



*“The purpose of this congregation shall be to seek the honor and glory of God, to carry out His will, to manifest the unity of our faith in Jesus Christ as God and Savior, to spread the kingdom of God and to foster Christian fellowship and love by the preaching of the Word of God, by the administration of the Sacraments, and by the religious instruction of all its members, according to the confessional standard of the Evangelical Lutheran Church.”* New Hope Lutheran Church Constitution, Article II, paragraph 2.

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Those who founded our congregation, with the help of our Synod, adopted this clear and Biblical statement of why we exist and what we are to do. It is helpful at any point in our life as a congregation to reflect on these purposes, but it is especially important that we reflect on them as activities begin anew after the summer.

The statement opens by listing the following five goals for our congregation:

1. Seek the honor and glory of God
2. Carry out [God’s] will
3. Manifest the unity of our faith in Jesus Christ as God and Savior
4. Spread the kingdom of God
5. Foster Christian fellowship

Those are laudable goals for us, and they reflect what Scripture says. However, they alone do not give well-defined details on how these goals are to be met. How are we to spread the kingdom of God? How are we to foster Christian fellowship? We might be tempted to invent our own ways of accomplishing these goals rather than using the means that God has given us. Thus, the purpose statement goes on to explain, in accordance with God’s Word, how we are to pursue the

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forementioned goals. The statement says that we will pursue these goals

1. By the preaching of the Word of God
2. By the administration of the sacraments
3. By the religious instruction of all [our] members

All three of these activities are conducted “according to the confessional standard of the Evangelical Lutheran Church.”

We should notice both the simplicity of this list and that the Word of God is central to the whole list. First, notice that the list of church activities in our purpose statement is very short. There are many programs that people might expect from a church, but there are only a few that are really essential. Our Lord wants us to call sinners to repentance and forgive sins for the sake of Christ’s life, suffering, and death; to baptize in His Triune name; to give out His body and blood for the forgiveness of sins; to teach the Christian faith. Everything else that we do must serve and support these purposes because these are the ways in which God reconciles people to Himself and keeps us alive as Christians.

Second, notice the centrality of the Word of God to all three activities of our congregation (and not just the first activity). The sacraments are given to us by God’s Word. God’s Word of promise is joined to a visible element and is spoken as each sacrament is

administered. In the third activity, the content of “religious instruction” is God’s Word.

I encourage you to consider how you, as a member of our congregation, can support the preaching of the Word, the administration of the Sacraments, and the religious instruction of all members. Besides lending financial support to the proclamation of the Word here, you support the proclamation of the Word by receiving it. Make it your goal to be in worship each week and at a Bible study (on Sunday or on Wednesday) each week this year. Develop the habit of praying and reading a chapter of the Bible every day. You also support the proclamation of the Word by giving that Word to others. Think of one person whom you could invite to Divine Service or Bible study this month. I encourage the head of every household to teach the Christian faith to the rest of his family in the home (If you need some suggestions or guidance for family devotions, please feel free to contact me). By receiving the Word of Christ and rejoicing in the forgiving Word of Christ and speaking that Word of Christ to others, you act as a member of the body of Christ, and you support the proclamation of the Word. Our Lord has great gifts for us in His Word. He makes promises which He will fulfill; He forgives our sins; He grants us eternal life. His Word is the life of every person and the life of our congregation. Thanks be to God that He is the One who gives us life for the sake of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. – Pastor Burfiend

### From the Finance Board:

YTD Income: \$78,053

YTD Expenses: \$80,740

(Income does not include donations toward the mortgage)

