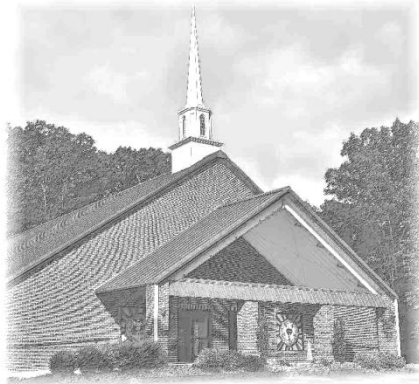


Hope Lutheran Church

ANNUAL REPORT
2018



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*"Making Christ known through reaching, welcoming,
praising, equipping, and sending"*

2018 Annual Report of the Congregation Council

What an exciting and humbling experience this past year has been for me. I have been involved in the Lutheran Church since birth, in many capacities, but never as President. In this position I have had the opportunity to see the blessings of an entire congregation. When there is a need it is filled, be it financial, spiritual, physical or emotional. It has been a year of excitement, change and sadness.

Moments worthy of note include: *SpringFling* was a huge success; young members were helped with camp tuition; our seminarian was assisted with funds for health insurance; we shared fellowship with folks from Good Samaritan Catholic Church; segments of our Long Range Plan are up and running; we have our new Church Directory; support for our many community activities prospers; we are planning and have financing for several much needed maintenance issues for this beautiful facility and we have accepted into our family new members.

After much thought and discussion, it was decided, after more than 20 years, to no longer participate in the annual Apple Festival. To replace this loss of revenue for the Food Pantry (which was diminishing each year) we are planning an *OctoberFest*, which promises much fun and good food. We have had staff changes and new hires.

We have been saddened by the loss of beloved members. Some have died and are now with our Lord. Others have moved due to health issues, etc. Through these trying times, members have been there to support the grieving and hurting.

Thank you for the opportunity to work with this wonderful Council – they are a joy! And for the leadership of Pastor Dave. It is an honor and blessing to be a member of Hope Lutheran Church.

God has greatly blessed us. We continue to grow and thrive. God's Work, Our Hands.

Respectfully Submitted,

Sylvia Negri,
Congregational President

Joe Waid, Vice President
Emma Claire Fakier, Secretary
Rudy Kruger, Treasurer
Jerry Below, Property
Pastor Dave Smedley

Jim Beno
Sue Marler
Jaymie Pierce
Frank Quido
Mary Young

2018 Annual Report of the Pastor

Searching around for a word to best describe 2018 for me in our life together here at Hope Church, I come up with this one – transitional. I choose this word for several reasons.

It's the first year out of the gate since we adopted our new long range plan at the end of 2017. In recent weeks we've had significant turnover in our staff – Laura Rogne has retired after 18 years, Noah May has moved on to a full-time position in Atlanta, Sarah Harbin is serving as interim choir director in addition to her duties as accompanist, and Jeannine Sieck is taking over the custodial duties that Nancy and Butch Hinton have performed so faithfully and well for the past many years.

In the past year, we've had several long-time member families move away as they've made housing choices that were more conducive to their needs as they've grown older. We've had to say goodbye to dear members who have died during the year. And young people who have been more numerous in years past are either now grown up and moved on or have become more scarce.

In the coming year we will no longer participate with our booth at the Georgia Apple Festival after our many years of participation.

And maybe the most notable observation I can make is that our congregation is growing older – or as Jim Beno would put it – we're becoming more mature!

Which isn't a bad thing at all – it's just different and is presenting different and new challenges as we look into the future.

Our worship life continues to be faithful and vibrant; new ministries are starting; needed maintenance work in our sanctuary and around our property will soon begin; new members are joining with us; willing leaders continue to step up in the congregation; our financial support continues to be faithful and strong; our fellowship opportunities remain varied and inviting; we have a new pictorial directory; and, our commitment to the larger community remains unabated and strong!

As I look to the coming year, I'm pleased to note that our proposed financial budget has taken into account the different challenges some of the transitions mentioned above have presented us with. Primarily, our income is projected to be about the same as last year but our expenses have been adjusted so it is anticipated we will end our next fiscal year in the black.

