



Hope

United Church of Christ

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**Happy New Year!**

The January newsletter is always a bit of a challenge for me due to its timing: all of the content is due at the same time as all of the preparations for Christmas at church (and home) are at their most chaotic. I want to be in the moment for Christmas, not worrying and writing about January and the work that is waiting for us. However, as I reflect on this challenge, I know this work is important and carries over into my ministry way beyond the completion of our monthly newsletter.

As a community of faith, we must continue to consider how God is calling us to live and serve as God's people. So, this means finding space to embrace the challenges of being intentional in prayer, reflection, and listening to God. Finding the time (and energy) to step away from daily tasks in order to offer God our attention helps us to notice the holy in our lives. What if, in the midst of the activity and busyness of each day, we can pause just for a few minutes and look up and around and offer God our thanks for the day and God's presence in it? How might that change the patterns of our days? How will that spiritual practice lead to stronger prayer muscles? For me, these intentional pauses in my daily activities prove challenging, but I have found that when I'm consistent about taking these spiritual prayer pauses, I am actually more productive and honestly, happier, as I continue my work following the pauses. I finally realized that setting the alarm on my phone as a reminder to pause is very helpful. We all find our own paths forward – finding our own spiritual rhythms in prayer and meditation - but I hope that our time together in worship on Sundays helps to anchor your spiritual practices as you begin a new week.

As you are receiving this newsletter following the 1st of January, you now know why it's late. I hope and pray that your Christmas celebrations were joyful and filled with light and that your new year brings peace and physical and spiritual health. I hope as we begin this new year, that new patterns of prayer emerge for you and that within it all you feel God holding you close.

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(Happy New Year, continued)

As I do at the start of each new year, I spend time with this meditation written by the great African-American theologian, educator, and civil rights leader, the Rev. Dr. Howard Thurman. I share it again to remind us that although Christmas day has passed, as a community of faith, we believe Christmas continues as we share the light and love of God. Thank you for helping me to find beauty and hope in 2022 as we anticipate with love and hope all that 2023 will bring. Hope Grows!

Happy New Year and peace always,
Pastor Santana

January Scripture

January 1	Ecclesiastes 3:1-13
January 8	Isaiah 60:1-6 Matthew 2:1-12
January 15	Psalms 40:1-11 1 Corinthians 1:1-9 John 1:29-42
January 22	Psalms 27:1, 4-9 1 Corinthians 1:10-18 Matthew 4:12-23
January 29	Micah 6:1-8 Matthew 5:1-12

New Office Hours

The church office hours have changed. Beginning January 1st, the office will be open 9:00 A.M.-12:00 P.M. Monday – Thursday. If you are interested in volunteering to help in the church office until a new office administrator is hired, please let Pastor Santana know and we can work out the volunteer schedule. Thank you!

The Work of Christmas

by Rev. Dr. Howard Thurman

When the song of the angels is stilled,
when the star in the sky is gone,
when the kings and princes are home,
when the shepherds are back with their flocks,
the work of Christmas begins:
to find the lost,
to heal the broken,
to feed the hungry,
to release the prisoner,
to rebuild the nations,
to bring peace among the people,
to make music in the heart.

Hope UCC Annual Meeting

Sunday, January 29, 2023

Immediately following worship

Please plan to stay to discuss and vote on

- 2023 Proposed Budget*
- Affirm Nominating Slate
- Approve Proposed Constitution/Bylaws Amendments*

**copies of final proposed budget and amendments available in narthex and church office*

**Questions about the proposed budget?
We will have a Budget Forum following
worship on January 8. Plan to be there!**

Stewardship 2023 - Thank You!

We thank you for your generous and faithful response to Hope UCC's 2023 Stewardship Campaign. This year's theme: A Statement of Our Faith truly exemplified your response to supporting Hope UCC's mission in the new year. The pledges offered by our members and friends totaled \$106,000 and we are grateful to be able to use that amount to formalize our final 2023 proposed budget. The final draft of the proposed 2023 budget is available for your review and we will hold a Budget Forum following worship on January 8th in order to answer any questions prior to our Annual Meeting scheduled for January 29th. Pledged support can be made at any time during the year – if you would like to do this, you can find pledge cards in the information rack in the rear of the sanctuary. Of course, pledges are not the only source of financial support that is faithfully given in this faith community. We thank the many people who continue to share their financial gifts with Hope UCC without an official 'pledge.' Your support is a vital part of our mission plan and we are grateful.

We thank you for the many ways you share your gifts with Hope UCC, and we prayerfully commit to the faithful stewardship of your gifts. If you have any questions about Hope UCC's Mission Plan, budget, or your financial gifts to Hope UCC, please see our Treasurer Bob Tallitsch or Pastor Santana.

Thank You to Trustees and Bob Church!

A big thank you to our Trustees Ministry for organizing the repairs for the uneven sidewalk in the back of the church and to Bob Church who did all the finishing work on the project. What a relief to be able to enter and exit the building through the rear doors and the kitchen door without worrying about tripping on uneven sidewalk edges! Thank you!



