



HOPE UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST

Hopeful Connections

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Joy to the World!

*Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth;
break forth into joyous song and sing praises.*

*Sing praises to the Lord with the lyre,
with the lyre and the sound of melody.*

*With trumpets and the sound of the horn
make a joyful noise before the King, the Lord.*

~Psalm 98:4-6

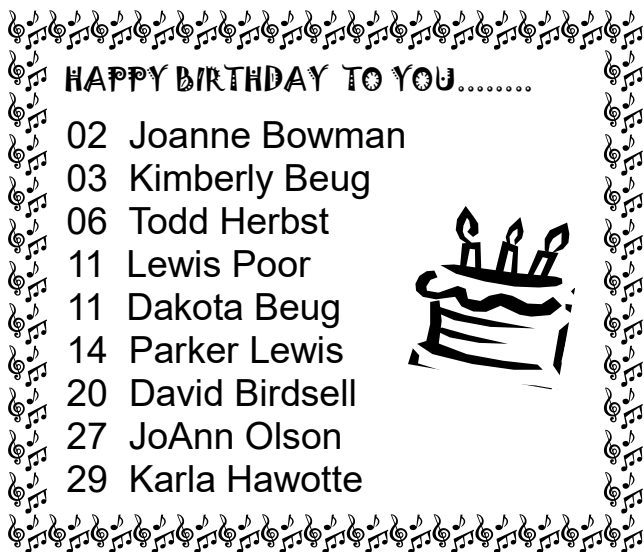


In what some people might call an early Christmas miracle, I have approved the playing of Christmas music in the Poor House before Thanksgiving! I've been trying to figure out what has happened that could have brought me to break this previously unbreakable rule. Maybe it is because it has been so snowy and cold? Maybe it is all the Christmas displays that started appearing even before Halloween? No, none of these things have brought Christmas joy early to our home. Honestly, what has sent me, happily, over the Christmas music edge, has been the excitement of planning worship and our programs for Advent and Christmas at Hope UCC. Throughout Advent, our worship services will focus on theme of Joy coming to us and we will use a beloved Christmas hymn to guide us.

"Joy to the World" turns 300 this year. Composer Isaac Watt's interpretation of Psalm 98 invites us to sing a "new song"—and it is a powerful cosmic performance of all creation being renewed and freed. Rather than "joy" being yet another word for "happiness," we will discover that the depths of joy can be found especially in the midst of suffering, the work of justice, and the presence of compassion—all part of the coming of Jesus to this world and a message the world still so desperately needs. Each week as we light a candle on our Advent wreath, we will sing a song of waiting for joy to come. Throughout worship our prayers, mediations, and hymns will reflect the many ways we experience joy in our lives through the wondrous gift of God's love. Our handbell choir has beautiful music to offer during worship on December 15. Our youth and children are excited to offer a special program on December 22 during worship. We will have a special service on the afternoon of December 15 where we will hold sacred space for grief in the midst of the joy that surrounds us. This Blue Christmas service is an important time for many of us who carry the sadness of loss as we explore ways to find joy in our sorrow. We will have an opportunity for faith formation with two Tuesday evening Bible studies as well.

As we enter into Advent together, may God's joy be experienced in all we do and may God's love be known to all through us.

Yours in the Advent journey,
Pastor Santina



Thank you to Trustees who served coffee hour for the month of November. Ruth Circle will serve for the month of December.

Average church attendance for November 90

December Scripture

Dec. 1	Isaiah 2:1-5 Matthew 24:36-44
Dec. 8	Isaiah 11:1-10 Psalm 72:1-7, 18-19 Matthew 3:1-12
Dec. 15	Isaiah 35:1-10 Psalm 146:5-10 Luke 1:46-55
Dec. 22	Children's Program
Dec. 29	Isaiah 63:7-9 Matthew 2:13-23

December Sunday School Schedule - Baby Jesus

Class	Dec. 1 Sunday 1	Dec. 8 Sunday 2	Dec. 15 Sunday 3	Dec. 22 Sunday 4	Dec. 29 Sunday 5
Lower Elementary Pre-K, K, 1	Large Group	Practice for Christmas Program	Practice for Christmas Program	Christmas Program	No Sunday School
Upper Elementary Grade 2, 3, 4, 5					

Hope Book Club

Hope Book Club does not meet in December. See you in January!

