



## HOPE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

# Hopeful Connections

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## Poor Musings...



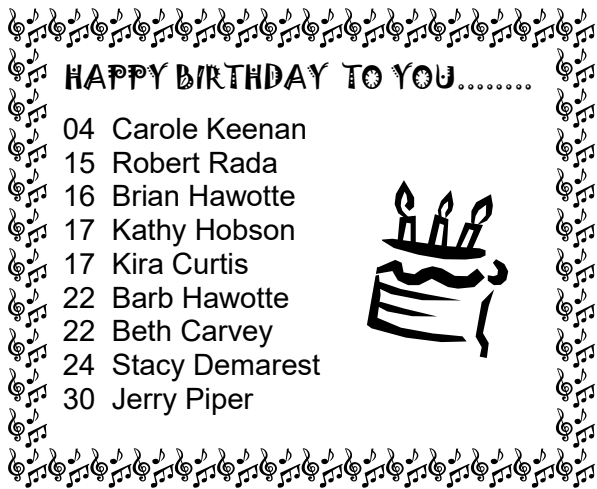
This winter has been particularly challenging. The endless snow that has been around since November is bad enough, but the ice has just about done me in. I am yearning for spring. But, just when I think I cannot stand to put on one more layer of heavy clothing and the extra 2 pairs of socks, I am reminded that spring will be here

soon and with spring comes the promise of renewal, rebirth, and green leaves and flowers blooming. I cannot help but feel eager as I anticipate the warmer days that will soon arrive and it will not physically hurt to spend time outside.

This sense of eagerly waiting for something is what Lent is all about. 'Lent' is a shortened form of the Old English word *lencten*, meaning "spring season." It is no accident that Lent begins as the days start to get longer with sunset coming later and later, and the 'longest night' feels like a distant memory. The new life we witness all around us in creation during spring and the hope it nurtures is also reflected within us during this new season in the church year: Lent. As we begin our Lenten journey on Ash Wednesday, March 6, and throughout the six weeks of Lent, we are invited to be part of experiences that will renew within us a deeper connection to God and to the one through whom we know God, Jesus Christ. Each of us is invited to the cross this Lent, It is at the cross where we experience the hope that came to us and lives within us.

For many of us Lent brings back memories of giving up something to prove our repentance during this season. This tradition of fasting from things during this season definitely has its value and if you are compelled to do this, I would encourage you to follow your heart. However, I recently read Parker Palmer's new book, *On the Brink of Everything*, and in it he poses the question, "What do I want to let go of and what do I want to give myself to?" What a great question: *What do I want to give myself to?* This Lent you are invited to ask yourself this question and Hope UCC will offer a variety of programs, spiritual practices, and worship opportunities throughout Lent which are intended to deepen your Lenten experience and ultimately, your faith. I pray that you accept the invitation offered this Lent and give yourself to God with a new awareness and mindfulness of doing so. May God bless you always.

Yours in the journey,  
Pastor Santana



Thank you to Vision Council who served coffee hour for the month of February. Men's Breakfast will serve for the month of March.

### March Scripture

Mar. 3	Exodus 34:29-35 Luke 9:28-36,(37-43)
Mar. 6	Joel 2:1-2, 12-17 Psalm 51:1-17
Mar. 10	Deuteronomy 26:1-11 Luke 4:1-13 Psalm 91:1-16
Mar. 17	Genesis 15:1-12, 17-18 Luke 4:1-13 Psalm 27:1-4a, 11-14
Mar. 24	Psalm 63:1-8
Mar. 31	Luke 15:1-3, 11-32 Psalm 32

Average church attendance for February  
64

### March Sunday School Schedule

The Lord's Prayer	March 3	March 10	March 17	March 24	March 31
Pre K-Kinder	Art	Cooking	Science	Music	Bible Games
1st-2nd	Music	Art	Cooking	Science	Bible Games
3rd & 4th	Science	Music	Art	Cooking	Bible Games
5th-6th	Cooking	Science	Music	Art	Bible Games

*Thank You*

*I would like to thank everyone who sent cards and well wishes this winter. Also thank you to Pastor Poor for her visits.*

Marge Gottwalt

### Hope UCC Confirmation Class of 2019

Please keep our Confirmands in your prayers as they take this journey of discernment in their faith formation. We meet each Sunday at 4:00 p.m. for prayer, discussion, and activities. This is such a wonderful group of young adults and they have much to share with their thoughts, insights, and spiritual development that I am learning from them and finding my own faith deepened through this time with them. Please mark your calendars and be sure to be at church on Pentecost Sunday, June 9<sup>th</sup>, when these amazing youth are confirmed in their faith. Thank you for holding them in prayer. Our Confirmands:

Abby Beug	Dennis Beug
Tyler Demarest	Wyatt Demarest
Reagan Hawotte	Riley Hawotte
Colton Jones	Hunter Toye

### Youth Update

Calling all Hope UCC Youth: please plan to help prepare and serve dinner at our Meal Site program on Sunday, March 10. We'll meet at church at 3:30 to start cooking. **Confirmation class, please note this will be our class that night so the time is changed to 3:30-7:00** (but you get to eat a tasty dinner that you will make!). Your families are invited to eat with us too – dinner is served at 6:00. We will also make plans for a social activity that night. Escape Room, roller skating, laser tag? You decide! Thank you!

# Hope Happenings

## Invited To... the Cross

Throughout Lent we are invited to deepen our spiritual formation and engagement with Spirit through prayer, study, conversation, and fellowship. Hope UCC invites you to journey to the cross this Lent by attending any and all of the following programs:

- ✠ **Ash Wednesday, March 6: “Invited to Return”** 7:00-8:00 p.m.: Join us for a Service of Ashes.
- ✠ **Sunday Worship:** Each Sunday we will explore what God is inviting us to become through scripture, prayer, and sacred music. 10:00 a.m. – invite a friend!
- ✠ **Tuesday Evening Programs: “Invited to Journey”** Join us March 19, March 26, April 2, and April 9 for a simple dinner together (6:00-6:30) followed by a program designed to deepen our understanding of ourselves and our faith journey and how God is calling us to build the Kingdom of God. Our programs will be led by Pat Bereskin, Kim Powell & Amber Bruning, and representatives from local non-profit outreach ministries.
- ✠ **Thursday Spiritual Practices: “Invited to Pray”** Each Thursday during Lent, we will engage in a different spiritual practice. Join us at 4:00 p.m. at Hope UCC and learn about and practice different spiritual practices such as Lectio Divina, Examen, contemplative prayer, and breath prayer. You do not have to attend each Thursday – attend as you are able or feel called by the Spirit. Thursdays during Lent, 4:00-5:00 p.m.
- ✠ **Maundy Thursday, April 18: “Invited to Serve and Remember”**  
5:30-6:00 p.m.: Service of Foot Washing in Sanctuary. Drop by the sanctuary at any time during this 30 minute portion of the evening to experience this sacred ritual.  
6:00-6:30 p.m.: Fellowship Meal in Fellowship Hall  
6:30-8:00 p.m.: Holy Communion and Tenebrae Service in Fellowship Hall
- ✠ **Good Friday, April 19: “Invited to Follow to the End”** 7:00-8:00 p.m.: A quiet and reflective service in the sanctuary.

## Invited To: Express Your Journey

Please join us for an evening of artistic expression on March 19! To begin our Lenten journey, we will explore what our individual spiritual journeys look like. Led by talented local artist and art educator, Pat Bereskin, we will learn the art of ‘tangling’ in which we will create individual repetitive patterns to create a piece of art. This creative process does not require any artistic experience or artistic ‘ability.’ **All ages** are invited to participate in this mindful, spiritual, creative, and FUN evening. We will begin with a baked potato dinner at 6:00 p.m. and the class begins at 6:30. Intrigued? Join us, find out more, and create a pattern that will offer you a new perspective of your spiritual journey!

In order for us to ensure we have enough supplies and food, please let the church office or any members of the Faith Exploration Ministry (Lisa Powell Williams, Mary Tallitsch, Laura Black, Bob Poor, Beth Carvey) know that you are planning to attend.

## Invited to Discover on Tuesday, April 9

As part of our Lenten study series, Kim Powell and Amber Bruning will share their journeys with us and lead us in discovering more about Autism Spectrum Disorder. Kim is an educator and "Autism" mom and Amber is a speech and language pathologist with experience working with children on the Autism Spectrum. They will offer a presentation on Autism in honor of Autism Awareness Month, which is celebrated in April each year. Kim and Amber will be provide a general overview of autism spectrum disorder, the early intervention and identification of those on the spectrum, and will speak about the educational and language needs of children on the spectrum. They will share ideas about how to support special needs individuals and families in the church setting. Dinner will be served from 6:00-6:30 and the program will begin at 6:30.

