



HOPEFUL CONNECTIONS

April 2020

*The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not want.
He makes me lie down in green pastures;
he leads me beside still waters;
he restores my soul.
He leads me in right paths
for his name's sake.*

*Even though I walk through the darkest valley,
I fear no evil;
for you are with me;
your rod and your staff—
they comfort me.*

*You prepare a table before me
in the presence of my enemies;
you anoint my head with oil;
my cup overflows.
Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me
all the days of my life,
and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD
my whole life long.*

Greetings to Our Beloved Hope UCC Community,

Psalm 23 makes so much more sense to me lately. I find myself saying it as part of my morning prayers – it has been a meaningful way to begin each day and a way to get my head and heart centered before facing the onslaught of statistics, news briefings, and images of what is happening all around us.

If you feel the stress and are experiencing anxiety during this global pandemic, you are not alone. Navigating the information and following the rules in order to stay healthy and keep others healthy has altered so much in our lives, but is so important to keep the curve flattened and stop the spread of the Corona Virus. Suspending in person worship at Hope UCC was one of the hardest – yet also the easiest – decision I've had to make with our Church Council. It was hard, of course, because- CHURCH!! How will we be the church if we are not together? And yet it was the easiest to make because- CHURCH!! We will *always* be the church, no matter if we are in a building and in the same room or gathered as God's people in all places and spaces, gathered in the Spirit. As I read in an article about this crisis, we are now being reminded that being the church was never about the building.

I am thankful to have a foundation of faith and hope that anchors me when I feel like I am starting to drift off into the fear and stress that is very natural to experience during a crisis like this. I pray that you can identify this same foundation in your lives to hold you and give you comfort and that

our faith community continues to build that foundation within you. Yes, this global pandemic is frightening, and we all have good reason to be cautious and careful and thoughtful in our activities. However, throughout it all, the Holy Spirit is blowing and moving us into places that we never thought we would go (because that is just what she does!). We are not in this alone and there continues to be signs of hope, love, and light throughout all of this: People are caring for one another in new and innovative ways. Healthcare professionals are heroically working to help those affected by the virus and are developing new methods for treating their patients. New ways of worshiping together and gathering in prayer are being utilized.

We will continue to follow the federal, state, and local guidelines and requirements. Consequently, we will continue to suspend in person worship the end of April. We will continue to offer on-line opportunities to gather for worship and prayer groups, Bible study, administrative meetings, and social gatherings. For those in our community without internet access, we will continue to provide paper based materials and phone contact. Please be assured that our church building is being cared for during our time physically apart. The new paint in the hallway and Fellowship Hall looks great and will be a great backdrop for our celebrations when we return to the building. Pam and I are at the church at different times each day. Best of all, the work of the church continues outside of the building! Not just through our work though – you all continue that work as well. You carry the love of God into all the spaces and places you go. Hope UCC's ministries continue and have never been confined to four walls, because God cannot be confined within four walls.

My prayers for each of you and your loved ones are lifted daily. As I read Psalm 23, I picture you all being restored and comforted. May God's peace and love be with each of you!

Yours in the journey,
Pastor Santina

A Note From the Treasurer

First and foremost, I hope that all members and friends of Hope UCC, as well as your friends and families, are safe and staying healthy in these unprecedented times.

In the interest of financial transparency at Hope UCC, Pastor Santina and I agree that I should write something for the newsletter at least every three months; more often if needed. In addition, if you have any questions about Hope's finances, please call me or send an e-mail. When our self-quarantines are over, feel free to stop me at church, or wherever you see me, and I will gladly answer anything and everything to the best of my abilities.

Several people have called and asked me two similar questions, so I thought I should share the answers with everyone. First, the staff is still being paid in these unprecedented times. They are continuing to work from home and from the church. We have money in the budget to do so, and it is the correct thing to do.

Second, I have also been asked how members and friends of Hope can continue their financial contributions to the church while maintaining their self-quarantine. I have two answers to that question.

First, the easiest and safest way would be to simply drop your check in the mail to Hope UCC at 3324 41st Street, Moline, IL. 61265. If you would like to know whether or not the check has been received, please enclose a note with your phone number and Pam will give you a call to confirm that we have received the check.

In addition, we are investigating the possibility of electronic giving for any Hope UCC members and friends that prefer to use electronic banking for their church pledging and donations. There are a wide

variety of options and we are looking into the necessary procedures, possible “kinks in the system”, and what, if any, fees might be associated with such a process. As we learn more we will keep you informed regarding this possibility. If we begin to offer electronic giving as an option for Hope UCC, please understand that your contributions would remain confidential, and electronic giving is an optional way to accomplish your financial contributions to the church — it would NOT be required. Traditional giving through checks and cash are always welcome. You will be able to support Hope UCC in the manner that is most comfortable and convenient for you.

Finally, these times are truly unprecedented. Hope UCC is currently fiscally strong and we will do our best to remain so. We understand if, because of the economic impact of the COVID-19 virus, you must take a break from your pledge or regular giving. We understand completely. Your personal and emotional wellbeing is our first concern.