Prayer Shawl Group

November has been a very busy month for the Prayer Shawl Group. In addition to beautiful prayer shawls, we have been knitting and crocheting warm scarves for the Humility of Mary Shelter and colorful blanket squares for Moline Library's Project Linus. Come Join the fun! We meet in Fellowship Hall the second Wednesday of every month from 2:30 to-4:30; all skill levels are welcome. Want to be involved in Hope's newest ministry but don't knit or crochet? Donations of yarn (800 yds of soft yarn with the same dye lot number, all found on the label) or cash to purchase yarn are always appreciated.



Hope UCC Annual Meeting Notice: January 19th, 2020

On behalf of Hope UCC's Church Council I would like to announce that our annual meeting will be held immediately after the church service on January 19th, 2020. Church Council, Trustees, Treasurer, all Committees, Auxiliary Organizations and Church Staff need to have their annual reports turned in to Pam in the church office no later than January 5. Bob Tallitsch, President



Thank You

Additional Accessible Parking Spaces



Have you noticed that we have 2 additional handicapped parking spaces in our front lot? The need for additional accessible spaces was brought to our Trustees and they listened and figured out the best way to make this happen. The front lot was chosen because of the location of accessible doors in the front of the church. A BIG thank you goes to Cliff Findlay for painting the new symbols on the spaces, repainting the lines on the other spaces in front, and the new signs designating the spaces as handicapped parking.

Thank You to Hope UCC's Green Team!

The grass will soon be covered by snow which means our Green Team will have a little break. Thank you Dean Herbst, Dan Hawotte, and Bob Church! We are so grateful for the loving care and stewardship you offer to our grounds all year long. Enjoy the winter break!

Hope Happenings

Special Events in December

Please join us for some or all of the following events this month.

December 1: First Sunday in Advent

All church potluck lunch following worship

December 3: Quad City Flutes Concert at Hope UCC

This talented group of musicians will offer a variety of selections in a free concert in our sanctuary. Concert begins at 7:00 P.M.

December 5: Advent Study "Finding Our Place at the Manger"

Fellowship Hall 6:45 – 8:00 P.M.

December 8: Second Sunday of Advent

We will celebrate the Meal Site Program and honor Hope's history in that program during the service. We will take a special offering for Churches United Quad Cities during worship.

December 10: Advent Study "Finding Our Place at the Manger"

Fellowship Hall 6:45 – 8:00 P.M.

December 15: Third Sunday of Advent

The Hand Bell Choir will offer special musical selections throughout the 10:00 A.M. service. Blue Christmas service at 12:30 P.M.

December 17: Advent Study "Finding Our Place at the Manger"

Fellowship Hall 6:45 – 8:00 P.M.

December 22: Fourth Sunday of Advent

During worship we will have a special offering from our children and youth. We will also decorate the tree in the sanctuary with stars at the conclusion of the play.

December 24: Christmas Eve

Hope will offer 2 worship services on Christmas Eve.

1:00 P.M. Traditional worship with Holy Communion

5:00 P.M. Lessons and Carols

December 29: Stories, Carols, and Cocoa

Join us for a pajama party worship service in Fellowship Hall. We'll praise God and celebrate Jesus coming to us while we call out our favorite Christmas hymns and share our favorite Christmas stories. Be prepared with Christmas memory to share – we can't wait to hear your story!

Christmas Giving Tree

You've got thatgiving spirit!

Watch the table in the corner of Fellowship Hall for the return of the popular giving tree. Faith Exploration has adopted two local non-profits, Humility of Mary and World Relief, to benefit from your generosity. Each star will have designated items requested that you can purchase and bring to church by Dec. 22. General household items need not be gift wrapped.



Reel Theology

There will be no Reel Theology for the month of December. See you in January!

Advent Study: December 5, 10, and 17

Finding Our Place at the Manger



We see the nativity scene throughout the Advent season, on greeting cards, under Christmas trees, or brightly illuminated on the

lawns of public places. This scene depicts a romanticized version of Jesus' birth narratives found in Matthew and Luke, complete with wise men who traveled long distances to join the shepherds and holy family. Yet these paintings or figurines can lead to a glossed-over experience of the individual characters and their importance in our lives.

The purpose of this study is to look beyond the presentation of the nativity scene so that participants can find their place at the manger. Each session of this four-session study will examine what we know about those who were there to witness the birth of Jesus: Mary, Joseph, the shepherds, and the wise men. Throughout each session, participants will not only look at these characters in Scripture but also how they speak to us in our modern context so that we may find where we fit in as we await the joy of Jesus' birth.

Blue Christmas Service: Elusive Joy, December 15 at 2:00 P.M.