In spite of the fact that our mortgage interest rate will increase by $\frac{1}{2}$ of one percent for the next term (we're on a 5-year ARM), because we've been able to pay down our principal amount owed by a healthy \$50,000 in the last five years, our monthly payment will only increase by a modest \$22 as we look to the next five years. In addition, we will continue to pay extra money each month to speed up the paying down of the principal owed.

Hope Lutheran Church – I've been told – is one of the Mission Investment Fund's very best customers! Over all the years we've had our mortgage with them we've never missed or been late with a payment, and we've never asked for special consideration because our finances have been squeezed. Apparently we're a rarity among ELCA congregations in this regard.

As I look to Hope's future then, the possibilities for meaningful and faithful ministry seem limitless and continue to excite me.

After years of going back and forth in our conversations here at Hope Church, however, about the lack of young families here, I've come to the conclusion that several things need to be discussed candidly if we are to come to a good resolution of that discussion.

In my early years here at Hope, we seemed to be moving in a positive direction in terms of the goodly number of younger families that were joining with us. Ten years ago, however, when the economy turned so badly with the recession, it seemed like the local pool of young families became more scarce. Many – I think – moved away because of the lack of employment opportunities locally.

In the meantime, it seems like fewer and fewer young families are making affiliation with church communities a priority in their lives. I'm hearing this from pastor friends of mine around the country and from all denominations who are lamenting the dearth of young families these days which are coming into their congregations.

In addition, Ellijay and Jasper are becoming more and more known in the Atlanta metropolitan area as "retirement communities." The implication in this last mention is obvious.

Also, while there are several congregations in both Ellijay and Jasper that have strong youth and family-oriented ministries – Hope Lutheran Church isn't one of them. These all are larger congregations that are blessed to have the staffing, the facilities and the financial resources needed to be able to do such ministry effectively well. That Hope Lutheran Church will join their ranks any time soon? Does not seem likely.

Hope, however, is a congregation that has been blessed in many ways to be a powerful and faithful witness for Christ in our community for its more mature residents.

So, it seems to me – in this moment – considering that the need for our ministry is primarily among the more mature people in these retirement communities? It seems that we need to press on – "full-steam ahead" – and faithfully plan and execute our worship life and programs in ways that will best serve this older demographic.

I'm going to be forming a evangelism team in the coming months here at Hope that will help guide and focus us in strengthening our existing ministries and in helping us develop new ones.

There is much GOOD work for us to do. The future is bright for us here at Hope Church. We continue to be faithful as God's people!

The New Year is waiting!

Faithfully submitted,

Pastor David Smedley

2018 Year-Ending Membership Report

Members Received – 09/01/17 – 08/31/18	
By baptism	4
By affirmation of faith	6
By transfer from ELCA congregations	2
By transfer – other Lutheran congregations	0
From non-Lutheran congregations	2
Total members received this year	14
 Baptized youth confirmed this year	 2
 Members removed – 09/01/17 – 08/31/18	
By death	5
For other reasons	9
Total members removed this year	14
 Membership at 8/31/18	 193
Average weekly worship at 09/01/17	117
Average weekly worship at 08/31/18	114
Net percentage increase/decrease	-2.5 %

2018 Annual Report of the Treasurer

Many thanks go out to Ellen Ottinger, Jaymie Pierce, Micky Northrup and Jan Austin for all the work they do to prepare the financial reports. Thank you for all your support and help.

Ellen Ottinger especially keeps me on track, and is a wonderful source for information as to what is going on at the church.

Without the good help of the finance committee, our annual budget would not be complete. Steve Austin, Chris Cleberg, and Pastor Dave Smedley work hard to complete our budget so the church can run smoothly.

Also, my thanks go out to the volunteers who weekly count and record our contributions. Their work is a blessing to our church.

It is a pleasure and an honor to be part of our congregation council. Sylvia Negri has done a great job this year leading us as president. The council under her leadership has worked well to keep things running smoothly and efficiently. We are blessed at Hope to have such an effective and conscientious team.

Our regular offerings have stayed slightly ahead of budget throughout the year. Our offerings received for the mortgage have fallen below projections by about \$1300 for the year. The total we owe on our mortgage at fiscal year's end stands at about \$289,000.

