

# Whisperings



## Contents

Pastor Scott ..... 1-2

Out and About ..... 3

Sermon Series ..... 4

Church Event ..... 5

Office Notes ..... 6

Meetings & News ..... 7-8

Adult SS Classes ..... 9-11

Hope Preschool ..... 12-13

Birthdays, Anniversaries and Remembered with Love ... 14

Thank You Notes ..... 15

Wild Church ..... 16

Donations & Assistance .. 17

Recycling ..... 18

Word Search Puzzle ..... 19

Clyde’s Nature Note ..... 20

## A Word from Pastor Scott

### The Greatest Love

Dear friends of Hope Church,

As we begin this new year of 2025, we are given the opportunity to reflect on the fresh start that a new year brings. It’s a time to set goals, renew our hearts, and realign our lives with God’s purpose. As we approach Valentine’s Day, we are reminded of the greatest love story ever told—the love that Christ has for us, which is the foundation of our faith and our identity in Him.

Galatians 2:20 declares, “I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me.” This is not just a statement, but a call to live fully in union with Christ—one heartbeat, one purpose, one life that He has given us. In this new year, let us remember that Christ’s love has already made a way for us to start anew. We are invited to live in His love and to reflect His life in all that we do.

When we say we are crucified with Christ, we acknowledge that the same nails that were driven into Jesus on the cross are driven into us. We are called to take up our cross daily, to die to self, and to embrace the new identity we have in Him. “The old life is gone; a new life has begun.” (2 Cor. 5:17b) This is the wonderful truth of the gospel: we are reborn in Christ!

— CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

## Hope United Methodist Church

3474 Rothsville Road, Ephrata, PA 17522 (717) 738-3774

hopeumc@ptd.net ■ www.hopeumcephrata.org

www.facebook.com/hopeumcephrata

Worship 10 a.m. ■ Sunday School 11:15 a.m.

But the story doesn't end at the cross. Just as Jesus was resurrected, we too rise to new life in Him. We die to sin, but we rise with Christ, empowered by His resurrection. We no longer live for ourselves but live by faith in the Son of God, who loved us so much that He gave His life for us. His love is not just a feeling—it is a transformative power that makes us new and strengthens us each day.

As we reflect on this, we can't help but marvel at the depths of God's love. 1 John 4:10 says, "This is love: not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins." God loved us first, and His love is the ultimate expression of sacrifice. It is the love that gives without expecting in return, a love that makes us righteous before God, not through our works but through the finished work of Jesus on the cross.

In this new year, let us not forget that grace is not cheap. Christ paid the price that we could never pay, fulfilling the law we could never keep. And as we walk in His love, we are reminded of Galatians 3:13: "Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us."

So, as we celebrate Valentine's Day, let us celebrate the love that never fails—the love of Christ that transforms us from the inside out. May we remember that the love we are called to reflect is not just a fleeting emotion, but a sacrificial, eternal love. This year, as we live out our faith, may we do so with a renewed sense of the depth of God's love and grace, living as those who have been crucified with Christ and raised to new life in Him.

With love and blessings,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Scott", followed by a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Pastor Scott

## ► **Out and About:**

Pastor Scott believes, "Opportunity is everywhere for true mission and evangelism." His faith and spirit guides him to get 'out and about' in the community. Each month we highlight some of his recent ministries.

**On Thursday, January 9, we had our Ephrata Ministerium meeting at Bethany Slavic Church in Ephrata. Executive Pastor Constantine Resnik hosted and the guest speaker was Jonathan Shirk, Pastor of Jerusalem Church in Manheim.**

**Pastor Scott and Executive Pastor Constantine Resnik**



**Pastor Jonathan Shirk**



**On Saturday, January 11, Pastor Scott spoke at City Gate to the Main Point Men of Faith Group.**



If you would like to suggest a future 'Out and About' segment for the Whisperings, contact Pastor Scott at (267) 467-4027 or email [hopeumcpastorsscott@gmail.com](mailto:hopeumcpastorsscott@gmail.com).

