



**Ray Of Hope**

***Church Of Our Lord Jesus Christ***

**"My House shall be a house of prayer for All People."**

(Isaiah 56:7)

Founded: 10/31/1983. Now in our Thirty-eighth year of Ministry.

MISSION: Love God, Love your neighbor,  
make disciples of every person everywhere.

(Matthew 22:37-39; Matthew 28:19)

"This is the time we need to shine."

"We are standing in Faith and Expecting Victory."

Veronica Floyd, Moderator

Rev. Br. Shawn F. Benedict, O.S.B, Appointed Pastor

*A very special welcome to our visitors.*

*You are as welcome here as Jesus Christ Himself.*

*Scripture exhorts us: "Welcome one another, then, as Christ welcomed you, for the glory of God" Romans 15:7 (NABRE – 2011)*

Guests are invited to participate in all parts of the worship service as they feel comfortable. We are building a wonderful Christ-centered Community here, and we invite you to share in our joy! After the Worship Service, please join us for a time of refreshments and sharing.

August 29, 2021 22nd Sunday of the Church Year B

Ray Of Hope Church teaches the same Christian faith of ancient ecumenical consensus. St. Vincent of Lerins, a fifth-century monk and theologian, described it as

***"what has been believed always, everywhere, and by all."***

Scripture Readings for this worship event:

**First Reading: Gospel: Mark 7:1-23 NRSV 2<sup>nd</sup> Test. pg. 43**

**Second Reading: Revelation 3:14-22 NRSV 2<sup>nd</sup> Test. pg. 247**

Special series: The state of the Church according to the seven letters of Revelation.

**\*We use the term 1st for the "Old" Testament and 2nd for the "New" Testament. The NRSV Bible 1st Testament numbers are found in the front portion of the Bible and the 2nd Testament numbers are found in the later portion. If this confuses you just ask someone around you to assist you. Thank you.**



## **CALL TO WORSHIP**

**Visit and greet one another for a social time before the bell rings.**

**Bells 1<sup>st</sup> ring.** Once the bell rings, please find your seat and spend the next few minutes in silent prayer. Please refrain from conversations as these disturb those trying to pray.

The St. Francis and St. Clare of Assisi bell at Ray Of Hope Church, 380 W. 1<sup>st</sup> St. in Elmira, NY, was a gift from Michael Quinnell of Syracuse, NY, in September 2005. The bell rings out 39 joyful rings, in contrast to tolling the bell in single rings. The 39 joyful rings honor the 39 lashes Jesus endured that we now celebrate in victory and gratitude for our salvation. "The chastisement for our peace was upon Him, And by His stripes we are healed." (Isaiah 53:5) We always ring the bell before worship and Bible Enrichment sessions. Listen carefully and see if you can hear all 39 rings.

**\*\* We will welcome the Facebook Live guests before the second bells ring.\*\***

**The bells ring a second time to announce the start of the worship event.**



## **WE GATHER TO PRAISE THE LORD AND TO GIVE THANKS**

### **+ Pastoral Welcome**

**Leader – 1:** Hello. My name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I am in the City of \_\_\_\_\_ in the State of \_\_\_\_\_. We welcome you to Ray Of Hope Church Of Our Lord Jesus Christ, the faith community founded in Central New York, and now all across the world through the Internet, where everyone is welcome. We extend a special welcome to our visitors and guests. We invite you to participate in some or all parts of this worship event as you feel comfortable. We are glad you have chosen to spend this time with us. You are as welcome here as Christ Jesus himself. In Romans Chapter 15:7, the Church is commanded:

**ALL: "Welcome one another, then, as Christ welcomed you, for the glory of God." (NABRE)**

**Leader -1:** Please take a moment now to welcome one another, and introduce yourself to those around you for the glory of God. **\*\*During COVID we may simply wave across the room and into the camera for the Internet.**

**Pastor:** We begin in the name of God, Christ Our Saviour, and the Holy Spirit.

**ALL: Amen**

**Pastor:** Grace, peace, and fellowship be with you from God, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit. (1 Corinthians 1:3, 2 Corinthians 13:14, 2 Peter 1:2-4)

**ALL: And also with you.**

**Pastor: (\*\*introduction of the theme of the day\*)**



Psalm 119:89-91

<sup>89</sup> The LORD exists forever;

your Word is firmly fixed in heaven.

<sup>90</sup> Your faithfulness endures to all generations;

you have established the earth, and it stands fast.

<sup>91</sup> By your appointment they stand today,

**for all things are your servants.**

Referenced by Oecumenius in Commentary on the Apocalypse 1:4b (**Oecumenius** (sixth century). Called the Rhetor or the Philosopher, Oecumenius wrote the earliest extant Greek commentary on Revelation. Scholia by Oecumenius on some of John Chrysostom's commentaries on the Pauline Epistles are still extant. [Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture: Introduction and Biographic Information](#). (2005). (p. 500). Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.) (ACCS, Vol. 12 Revelation, pg. 3)

We are continuing in our special series on the story of the Church as seen through the seven letters to the seven churches in the Book of Revelation.

Today we consider the seventh church, Laodicea-Apostate church \*\* the lukewarm church \*\*(A.D. 1900- to the Tribulation) pages 84 - 91

**Pastor:** We begin now to worship God in the beauty of holiness, in spirit, and in truth. (Psalm 96:9; John 4:23-24)

**ALL: Together we give God thanks and praise.**

**FIRST SONG:**

### + The Candle Of Hope

**Leader -1:** Please be seated. At this time we light our Resurrection Candle Of Hope. This is a testimony to our anticipation of the resurrection of all the dead, and the transformation of the living faithful, when Christ returns.

**ALL: Jesus said: "I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die."** (John 11:25, 26)

**Leader -1:** Our faith community is looking forward and waiting "for the blessed hope and the manifestation of the glory of our great God and Saviour, Jesus Christ." (Titus2:13 NRSV) We named this candle the Candle of Hope in honor of the "Blessed Hope," the return of Christ who will raise all to new life. (John 5:25)

**Leader -2:** Hello. My name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I am in the City of \_\_\_\_\_ in the State of \_\_\_\_\_. It is our custom to read panel entries from the Names Project Aids Memorial Quilt to help us remember those who died of AIDS, especially since many who were very sick and dying were rejected by the churches, were very much alone, and needed spiritual guidance. We remember them here and pray for their families.

**Leader -3:** Hello. My name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I am in the City of \_\_\_\_\_ in the State of \_\_\_\_\_. (Names are read at this time.)

**Leader -2:** We also remember in our hearts the names of our family and friends who have passed. May the candle's flame remind us of the joy and happiness known in life, the comfort offered us by the Holy Spirit in our loss, and the "Blessed Hope" we have in the resurrection of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

**ALL: Amen**

(NAMES Project website where you can visit over 48,000 panels, over 100,000 names on the Quilt virtually:

<https://www.aidsmemorial.org/interactive-aids-quilt>)

**SECOND SONG:**



**WE PREPARE OUR HEARTS**

**+ Confession and Forgiveness of our sins.**

**Leader -2:** Please be seated. (wait) At this time we prepare our hearts to be renewed by receiving God in Word and Sacrament by confessing our sins to Christ in silent prayer.

(silent prayer)

**Leader -2:** We pray together:

**ALL: I confess to Almighty God, and to you, my brothers and sisters, that I have sinned through my own fault in my thoughts and in my words, in what I have done, and in what I have failed to do. I declare in the midst of this assembly of believers that I am truly sorry for having offended God in any way. I ask you, my brothers and sisters, all the angels and the saints to pray for me to the Lord our God.**

**Leader -2:** Almighty and Eternal God, creator of the Heavens and Earth, you give us our humanity and fill us with innumerable gifts and

abilities. We pray that people will appreciate the unique gifts that each person is blessed with. Lord, have mercy.

**ALL: Lord, have mercy.**

**Leader -2:** Christ Jesus, you are with us at all times. We are aware of human atrocities and the cruel treatment of people near and far. We pray that people will realize you are present when they do these things to others. Christ, have mercy.

**ALL: Christ, have mercy.**

**Leader -2:** Holy Spirit, we need your help to discern and to do God's will. Help us to move beyond the expectations of a lukewarm church and move into the fiery heat of a Holy Spirit guided church. Lord, have mercy.