Starting this September, our mortgage payment – which is a 25-year note on a 5-year ARM – will go up \$22 to \$1833 a month. Our new interest rate is 4.65%. We will continue making our additional principal payment each month of \$417 to speed up the paying off of our loan.

The challenge we've faced in the past several years is either the number of people who have supported the church who have moved away as they've gotten older, or folks who have died. Because of this limiting factor, the budget and finance team have projected regular income to come in at virtually the same level as was budgeted for last year. Several things that will help on the coming year's expense side are the lowering of some of our staff expenses due to retirement, staff changes and a lowering of the pastor's medical premium cost.

In the coming year, some major repair/maintenance projects are planned for the church: the re-upholstering of the pews in the sanctuary, the placement of a permanent floor covering for our kitchen, repair of several of our HVAC units and the sealing and striping of our parking lot. The good news is that generous families have already stepped up and given the money to do all this work.

Many thanks to Pastor Dave and all the staff for the blessed work they do for our congregation.

Respectfully submitted,

Rudy Kruger
Treasurer

2018 Financial Reports

The following End-of-Year financial reports will be filed as an Addendum to this Annual Report and presented at the Annual Meeting:

FY 2018 Balance Sheet
as of August 31, 2018

FY 2018 Profit & Loss Budget vs. Actual
September 2017 through August 2018

Proposed Budget FY 2018

Ordinary Income/Expense

Income

4010 · Regular Offerings	181,200.00
4025 · Columbarium Income	1,000.00
4066 · Offerings for Mortgage Pmt	21,996.00
Total Income	\$ 204,196.00
Gross Profit	\$ 204,196.00

Expenses

7010 · Advertising Expense	500.00
7040 · Mission Support ELCA	13,200.00
7110 · Pastor's Compensation	
7110 - Compensation	66,036.00
7112 - Pastor's Retirement	7,900.00
7125 - Pastor's Medical Expense	13,720.00
Total 7110 · Pastor's Compensation	\$ 87,656.00
7120 · Pastor's Auto Reimbursement	7,500.00
7130 · Choir Director's Compensation	7,308.00
7131 · Accompanist	7,308.00
7150 · Secretarial Services	13,400.00
7151 · Hope FICA Contribution Expense	2,600.00
7190 · Cleaning Services	6,100.00
7210 · Debt Service - Interest	12,500.00
7220 · Building & Grounds Maintenance	
7221 - Grounds Maintenance	1,000.00
7222 - Building Maintenance	3,500.00
Total 7220 · Building & Grounds Maintenance	\$ 4,500.00
7230 · Utilities	10,000.00
7240 · Insurance	6,500.00
7335 · Office Supplies	4,000.00
7340 · Telephone	1,100.00
7341 · Internet Access	660.00
7345 · Postage	200.00
7350 · Security Monitoring	348.00
7510 · Conferences	1,000.00
7610 · Dues & Subscriptions	220.00
7650 · Education	1,000.00
7690 · Fellowship	3,500.00
7691 · Sonshine Committee	600.00
7695 · Youth Activities Expense	600.00
7700 · Flowers & Altar Supplies	750.00
7720 · Community Outreach	2,400.00
7750 · Music	1,000.00
7760 · Quilting Group	600.00
7860 · Visiting Pastors	1,000.00
7870 · Worship	2,000.00
Total Expense	\$ 200,050.00
Net Ordinary Income	\$ 4,146.00

Other Income/Expense**Other Income****4056 · Youth Activities Income**

4057 · Youth Scholarship Income	6500.00	
4056 · Youth Activities Income - Other	00.00	
Total 4056 · Youth Activities Income		\$ 6,500

4120 · Designated Gifts

4081 - Benevolent Fund Income	500.00	
4110 - Memorials	500.00	
4121 - Food Pantry Gifts	600.00	
4122 - Kids First Gifts	100.00	
4124 - Flowers	750.00	
4126 - Designated Acquisition gifts	400.00	
4131 · Honduras	300.00	
4135 · Shoes for Souls	50.00	
4137 - Seminary Scholarship Gifts	450.00	
4220 - Pastors Discretionary Fund Gifts	600.00	
Total 4120 · Designated Gifts		\$ 4,250.00

