



Hope

United Church of Christ

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Kick Off Part 2!

It has been one month exactly since my official return from sabbatical. I am so glad to be here, and the shift in busyness and focus has been wonderful and challenging. Thank you again for the time away – both for my bereavement leave and then the sabbatical. That space truly offered me a time to rest and renew my mind, body, and my spirit. It gave me a chance to really think about priorities in life and in my ministry – both of which are easy to push aside when one is busy and moving from one thing to the next. I'm not going to lie – there have been a few days when I asked Bob if someone else could be the lead pastor and just tell me what to do. But naps help and so does reflecting on what I have learned with the help of my therapist: find a time to 'be' and regather myself; in that quiet space give thanks for the blessings of the day and pray for the strength to discern what to do with the things that are weighing me down. Being honest about my limitations has been hard to embrace – who wants to admit they have limits? However, when I do, I realize it is actually pretty liberating.

In hindsight, we should have celebrated 'Kickoff Sunday' in October since the majority of our new programs and initiatives are starting this month. I used September to reconnect with everyone, including our Church Council and Ministry teams. I had a few new plans to kick off, but wanted to make sure Hope UCC's leadership felt these plans aligned with our mission and would be beneficial to our congregation and community. Thankfully everyone approved and so we will kick off some new adventures this month! Here is a summary of what is coming, but there are more detailed explanations of each in the newsletter.

Third Sunday Faith Formation Fellowship Hour:

An intergenerational "Sunday School" program following worship on the 3rd Sunday of each month. All ages are invited to spend time together in study and activities based on the text and/or theme studied in worship that day or a related topic.

Tuesday Night Bible Study: Tuesdays from 6:30-8:00 P.M.

Whole Life Stewardship: Instead of signing up for the usual ministry teams, you will have the opportunity get involved and share your gifts by signing up for various aspects of our ministries. *(continued on next page)*

Kick Off 2 (continued)

Suggestions for additional opportunities to engage in the Spirit-led work are encouraged. The different ways to be involved will be included in this year's Stewardship packet and will also be available in Fellowship Hall during the month of October.

Grief Support Group: An opportunity to gather once a month to support one another in their grief journey.

Prayer Partners Ministry: A covenanted group praying together and individually.

Our stewardship theme this year is "Imagine Together" so I invite you all to imagine the ways that Hope UCC will be a place of mission, worship, faith formation, caring for the world and our neighbors all around us, and discipleship. Imagine all we can accomplish together, as we live into our call to share the good news of God's love for all Creation.

With much love and deep gratitude for all of you,
Pastor Santina



REKINDLING
OUR INNER LIGHT

A lit candle with a bright flame is the central focus. In the background, a world map is visible, with the Americas highlighted in a reddish-brown color. The entire scene is set against a dark, almost black background.

WOMEN'S RETREAT
OCTOBER 19TH FROM 9 AM - 3 PM AT
HOPE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
COST - \$25

A square QR code is located at the bottom center of the poster, likely linking to more information about the retreat.

BLESSING OF OUR PETS

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 4TH

8:30 A.M.-12:30 P.M.

& 2:00 P.M.-4:00 P.M.

All pets and their humans are
invited for a blessing.
Invite your friends and



Inquirers' Class

Would you like to learn more about Hope UCC and what it means to be a member?

Join us on Sunday, October 27, following the worship service, when Pastor Santina will lead us in a one hour session on the history, life and mission of Hope UCC. Grab up a cup of coffee and a snack and join us in the Conference Room (next to Pastor's Office).

Questions? Contact church office (309)762-1419.



As always, if you note any inaccuracies or missing birthdays of any friends or members, please do not hesitate to let the office know, and we will correct and update our information in an expeditious, speedy, quick, prompt, swift, and efficient manner.

October Birthdays

Abbey Jones October 02
Kendall Johnson October 15
Jan Birdsell October 17
Phebe Head October 22
Wanda Poor October 25

Imagine Together
Stewardship at Hope UCC



Sometimes the world feels like it is changing too rapidly and not always in a positive direction. These are the times when we can look to our faith traditions that assure us that God's love and God's activity in our world is steady and always present.

We are grateful for the gift of this worship and faith community at Hope UCC. It is here that we can explore what it means to be the Body of Christ, striving to live the lessons Jesus taught. It is here we can imagine what God's word means to us and how we are to go out into the world to live God's word and be the light that God has created each of us to be. We can imagine together all that is possible and how we will make this vision a reality. Of course it is work to imagine and then act on our plans. But this is what stewardship is all about. As stewards, together we can build up, care for, and share the Kingdom of God. Throughout our 2025 Stewardship Campaign we will explore the many ways we can imagine together what God's Kingdom looks like and how we will make it known. We will kick off our 2025 campaign on Sunday, October 13 when you will receive a packet of materials explaining Hope UCC's Mission Plan. Our Mission Plan is our story - our story describing how each of us has a part in imagining and creating this plan. Hope UCC cannot do what happens here without your participation. We are so grateful for each of you and many ways you all share your gifts. This year we will be re-imagining the ways we volunteer and share our time and gifts at church. Instead of signing up for a ministry committee that meets monthly, we are encouraging each of you to look at the list that will be included in your Mission Plan packet, and sign up for any of the many ways to be involved at Hope UCC. It may be a one time event or perhaps you are interested in serving in a recurring role at church or in the community. We also encourage you to share your ideas for community involvement and faith formation with us so that those ideas may be included as well.