**ALL: Lord, have mercy.**

**Pastor:** May Almighty God have mercy on all of us, forgive all our sins, and keep us in everlasting life.

**ALL: Amen.**

**Pastor:** Please rise as you are able to give thanks and praise to God for the forgiveness of our sins by praying the Gloria.

**Song:**

**Glory be to the one God, and to the Christ, and to the Holy Ghost. As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen. Amen.** (Traditional Gloria Patri hymn with inclusive language.)

**Spoken:**

**Glory to God in the highest,  
and peace to God's people on earth.  
You are the One God, Sovereign of the universe,**

**Only Holy God, we worship you,  
we give you thanks,  
we praise you for your glory.**

**Lord Jesus Christ**, the only begotten Son of God,  
Lord God, Lamb of God,  
you take away the sin of the world:  
have mercy on us;  
you are seated at the right hand of God:  
receive our prayer.

For you alone are the Holy One,  
you alone are the Lord of all,  
you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ,

**with the Holy Spirit**, in the glory of the  
Holy Unity of God. Amen.

+ Opening Prayer



**THE SERVICE OF THE WORD OF GOD**

We read to recall, reflect on, and rejoice in the action of God in life.

+ The Holy Gospel of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ

**Reader:** We sing an acclamation before and one after the reading of the Gospel. Please rise as you are able for the Gospel Acclamation.

**Gospel Acclamation**

## We Love Your Word!

To my friends in Christ  
at Ray Of Hope Church

"Music for Worship"

Music by: Gaude! Liturgical Arts  
October 31, 1993  
Revised 8/2013

The musical score is written on four staves in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. The lyrics are: We love Your Word, O Lord for it set us free. We know the truth, O Lord; We are Yours e - ter - nal - ly. So we stand to hear Your Word. We praise You for Your Word. Al-le - lu - a! for Your Word. It heals our hearts, souls and minds. For Your Word, Al - le - lu - ia! Thank You Je - sus!

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**Reader:** The Gospel reading is on page 43 in the back of the NRSV Bible. The reading is in the Gospel of Mark, chapter 7, verses 1-23.

**Reader:** Truly present among us, the Lord is with you.  
**ALL: And also with you.**

**Reader:** A reading of the Holy Gospel according to Mark.  
**ALL: Glory to you, O Lord. May the Word of God be in our (+) minds that we will understand it, on our (+) lips that we will speak it, and in our (+) hearts that we will love it.**

### The Tradition of the Elders

7 Now when the Pharisees and some of the scribes who had come from Jerusalem gathered around Jesus, 2 they noticed some were eating with defiled hands, that is, without washing them. 3 (For the Pharisees, and all the Jews, do not eat unless they thoroughly wash their hands, thus observing the tradition of the elders; 4 and they do not eat anything from the market unless they wash it and there are also many other traditions that they observe, the washing of cups, pots, and bronze kettles.) 5 So the

Pharisees and the scribes asked him, “Why do your disciples not follow the tradition of the elders, but eat with defiled hands?”

6 Jesus answered, “Isaiah prophesied rightly about you hypocrites, as it is written,

‘This people honors me with their lips,

but their hearts are far from me;

7 in vain do they worship me,

teaching human precepts as doctrines.’

<sup>8</sup> You abandon the commandment of God and hold to human tradition.” <sup>9</sup> Then he said to them, “You have a fine way of rejecting the commandment of God in order to keep your tradition!

10 For Moses said, ‘Honor your father and your mother’; and,

‘Whoever speaks evil of father or mother must surely die.’ 11 But

you say that if anyone tells father or mother, ‘Whatever support you might have had from me is Corban’ (that is, an offering to

God)— 12 then you no longer permit doing anything for a father

or mother, 13 thus making void the word of God through your

tradition that you have handed on. And you do many things like this.”

<sup>14</sup> Then he called the crowd again and said to them, “Listen to me, all of you, and understand: 15 there is nothing outside a person that by going in can defile, but the things that come out are what defile.”

<sup>7</sup> When he had left the crowd and entered the house, his disciples asked him about the parable. 18 He said to them, “Then do you

also fail to understand? Do you not see that whatever goes into a person from outside cannot defile, 19 since it enters, not the heart but the stomach, and goes out into the sewer?” (Thus he declared all foods clean.)

20 And he said, “It is what comes out of a person

that defiles. 21 For it is from within, from the human heart, that

evil intentions come: fornication, theft, murder, 22 adultery,

avarice, wickedness, deceit, licentiousness, envy, slander, pride,

folly. 23 All these evil things come from within, and they defile a

person.”

**Reader: This is the Gospel of the Lord!**

**ALL: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ!**

# Gospel Acclamation

## Forever, We Are Yours!

To my friends in Christ  
at Ray Of Hope Church  
for the 1996 New Year,  
The Year of The Holy Spirit!

"Music For Worship"

Music by: Gaude! Liturgical Arts  
December 31, 1995

Glo-ry to the One God! Glo-ry to our Sa - vior Je - sus the  
Christ! And, to the Ho - ly Spi - rit, for - ev - er You're Our God!  
You brought us out of dark - ness, in - to Your mar - ve - lous Light! Your Word is our  
joy! For this we give You glo - ry, both now and ev - er more!  
For - ev - er we are Yours! For - ev - er we are Yours!

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### + Thoughts on Today's Gospel.

#### The Lukewarm Church, perfectly associated with this Gospel.

Mark 7:2,3 2 they noticed some were eating with defiled hands, that is, without washing them. 3 (For the Pharisees, and all the Jews, do not eat unless they thoroughly wash their hands, thus observing the tradition of the elders; 4 and they do not eat anything from the market unless they wash it and there are also many other traditions that they observe, the washing of cups, pots, and bronze kettles.)

It is interesting to be thinking about handwashing with our current situation with COVID-19+.

When Teachings, Dogmas, and Practices replace Doctrines:

6 Jesus answered, "Isaiah prophesied rightly about you hypocrites, as it is written,

'This people honors me with their lips,  
but their hearts are far from me;

7 in vain do they worship me,  
teaching human precepts as doctrines.'

8 You abandon the commandment of God and hold to human tradition."

Even dirty food will not defile a person. Breaking Traditions does not defile a person.

20 And he said, "It is what comes out of a person that defiles.

21 For it is from within, from the human heart, that evil intentions come: fornication, theft, murder, 22 adultery, avarice, wickedness, deceit, licentiousness, envy, slander, pride, folly. 23 All these evil things come from within, and they defile a person."

## + Second Reading

**Reader:** Hello. My name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I am in the City of \_\_\_\_\_ in the State of \_\_\_\_\_. The second reading is in the Book of Revelation chapter 3, verses 14 - 22. Here begins the reading:

### **The Lukewarm Church**

<sup>14</sup> "And to the angel of the church in Laodicea write,

'These things says the Amen, the Faithful and True Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God: <sup>15</sup> "I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot. <sup>16</sup> So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth. <sup>17</sup> Because you say, 'I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing'—and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked— <sup>18</sup> I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich; and white garments, that you may be clothed, *that* the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see. <sup>19</sup> As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent. <sup>20</sup> Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in and dine with them, and they with Me. <sup>21</sup> To the ones who overcome I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on God's throne.

22 "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches." ' ' "

**Reader:** This is the Word of the Lord!

**ALL:** Thanks be to God!



**+ Sermon: Series: The state of the Church according to the seven letters to the seven churches in the Book of Revelation**

"In the Revelation, Christ discloses the course of the life of the Church to her perfection at the end (BEDE). Writing to seven churches, John is in fact writing to all churches and to all ages, for the number seven represents the present life (APRINGIUS, ANDREW OF CAESAREA)."

