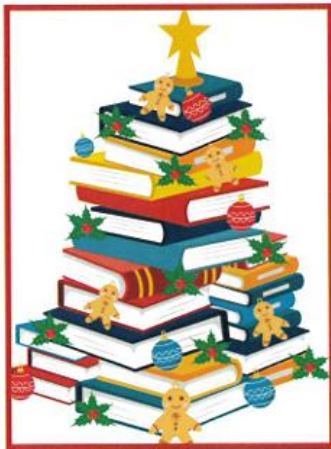




Hope UCC Weekly Update: December 22, 2024

There is always something happening at Hope UCC, so we thought we would add a weekly announcement feature to the bulletin that is mailed and emailed out to everyone. This Weekly Update will provide you with announcements, information, and updates on all that is going on in our community – at church and beyond.



Gifts of Books: A Ruth Circle Christmas Extravaganza!

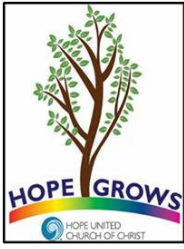
December 23rd at 1:00 P.M.

Spring Valley Community Center

Everyone is welcome to join Ruth Circle for the great Gifts of Books Christmas Extravaganza on December 23. During the Holiday Party at Spring Brook and Spring Valley Community Center, our Ruth Circle group provides a huge variety of books for readers of all ages. We could not do this without our wonderful donors of these books – thank you!. The children at the party can come and pick out books to give as gifts. They get wrapped up and the kids can then take them to the people on their gift list. Volunteers are needed to help kids pick out their books and also to get the books wrapped up in holiday paper the day of the event.

Any "Extravaganza" will need help to get ready! Your help is appreciated on Thursday, December 19 at 10:00 a.m. to set up the books. We will meet in Spring Valley's Community Room for the book set up and go for lunch when we finish. Please contact Barb Hawotte with any questions about this

**HOLIDAY OFFICE HOURS:
OFFICE CLOSED: December 24, 25, 26 and January 1st**



Hope United Church of Christ Moline, IL
Worship Bulletin December 22nd, 2024
Fourth Sunday of Advent

Thank you for joining us for worship today.

We are glad you are here!

*Because you are who you are,
 you are welcome here!*

***You may stand.**



PRELUDE

O Come, O Come Emmanuel

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

LIGHTING THE CANDLE OF LOVE

One: When the people were looking for deliverance, the prophet Micah declared, "But you, O Bethlehem of Ephrathah...from you shall come forth for me one who is to rule in Israel, whose origin is from of old, from ancient day." But what if Micah is also talking to us, proclaiming, "But you, O Hope UCC..." calling forth from us?

Many: God invites us to receive the promise of God's salvation and the sustenance of God's mercy and grace, enabling us to live the promise as God-bearers to the world. As Christ was born in Bethlehem, so too we answer God's invitation to have Christ born among us today and every day.

One: We light this candle of love as a sign of our commitment to live as people of God's promise, a promise of salvation and flourishing for all people that springs forth from God's love for all creation.

*HYMN: *We Light a Candle*

We will sing the Love verse once followed by the Joy, Peace and Hope verses

We light a candle for love and our world that's longing for love.

We light a candle for love and our world that's longing for love.

Holy One, shine with the fire of our lives, oh

We light a candle for love and our world that's longing for love.

We light a candle for joy and our world that's longing for joy.

We light a candle for joy and our world that's longing for joy.

Holy One, shine with the fire of our lives, oh

We light a candle for joy and our world that's longing for joy.

We light a candle for peace and our world that's longing for peace.

We light a candle for peace and our world that's longing for peace.

Holy One, shine with the fire of our lives, oh

We light a candle for peace and our world that's longing for peace.

We light a candle for hope and our world that's longing for hope.

We light a candle for hope and our world that's longing for hope.

Holy One, shine with the fire of our lives, oh

We light a candle for hope and our world that's longing for hope.

*COMING TOGETHER AS A WORSHIP COMMUNITY

One: Before the Majesty of God, we gather to worship;
in quiet expectation, we come to hear God's promises.

**Many: This is where we belong; here we are warmly greeted.
Surely God will feed our deepest hunger.**

One: Before God's strength and power, we bow down;
in hesitant anticipation, we listen for God's judgment.

**Many: This is our home, where our lives are redirected.
Surely God will show us new ways to live.**

One: Before the mercy of God, we lift our hearts;
in humble imagination, we welcome a new visitation.

**Many: This day God is present with us; we feel it.
Surely God is preparing for us a time of joy.**

*OPENING HYMN

NCH #110

Now Bless the God of Israel

*INVITING GOD INTO OUR MIDST

Let your face shine on us, mighty God. Break through the obstacles that keep us from seeing your way. Melt down the barriers that keep us from knowing the embrace of your love. Remove from us the low self-esteem that keeps us from valuing the overwhelming gift of life that you entrust to us. Speak to us here in life-changing words. Amen.