## ► **SERMON SERIES: “LESSONS FOR THE JOURNEY”**

- January 12 ..... Part 1 - First Sunday after the Epiphany  
..... R & R (Luke 3:15-17,21-22)
- January 19 ..... Part 2 - Second Sunday after the Epiphany - Worship Service Canceled
- January 26 ..... Part 3 - Third Sunday after the Epiphany  
..... Meaningful Change (John 2:1-11)
- February 2 ..... Part 4 - Fourth Sunday after the Epiphany  
..... Oh, Well (Luke 4:14-21)
- February 9 ..... Part 5 - Fifth Sunday after the Epiphany  
..... Focused Vision (Luke 4:21-30)
- February 16 ..... Part 6 - Sixth Sunday after the Epiphany  
..... Surprise (Luke 5:1-11)
- February 23 ..... Part 7 - Seventh Sunday after the Epiphany  
..... Points to Ponder (Luke 6:17-26)
- March 2 ..... Part 8 - Transfiguration Sunday  
..... Mission Goes On (Luke 9:28-36)

# Savor The Seasons Dinner- December 7



# Office Notes

## ***FOR A USEFUL CALENDAR***

Please fill out the yellow forms on the Administrative Assistant's desk to schedule meetings.

## ***UPDATES***

Please inform the church office whenever you set your next meeting date or select your next book or topic for your Sunday school or study. Thank you!

## ***DEADLINES***

Please submit all items for the bulletin by **12 p.m. Thursdays** and by the **15th of the month** for the next Whisperings.

## ***FLOWERS & BULLETINS***

*Contact Sandy Muckle if you want to sponsor altar flowers less than a week in advance.*

You may share an altar flower order with a friend, so that each person keeps one bouquet of flowers after the service and the total price still equals \$50. Two dedications may go in the bulletin.

**Sponsor Flowers - \$50.00**

Available: February 2, 9, 16 and 23

**Sponsor Bulletins - \$10.00**

Available: February 2, 9 and 23

## ***CAN WE HELP?***

For financial assistance, please contact Don Miller at (610) 858-9958

## **Updates to the Directory**

**Dick & Donna Imhoff (New Address)**

**Keystone Villa at Ephrata**

**100 North State Street, Apt. 333 - Ephrata, PA 17522**

**Jill Curley (new email) [Jhughes1211@gmail.com](mailto:Jhughes1211@gmail.com)**

**Janet Wenk (new email) [janet53w@yahoo.com](mailto:janet53w@yahoo.com)**

Please notify the office of any changes to your contact information.

## **Hope UMC Staff and Office Hours**

**Pastor: Rev. Scott Dorn ■ Administrative Assistant: Laura Luciano**

**Director of Music: Lisa Helock ■ Organist: Dave Luck ■ Sexton: Doreen Deamer**

**Tuesday - Friday ■ 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.**

**[hopeumc@ptd.net](mailto:hopeumc@ptd.net) ■ [www.hopeumcephrata.org](http://www.hopeumcephrata.org) ■ [www.facebook.com/hopeumcephrata](http://www.facebook.com/hopeumcephrata)**

# Meetings and News

## February Dates

- 2 Fourth Sunday after the Epiphany  
Holy Communion  
Groundhog Day
- 6 42nd Anniversary of Hope Church on  
Rothsville Road
- 9 Fifth Sunday after the Epiphany
- 14 Valentine's Day
- 15 Newsletter Deadline
- 16 Sixth Sunday after the Epiphany  
Fellowship Sunday
- 17 President's Day Holiday
- 22 West District Tools for Ministry at  
Salem UMC in Manheim
- 23 Seventh Sunday after the Epiphany

**Facility Usage Forms** - Updated Facility Usage Forms are now available! Anyone planning to utilize the facility needs to complete a form and return it to the Administrative Assistant for approval. Thank you!

## Weekly Events

### Bells of Hope

Wednesdays at 6 p.m.  
Sanctuary

### Senior Choir

Wednesdays at 7:15 p.m.  
Choir Room

### Monday Night Bible Study

Mondays at 7 p.m.  
Conference Room  
Room 226

### Women's Book & Bible Study

Thursdays at 10 a.m.  
Room 221

### Men of Hope

Fellowship Hall  
(First Friday of each month is  
at Gus's restaurant.)

## Fellowship Sunday

(the 3rd Sunday each month)

Please donate snacks/drinks to  
share with your fellow worshipers.

**February 16**

March 16

April 20

May 18

## Church Administration Meetings

All meetings are at 6:30 p.m. unless specified.