Ancient Christian Commentary On Scripture, Weinrich, W. C. (Ed.). (2005). Volume 12, *Revelation* (p. 1). Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press. Hereafter referenced as (ACCS)

"Bede the Venerable (c. 672/673 – 737). "Born in Northumbria, at the age of seven, he was put under the care of the Benedictine monks of Saints Peter and Paul at Jarrow and given a broad classical education in the monastic tradition. Considered one of the most learned men of his age, he is the author of *An Ecclesiastical History of the English People*." (ACCS, Vol. 12, page 416)

"Apringius of Beja (middle sixth century). Iberian bishop and exegete. Heavily influenced by Tyconius, he wrote a commentary on Revelation in Latin, of which two large fragments survive." (ACCS, Vol. 12, page 416)

"Andrew of Caesarea (early sixth century). Bishop of Caesarea in Cappadocia. He produced one of the earliest Greek commentaries on Revelation and defended the divine inspiration of its author." (ACCS, Vol. 12, page 416)

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**PERTAINING TO ALL THE CHURCHES.** APRINGIUS OF BEJA: What is the importance of the people of Asia that they alone deserve to receive the apostolic revelation? However, there is a mystery in the number and a sacrament in the name of the province. First, let us discuss the meaning of the number, because both the number six and the number seven are always used in the law with a mystical meaning: "For God made heaven and earth in six days," and "on the seventh day he rested from his works" <sup>8</sup> and "on it," it says, "they shall enter again into my rest." The number seven, therefore, signifies the period of the present life, so that the apostle is not merely writing to seven churches and to that world in which he was then present, but it is understood that he is giving

these writings to all future ages, even to the consummation of the world. Therefore, he mentions the number in a most holy manner, and he names "Asia," which means "elevated" or "walking," indicating that celestial fatherland which we call the "catholic church." For exalted by the Lord and always moving toward the things which are above, it is the Church which advances by spiritual exercises and is always desirous of the things of heaven. TRACTATE ON THE APOCALYPSE 1:4.<sup>1</sup>

"Apringius of Beja (middle sixth century). Iberian bishop and exegete. Heavily influenced by Tyconius, he wrote a commentary on Revelation in Latin, of which two large fragments survive." (ACCS, Vol. 12, page 416)

"Although this time-honored belief that Christ's message to the seven churches includes a prophecy of the seven stages of church history has never been unanimous, it is held by most premillennialists. Even Phillip Schaff, the writer of the classic eight-volume set History of the Christian Church, accepts that position."

LaHaye, Tim. Revelation Unveiled (p. 36). Zondervan. Kindle Edition and 1999 print edition.

**Other citations to Revelation Unveiled will be noted as Revelation Unveiled, page \_\_\_\_.**

The seven periods are generally given approximately as follows:

1. Ephesus-Apostolic church (A.D. 30-100) pages 43 - 50
2. Smyrna-Persecuted church (A.D. 100-312) pages 51 - 56
3. Pergamos-State church (A.D. 312-606) pages 57 - 64
4. Thyatira-Papal Church (A.D. 606-1520 to the Tribulation) pages 65 - 71
5. Sardis-Reformed church (A.D. 1520-1790 to the Tribulation) pages 72 - 77
6. Philadelphia-Missionary church (A.D. 1750-1900 to the rapture) pages 78 – 83 \*\* the small but faithful church.\*\*
7. Laodicea-Apostate church \*\* the lukewarm church \*\* (A.D. 1900- to the Tribulation) pages 84 - 91

This chart appears at LaHaye, Tim. Revelation Unveiled (p. 36). Zondervan. Kindle Edition and 1999 print edition. I added the page numbers for the same book for further study by the reader.

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<sup>1</sup> Weinrich, W. C. (Ed.). (2005). [Revelation](#) (p. 3). Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

In this study of the seven letters, we will make a chart that has four parts:

- A) Commendation: What Christ approves about this Church.
- B) Condemnation: What Christ disapproves about this Church.
- C) Counsel: What Christ suggests to this Church.
- D) Challenge: What Christ offers to those who accept the instruction and act upon it.

We will review the seven stages of the Church as **cumulative, qualitative, and quantitative**. Each stage is cumulative or incremental as it builds in succession on the previous stage and continues forward. Each stage is qualitative as we measure the qualities (good, bad, or indifferent). Finally, each stage is quantitative as we measure the growth or decline of the actual population of persons in each stage of the Church. Notice many of these characteristics of each stage of the Church's story continue to the present day. When the study is over, we will look at the chart and use it as a starting place for our self-evaluation to improve and celebrate our successes.

As I present this series, it will be from three perspectives.

There is the **historical perspective** – who, what, where, when, and why. The **prophetic perspective** – what prophecy is here, was some of it or all of it fulfilled by now, and is some of it or all of it to be fulfilled in the future.

Thirdly, the **spiritual perspective** – what universal lessons are revealed and how they might be applied in our present lives.

**Series Part 8 – the seventh Church, Laodicea-Apostate church \*\* the lukewarm Church \*\* (A.D. 1900- to the Tribulation) pages 84 – 91**

Again, any treatment of these issues in this short sermon is an immeasurable understatement of the essential facts.

I recommend these two books for easy reading on Church History.

**Christianity: The Illustrated Guide to 2,000 Years of the Christian Faith** by Ann Marie B. Bahr ([Right Click Here](#))

**Introduction to The History of Christianity** Edited by Tim Dowley ([Right Click Here](#))

## **Introduction to part 8**

**1) Historical Background:** The city of Laodicea evolved into a very wealthy city from an insignificant and poor start. One main contributing factor to it becoming a wealthy city was its position on a major trade route. Laodicea was 11 miles west of Colossae, 6.2 miles south of Hierapolis, about 99 miles east of Ephesus. As the Roman Republic was ending it became one of the most important commercial cities in Asia Minor. There were large money transactions, and a flourishing black wool trade was one of the most successful businesses. The city advanced the arts, education, sciences and had a great medical school.

Laodicea had an extensive Jewish community, and it seems to have had a significant and wealthy Christian community. While there are excavations that indicate three early churches existed, and while there is a record of a bishopric from very early years, very little is known of this congregation's work to spread the Gospel. It appears to have existed as one organization among others in this cultural center, the City of Laodicea.

LaHaye makes a point of observation that the first three churches end when a new one starts. Ephesus ended, and Smyrna began. Smyrna ended, and Pergamum began. Pergamum ended, and Thyatira began. The last four churches on the chart are all still with us, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and now Laodicea. "Thus Laodicea adds to this church age by arising from the three that preceded it. The Laodicean church age began around 1900 and is increasing in intensity at a breathtaking pace." (Revelation Unveiled, pg. 85)

Currently, we find ourselves surrounded by the lukewarm church. Perhaps some people are tired and worn out by the stress of our society. Others are seeing the old and established ways of being church are not working, but there doesn't seem to be any youth to lead the way into new ideas. Change is too much to deal with when it comes to my church and my religion. Some, many, just think it is best to let things simply die out and fade out, after all, I won't be here in 20 years anyway, so why should I care?

**2) Rev 3:14** <sup>14</sup> "And to the angel of the church in Laodicea write,

'These things says the Amen, the Faithful and True Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God:

As in other introductory sentences to each of the churches, Jesus gives a self-revelation in four characteristics. Jesus is

The Amen – The final word, the confirmation of God. God's total revelation of God's self is made known in Jesus. Christ is "image of the invisible God...." "It pleased God that in Christ all the fullness of God should dwell." (Colossians 1:15+,19)

The Faithful and True Witness – In Revelation 21:5 Jesus says, "Write these things, for these words are faithful and true." When Christ comes to cleanse the earth of the Anti-christ armies and rule on the earth, Jesus rides a white horse. "11 Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness, He judges and makes war. " (Revelation 19:11)

The Beginning of the creation of God: – John 1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. <sup>2</sup> He was in the beginning with God. <sup>3</sup> All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made.

Colossians 1:16-17 <sup>16</sup> For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or <sup>[a]</sup>principalities or <sup>[b]</sup>powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. <sup>17</sup> And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist.

#### A) Commendation: What Christ approves about this Church.

The Church of Laodicea has the unique distinction of being the only church of the seven stages to not have one single word of commendation. The lukewarm church is so objectionable to Christ that there is not one word to commend her with.

B) Condemnation: What Christ disapproves about this Church.

**3) Rev. 3:15** <sup>15</sup> “I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot.

The last days church would have a neutral condition, not zealous of good works, it would be lifeless and indifferent, “lukewarm.” There may be a lot of organization, programs, committees, activities, but no spiritual power. Even repetitive schedule and liturgy, no creativity. More programming, planning, but little praying. 2 Timothy 3:5 “having the form of godliness but denying its power. Do not associate with them.”