8020 – Interest Income

150.00

Total Other Income**\$ 10,900.00****Other Expense**

7020 · Benevolent Expense -Food Pantry	600.00	
7025 · Benevolent Expense - Kids First	100.00	
7026 · Designated Acquisition Disburse	400.00	
7032 · Miscellaneous Expense	300.00	
7050 · Benevolent Expense - Honduras	300.00	
7055 · Benevolent Expense - Shoes for	50.00	
7057 · Seminary Scholarship Expense	450.00	
7550 · Discretionary Fund Disbursement	600.00	
7560 · Designated Benevolences	500.00	
7890 · Youth Scholarship Expense	6,500.00	

Total Other Expense**\$ 9,800.00****Net Other Income****\$ 1,100.00****Net Income****\$ 5,246.00**

2018 Annual Report of the Nominating Committee

Faithfully serving on this year's Nominating Committee were Barbara Bell, Barbara Polk, Jim Beno, Juanita Littleton, Micky Northrup and Pastor Dave Smedley.

There are six council terms expiring September 30, 2018. These terms are currently held by Emma Claire Fakier, Jaymie Pierce, Jerry Below, and Sue Marler who are leaving Council; and Sylvia Negri and Jim Beno who are eligible for re-nomination.

The Nominating Committee nominates the following six members of Hope Lutheran Church for the upcoming two-year terms on the Congregational Council: Wayne Buehler, Juanita Littleton, LeRoy Polk, Amy Freese, Jim Beno and Sylvia Negri.

Each of the nominees was contacted and has expressed his/her willingness to serve on the Congregational Council.

Respectfully Submitted,

The Nominating Committee

2018 Annual Report of the Worship and Music Ministry Team

The Music and Worship ministry has had a wonderful year! In October, we held a special service to commemorate the 500th anniversary of the Reformation. The service included a choral anthem, congregational hymns, and readings dealing with Martin Luther's 5 Sola Statements. In December, we had a special Christmas service full of choral music and congregational hymns. In November, our Music Director and Accompanist, Ellen Ottinger, retired. In January, Sarah Harbin became our new Accompanist. Sarah brought with her years of experience in a small church in Cherokee County, as well as being the Director of Choirs at Gilmer High School. Throughout the year, our string ensemble, *anchored*, and our chime choir, *The Chimes of Hope*, helped lead worship.

Our choir, *The Luther Singers*, currently meets on Wednesday nights at 5:30 PM in the sanctuary. *The Chimes of Hope* meet seasonally. If interested in joining *The Chimes of Hope*, please contact Ellen Ottinger. *anchored* meets in months with five Sundays. If interested in joining *anchored*, please contact Pastor Dave Smedley.

"Sing to the Lord a new song, for he has done marvelous things; his right hand and his holy arm have worked salvation for him. Shout for joy to the Lord, all the earth, burst into jubilant song with music; make music to the Lord with the harp, with the harp and the sound of singing, with trumpets and the blast of the ram's horn—shout for joy before the Lord, the King. Let the sea resound, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it. Let the rivers clap their hands, let the mountains sing together for joy; let them sing before the Lord"

--Psalm 98:1, 4-9a

In His Service,

The Music Ministry Team

2018 Annual Report of the Altar Guild

Our Altar Guild is a wonderful, dedicated, behind-the-scenes group of members. You hardly ever see us in action but I know our efforts are always appreciated!

Some of the duties we perform include: baking and storing bread for communion each Sunday; keeping altar supplies stocked, and linens and paraments clean and ready to use on the altar; preparing the altar and sanctuary for our Sunday and special services; putting together communion trays of wine and bread for our services; making sure our floral displays for the sanctuary and the narthex are fresh and seasonal; keeping our chancel candles filled with oil.

If anyone would like to donate flowers to mark a special occasion or as a memorial, please sign the chart in the narthex. You may also call Ellen Ottinger in the church office or contact any Altar Guild member to make your request. Donors have a choice of bringing your own flowers, or making a contribution to the flower fund and having the Altar Guild obtain fresh flowers for you.

If anyone in the congregation would like to take on the responsibility of arranging and placing flowers for Sunday services, please contact Juanita Littleton.