It can be challenging to face the joy and happy chaos of the Christmas season when we feel

sadness or pain. For many people that joy is elusive because the holiday season is a time of mourning, loneliness, sorrow, alienation, and anxiety. This Blue Christmas service at Hope UCC is a space to claim those feelings and find hope in the compassionate love of God. All are invited to join in sharing prayers, scripture, and sacrament that acknowledge that God's presence is there for those who mourn, for those who struggle and that God's word comes to shine light into the darkness.

Churches United Meal Site – An Impactful Legacy at Hope UCC

After much conversation, discussion, observations, and prayerful discernment, Hope UCC will conclude our rich history as the Sunday evening location on December 29. Since beginning the program here over 20 years ago, stomachs and spirits have been fed through the stewardship of Marcella Park, Kathy Lewis, Kathy Hobson, and Caridad Ramos. Not only have they coordinated and welcomed other churches who have provided meals, they have prepared and served numerous meals themselves. It has been a ministry of love and their work leaves a legacy of caring and service. Over the years, the attendance at the Sunday evening Meal Site has tapered off, while the attendance at the weekly Meal Sites in other locations has increased. This led to a conversation about stewardship of our resources and how to best serve the needs of the community that gathers on Sunday evenings and how to support the Meal Site program where they need the most help. Hope UCC will continue to support the Meal Site program – we will have information available about how to help at the dinners held at the other churches starting in February. Our newly formed Mission and Outreach Ministry will be gathering and publicizing that information, as well as other opportunities to live out our mission and serve the community, after the annual Congregational Meeting in January. The closing of this program at Hope does not mean we are closing our relationship and support of Churches United! We will continue to support this wonderful organization and work with them to develop new ways to join with them in serving our community!

Will something replace the Sunday night Meal Site program? Because it is clear that this weekly gathering is a special time for folks to gather and share a meal and fellowship – a time for feeding their spirits – we are planning a once a month Dinner Church gathering beginning in February. There will be more information about this monthly gathering in the January newsletter so please stay posted. If you are interested in volunteering to be on a planning committee for this gathering, please see Pastor Santana.

We are so grateful to Marcella, Kathy, Kathy, and Caridad, and so many others who have been part of Meal Site over the years. Their faithful stewardship has brought great joy to so many lives. We will celebrate the legacy of the program during our worship service on December 8. During that service, we will also take a special offering for Churches United of the Quad Cities in order to provide them with additional support. We hope you will be in worship to join this celebration and support of this program.

Room at the Inn

Several months ago, Hope UCC was approached by the pastor from a Congolese church, Holy Ghost Assembly, about the possibility of their congregation holding their worship in our sanctuary on a weekly basis. As we reported to Hope, both in worship and in the September newsletter, our Trustees and Church Council have been working hard to prepare a Covenant of Use that will help Holy Ghost Assembly and Hope UCC move forward in a successful 'nesting' relationship as the Body of Christ together. After much discussion and many revisions, we believe we have accomplished this, and are prepared to meet with Holy Ghost Assembly to discuss the covenant and formally begin this relationship. Both the Trustees and Council have agreed to begin this relationship January 1, 2020. Our Council President and Trustees Chair will meet with Pastor Daudet and his lay leader before that date to explain and discuss the Covenant of Use, answer any questions they have, and, hopefully, all parties will be called to sign the Covenant. We ask for your prayers for Holy Ghost Assembly and our congregation as together we begin this new adventure offering space to our brothers and sisters in Christ who knocked on our door seeking space to worship – it is so reminiscent of the story of a certain young couple seeking shelter at the inn. What a wonderful time to consider the many ways God enters our lives and makes God self known to us! If you have any questions about the Covenant of Use, please see Council President Bob Tallitsch, Vice President Grady Birdsell, or Pastor Santana.



Stories, Carols, and Cocoa A Special Worship Service on December 29th

Wear your comfiest attire - sweats and Christmas pajamas welcome and encouraged!! – and join us for a special worship service the Sunday following Christmas on December 29th. We will be cozy and comfy as we gather in Fellowship Hall for the service. We'll enjoy hot cocoa and cookies as we praise God and celebrate Jesus coming to us while we call out our favorite Christmas hymns and share our favorite Christmas stories. **Get thinking about your favorite Christmas memory that you will share during worship – we can't wait to hear your story!**





12-19-1997

I'M SORRY GUY, I KNOW THAT YOU'VE GOT
A GOOD HEALTH PLAN AND YOU GIVE OUT
FREE GIFTS AND ALL, BUT JESUS REALLY
DOES HAVE A MUCH BETTER PLAN