**4) Rev. 3:16** <sup>16</sup> So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth.

The Lord does not claim ownership over this church. Instead, he rejects it. This church will be left behind at the Blessed Hope and will march full-on into the Tribulation Period. It will also be vulnerable to the leadership of the “false prophet” of the “anti-christ” of the seven-year Tribulation Period because the membership has a very minimal understanding of Scripture, prophecy, and Theology.

**5) Rev. 3:16** <sup>17</sup> Because you say, ‘I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing’—and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked—

The wealth and the public position of respect, the outward appearance of holiness and religiosity, the clericalism, the life of the religionist has caused this church to think it has arrived. What it does not notice is the slow death that is happening. For example, the absence of interest in Bible education of the youth, the young adult, the seasoned adult, the elderly.

Amos 8:11-13 <sup>11</sup> “Behold, the days are coming,” says the Lord GOD,

“That I will send a famine on the land,  
Not a famine of bread,  
Nor a thirst for water,

But of hearing the words of the LORD.

<sup>12</sup> They shall wander from sea to sea,

And from north to east;

They shall run to and fro, seeking the word of the LORD,

But shall not find *it*.

<sup>13</sup> “In that day the fair virgins

And strong young men

Shall faint from thirst.

This is my own association. I often think about this as I try to interest people in study of the Word. I think about this famine when I try to engage people in the Vocational Ministry Training Program. I think about this famine when I see the paint peeling on the building, when I see the foundation in need of attention, when I see the drywall falling down upstairs, when I see pipes leaking, boards cracking. Complacency will lead to tragedy. Complacency can lead to massive failure. A church that keeps doing what it always has done and is satisfied with a quiet sense of pleasure and security will often be accompanied by a lack of awareness of potential dangers, potential system failures, equipment that needs to be replaced, shrinking membership.

Ray Of Hope Church teaching ministry disagrees with Tim LaHaye here: “Instead of grappling with and teaching the truth of the Bible, they spend their time in social causes. The Laodicean church today would be at the forefront of the gay rights and feminist movements and be leaders in the ordination of women and the feminizing of the deity. The message of our Lord is clear to such a church: ‘Have nothing to do with them.’”

LaHaye, Tim. Revelation Unveiled (p. 87). Zondervan. Kindle Edition.

Tim LaHaye is raising teachings to the level of Doctrines with these statements. This was entirely too wide of a brush to put all of these teachings on one category. Our Statement Of Purpose calls us to support many of these issues Mr. LaHaye takes exception to.

C) Counsel: What Christ suggests to this Church.

**6) Rev. 3:18a**<sup>18</sup> I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich;

Material riches are not everlasting and usually not spiritual. The riches that are for eternal life come from the Blood of Jesus Christ, the Sacraments, and first of all our faith. 1 Peter 1:7 indicates our faith is “more precious than gold.” Notice the poor church is asked to buy gold. That seems a little odd until we recall Isaiah 55:1 where we are invited to come and buy “without money and without price.” We remember here the song, “Come To The Water.”

**7) Rev. 3:18b** buy from me white garments, that you may be clothed, *that* the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed;

Due the loss of spiritual authority, the lukewarm church is naked spiritually. Only the covering of the righteousness of Christ will help. Isaiah 61:10 God provides “garments of salvation” “robe of righteousness” so we are prepared when called.

**8) Rev. 3:18c** and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see.

We need the inspiration and illumination of the Holy Spirit to see the way of God. We need the Holy Spirit to live within us to discern the will of God and to see the path to follow it. If we do not have the Holy Spirit within us the ways of God are unacceptable to our minds. If we have the Holy Spirit within us, we accept the Holy Spirit's direction and our eyes are healed. (see 1 Cor. 2:14)

**9) Rev. 3:19a**<sup>19</sup> As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten.

If we are going to get out of our lukewarm state then we should expect the Lord to guide us with some nudges and some hard hits and bumps to help us wake up and change our direction. The Lord is a living and truly present God. He disciplines and guides us with strength and intentional action.

**10) Rev. 3:19b** Therefore be zealous and repent.

Return to the first love. Be on fire for the Lord. Be eager to do

discern, understand and do the Lord's will. Come out of complacency and turn away from the easy road. Fire up and start your engines and begin anew.

D) Challenge: What Christ offers to those who accept the instruction and act upon it.

**11) Rev. 3:20** <sup>20</sup> Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in and dine with them, and they with Me.

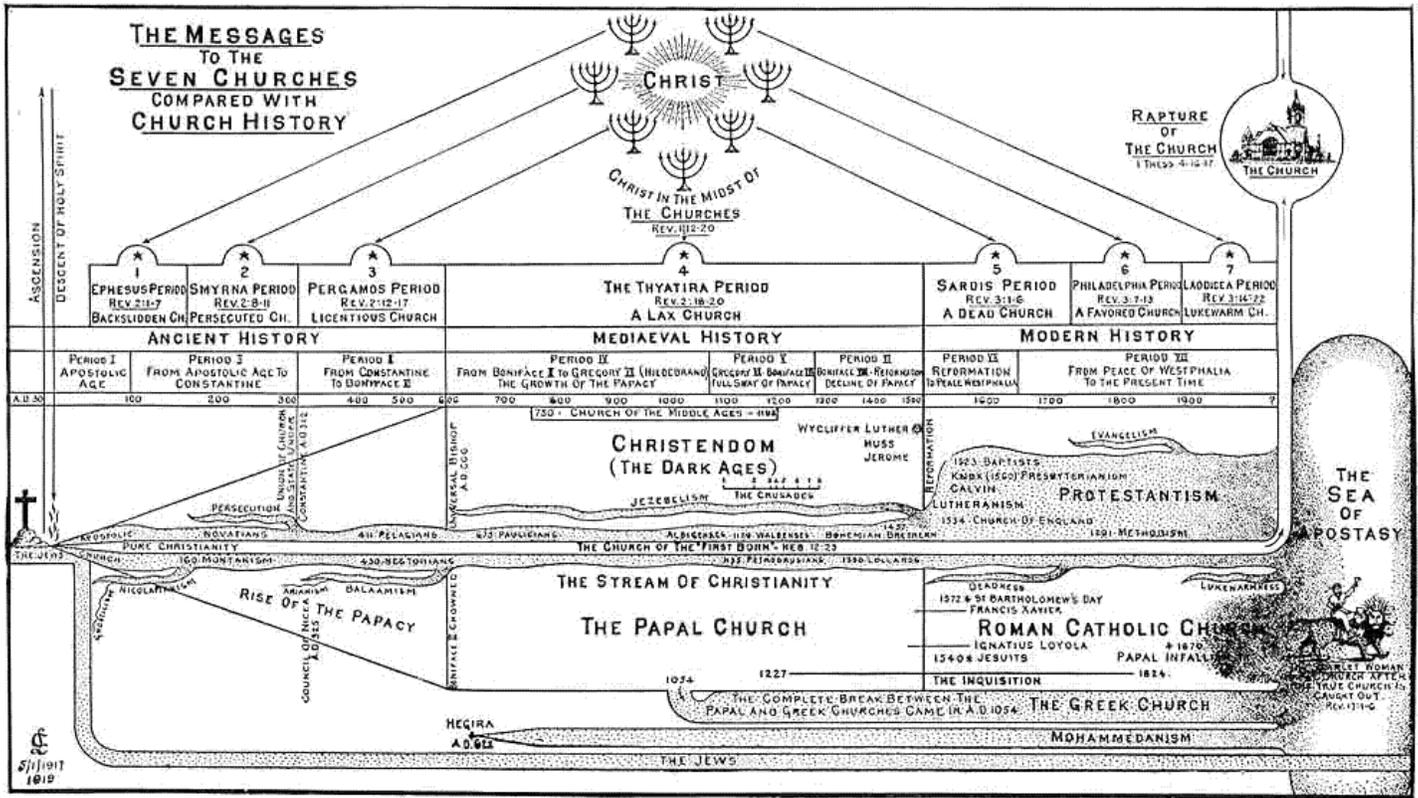
This verse has been the subject of many paintings where we see Jesus standing at a door that does not have a handle on the outside. He stands there and knocks and waits to be let in. Once He is invited in there is a Holy Communion, a Holy Union, a Common – Union with the person or persons who have opened the door to Him.