WPCM - Monday, February 3

Worship Planning - Thursday, February 6

Trustees - Monday, February 10

Finance - Tuesday, February 11 at 7 p.m.

SPRC - Tuesday, February 18

## **One Great Year of Sharing – Hurricane Relief Fund**

The donation jar is in the Sanctuary. Our **January 26** total was **\$523.00**.  
Thank you.

## **5TH Sunday Giving**

On December 29, we collected **\$400.00** for the Hurricane Relief Fund.  
Thank you!

## **Offering Envelopes**

Envelopes will only be available in the basket in the Sanctuary. Please remember to identify your giving by **writing your name on the envelope**.

Thank you! Using envelopes is a big help for our Financial Secretary, Amy Trella. Thank you.

## **Praise and Prayer Cards**

Praise and prayer cards are now back in the pews.  
Thank you.

## **Mission Giving**

The following organizations received money and donations from Hope UMC in 2024:

Align Ministries  
City Gate  
EASS - Coats  
EASS - Food  
EASS - Giving Tree  
EASS - Money  
Good Samaritan Services  
Gretna Glen  
Harvest Home  
Hawaii (Maui Fires)  
Power Packs  
Samaritans Purse  
Stacey Everline  
Tornado and Flooding Donations  
Water Street Ministries

## **Notice**

**February 15** is the deadline for the March newsletter.  
Thank you.

## **Giving Tree**

Thank you to everyone who donated to the Ephrata Area Social Services (EASS) Giving Tree this holiday season. Three area families had a special Christmas with gifts, food, and gift cards. Great job, Hope!



## **Attendance Registration**

Hope has reintroduced attendance registration. Please register your attendance in the booklet placed on a table in the lobby. This will be made available every Sunday.  
Thank you.

## **Assistance Fund**

Due to needs within our congregation and in our community, the Assistance Fund is nearly depleted. Please consider a donation to the fund so that we can continue to help those in need. You can donate by placing your donation in the collection plate. Please remember to mark your envelopes accordingly. Any questions, see Don Miller. Thank you.



# Adult Sunday Schools & Studies

## **Seekers** - Bruce Tucker

Sundays 11:15 a.m. in Fellowship Hall

***The Book of Romans*** by Jada Edwards

This eight session study explores the book of Romans and explains that the gospels provide clarity for everything we need in this life.

All are invited and welcome for whatever weeks you are able to participate.



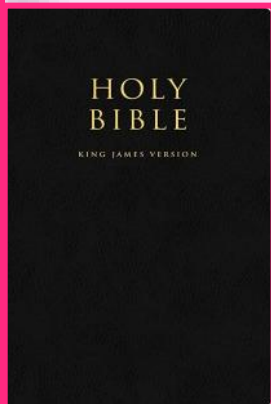
## **The Way** (*a name given to the earliest followers/disciples of Jesus*) - Rev. Kevin Readman

Sundays 11:15 a.m. in the Conference Room (Room 226)

***The Books of 1 and 2 Thessalonians***

Questions and request for a book should go to Kevin Readman at [kevin\\_readman@yahoo.com](mailto:kevin_readman@yahoo.com) or 717-203-8452 or in person.

All are invited and welcome for whatever weeks you are able to participate. Let us grow in spirit and knowledge together.



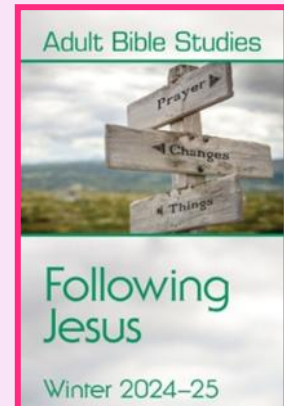
## Wide Awake - Melissa Readman

Sundays 11:15 a.m. in Room 221

### **Winter Adult Bible Studies - Following Jesus** by Laura Wittman

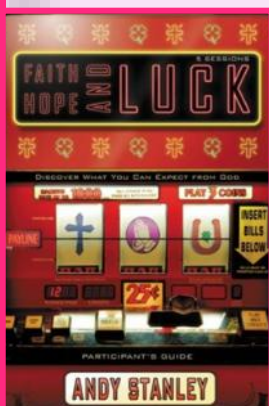
Cultivate a deeper relationship with God through *Adult Bible Studies*. This resource, endorsed by the Curriculum Resources Committee of The United Methodist Church, offers a year-round, weekly Bible study plan for Sunday school classes and other small groups.