## Mission Roundtable Discussion Update

Thank you for participating in the Mission Roundtable discussion in February. Our Faith Exploration ministry is compiling all the responses and working on the summary. We will have more information soon.

### Reel Theology March 9, 2019

#### **The Greatest Showman**



Join us to watch and discuss this fun and lively musical, *The Greatest Showman*. Inspired by the imagination of P.T. Barnum, *The Greatest Showman* is an original musical that celebrates the birth of show business & tells of a visionary who rose from nothing to create a spectacle that became a worldwide sensation. This movie is rated PG and it is a movie all ages will enjoy watching and discussing together.

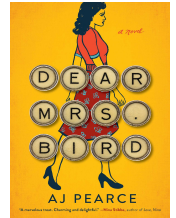
We will have a potluck at 6:00 p.m. and the film will begin at 6:30. We will have our discussion immediately following the film. Please contact Pastor Santina if you have any questions. See you at the movies!

### **From your Vision Council President**

Starting this month you will see the monthly financial report for Hope U.C.C. posted on the bulletin board in the hallway. It will list all income and expenditures, and how those expenditures line up with the church's budget. If you have any questions feel free to find me or Pastor Santina, and we will do our best to answer them for you.

### **Hope Book Club**

We invite you to read *Dear Mrs. Bird*, a novel by AJ Pearce, then join us for discussion March 25 at 6:00 p.m. in the Platinum Room at the Moline Public Library.



### **Faith Exploration notes...**

Faith Exploration ministry is grateful to those who have signed up to teach Sunday School in March, April and May! Kids will be studying the **Lord's Prayer** during March. Thank you to the "tall friends" who will guide their study.

The Angel Tree at Christmas was a huge success and FE will extend our mission outreach during Lent. Please watch for the Easter tree to soon appear in Fellowship Hall. The contributions will benefit Humility of Mary.

Please take special note of the newsletter article regarding the **special event for all ages on Tuesday March 19**. Pat Bereskin is inspiring, fun, insightful and talented. We are so fortunate to be able to have her lead us in an art activity – an art activity that ALL will find success in doing and has a wonderful surprise ending that all will discover on Easter morning. This is truly a **family** event. Don't miss this one!

Set your calendar for Saturday, April 20. Plans are in full gear for our Lenten Family Festival. More details will follow in the March newsletter.

Finally, the Lenten series on March 19, 26, April 2 and 9 will be informative and inspiring. Please join us on our journey to the cross for these evenings.

### **Welcome Rev. Gonzalez!**

We are excited to welcome the Rev. Justo Gonzalez to Hope UCC on Sunday, March 24. Rev. Gonzalez is the Interim Conference Minister for the Illinois Conference and will preach during our Sunday worship. Following worship we will have an opportunity to get to know each other better during coffee hour. At 12:00 Hope UCC will host a town hall meeting led by Rev. Gonzalez. We will welcome our sister congregations of the Blackhawk Cluster to the gathering. This is a special opportunity for Rev. Gonzalez and our local congregations to get to know each other better and for him to learn more about what is being accomplished and what challenges are faced by the UCC congregations in our area. Please plan on attending worship and the town hall gathering – bring your questions! Our conference depends on our participation and needs to hear our voices. If you interested in helping organize the refreshments for the social time prior to the town hall, please see Pastor Santina.

### **Pastor's Discretionary Fund**

Did you know that the pastors of Hope UCC have long maintained a Pastor's Discretionary Fund? Thanks to the generous donations of individuals throughout the years, each of the pastors of this church has been able to provide assistance to people in a variety of ways. Members and friends of Hope, as well as individuals and families who have no connection to our church, have received vouchers for groceries and gasoline as well as rental and utility bill assistance through this fund. The discretionary fund has paid for motel rooms for people who need shelter and has also provided funds for individuals who simply need a little assistance making it to the end of the month or who need help with unexpected expenses. The discretionary fund has also been used to help pay for unbudgeted church expenses and programs. The Pastor's Discretionary Fund at Hope UCC is similar to funds held at other churches in all denominations and is set up so that the money is spent at the pastor's discretion. Council approval of expenditures is not required. This is a fund that is managed by the pastor who is expected to thoughtfully and prayerfully use this money in a way that reflects our mission. The pastor is not required to submit an accounting about where or to whom the funds are used or given, but good stewardship requires the pastor to track the expenses and offer the balance to be listed on the church financial report. If you would like more information about the Pastor's Discretionary Fund or if you would like to make a donation to it, please see Pastor Santina.