Our worship series for October and November will focus on this theme of imagining together.

October 13: Imagine Together a World Where Everyone Has Enough

October 20: Imagine Together: Faith over Fear

October 27: Imagine Together a World of Healing Love

November 3: Imagine Together a World Made Whole

November 10: Imagine Together a World of Vitality and Spiritual Growth

November 17: Imagine Together a World Filled with Awe

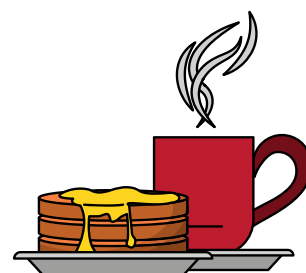
November 24: Imagine Together a World of Thankful Hearts

We hope you will join us in imagining together the many ways that we can be stewards of the gifts God has given us as we join together to use these gifts to God's glory.



Men's Fellowship Saturday, October 5th Breakfast!

The Men's Fellowship group will be meeting on Saturday, October 5th at 8am at Deerfield Family Restaurant in Silvis. Please contact Josh Powell at (309) 737-8378 to RSVP or if you have any further questions.



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OPEN DOOR YOUTH GROUP

SUNDAY'S 2-4PM

Starts Oct 6th



Scan for schedule



Information:
www.hopeuccqc.org

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Open Door Youth Ministry

We look forward to our youth getting together for many learning and faith formation activities. Scan the QR code to get the schedule and make sure you plan to meet with Lindsey and the group. OWL classes meet every other week and for students in grades 7-12. The YG meetings on the alternating weeks are for all youth grades 6-12.

Please contact Lindsey in the church office if you have any questions:
office.hopeuccqc@gmail.com

Open Door Youth Ministry

Faith over Fear Worship Celebration

Our youth will design our worship service for October 20. They will offer reflections on their experiences at the UCC Regional Youth Event they attended over the summer. We look forward to hearing their Spirit-inspired words!

New Tuesday Night Bible Study Beginning October 8

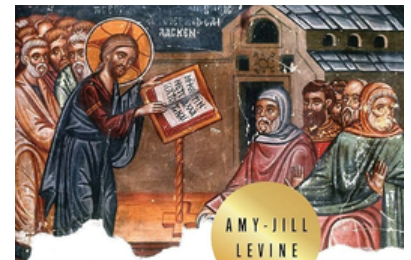
Join us for our new 6 week Bible study as we examine the most difficult teachings of Jesus using Dr. Amy Jill Levine's wonderful book, *The Difficult Words of Jesus*. We will meet from 6:30-8:00 P,M, Tuesdays October 8, 15, 22, 29, November 11, 18.

Jesus provided his disciples teachings for how to follow Torah, God's word; he told them parables to help them discern questions of ethics and of human nature; he offered them beatitudes for comfort and encouragement. But sometimes Jesus spoke words that followers then and now have found difficult. He instructs disciples to hate members of their own families, to act as if they were slaves, and to sell their belongings and give to the poor. He restricts his mission; he speaks of damnation; he calls Jews the devil's children. This is tough stuff!

Together we'll explore these texts, letting Dr. Levine show us how these difficult teachings would have sounded to the people who first heard them, how have they been understood over time, and how we might interpret them in the context of the Gospel of love and reconciliation.

You will need to purchase a book which is available as an ebook or paperback through Amazon. Or you can let Pastor Santina know you need one and she will order it for you. The books are \$14 and financial assistance is available if needed.

Please let Pastor Santina or the church office know if you will be attending so we can make sure we have enough materials available. We sure hope you will come and share your questions about and your frustrations with these texts - that is what makes a Bible study so interesting as we learn new appreciations of these mysterious texts together.



The
**DIFFICULT
WORDS** of
JESUS

A BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO HIS MOST PERPLEXING TEACHINGS



Fall Harvest Project for 'Charley's Pantry'

Last Christmas Hope UCC helped to launch a micro pantry at Rock Island Academy to help their school nurse, Heather McCarty, address the food insecurity needs of the students there. Your kind generosity in fulfilling the requests from our Advent Angel Tree provided food to help sustain families for the rest of that school year. It was a beautiful project that became something even more special: Heather met Charley Poor when she came to speak at church during Advent and again when he helped bring the many items that our congregation donated to the school. Heather also learned a lot about Charley through her friendship with his aunt, Becky Lapp, who teaches at the school. In honor of Charley's memory and in recognition of his church's support of this project, Heather and the school have named this micro pantry that provides needed groceries for families to get through a weekend and for students to find necessary clothing items "Charley's Pantry." It is absolutely an honor to know that Charley is remembered in such a kind and generous way with a program that is making a difference in the quality of life of so many children in our community.