Each weekly lesson offers background and focal Scriptures, key verses, and doctrinally sound and relevant biblical interpretation and application in a readable font size. Annual plans provide comprehensive coverage of the Bible, special lessons during the church seasons of Advent/Christmas and Lent/Easter, and suggestions for developing spiritual practices such as prayer, worship, community, and service, among many others. *Adult Bible Studies* is a reliable companion and guide for learning and growing in Christian faith.



## Monday Night Bible Study - Bruce Tucker

Mondays at 7 p.m. in the Conference Room (Room 226)



### **Faith, Hope and Luck** by Andy Stanley

This accessible Participant's Guide will enrich the experience of anyone using the Faith, Hope, and Luck individual and small group DVD study. It adds depth to Andy Stanley's lively, 5-message program on the transformational power of faith and the need for maintaining one's confidence in Jesus Christ amid the ups and downs of daily life.

## Women's Book & Bible Study - Sandy Schmid

Thursdays at 10 a.m. in Room 221

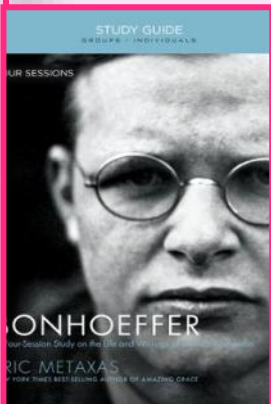
***Seizing the Moments*** by James Moore

Beloved author James W. Moore returns in the revival of his 1988 classic. Readers will appreciate Moore's distinctive style as he relates stories, anecdotes, and examples of people who learned to "seize moments" -- who turned opportunities and treasured moments into realized dreams. Each chapter features a related passage of Scripture. This edition also includes a study guide with questions ideal for personal reflection or for group discussion. Readers will discover encouragement and guidance for better living as they find themselves becoming more courageous, more willing to "seize the moments", and more aware of God's grace.



## Men of Hope Book & Bible Study

Fridays at 7:30 a.m. in Fellowship Hall



***BONHOEFFER - The Life and Writings of Dietrich Bonhoeffer*** by Eric Metaxas

*New York Times* best-selling author Eric Metaxas will help you discover the major themes of Dietrich Bonhoeffer's writing and speaking and how he not only helped transform an entire faith community in Germany during World War II, but how his beliefs continue to impact the Christian faith of people throughout the world today.

*(First Friday of each month is at Gus's restaurant)*



## ► Hope Preschool Prattle

Happy New Year from Hope Preschool!

The holidays went much too fast, but the kids and staff had a nice long break and came back to work hard in 2025. Our Pre-K classes are working hard to prepare for their Kindergarten evaluations that are coming up. All the classrooms have been talking about winter and creating beautiful snowflakes, snowmen, mittens and hats. There are penguins waddling through all the hallways and hibernation has been the unit of study for science. They've also been able to enjoy snowball fights and ice skating in the bike room. We are making the best of the cold temps and embracing everything winter has to offer.



The classes have also been busy preparing for the Open House/Art Show that is March 10. The theme this year is "Colors of the Rainbow". Each class chose a color, and all of their projects will reflect that color. One project from each class will be combined to create a beautiful rainbow display reflecting how when we come together, we can create something amazing. Please plan to stop down to admire all their hard work.

With the help of Jim and Jeanette Pitman, and Pastor Scott, we have been able to introduce a music program to our Pre-K classes. On Monday mornings our 4/5 year olds are blessed to participate in the class that will teach them all of the fundamentals of music. The first class was held on January 13 and the children had a really good time learning about rhythm and the song Kum ba yah.

Believe it or not, it is almost time to open registration for the 2025/2026 school year. Our in-house families will be able to start on February 24, and it will open to the public on March 10.

Welcome to 2025. May your year be happy and healthy!

Mrs. B

For more information, visit our website at <https://www.hopepreschoolephrata.com/>

Follow us on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/hopepreschoolephrata/>

# Preschool Pictures



## February Birthdays

- 1 Ron Raezer
- 2 Brent Smith
- 4 Curt Kline  
Lori Overly
- 5 David Luck
- 6 Jodi Seifert
- 12 Tom Bear
- 14 Sandy Schmid
- 21 Bill Peters
- 22 Esta Allabach
- 24 Isaac Deamer
- 27 Kathy Brenton

CARD SHOWER  
CARD SHOWER



## Early March Birthdays

- 6 Jim Helock
- 8 Kelley Lindberg  
Shirley Park
- 14 Christine Heft  
Bruce Tucker

## February Anniversaries

- 1 Jack & Doris Smith celebrate 34 years together!