If you would like to learn more of what we do for the church and join us please call me.

In His service,

Juanita Littleton
Altar Guild Chair

Altar Guild Members

Juanita Littleton: 706-276-1221; cell: 706-273-9605

Jim and Katy Beno: cell: 706-455-1639

June Edgemon: 770-893-1288

Micky Northrup: 706-636-2284; cell: 706-502-4515

2018 Farewell Report of the Minister of Discipleship

My days of service as a member of Hope's staff are through. As memories fade into the past what will be remembered is the joy and privilege given me by our God to join Him in His work here at Hope. Joy to have witnessed and experienced His mighty work through the faith, footsteps, sweat, and love of His people as they faithfully continue *"Making Christ known through reaching, welcoming, praising, equipping, and sending"*.

The Lord has used the people and experiences of Hope to teach me so many things. Who is God? What does he want of me? How do I build a relationship with God? With others? Don't make the mistake of just learning about God; take the time, invest the energy, and make the sacrifice to KNOW HIM not just know that he exists.

It is humbling and a great honor to be part of a congregation which allows the Holy Spirit to guide and direct its steps. The Lord has orchestrated just the right pastor, staff, leaders, and workers and graciously permitted me to be part of that team.

Please know that though I am retired, as with many of you, I am still a member and available to join you in His work.

As the years go by you can add me to that list of endearing, little old, gray haired ladies that loved Hope and loved the Lord.

When all is said and done remember the truth of Jesus' love and your prayers do make a difference.

With love, joy and peace,

Laura J. Rogne,
Minister of Discipleship

2018 Annual Report of the Christian Education Ministry

Adult Sunday school over the past year has been utilizing a variety of DVD study series provided by *SelectLearning* – an educational resource provided by Luther Seminary in Minneapolis. The gift of a large screen TV from Hope's *Quilters, Sewers and Wanna-Have-Funners* has wonderfully enhanced the class' time together.

In addition, Bible Study groups continue to thrive at Hope Church in different settings – some of them off-site during the month and throughout each week – a ladies', two men's groups, a co-ed bible study and a recently added *Gather* discussion group that meets once a month. These groups are open to the community, and some folks from other churches have taken advantage of this invitation.

Our Christian Education Ministry action team is pulling together their ideas and resources, in an effort to determine the growth potential and needs of Hope and the community we serve.

Respectfully submitted,

The Christian Education Team

2018 Annual Report of the Fellowship Ministry

Our monthly game nights and movie nights have been a great success. They will start back up on the second Friday of the month beginning in September.

We opened our doors to Girl Scout Troop 83072 on a number of occasions during the year as they worked on various badges and as they met with girls from sister troops from around the area. They hosted World Thinking Day and contributed a first aid container with various supplies for the Benos to take with them on their trip to Honduras this year.

Hope Church lent one of our Apple Festival tents to the Gilmer High School marching band and color guard for the young people to find shade from the sun during their annual camp this past summer.

Hope's *Sewers, Quilters and Wanna-Have-Funners* have worked hard throughout the year on quilts both for our congregation but also for community needs. They also are planning a quilt to be raffled at the *OctoberFest* luncheon in late October that will benefit the Gilmer Community Food Pantry. In addition, the quilters are working with Judy Harvey in creating new banners for our chancel during Advent, and they are working on new altar arrangements.

A new *Angels of Hope* ministry has started with handcrafted angels being sent to people at Hope and in the larger community as they are recovering from illnesses, surgery or difficult times in their lives. Many thanks to Hope members Judy Harvey and Juanita Littleton and all their wonderful artists who are making such a difference in peoples' lives with this ministry.

The knitting group is working hard on their beautiful prayer shawls and baby blankets.

It's been a great year. We're honored to serve our wonderful and giving people at Hope Lutheran Church. To God be the glory!

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Marler and
The Fellowship Ministry Team

2018 Annual Report of the Wellness Team

This past year, the Wellness Team addressed several medical issues by posting articles in the Anchor. We organized a CPR/AED class and now have two certified members from the early service and six from the late service. Also, the accessories needed for the AED were updated.