Sincerely,
Bob Tallitsch, Treasurer

Mission and Outreach News

Mission and Outreach Ministry has a bold objective for the year 2020- “30 for 30.” We hope to complete 30 service projects to celebrate our 30th anniversary. We plan to introduce several programs to help those in our world who are most needy.

One program that we will be supporting is *Feed My Starving Children* (FMSC). FMSC is a Christian nonprofit committed to feeding God’s starving children who are hungry in body and spirit. FMSC meals are donated to partners around the world who distribute them every day in schools, orphanages, clinics and feeding programs. Kids and adults of all ages engage in a unique and powerful volunteer experience as they work together to hand-pack nutritious FMSC Manna Pack meals specifically designed to improve the lives of undernourished children around the world. Some of you may recall a group of us from Hope did this several years ago at a mobile site set up in the Isle of Capri in Bettendorf. One of their packing sites is located in Aurora, IL. Mission and Outreach is planning to take a group there to pack these meals in May. We are looking for volunteers. We have 37 slots allotted and all names must be turned in by the 4th of May. Families are encouraged to sign up, but unfortunately children under aged 5 and under are not allowed in the packing area. This would be a great experience for our youth (and their friends!). Grown ups too!! We plan to be there on Saturday, May 16th between the hours of 11:30 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. This is a wonderful event and you will make a difference if you sign up to join this group. We are also looking for volunteer drivers. We will plan to have lunch in the area before we come home. It is about a 2 hour drive so we will be heading out by 9:00 a.m. and should be home around 5. This should be a fun and eye-opening day. Please let me know if you would like to participate and if you could drive. We have 7 volunteers so far and 3 vehicles. Also, if you are unable to participate that day, you may want to make a monetary gift to help fund these meals. Of course with the Coronavirus, things may change. We may not be able to make this trip, at this time. I get updates from FMSC and for now the sites are closed through April 12th.

If they are still closed in May, we will have to adjust our schedule with them. Please consider being a part of this worthwhile and fun project.

Barb Hawotte
Mission and Outreach Ministry

Pastoral Care

Please be assured that Pastor Santina is completely available during this time we are physically apart. Please call her cell or home, the church office, or text or email her with any pastoral care needs! If you or anyone you know has needs of any kind (groceries, errands, yard work, etc.), please let Pastor Santina know and we can help take care of those needs.

Worship & Meeting Alternatives throughout April

While our in person worship services are suspended, please join us on Sunday mornings at 10:00 a.m. for our live streamed services. Pastor Santina is following the stay at home order for our state and streaming the service from her home. While it is not our typical worship service, we hope you will find spiritual renewal and significance in the experience. If you cannot join us live, the videos are available on Hope UCC's new You Tube channel. Please like our church Facebook page and also subscribe to our You Tube channel for notifications:

<https://www.facebook.com/hopeuccmoline/>

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC_5KL_8zBHOmMHE-_98uXIg?view_as=subscriber

Devotional, informational, and worship materials will be sent out each week during the suspension of in person worship both via email and paper based material through the US Mail. Please let Pam know if you prefer email or paper based material – or both. Please call and leave a voicemail at the office or email: 309-762-1419 or office.hopeuccqc@gmail.com

Please remember to check the church website for updated information.

We will use Zoom Meeting for our Bible studies, meetings, and contemplative services. This is a free application you can download on your laptop, desktop, tablet, and/or smartphone. This technology uses your camera so that participants can see each other as we meet, or you can simply dial in using audio only. Once you have the application on your device, you can simply click on the link in the invitation that is emailed, posted on our church Facebook page, and/or posted on our church website. It takes a little practice, but it is surprisingly easy to use. Please go to Zoom.com to download the application and set up your free account.

Thank You

Heartfelt thanks to everyone who called, sent cards, brought food, made beautiful prayer shawls for us or offered prayers to lift our spirits in this sad time as we said goodbye to our beloved Sam. A special thanks to Pastor Santina for her caring visits and wonderful service. We greatly appreciate our Hope Church family.

Love, Linda Brown and Family

April Birthdays

01 Caridad Ramos
02 Jan Varga
03 Charley Poor
04 Duane Goderis
05 MJ Poor
24 Barbara Babcock
28 Suzanne Cutler
28 Rebecca Morse

April Scripture

April 5: Mark 14:32-36, Ephesians 6:11-17
April 12 Easter Sunday: Psalm 118:1-2, 14-24, John 20:1-18
April 19: Acts 2:14a,22-32, John 20:19-31, Psalm 16
April 26: Acts 2:14a,36-41, 1 Peter 1:17-23, Luke 24:13-35
Psalm 116:1-3, 10-17

May Scripture

May 3: Acts 2:42-47, John 10:1-10, Psalm 23
May 10: Acts 7: 55-60, John 14:1-14, Psalm 31:1-5, 15-16