## Early March Anniversaries

- 1 Charlie & Betty Anderson celebrate 74 years together!
- 16 Tony & Judy Hachkowski celebrate 53 years together!
- 28 Dan & Raelene Wickerham celebrate 9 years together!

## Remembered with Love

### December 12

Jody Klopp - husband of Lisa Klopp

### December 19

Tom Wenzel - husband of Diana Wenzel

### December 21

Dick Hopkins - friend of Tom & Ivy Texter

### January 19

Elizabeth (Betty) Stoll - † Member

### January 25

Evelyn (Evie) Shaar -- † Member

# Thank you notes. . .

- ❖ **Thank you** - to all who participated in Hope's Crafts, Homemade/Handmade and Baked Goods Sale on November 16. We collected a total of **\$435.00** All proceeds went towards Hope's general fund- Fellowship Events Planning Committee
- ❖ **Thank you** - to all who volunteered and bought the Pennsylvania Dutch Chicken Pot Pie. We sold **66** quarts and collected a total of **\$660.00**. All proceeds went towards Hope's general fund - Fellowship Events Planning Committee
- ❖ **A Big Thank you** - to Sandy Muckle for donating all the ingredients and her time for the Pennsylvania Dutch Chicken Pot Pie Sale – Fellowship Events Planning Committee
- ❖ **Thank you** - we collected **9** Christmas Child Shoeboxes for Samaritan's Purse - Sandy Schmid
- ❖ **Thank you** - to those who have given meals and to the people who are signed up for other meals - Martha Smith
- ❖ **Thank you** - very much for all the gifts and cards. God Bless every one - Doreen Deamer
- ❖ **Thank you** - for all the prayers for Rick, he is doing better - Doreen Deamer
- ❖ **Thank you** - to my Hope Church family for the prayers, phone calls and cards during my illness. I love you and miss you too - Donna Imhoff
- ❖ **Communion Stewards** - Jim & Jeanette Pitman have graciously agreed to serve as Hope's Communion Stewards.
- ❖ **Thank you** - to all who participated in The Giving Tree. This year Hope sponsored three families - Sandy Schmid
- ❖ **Thank you** - for all the Christmas cards and treats - Charlie & Betty Anderson
- ❖ **Thank you** - to our Hope Church family for the beautiful Christmas cards. The party mix was wonderful also - Barry & Shirley Kreider
- ❖ **Thank you** - for the Christmas gifts and treats - Laura Luciano
- ❖ **Thank you** - The Christmas card recipients were excited and very appreciative to receive a bag of cards and treats. Also, thank you to all those who participated in giving cards to the homebound - Sandy Schmid
- ❖ **Thank you** - for all the prayers and support - Dave Luck
- ❖ **Thank you** - for the birthday and Christmas cards and treats - Sissy Vierling
- ❖ **Thank you** - the total collected for the hurricane relief during the 5th Sunday giving on December 29 was **\$400.00**.
- ❖ **Thank you** - Hope Church Family, for your kindness and generosity during this Christmas season. The gifts, cards and heartfelt gestures I have received are truly appreciated, but more than that, I am touched by the love and care you continuously show me and my family. It is an honor to serve alongside such a wonderful and faithful congregation. Your prayers, support, and the way you live out Christ's love in our community are gifts I treasure more than words can express. May God bless each of you richly in this New Year, and may we continue to grow together in faith and fellowship - Pastor Scott
- ❖ **Thank you** - for the bag of Christmas cards and the Chex mix treat - Eleanor Drybread
- ❖ **Thank you** - for the Christmas gift that I received from the congregation. It was truly a blessing! It has also been a blessing to hear your kind words about the Music Ministry here at Hope. It has been my honor to serve the church and the Lord through music, and I truly appreciate all of the people that have volunteered their time and talents to make this ministry possible - Lisa Helock
- ❖ **Thank you** - for remembering me at this time of the year - Kathy Bartels
- ❖ **Thank you** - very much for the gift, it was very much appreciated - Doreen Deamer

# Wild Church

## Partnership with Hope Meadow

Here are words to embrace all winterlong, with thanks to Rev. Beth Jones of the Susquehanna Conference who leads Deep Green Journey in the Loyalsock area of Pennsylvania. We shared them at January's Wild Church gathering; may it now focus your contemplation:

The invitation remains, to press  
our ears against the bark or the soil,  
to slow our breath, our heartbeat.  
There is deep work here.

