

October 2023 Pastoral Letter

Dear Members and Friends of Hope Community Church Lakeland,

Greetings to you as we enter the week of All Saints Day 2023, a time when we celebrate and remember those who are part of the “great cloud of witnesses” of the Christian Faith. We celebrate and remember those we know and love and those who have guided and shaped the faith through the ages. You and I are part of that story right now. We will also reflect on the Persecuted Church around the world and through history.

We enter an exciting time for us as the church when we celebrate Thanksgiving, Advent and Christmas heading into the New Year of 2024. Thank you for your participation and support of the worship, ministry and mission of this congregation and beyond. We have many opportunities and challenges in front of us. Therefore, we will be having a congregational meeting in early December to update you on where we are as a church, to elect new elders and confirm your call to me as your senior pastor. Here are some highlights of several things coming up for us and ask you to come and be part of what God has in store.

We begin with celebrating **All Saints Sunday and Remembering the Persecuted Church around the world on November 5th** and welcoming our new general executive presbyter Holly Dillon to our services. We will continue in the Psalms through the month of November including our **Thanksgiving Eve Service (6:30pm) on November 22nd. Advent begins on Sunday December 3rd and will conclude on Christmas Eve, which is on a Sunday this year, when we will celebrate the birth of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.**

Please continue in this season of grace, gratitude, giving and thanksgiving to give faithfully to the ministry of Hope Community Church not only in your finances, but in your willingness to meet the great opportunities before us through your time, talent and passion for Christ and His mission through the church and you. We look forward to welcoming our friends back from up north during this season as they continue to show their support even when they are not present. Please continue to pray for Hope Community Church and for one another. There is great strength released in the prayers of God’s people. May we enter this season expecting Jesus Christ to meet us again today as he came 2000 years ago. Our devotional this season from Christianity Today is entitled “The Eternal King Arrives: Journeying through Advent with our Humble and Mighty Savior” which will be available soon!

May the God of Peace bring us peace in these challenging times.

Together in Christ,

Rev. Dr. Bryan Burton Senior Pastor of Hope Community Church Lakeland