**12) Rev. 3:21** <sup>21</sup> To the ones who overcome I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on God's throne.

“Through Him, with Him, and in Him”

**13) Rev. 3:22** "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches."

The Spirit has just told you what the Holy Spirit has been saying this entire age, listen, understand, and follow to the faithful conclusion of this way of life, the Paradise of God. We can do this!



See this chart online to be able magnify it:

<https://www.preservedwords.com/disprtruth/images/22-messages.gif>

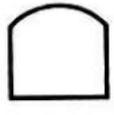
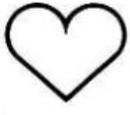
							
	EPHESUS The Apostolic Church Rev. 2:1-7	SMYRNA The Persecuted Church Rev. 2:8-11	PERGAMUM The Indulged Church Rev. 2:12-17	THYATIRA The Pagan Church Rev. 2:18-29	SARDIS The Dead Church Rev. 3:1-6	PHILADELPHIA The Church Christ Loved Rev. 3:7-13	LAODICEA The Lukewarm Church Rev. 3:14-22
	A.D. 30-100	A.D. 100-312	A.D. 312-606	A.D. 606-Tribulation	A.D. 1520-Tribulation Protestant Reformation	A.D. 1750-Rapture	A.D. 1900-Tribulation
COMMENDATION I know your...	Good works, labor, patience. Hated Nicolaitans.	Works, tribulation, poverty.	Works. Held fast my name. Has not denied my faith.	Good works, love, service, faith, patience.	Works. A name that you live.	Works. Missions. Little strength. Kept my word. Not denied my name.	Not one word!
CONDEMNATION	You have left your first love.	Not one word!	You have false teachers of Balaam and the Nicolaitans.	You allow Jezebel to teach idolatry and compromise.	You are dead. Works not complete.	Not one word!	You are lukewarm, wretched, miserable, poor, blind and naked.
COUNSEL I counsel you...	Remember from where you are fallen and repent.	Fear not. Be faithful.	Repent.	Hold fast what you have until I come.	Watch. Strengthen the things that remain. Remember, hold fast and repent.	Hold fast what you have.	Buy gold tried by fire and white raiment. Anoint your eyes. Be zealous and repent.
CHALLENGE To him that overcomes...	Will give to eat of the tree of life	Will not be hurt by the second death.	Will give hidden manna and a white stone.	Will give millennial leadership and the Morning Star.	Will be clothed in white raiment. I will not blot his name out of the book of life.	Will make him a pillar and write upon him the name of God and My new name.	Will grant to sit with me on my throne.

Chart from page 24 of LaHaye, Revelation Unveiled referred to above in these notes.

With that verse, we complete the seventh stage of the Church Age. Next Sunday we will conclude this series with the question, how do we apply the lessons learned.

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## WE RESPOND TO GOD'S WORD

### **+ (optional) Profession Of Faith**

Creed #1: The Apostles' Creed

I believe in the One Eternal, Loving, Life-Giving,  
Forgiving, Good, and Gracious God,  
Creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus the Christ, the only Begotten Son of God,  
our Lord and Saviour.

He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit  
and born of the Virgin Mary.

He suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, died, and was buried.

He descended to the dead.

On the third day, God raised Jesus from the dead.

He ascended into heaven,  
and is seated at the right hand of God.

Christ will come again in glory to judge the living and the  
dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, Who is equal with God and the Son.

I believe in the one, holy, Christian Church, the Body of Jesus  
Christ that is universal/catholic, and apostolic.

I believe in the communion of saints,  
the forgiveness of sins,  
the resurrection of the body,  
and life everlasting. Amen

## + The Prayers Of The People: Shared Prayer

**Leader – 4:** Hello. My name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I am in the City of \_\_\_\_\_ in the State of \_\_\_\_\_. Having heard the Word Of God we bring our prayers to God in Christ, through the powerful ministry of the Holy Spirit. Everyone is welcome to pray out loud for themselves, for others with prayers of praise and thanksgiving, or whatever is on your heart. Please keep the prayers brief so as many people as possible may participate in the given time. We invite you to speak your prayers loud enough so everyone may hear your prayer and join you in spirit and in truth. So, we begin with \_\_\_\_\_  
(The person leading will invite prayers from the various rooms in the service.)

**Leader – 4:** (when all prayers have been heard) Lord Jesus, we lift our spoken and unspoken prayers and we ask you in intercede for us as our High Priest at the right hand of God.

**ALL: Amen**



(Visit our moving prayers page [Right Click Here.](#))

## + Offertory And Preparation of our at-home Holy Communion Altar/tables.

**Leader - 5:** Hello. My name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I am in the City of \_\_\_\_\_ in the State of \_\_\_\_\_. At this time we show our gratitude to God and our dedication to the Church of Jesus Christ, which is His Body present in the world, by offering our financial gifts and support for this ministry. Those in the chapel may use the offering plate, while those worshipping with us on the Internet may go to our website and use the PayPal link or you

may mail a check to Ray Of Hope Church, 380 W. First St. Elmira NY 14901. Please give what you can, but never give your last.

At the same time, we will prepare our Holy Communion Altars and Tables at home and in the chapel. Bring to your table at home some wine, or grape juice, a small piece of bread, a little bit of water in a side cup, and a side napkin. The ideal situation is you are celebrating with us during the live webcast. We do understand you may be viewing this video at another time. We do not encourage private practice and reception of Communion as your normal, weekly worship routine. Communion is a gift for the worship community to celebrate together, an action of the local Church. However, if this is an extraordinary situation, and you believe the Holy Spirit is calling you to celebrate at a time other than the live webcast, then yield to the direction of the Holy Spirit. Hopefully, you will be able to join us in a live virtual worship event soon. (\*This practice policy was changed on Gaudete Sunday, December 13, 2020.\*)

Each of you in the chapel will find at your seat a small plate, communion wafer, plastic chalice of grape juice and a napkin. Please take the plate and wafer from the baggie and shake the chalice gently in case there has been settling of the contents. Please do not remove the top from the chalice until the Celebrant announces that Communion is served. Once you have received Communion, place the plastic chalice on top of the plate and someone will collect while the Table of the Lord is being cleared.

(\* The offering is received. The Altar and Tables are set.  
A song may be sung or silent prayer is maintained. \*)

### **SONG: I Really Love The Lord**

**Leader -2:** (\*Pray a prayer over the offering giving thanks and praise.\*) Please rise as you are able to conclude the Service Of The Word Of God with a doxology.

**ALL: Praise God from whom all blessings flow. Praise God all creatures here below. Praise God above ye heavenly hosts. Praise God the Son and Holy Ghost. Amen.**



## **WE CELEBRATE THE SACRED MEAL OF CHRIST**

**Pastor:** Lord God, we ask you to receive our worship this day. We pray that you will be pleased with our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving we offer you with humble and contrite hearts.

**ALL: May the Lord accept our lives as a sacrifice for the praise and glory of God's name, for our good and the good of all God's people. Amen**

**Pastor:** Please lift your bread at this time as I pray this prayer. (\*Another person may be invited to say this prayer out loud.\*)

**Pastor:** Blessed are you, Lord, God of all creation. It is through your goodness that we have this bread, which the Earth has given us and human hands have lovingly made. Now, through the powerful ministry of the Holy Spirit, this bread will become for us the Bread From Heaven (Exodus 16:2, Psalm 78:24, John 6:32, 41,50,58), the Bread of the Angels (Psalm 78:25), the Bread of God (John 6:33), the Living Bread (John 6:51), the Bread Of Life (John 6:35, 48, 58), the Bread of the New Covenant (John 6:32, 49, 50,51, 58), the Sacrament of the Eucharist, the very Body Of Christ (John 6:52-56, 1Corinthians 10:16).

**ALL: Blessed be God forever.**

**Pastor:** Please set down your bread.

Now pour your wine or grape juice into your cup, if you have not done so already. Then add a small amount of water to the cup. With this water, we remember Jesus is human, and with this fruit of the vine we remember He is divine forever.