Roots releasing, collecting,  
Nurturing quiet beings and  
Pathways of green.  
Water expanding and contracting,  
breathing with the earth, creating space.

Bidding here in the hidden  
stillness  
to sense more than to see  
the deeper, softer gift rising within.

To sink into the dark earth within  
and tend the forgotten places,  
creating space for redemption, repair and renewal  
in the quiet nursing of life.

## Looking ahead -

We'll not gather in Feb but keep alert for an announcement for the March date, to be led by Linda Spotts, and back in daylight time at 5pm.

In April , we'll gather on the 13<sup>th</sup> – Palm Sunday – to continue walking as followers of Jesus.

May's gathering will be on the 18<sup>th</sup>.

Our gatherings include reflections, observations, poetry, and your input!

Wild Church is part of a growing movement in which we seek to recover our natural "roots" and take worship outside into our first and greatest sanctuary: creation itself. Our gatherings are not traditional worship services in an outdoor setting, but rather experiences that recognize the natural environment itself as a participant. We learn to identify God's presence and activity in all things.



# Donations & Assistance

## ▶ **City Gate Needs:**

Kitchen size garbage bags, paper towels, napkins, plastic spoons, toilet paper, paper plates and individually wrapped snacks, adult backpacks, winter gloves, warm socks, coats, winter hats, scarves and blankets. Thank you!

## ▶ **Ephrata Area Social Services Needs:**

Cereal, canned meat, hearty soups, baking items, spaghetti sauce, pasta side dishes, toilet paper, paper towels, shampoo, conditioner, body wash and laundry soap. Thank you!

## ▶ **Good Samaritan Services Needs:**

Paper towels (high need), twin sheet sets and comforters (high need), pillows, twin/queen winter blankets, cleaning supplies, laundry detergent and gift cards (\$25 gas, groceries, etc.). Thank you!

## **Ephrata Area Social Services (EASS)**

Please place your donations in the basket under the coat rack in the lobby.

Thank you for your continued support of EASS and the work they do for our local community.

## **Good Samaritan**

Please place your donations in the basket under the coat rack in the lobby.

Thank you for your continued support!

# Recycling

Thank you to all members and friends who continued dropping off recyclable items behind the church garage throughout 2024.

Over 5,000 lbs. of various metals—such as lamps, stoves, TVs, aluminum and steel chairs, cages, fencing, sheet metal, door and window frames, aluminum cans, lawn mowers, electric motors, plumbing fixtures, copper wire, and pipe—were broken down, separated, and taken to Ephrata Recycling on Fulton Street.

In total, these efforts raised nearly \$1,100.00, including \$175.00 from Facebook Marketplace sales. These funds were used for various purchases supporting the church and WPCM.

Thank you for contributing items and helping turn them into valuable resources!

## Important Notes:

- Steel (non-aluminum) food cans are not recyclable through Fulton Recycling—please place them in your own recycling bin.
- Avoid dropping off plastic, plastic bags, or paper boxes unless they contain the listed acceptable items.

If you're unsure about what can be recycled, feel free to call or text 717-575-4287 or email [hachkowski@dejazzd.com](mailto:hachkowski@dejazzd.com).

Recycling Summary 2024 and since 01/01/2014		
Material	lbs in 2024	Total lbs 2014 - 2024
Steel	3780	67,005
Aluminum cans	384	3,235
Elec motors and transformers	328	4,436
Refrigerant compressors	41	1,328
Batteries	19	922
Lead	0	206
Copper (pipe, bare wiring)	12	718
Stainless steel	14	324
Circuit boards	15	460
Copper wiring (insulated)	71	1,169
Radiators (a/c coils etc)	10	690
Aluminum (siding, sheet, frames)	166	4,446
Brass (faucets, shells, other)	41	646
Ballast (electrical)	176	1,932
Grand Total weight in pounds	5057	87,517