*OFFERING OUR CONFESSION AND RECEIVING ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS

Merciful God, when we sense who you are, we are ashamed. How do you tolerate our pettiness? The abundance you have given us has made us proud more than thankful. We act as if our accomplishments were all our own doing. We seldom acknowledge your generosity or let you rule our lives. We go through the forms of worship, but we try to keep you at a safe distance. We fill our lives with noise that blocks out your call and limits our response. O God, we need to change. Will you help us? Amen.

*SHARING GOD'S PEACE

SPECIAL MUSIC

Starchild

soloist Marilyn Rada

accompanied by Mary Tallitsch

PRAYING AS GOD'S PEOPLE/LORD'S PRAYER

Each of us has a unique experience with the Lord's Prayer. Please use the words you are most comfortable using as we share this prayer together. We can pray with one voice using a variety of words.

One: May the Lord be with you.

Many: And also, with you.

One: Let us pray: ...

With the assurance Jesus offers, together we pray the words Jesus taught us:

Our Father, who is in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For yours is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

HEBREW SCRIPTURE LESSON

Micah 5:2-5a

² “But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah,
 though you are small among the clans of Judah,
 out of you will come for me
 one who will be ruler over Israel,
 whose origins are from of old,
 from ancient times.”

³ Therefore Israel will be abandoned
 until the time when she who is in labor bears a son,
 and the rest of his brothers return
 to join the Israelites.

⁴ He will stand and shepherd his flock
 in the strength of the LORD,
 in the majesty of the name of the LORD his God.
 And they will live securely, for then his greatness
 will reach to the ends of the earth.

⁵ And he will be our peace
 when the Assyrians invade our land
 and march through our fortresses.

We will raise against them seven shepherds,
 even eight commanders,

*GOSPEL LESSON

Luke 1:39-55

³⁹ At that time Mary got ready and hurried to a town in the hill country of Judea, ⁴⁰ where she entered Zechariah’s home and greeted Elizabeth. ⁴¹ When Elizabeth heard Mary’s greeting, the baby leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. ⁴² In a loud voice she exclaimed: “Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the child you will bear! ⁴³ But why am I so favored, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? ⁴⁴ As soon as the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy. ⁴⁵ Blessed is she who has believed that the Lord would fulfill his promises to her!”

⁴⁶ And Mary said:

“My soul glorifies the Lord

⁴⁷ and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,

⁴⁸ for he has been mindful

of the humble state of his servant.

From now on all generations will call me blessed,

⁴⁹ for the Mighty One has done great things for me—

holy is his name.

⁵⁰ His mercy extends to those who fear him,

from generation to generation.

⁵¹ He has performed mighty deeds with his arm;

he has scattered those who are proud in their inmost thoughts.

⁵² He has brought down rulers from their thrones

but has lifted up the humble.

⁵³ He has filled the hungry with good things

but has sent the rich away empty.

⁵⁴ He has helped his servant Israel,

remembering to be merciful

⁵⁵ to Abraham and his descendants forever,

just as he promised our ancestors.”

SERMON *Prophetic Love*

SERMON HYMN NCH #119 *My Soul Gives Glory to My God*

SHARING OUR GIFTS

In this season, we remember the greatest offering of all time, God's gift of salvation in Jesus Christ. The only appropriate response is our giving of ourselves. What we place on the altar today symbolizes the depth of our commitment. May we show how thankful we are.

Hope UCC thanks you for the gifts you share with this congregation. Your offering enables us to live into our mission. Offering plates are located near the Sanctuary doors.

*BLESSING OUR GIFTS

Thank you, God, for your mercy and protection, for feeding us physically and spiritually, for caring for us like a shepherd. We present our offerings as an act of gratitude. What we can never repay we pause to appreciate. In the name of generosity we cannot match, we seek to be generous toward others. May these offerings do far more than support our church. We dedicate ourselves and these gifts to honor Christ through ministry in the world. Amen.

*CLOSING HYMN NCH # 121 *Todo la Tierra (All Earth Is Waiting)*

*BENEDICTION

One: Depart from this place to do God's will.
Carry your discipleship and service into the world.

**Many: Our spirits rejoice in God's saving grace.
Our lives have been equipped to meet the world.**

One: Greet strangers as you have been greeted here.
Feed them as you have been fed by a living God.

**Many: Our estrangement has been overcome.
We want to welcome neighbors into God's family.**

One: God's mercy continues from generation to generation.
You are accepted and loved and sent forth.

**Many: In gratitude and joy we accept our commission.
Our spirits rejoice to share good news. Amen**

POSTLUDE *The Angel Gabriel from Heaven Came*

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Serving in Worship Today

Reverend Santina Poor, Pastor Hope UCC

Liturgist: Julie Bustard

Ministers of Music: Laurel Filzen Etzel, Greg Etzel

Accompanists: Bob Poor & Mary Tallitsch

Soloist: Marilyn Rada

Greeter: Carol Keenan

Slide Ministry: Lindsey Svetlick

Fellowship Hour: Fellowship Ministry

Audio-Visual Ministry: Jenny Hookey, Donna Werner, Bob Tallitsch, Kathy Hobson,
Bob Poor, Bek Svetlick