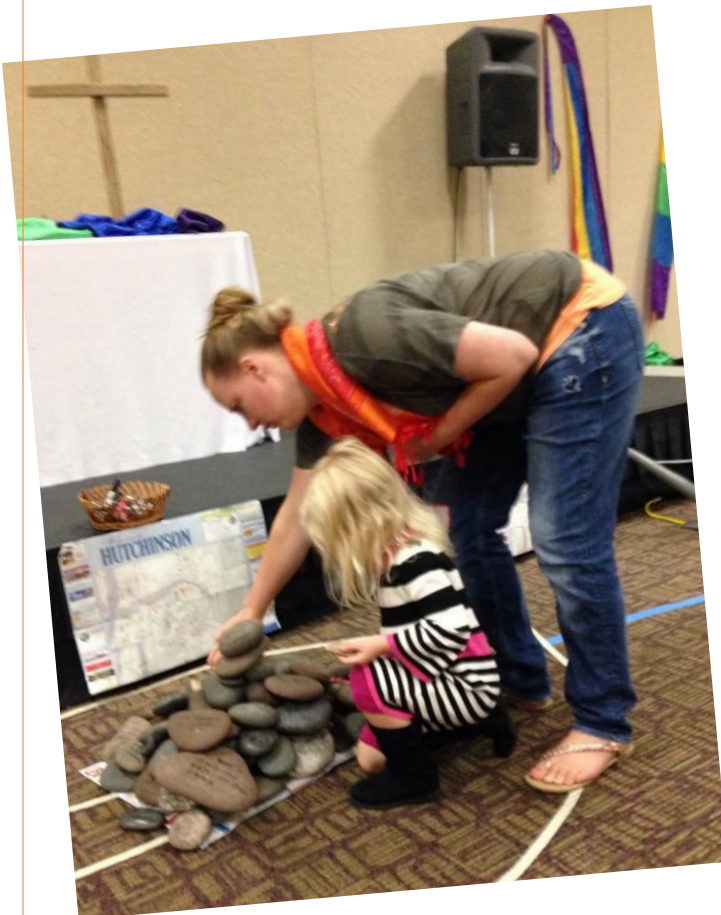


What's with the root beer floats?

We believe (and have seen) that hope floats. So we show up at community events and hand out root beer floats, telling people they are loved. No strings attached. In a world that is suspect of anything free, wondering where the catch is, it's refreshing to smile and say, "This is for you. It's free" and to mean it.



Is there a youth group? Yes. There are some pretty great adults in the congregation who love kids and will periodically organize an outing or a grouping for 6th-12th grades. 7th, 8th, and 9th grades each participate in a different summer activity together.



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Is there a choir? Yes. It's an Instant Choir – just add people. There is one for youth and one for adults. You'll hear about it a few weeks before it happens. The morning of the Sunday you'll sing, the choir will show up early to practice and then sing it the same day in worship. It is a gift to worship and Jim Nelson, our Worship and Music Curator is just the guy to pull it all together.



What is confirmation like? Confirmation is for youth in grades 7, 8 and 9 resulting in a fall of 10th grade confirmation celebration. That being said, any adult at any time can confirm their faith (reaffirmation of baptism) since faith is a life long thing.

Confirmation is about relationship: Once a month, confirmation kids and their adult mentors all meet together, are taught by Pastor Janine, and have small group or one-on-one time together to chew on scripture and life and where they intersect.

Confirmation is about worship: Confirmation youth and their families are encouraged to attend worship at least once a month.

Confirmation is about spiritual growth: Confirmation youth and their parents are part of a Discipleship Group that meets once a month and reads the Bible together. 7th, 8th and 9th graders take separate summer trips.

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Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

What's the ELCA? The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. Bishop Elizabeth Eaton is the church-wide Bishop. Locally, there are synods – 6 in Minnesota which is a lot because, well, of all the Lutherans. We are part of the Southwestern Minnesota Synod and our bishop is Bishop Jon Anderson. The synod offers guidance and resources to each ELCA church, yet we are given the freedom to live and move and have our being in our own particular way, specific to our context. It's freedom in Christ lives out, church by church. It's a big tent.



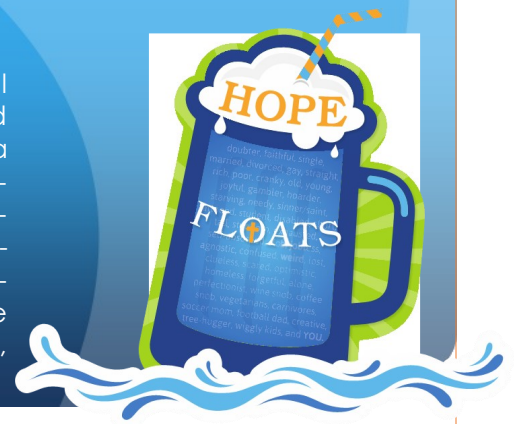
When are you going to build?

Never say never, right? We don't have interest in constructing or owning a building which ties up precious resources (leaky roof! broken furnace! shoveled walks! new carpet!) and furthers a club (insider) mentality. Maybe we'll build a community center. We're interested in showing love to Hutchinson, so maybe we'll end up having a home that is also a home or a place of use for many others, not just us.

Why do you need my money? Sometimes people think churches are supported by some other shadow entity. As Christians, we believe all we have is from God. Giving financial gifts to River of Hope is one way to practice giving thanks to God. Your financial support pays for Pastor Janine Olson, Jim Nelson, part time Worship and Music Curator, and Emily Heilman, our part time Administrative Assistant. That's nearly 80% of what our financial gifts support. They also go for our worship space and our office space. We tithe (give 10%) back to the Southwestern Minnesota Synod (See "What is the ELCA" question for more information) and we also support another new congregation, House of Grace in Montrose, Minnesota. The short answer? The goal is to give your money away to give life to others.

River of Hope Lutheran Church

We are the ELCA church in town. We are a purposely intergenerational community who is following Jesus out of the building and into the world where we live. We are learners (disciples) and practice-ers. Worship is a safe place to practice a dangerous gospel. And, believe us, it takes practice. Your questions, critical thinking, doubts and imperfect lives are welcome here. In fact, no matter your status in society (divorced, never-been-to-church, gay, straight, old, young, cranky, liberal, conservative, questioning, allergic-to-church, snarky) you'll be welcomed here. Then you'll be sent out, to live your life, transformed by Jesus Christ. And we believe, through the love of Jesus, you'll help to transform other lives.



Our purpose as a church:

We go out to transform lives through Jesus Christ.

Our Guiding Principles:

(Disciple = learner)

God is God and we are not.

We are called to grow together as disciples: to forgive, to teach, to love.

Disciples are inspired by the Holy Spirit to take risks.

Disciples seek God's justice.

Disciples serve with no strings attached.

Disciples invite and welcome through loving acceptance.

We meet you where you are.



**IF YOU KEEP UP WITH BRANDS,
THEN YOU SHOULD KNOW WE
ARE PART OF THE
EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN
CHURCH IN AMERICA (ELCA).
WE'RE PRETTY PLEASED ABOUT
THIS.**