Proceeds by year	
2014 to 2023	\$12,784.45
2024	\$1,085.49
Total 2014 - 2024	\$13,869.94

Disbursements	2024
WPCM petty cash (Al cans)	\$214.95
Sanctuary recessed led lights, bell led lights, door stops and wedges, misc	\$507.30
1 robot Roomba vacuum (Fellowship Hall for WPCM)	\$267.99
Mower blades	\$101.73
Total	\$1,091.97

Previous 2014 to 2023	\$12,313.66
Grand total 2014 - 2024	\$13,405.63

# Valentine's Day Word Search



Can you find the words hidden in the puzzle?

C	S	F	L	O	W	E	R	S	O	L	D
C	N	L	L	M	H	C	O	L	K	U	U
J	A	R	R	O	W	A	O	F	I	R	S
F	W	R	A	T	V	R	O	L	S	I	V
V	F	Y	D	T	L	E	N	A	S	C	A
B	E	J	U	S	F	O	C	K	E	K	L
L	B	B	M	N	T	H	U	G	S	O	E
E	R	D	G	S	K	H	I	N	G	T	N
C	U	P	I	D	S	E	E	T	S	E	T
F	A	E	F	Z	E	C	T	A	R	I	I
D	R	C	T	N	F	O	V	L	R	K	N
H	Y	S	C	H	O	C	O	L	A	T	E

**FLOWERS**

**GIFT**

**CARDS**

**KISSES**

**CHOCOLATE**

**HUGS**

**HEART**

**ARROW**

**VALENTINE**

**LOVE**

**CUPID**

**FEBRUARY**

# Suburban Sharpies and Coopers

by Clyde McMillan-Gamber

Over the years, I've seen sharp-shinned hawks and Cooper's hawks in our New Holland neighborhood, which adds excitement to it. These look-alike raptors are closely related and mostly prey on birds. Only size and the ends of their tails distinguish them. Sharpies are blue jay-sized and the ends of their tails are squared. Cooper's are crow-sized and have rounded ends to their tails.

Because they are different sizes, they seek different prey. Sharpies mostly catch sparrow-sized birds, while Coop's go after dove-sized victims. Their catching different kinds of birds reduces competition for food between them, which benefits both these birds of prey.

Sharp-shinned and Cooper's hawks are perfectly built for what they do. Both kinds are stream-lined, which helps in swift, maneuverable flight after panicky, feathered prey. And both have powerful wing muscles, and long tails for steering among tree limbs after their meals.

Sharp-shins have never nested in my neighborhood, but through the years, a few migrated through, or wintered here. One October day, a sharpy perched on a weeping willow tree in our yard and watched for house sparrows to show themselves. But no sparrow did and the hawk moved on to seek prey elsewhere.

In January of another year, a sharp-shin caught a house sparrow in a snowfall and ate it on top of the snow on our back lawn, as the snow continued to fall. With a pair of binoculars, I watched the sharpy dine. Feathers flew away on the wind across the snow cover as the hawk ingested the sparrow. When that raptor finished its meal and flew away, I saw only the sparrow's beak and a foot, both of which quickly became buried in snow. Snow covered everything, as if nothing happened.

Cooper's hawks have raised young in my New Holland neighborhood for years. And they ambush mourning doves, house sparrows, blue jays, other kinds of birds, and gray squirrels at times. Being larger hawks, it's exciting to see them flashing through a suburban neighborhood of taller trees and landing in one of them to watch for doves, starlings and other types of birds. I've seen them diving with great speed after doves, and, over the years, I've witnessed a couple of Coop's catching a dove and landing in a tree with its meal. Feathers float to the ground as the raptor dines. I've also seen Cooper's clambering swiftly through bushes after sparrows, which zip out of the shrubbery and gone to other sheltering bushes.

Created by God, as all life on Earth is, sharp-shinned and Cooper's hawks are perfectly built for what they do to make a living, as all life is. These elegant birds of prey are streamlined, and powerful fliers, to snare fast-flying victims. They are intriguing to experience.



**Sharpie Hawk**



**Cooper Hawk**

**Check out Clyde's nature blog: [NaturesWondersByClyde.blogspot.com](http://NaturesWondersByClyde.blogspot.com).  
Each short story is like taking a walk with your very own park naturalist!**