Now, please lift your cup with me at this time as I pray this prayer.(\*Another person may be invited to say this prayer out loud.\*)

**Pastor:** Blessed are you, Lord, God of all creation. It is through your goodness that we have this fruit of the vine, which the Earth has given us and human hands have lovingly made. Now, through the powerful

ministry of the Holy Spirit, this fruit of the vine will become for us the Cup of Our Salvation (Psalm 116:13), the Cup of Everlasting Life (John 6:54-57), the Cup of the New Covenant (Matthew 26:28, Luke 22:20, 1 Corinthians 11:25), the very Blood Of Christ (John 6:54-56; 1Corinthians 10:16).

**ALL: Blessed be God forever.**

**Pastor:** Please set down your cup.

**Pastor:** We offer ourselves, with our whole heart, our whole soul, and our whole mind unto you Almighty God. Accomplish your desires for us in our lives. Mold us to be more like you every day. Receive us along with these gifts of bread and fruit of the vine to be made holy, and through them make us into a perfect offering to you, One and Only Holy God. We ask this in the name of Jesus, Our Lord.

**ALL: Amen.**

**Pastor:** Truly present and risen among us, the Lord is with you!

**ALL: And also with you!**

**Pastor:** As His Body, we lift up our hearts!

**ALL: We lift them up to the Lord!**

**Pastor:** As His Church, we give thanks to the Lord, our God!

**ALL: It is right to give God thanks and praise.**

**\*\*\*\*\* the people may be invited to offer prayers of thanks and praise.**

**\*\*\*\*\* the Pastor continues with a Eucharistic Prayer.**

It is right that we should give you thanks and praise always and everywhere through our Lord and Saviour, Christ Jesus. He is the image of you the invisible God, He is the first-born over all creation. In Him, all things consist and have their being. Christ has called us into this place, into his very Body, the Church. Christ continues to build His Church as He said He would, and be with us until the end of this Age.

We are grateful to celebrate Christ's Lordship over our lives and our deaths. In Christ, we have experienced the power of your love, Almighty God. Through that love, we are now able to join our voices with all the Beloved Community from every time and every place who have already passed through the valley of the shadow of death and are forever secure in your eternal presence. Accept our song as we join in their unending hymns of praise. We sing holy to You our God, holy to You our Christ, and holy to you the One Holy Spirit of God as we move and have our being in your Divine Presence.

## Holy, Holy, Lord!

To my friends in Christ  
at Ray Of Hope Church

"Music for Worship"

Music by: Gaude! Liturgical Arts  
October 31, 1993  
Revised 8/2013

Ho - ly Ho - ly Ho - ly Lord, God of pow'r and  
5 might. Hea-ven and earth are full of your glo - ry. Ho - san - na in the  
10 high - est. Ho - san - na in the high - est. Ho - san - na in the high - est.  
16 Bless - ed is the One who comes in the name of the Lord.  
22 Ho - san - na in the high - est. Ho - san - na in the high - est. Ho -  
27 san - na in the high - est.

## + We Invoke the Blessing Of The Holy Spirit

**Pastor:** Here at Ray Of Hope Church, everyone prays together to ask the Holy Spirit to give to us the exact same gifts that Jesus gave when He instituted Holy Communion for His Church. At this time I invite you to extend your hands forward over the bread and fruit of the vine, or extend your arms out with palms turned up in prayer and say the following Invocation of the Holy Spirit with me.

**ALL:** O God, in the Name of Jesus, we, your faithful people, ask your Only One and Holy Spirit to bless and separate this bread and fruit of the vine for Christ's purpose. Through the powerful ministry of the Holy Spirit, give to us the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ in precisely the exact same manner that He gave them, and commissioned us to do often in His Holy Name. You alone, O Loving, True God, authenticate for us that this is the Messiah, Christ, New Covenant Meal that Jesus instituted for our Spiritual and physical well-being. We ask this in the Name of Jesus. Amen

## + The Words Of The Institution Of The Holy Eucharist

**Pastor:** Please lower your hands now. Please lift at this time the Eucharistic Body Of Christ, the Bread of Salvation and together we will say aloud our Lord and Saviour's words of institution when he gave us the Blessed Sacrament.

**ALL:** Before He was given up to death, a death He freely accepted, He took the bread and gave you thanks. He broke the bread, gave it to his disciples, and said:  
Take this, all of you, and eat it: This is my body which will be given up for you. Do this in memory of me.

(\*\* pause for adoration\*\*) (\*\*you may bow or genuflect if you choose to\*\*)

**Pastor:** Please set down the Bread of Life. Please lift now, the cup of salvation. Now, for the cup we say aloud:

**ALL: When the supper was ended, He took the cup. Again He gave you thanks and praise, gave the cup to His disciples, and said:**

**Take this, all of you, and drink from it: This is the cup of my blood, the blood of the new and everlasting covenant. It will be shed for you and for all so that sins may be forgiven. Do this in memory of me.**

**(\*\* pause for adoration\*\*) (\*\*you may bow or genuflect if you choose to\*\*)**

**Pastor:** Please set down the Cup of Salvation.

**+ Optional Christological Canticle:**

**#1 Philippians 2:6-11**

**Though He was in the form of God, Jesus did not deem equality with God something to be grasped at.**

**Rather, He emptied Himself and took the form of a slave, being born in the likeness of men.**

**He was known to be of human estate, and it was thus that He humbled Himself, obediently accepting even death, death on a cross!**

**Because of this, God highly exalted Him and bestowed on Him the name above every other name, So that at the name of Jesus every knee must bend**

**(optional\*\*genuflect or bow\*\*)**

**#2 Colossians 1:15-20**

**Christ is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation. In Christ everything in heaven and on earth was created, things visible and invisible.**

**All were created through Him;  
all were created for Him.  
Jesus is before all else that is.  
In Him, everything continues in being.**

**It is Jesus who is head of the body, the Church!  
He who is the beginning, the first-born of the dead, so that primacy may be His in everything.**

**It pleased God to make absolute fullness reside in Christ and, by means of Him, to reconcile everything in His person,**

**in the heavens, on the  
earth, and under the  
earth, and every tongue  
proclaim to the glory of  
God:  
JESUS CHRIST IS LORD!**

**both on earth and in the  
heavens, making peace  
through the blood of His  
cross.**

**+ A Proclamation Of Our Faith**

- a) Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again.**
- b) Dying you destroyed our death, rising you restored our life.  
Lord Jesus, come in glory.**
- c) When we eat this bread and drink this cup, we proclaim your  
death, Lord Jesus, until you come in glory.**
- d) Lord, by your cross and resurrection you have set us free.  
You are the savior of the world.**
- e) Keep in mind that Jesus Christ has died for us and is risen  
from the dead. He is our saving Lord. He is joy for all ages.**
- f) Jesus Christ has died for us, Christ our Lord is risen,  
Christ will come again someday. Oh deep in my heart, I do  
believe that Jesus Christ will come again.**
- g) Christ has spoken in times past. Christ is speaking to us  
today. Christ will speak and take us into the future.**

**+ Prayers of Dedication and/or Intercession for other Ministries.**

**Pastor (or other person designated):** While we are gathered here together we ask your blessing on all religious leaders of every Religion known to humanity. We pray that religious leaders everywhere would recognize and act upon their obligation to guide all people to you, Almighty God. We also pray that religious leaders will guide people to work for freedom, equality, and respect for everyone. We ask your

blessing, Almighty God upon every community of seekers, and those with no faith or formal Religion.

We also pray for all people who have been driven from faith because of the sins of those who have misused Religion to hurt others. We pray for those who have been cast aside, excommunicated, and wrongly not included. May all people everywhere come to the knowledge that they too are the living light of God. We eagerly await your promised renewal of all creation when you shall be all in all. (1 Corinthians 15:28)

## + Final Doxology

**Pastor:** Please elevate the Holy Eucharist as a gesture of praise, thanksgiving, honor, gratitude, and the offering of the entire Church, the Body Of Christ, to God.

**Pastor:** Together we pray:

**ALL:** It is through Christ, with Christ, and in Christ, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, that all honor and glory is yours, Almighty God, forever and ever.