We have an opportunity to continue to support this special program at Rock Island Academy by helping to restock Charley's Pantry for the upcoming Thanksgiving break. This is a week that the children will not have access to the daily breakfast or lunch program as the school is closed for the break. Nurse Heather works closely with the teachers to identify the students who are at risk regarding food insecurity to receive the groceries and the needs are growing.

Here is where Hope UCC can help. We will be collecting our Fall Harvest starting October 1st through November 17, on which day we will bless the 'harvest' before bringing it to the school. Please consider donating the following non-perishable ready to eat items for the harvest:

Smaller jars of peanut butter

Powdered milk packets or shelf stable milk

Fruit and vegetable cups

Individual small bags of chips

Individual serving size cups of Ravioli, soup, or similar

Cheese and cracker and or peanut butter cracker packs

Tuna 'Lunch To Go' kits

Canned fruit and vegetables with pull tab tops

If you would like to make a monetary donation to this Fall Harvest project, we will use that to purchase additional items as well as fresh fruit and bread closer to the delivery date. Please indicate "Fall Harvest" on the memo line of the check or on the envelope for a cash donation.

While you are gathering items for our friends at Rock Island Academy, please remember to pick up similar items for our Blessing Box in front of church. We continue to keep that stocked so that our neighbors in need have a place to find a few items they need to get through the day or week. It is highly utilized and greatly appreciated in our neighborhood!

It is easy to overlook the needs that are tucked away in our neighborhood where the needs are not as obvious. Food insecurity is a pervasive problem everywhere and we can make a difference in our community with our Blessing Box and with Charley's Pantry. Thank you for sharing in this Fall Harvest!





THIRD SUNDAY FAITH FORMATION FELLOWSHIP HOUR

This month we will begin a new intergenerational faith formation program – Third Sunday Faith Formation Fellowship Hour!

WHAT IS IT?

This program is created to fully integrate our youngest friends with our oldest friends in faith formation as we celebrate and affirm families of one and families of many. The program on these Sundays will usually be focused on the theme from worship that day (or the series theme). A special aspect of this intergenerational program is that our younger friends can 'adopt' an older friend as their 'grandfriend' so they can accompany each other in the activity so that they are both fully integrated in the event and can get to know each other.

WHEN IS IT?

On that 3rd Sunday of each month, which happens to be the Sunday that our children and youth will be serving as greeters, ushers, and liturgists. This month we will gather on October 20th.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

We will have tables designated for this program in Fellowship Hall during Fellowship Hour so anyone who wishes to engage in "Sunday school" can do so together. This monthly 45 minute program will begin at 11:30 which will give everyone an opportunity to engage in coffee fellowship prior to the start of the faith formation program.

DO I HAVE TO DO THIS DURING FELLOWSHIP HOUR?

Please do not worry, you do not have to be part of the program during Fellowship Hour – tables will be clearly marked for those folks who would like to engage in the program. **However, we sure hope you give it a try and are part of this fun way to get to know each other and share our faith formation journey together!**

If you have any questions or would like to volunteer to help facilitate this fun program, please connect with Pastor Santina at either pastor.hopeuccqc@gmail.com or by calling the church office at 309-762-1419.

Save the Date

The Annual Singles and
Doubles Wiener Roast
is coming!
Saturday, October 26th!



October and November Scriptures

October 6: Amos 5:6-7, 16-17; Psalm 90:12-17; Mark 10:17-31

October 13 Imagine Together a World Where Everyone Has Enough: Isaiah 55; Mark 6:30-44

October 20 Imagine Together Faith over Fear

October 27 Imagine Together a World of Healing Love: 2 Kings 5:1-19

November 3 Imagine Together a World Made Whole: Ruth 1:1-18; Mark 12:28-34

November 10 Imagine Together a World of Vitality and Spiritual Growth: John 3:1-10; John 7:45-52; John 19:38-39

November 17 Imagine Together a World Filled with Awe: 1 Kings 17:8-16; Mark 12:38-44

November 24 Imagine Together a World of Thankful Hearts: Joel 2:21-27; Psalm 126; 1 Timothy 2:1-7

Confirmation Class Begins October 6!

Pastor Santina will begin Confirmation class with all youth in grades 6-12 on October 6. This year we will once again use the wonderful "Confirm Not Conform" curriculum. We will team up with our friends from Church of Peace UCC. Please pray for our confirmands as they begin their journey of faithful discernment!

Hope UCC New Website Under Construction

We will soon have a new website for our church. Our current website has been a wonderful way to keep our congregation informed as well as introduce new friends to Hope UCC. The new website will keep the same address but will have all our information and graphics organized in a different way.

A church website is a church's new front door, with visitors opening these virtual doors many times before ever walking in the actual front doors of the physical building. We want to ensure that our visitors are able to learn as much as possible about Hope UCC so when they come to visit in person, they are informed, comfortable, and excited to be here!

Stay tuned for more information and get ready to provide us your feedback on the new website.



Help Keep the Blessing Box Stocked!

Can you spare a few minutes to help our neighbors? Sign up to help restock the Blessing Box in front of Hope UCC? It doesn't take much time at all and it makes a BIG difference in the lives our friends and neighbors. Please see Julie Bustard for more information or to sign up. Thank you!!