Going forward, we would like to receive input from the congregation concerning wellness issues, such as nutrition, aging, exercise, health maintenance, and hygiene. We would like to hear if there is an interest in possibly having speakers, in forming exercise or walking groups, and /or in performing monthly blood pressure checks. So we would like to hear from all of you!

Respectively submitted,

Hope Wellness Team

**2018 Annual Report
of the Youth, Family & Seminarian
Ministry Team**

Pastor Dave had three young people in confirmation class last year. Emma Claire Fakier, Brighton Fakier, and Zachary Bobak affirmed their baptisms on Pentecost Sunday.

Five young people went to camp this past summer.

The congregation did a wonderful job in supporting our scholarship fund raising efforts all year long – this year raising nearly \$6,000 through the Thanksgiving dinner, *SpringFling*, and all the *Lunch-Ins* throughout the year. Your help allowed our young people to go to camp and supported the payment of our seminary student's health insurance cost.

Many thanks to Emma Claire Fakier who served on our congregation council this past year and served as our secretary.

We continue to give thanks to all the folks of Hope who so generously support this important ministry and its fundraising activities throughout the year.

Faithfully submitted,

The Youth, Family & Seminary Ministry Team

2018 Annual Report of the Community Outreach Ministry

This has been the first full year of activity for our newly formed Community Outreach Team. Here is a summary of what we have done, and will be continuing in the coming year.

We held a Diaper Drive/Shower for Safe Choice Pregnancy Center. A Soup/Sandwich Luncheon was held on Jan. 6, 2018. Donations included diaper, diaper bags & baby supplies. A total value of over \$1300.00 was donated to Safe Choice. We are planning this as an annual event.

Starting in October of 2017 we have been volunteering at Cameron Hall Assisted Living, calling Bingo the third Saturday of the month.

We are preparing food/snack bags to be delivered through Meals on Wheels for elderly shut-ins in Gilmer County. Thrivent money was used to purchase items for the bags. Each bag contains Mac 'N Cheese, 2 fruit cups and 4 snacks. Fifty four bags were delivered May 23rd and fifty four more on August 15th. With donations from the congregation and \$200 from church council we have enough to do deliveries in November 2018 and February 2019. We plan to continue to deliver bags quarterly.

We are planning in the near future an information session for the congregation to learn and answer questions about living wills, advance directives for health care and finances, and Power of Attorneys.

Faithfully submitted,

The Community Outreach Team

2018 Annual Report of the Property Team

2017/2018 has been a relatively normal year in comparison with years past. Our main focus is still keeping the church and church grounds looking beautiful and well maintained. We have kept busy performing the typical day-to-day maintenance projects that one would expect with a church of this age and size.

Air-conditioning problems continue to plague this facility. Another unit had a blown capacitor probably due to severe thunderstorms in our area and one unit serving the sanctuary is still waiting parts to replace a coil that was leaking refrigerant. These units will continue to require more and more maintenance every year. It is probably time to consider a systematic replacement of one or two units each year in the coming years.

Three additional fire extinguishers were purchased in March as recommended by the local fire marshal.

Normal in-house maintenance continues as required:

- Replacing light bulbs
- Quarterly water filter replacement

Outsourced contract maintenance continues for:

- Air-conditioning
- Pest Control
- Gutter Cleaning
- Garbage Pick-up

The Congregational Workday was held on May 19th. Many thanks for all who attended and helped out.

Gutters were cleaned in late fall 2017 and need to be scheduled again this fall.

Weed control around the columbarium is a constant battle and we thank Jim Beno for tackling this project.

We replaced the exterior light fixture for the rear door in the basement near the kitchen. We thank Frank Quido for providing the light for this project.

We had to call in a contractor from Blue Ridge to add refrigerant to the large cooler in the kitchen. The smaller refrigerator in the kitchen is no longer working and has been removed. It will be replaced after the new kitchen floor is installed.

Going forward we have several projects on the docket including re-upholstering the pews, sealing and restriping the parking lot, installing flooring in the kitchen and, of course, coming up with a long range plan for the air conditioning units.

Respectfully submitted,

Jerry Below
Property Team Liaison

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THE ANCHOR OF HOPE

Anchored in His Word,
Ministering in His Mountains

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