## Doxology/Amen!

To my friends in Christ  
at Ray Of Hope Church

"Music For Worship"

Music by: Gaude! Liturgical Arts  
October 31, 1993

All hon - or and glo - ry be un - to \_\_\_\_ You. Al - migh - ty

5 God \_\_\_\_ world with - out end. \_\_\_\_ A \_\_\_\_ men! Al - le - lu - ia

11 A \_\_\_\_ men! Al - le - lu - ia! All hon - or and glo - ry to you! A - men! \_\_\_\_



## **The Reception of Holy Communion**

### **+ The Lord's Prayer**

**Pastor:** Having heard the Word of God and having remembered the sacrifice of the cross, we invite everyone to pray together the prayer of Jesus.

**ALL: Our Father, who art in heaven,  
hallowed be thy name,  
thy kingdom come,  
thy will be done,  
on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread;  
and forgive us our trespasses,  
as we forgive those  
who trespass against us;  
and lead us not into temptation,  
but deliver us from evil.  
For thine is the kingdom,  
and the power, and the glory,  
forever and ever. Amen**

### **+ Sign Of Peace**

**Pastor:** The peace of the Lord Jesus Christ is with you.

**ALL: And also with you.**

**Veronica Floyd:** Please take a moment now to share a sign of Peace with those around you. \*\*During COVID we may simply wave across the room and into the camera for the Internet.

### **+ The Lamb Of God**

**Pastor:** Please break the bread as we pray together:

**ALL: Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world:  
have mercy on us.**

**Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world:**

**have mercy on us.**

**Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world:  
grant us peace.**

**Pastor:** You may set the bread down and pray silently as I pray this prayer.

**+ Priestly Prayer For All People**

**Pastor:** Lord Jesus Christ, trusting in your love and your mercy we now partake of your body and blood as you commanded. We pray that our participation does not bring us condemnation as St. Paul warned, but brings us sanctification and healing in mind, body, soul, and spirit. We pray that all God's people will one day be reassembled without the loss of anyone in your kingdom of love and glory. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

**ALL: AMEN**

**+ Invitation to the Lord's Table**

**Pastor:** At this time I ask you to lift with me the Blessed Sacrament.

**Pastor:** Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world. Behold Jesus truly present in the Bread of Life, and the Cup of Salvation. Behold Him who said whoever eats of this Bread and drinks of this Cup though they die they shall live forever. (John 6:50, 51, 54) Blessed are those who come to His Table. All are welcome.

**ALL: Lord, you make me worthy to receive you, and by your  
Word I am healed.** (This prayer is credited to Fr. James Callan, Spiritus Christi of Rochester, NY.)

**Pastor:** Please set down the Bread and Cup at this time.

**Pastor:** I assure you, by the promises of Christ, that anyone who receives this Holy Communion today will surely live forever and be raised by Christ to new life.

**PRIVATE PRAYER FOR A SPIRITUAL COMMUNION.** Some people are watching from a location where they do not have actual Holy Communion Bread and Wine with them. We offer the following prayer for them based upon a prayer from the Episcopal National Cathedral

Prayer book for a Spiritual reception of Holy Communion. This prayer assures all the benefits and blessings of a physical reception.

**Oh, My Jesus, I believe that you are truly present in the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar. I love you above all things, and I welcome you in my soul. Since I cannot now receive you in the Sacrament of your Body and Blood, come spiritually into my heart. Cleanse and strengthen me with your grace, Lord Jesus, and let me never be separated from you. May I live in you, and you in me, in this life and the life to come. Amen.**

Spiritual Communion Prayer from the Episcopal National Cathedral Prayer Book.

A spiritual communion is a personal devotional that anyone can pray at any time to express their desire to receive Holy Communion at that moment, but in which circumstances impede them from actually receiving Holy Communion.

**Pastor Benedict:** Communion is now served. Everyone is invited to receive Holy Communion at Ray Of Hope Church. It is not required that you be a member of this Church or any other church to receive Holy Communion. This is the Table of Jesus Christ, He invites you to come and receive Him in this Eucharistic banquet.

When you come forward, the person serving you will say; "The Body and the Blood of Jesus Christ for you." Respond with "Amen" or "Alleluia" or some other acclamation of appreciation or faith. Then take a piece of the bread and dip it into the cup and serve yourself. If you are here with family or friends you may come to Holy Communion together and serve each other. Please wait after you receive Holy Communion because the person serving you will pray with you before you return to your seat.

Serving Holy Communion today will be: \_\_\_\_\_

We sing during Holy Communion and maintain our worship. We begin. The Table of Christ is served.

## **SONG:**

### **A silent prayer one might pray during Holy Communion:**

Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the living God, by the will of God and the work of the Holy Spirit your death brought life to the world. By your holy body and blood free us from all our sins and from every evil. Keep us faithful to your teaching, and never let us be parted from you. Amen.



**We Are Sent Forth To Serve**

**Pastor:** The Lord is with you!

**ALL:** And also with you!

**Pastor:** (a prayer is said) .... In the Name of God, the Christ, and the Holy Spirit.

**ALL:** Amen

**ALL:** Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. Amen

(Romans 15:13)

**Pastor:** We go forth in peace and love to serve the Lord ...

**ALL:** ... on our journey into renewal, fresh beginnings, new possibilities, and a renewed embrace of our potential! Thanks be to God.

**SONG:**

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF GIFTS AND DONATIONS**

**General Offering** for the week of August 22 \$88.00. Attendance 4. **We give God thanks and praise for all the gifts given.**

Br. Benedict at the time of Renewal of Vows, June 20, 2021: "Looking forward, I like to say the first twenty-five years were spent on **stabilization, survival, and sustainability**. The second twenty-five years will be spent on growth to help Ray Of Hope **thrive, train, and transplant** this Congregation to new leadership. The founders and foundresses successfully transferred the leadership to a new generation, us, and now we must do the same. I plan to fade into the Congregation and continue providing support to the new leadership. My goal is to leave the Congregation with new leadership, in good standing, and thriving."

**UPCOMING EVENTS**

<https://www.faithstreet.com/search>

Happy Birthday Kaiden – August 24 last Tuesday.

August Council Meeting Friday September 3 at 2:00 p.m.

The next Bible Enrichment will be on this Tuesday September 7, 2021 6:30 p.m.

The semi annual meeting is scheduled for Sunday September 19<sup>th</sup>. More details will be coming.

Choir Rehearsals for World Communion Sunday: Sept 21 and 27 at 7pm at New Beginnings.

=====Climate Change=====

**Climate Change today and tomorrow.**

**In Revelation 16:8-9 we read the Fourth Bowl Judgment will bring scorching heat of the sun. Here is the text: Fourth Bowl: Men Are Scorched**

<sup>8</sup> Then the fourth angel poured out his bowl on the sun, and power was given to him to scorch men with fire. <sup>9</sup> And men were scorched with great heat, and they blasphemed the name of God who has power over these plagues; and they did not repent and give Him glory.

During the last third, roughly, of the seven-year Tribulation Period God will authorize the seven bowl judgments. When the fourth bowl is poured out on the Anti-Christ's kingdom people will contend with a heat wave from the sun as never before experienced. People will not be able to go outside as their skin will be scorched "with fire" (verse 8). Keep in mind this judgment is falling on those who are blaspheming God and following the rule of the Anti-Christ. Believers will be kept safe from all of these judgments.

Years ago I was laughed out of apartment where I was teaching this portion of the Book of Revelation. Friends and Members of Ray Of Hope said this is never going to happen because Science shows the climate would never become that hot. That was in the year 1994. This is twenty-seven years later and we are facing a much warmer experience of our climate .

This week the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change released its annual report.. "As the world's latest and most rigorous scientific assessment of the physical basis of climate change, the report defines changes that are unprecedented in thousands if not hundreds of thousands of years. It emphasizes that there is still time to act, but it must happen immediately." Source: <https://www.un.org/en/climatechange>

=====Who can receive the Holy Spirit=====

**Everyone has access to the Holy Spirit, the gift of God to us.**

Below is a rendering of John chapter 16, verse 7 by the translators of the Amplified Bible that I find particularly enlightening. This verse gives many of the attributes of the Holy Spirit, in English, that are all packed and hidden in the original Greek Word parakletos. Each of the capitalized words in the verse below tells us how the Holy Spirit is ready to help us. All we have to do is ask with a short prayer like this: "Oh God, give me the awareness to know you are with me in all these ways through the Holy Spirit, Amen."

Here is the verse in the Amplified Bible

Jesus taught, saying: "But I tell you the truth, it is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper (Comforter, Advocate, Intercessor-Counselor, Strengthener, Standby) will not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him (the Holy Spirit) to you [to be in close fellowship with you]." John 16:7

Did you realize the Holy Spirit is with you to bring you all those actions of God? If we understand the Real Presence of God is with us in Christ through the powerful ministry of the Holy Spirit, we will experience more confidence, love of ourselves and our neighbors, and be able to feel better about our lived experience.

You can have all this and more. Start with that simple prayer above.

Signed: Pastor Benedict, 3-6-21. Read this on our website.

[Right Click Here.](#)

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## **WHO SHOULD RECEIVE HOLY COMMUNION, THE EUCHARIST, AT RAY OF HOPE CHURCH?**

Everyone is invited to receive Holy Communion, also known as The Eucharist, The Lord's Table, or The Blessed Sacrament at Ray Of Hope Church Of Our Lord Jesus Christ, Inc.

It is not required that you be a member of this Church or any other church, to receive Holy Communion at / or with Ray Of Hope Church.

This Holy Communion is the Table of Jesus Christ, who is really present among us. Jesus invites you to receive Him in this Eucharistic banquet. If this is your first time receiving The Blessed Sacrament, let us know before you receive or right after, so we might pray a special prayer of thanksgiving with you.

Unfortunately, through the centuries many institutional churches have established rules, teachings, and practices that would exclude people from Holy Communion. There has been an almost endless list of reasons to exclude people from the Blessed Sacrament. Yet, together, during the worship service, we recite the very words of Jesus, the Words of Institution, "This is my body. This is my blood," and we rehear Christ present with us saying: "Take this, all of you and eat; Take this all of you and drink" of this gift.

I have thought about this extensively and have decided to take these words "Take this, all of you.." as a command to the Church to give, and bring, the Eucharistic Gift to everyone who will receive. This approach also requires us to teach people about this gift. I have stated in other places, **it is uniquely and deliberately the work of Christ in His Church** to offer the

necessary education, guidance, and practices that help people live a life centered and purposed on finding and sharing the Will of God. The Lord's Table is central in that life.

The Eucharist belongs to the Church. The Blessed Sacrament is Christ in us, through us, and with us; made known in the breaking of the Bread of Life and drinking of the Cup of Salvation. We are to take this gift to the whole world.

We begin by inviting those who are on the fringe of society, those who have been pushed aside, those who are poor, who are not accepted, who are sick, who need God's help in special ways. We welcome and bring the Eucharist to everyone who has been told they cannot receive it by other Denominations. In conclusion, to all persons who have ever been told "no you cannot" go to Communion in any other church, hear us, "yes you can" at Ray Of Hope. All are welcome. Or as we like to say as one of our mottos, when we quote Fr. Bartholomew J. O'Brien; "You are as welcome here as Christ Himself."

Come to the Table of the Lord. There is a place set for you too. (Excerpted from the Pastoral Report given at the Annual Meeting 34 on January 28, 2018 by Pastor Br. Shawn F. Benedict, updated 3-6-21)

Visit our page on the Sacraments. [Right Click Here.](#)

See this in a PDF format from our website and share it with others or download it to your computer / device. [Right Click Here.](#)



The following information, published by the Secular Coalition for America, is included by me, personally, as part of my response to the Ray Of Hope Church Statement of Purpose. Ray Of Hope has not endorsed the Secular

Coalition For America in any way, officially or implied. I am including this information here to assist people who may want to take action now to encourage their members of the Senate of the United States to know the facts and identify the false information being put forth in the hearings that are happening now on the Equality Act. SIGNED: Rev. Br. Shawn F. Benedict, Pastor, 3-20-21 7:00 p.m.



Dear Friend,

Last month the House passed the [Equality Act \(H.R. 5\)](#). For those unaware, this important legislation would amend existing civil rights laws, such as the *Civil Rights Act of 1964*, to include sexual orientation, and gender identity as protected characteristics under law. The bill also expands federal non-discrimination protections regarding discrimination based on race, color, national origin, **Religion**, sex, sexual orientation or gender identity in public settings, and protects against sex-based discrimination in government services and federally-funded programs.

This week, the Senate held its first ever hearing on the [Equality Act](#) and as expected, the debate was heated. It seems opponents of the bill (Senate Republicans) are promoting [several misconceptions](#) about its purpose and scope which include:

- *"The Equality Act would destroy religious freedom in this country."*
  - **NOT TRUE.** Freedom of Religion is already protected by the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution. Nothing in the *Equality Act* would change that. The bill simply extends those rights that most vulnerable groups are already afforded to those who have been denied them, such as the **LGBTQ community**. In fact, the bill actually protects freedom of Religion by preventing the imposing of one's Religion upon another.
- *"The Equality Act will make athletics unfair for females."*
  - **NOT TRUE.** Schools across the nation already have policies in place to ensure a level playing field for all students, and they are working. Additionally, except for a very small percentage, most students who participate in high school sports do not continue on with their athletic endeavours after high school. The possibility that perhaps one or two transgender students in

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an entire student body would ruin that opportunity for another is almost nonexistent. *Little IX* is extremely important in regards to girls athletics, and the bottom line is that **nothing in the Equality Act changes that**. Instead, we should be calling for increased funding for girls athletics.

- "The Equality Act will allow men to harass women in public restrooms."
  - **NOT TRUE**. We already have laws in place to prevent such acts, and the *Equality Act* does nothing to change that. Additionally, **21 states** have had similar nondiscrimination laws on the books for decades now and they have worked, as there have been no increases in public safety incidents in bathrooms since they were codified.



### [Tell the Senate to Support the Equality Act - Secular Coalition for America](#)

It is important that we dispel these untrue myths about this legislation, which seeks only to provide the same protections that most of us already are afforded to those who are not. We must always push back against these false narratives whenever they are presented. Only by doing so will we be able to do away with the myths and focus on the facts of the issue, which is equal treatment under the law for everyone, regardless of race, Religion, gender, sexual identity, or sexual orientation.

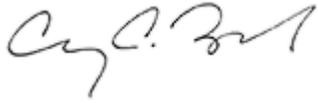
If you would like to contact your Senators in Washington to tell them that you would appreciate their support of the *Equality Act*, you can do so by clicking the link provided below. We are closer than we have ever been before, and now is the time to voice your support!

[\*\*Please click here to tell your Senators in Washington to support the Equality Act!\*\*](#)

To be a part of our team, and celebrate with us when we secure the passage of the Equality Act in the Senate, please click the "**I want to help**" button below. Every dollar goes to representing you on Capitol Hill, and strengthening the wall of separation between Religion and government. With *your* help, we can make even greater progress on the issues we care about!

[I want to help!](#)

Your advocate on the Hill,



Casey C. Brinck

*Director of Policy & Government Affairs  
Secular Coalition for America*



### *Ray Of Hope Church Weekly Schedule*

**Elmira Worship**- Sunday 10:30 AM – 380 W. First St. Parsonage/Monastery .  
Join us live on SKYPE: rayofhope26 is our contact name. Sign on by 10:15 AM.

**Syracuse Worship**- looking for a host in Syracuse. For more information  
[Click Here.](#)

**Bible Enrichment**- Tuesday 6:30-8 PM-380 W. First St. Parsonage /Monastery.  
Or Join us live on SKYPE: rayofhope26 is our contact name. Sign on by 6:15  
PM. [Click Here.](#)

**\*\* to call the Pastor: Rev. Shawn Benedict: 607-280-0374\***



### Ray Of Hope Church Statement Of Purpose

In the Spirit of God, and in the footsteps of Christ Jesus, we the Faith Community at Ray Of Hope Church commit to:

- **guide** and welcome all people to the Free Gift of Salvation in Christ Jesus, with a God-ordained celebration of all sexual orientations, and gender expressions, with an open ministry to persons affected by or infected with HIV/AIDS, their families and friends,
- **declare** and openly assert the truth that same-sex relationships, founded and fostered in God-centered love, are holy and blessed, and in fact originate by the work of the Holy Spirit; and,