Congregational Sympathy is lovingly extended to Tracy Mockmore Leuth and Mary Boquist.

Tracy's father, Gary, passed away December 12.

Mary's daughter, Kathy Hebditch, passed away December 22.

Our love and prayers are offered for Tracy & Eric and Mary & Judy McCollum and their families as they mourn the loss of their beloved family members.

Reel Theology January 13: Marcel The Shell with Shoes On

Join us on Friday, January 13 to watch and discuss this quirky and very special film. Marcel is an adorable, 1-inch-tall shell who ekes out a colorful existence with his grandmother, Connie, and their pet lint, Alan. Once part of a sprawling community of shells, they now live alone as the sole survivors of a mysterious tragedy. However, when a documentary filmmaker discovers them, the short film he posts online brings Marcel millions of passionate fans, as unprecedented dangers and a new hope of finding his long-lost family.

If you would like to eat together before the film, please bring your own dinner at 5:30. The film will begin at 6:00 with the discussion to follow. All ages are welcome – this film is rated PG and has many themes appropriate for intergenerational conversation and discussion.



Youth Group Confirmation Class

We will begin our formal Confirmation class with youth in grades 6-12 in January. We will meet Sundays from 1:30-3:00 which is right before our regularly scheduled Youth Group meetings which take place 3:00 – 4:15 on Sundays. We will use material from Confirm Not Conform and will be joined by youth from our sister congregation, Edwards UCC. Please contact Pastor Santina if you have any questions about our Youth Confirmation Class.

Adult Confirmation Class Jan. 17: The Bible: What and Why? Understanding Our Sacred Text

We will resume our Adult 'Confirmation' class in January with a monthly meeting on the 3rd Tuesday of the month from 6:30-8:00 P.M. in person and on Zoom. These classes are available to any adults interested in learning a little more about faith formation and having a conversation about why we are here together on this journey. All are welcome to participate in one or all of the sessions. Come to the sessions with the topic that interests you – we will discuss a different topic each month. For more information, please contact Pastor Santina or leave a message with the church office.





Happy New Year and Happy Epiphany!

Epiphany is celebrated on the 12th day of Christmas which, this year, falls on Friday, January 6 – we will celebrate it in church together on Sunday, January 8. On Epiphany we celebrate the light that is revealed through Jesus's birth. The scripture text associated with this celebration is Matthew 2:1-12 which tells the story of the Magi's visit to Mary, Joseph, and baby Jesus. As has been our annual tradition, we will again celebrate Epiphany by receiving Star Words for the New Year.

Star Words are a spiritual tool to help guide us through the year. Star Words are available for everyone – young and old. Keep the star close all year and use it as a spiritual practice to let the word guide your prayers and bring you into a new conversation with God. Trust that your word will have something to offer, some new understanding or insight for you this year. Watch and see how the word appears and makes itself known to you in different ways. Perhaps keep a journal to hold your reflections and the epiphanies that come from this spiritual practice. We will receive our Star Words during worship on January 8th.

We will mail out Star Words to anyone who would like to receive one but will not be in worship on January 8th. Simply notify the church office via email, phone, call, Facebook Messenger, or let Pastor Santina know you would like to have one mailed to you – please provide an address so we can get it to you.

Happy New Year and happy new Star Word! Hope Grows!



January Birthdays

8: Walt Lysell
10: Brian Williams
25: Dorothy Burdick
28: Becky Newton
31: Jerry Blunt



Blessing Box Requests

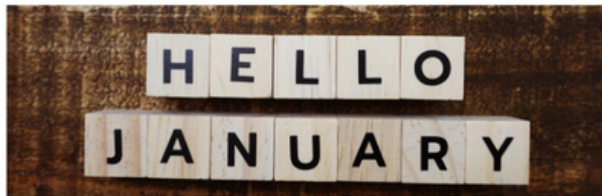
Thank you for your continued support of this important ministry! Due to cold weather the following items are most needed:

- hygiene supplies
- dry/powdered milk, soups, and grain mixes
- toilet paper



The Great Christmas Children's Book Adventure!

In spite of the severe weather on December 22nd, Jen Hookey, Sue Grchan, Judy Hawotte, and I ventured to the Moline Housing Authority Christmas party at Spring Valley apartments in Moline. The party was amazing with Santa Claus and his Elf and hot cocoa and cookies. There were crafts and coloring for the kids. What the gals from our church did, was to assist the kids in selecting books for themselves and to take home as gifts for others. We wrapped the books and added to and from stickers. We thought the weather would keep people from coming, and it was a small crowd. But those that came had so much enthusiasm that we also were filled with joy. It wasn't just the children but also the adults that loved to select books for themselves and others. This was the first time that MHA held this party and they told us that they would definitely do this again next year and are looking forward to our participation again. I want to thank Tracy and Eric Leuth who donated most of the books. A big thank you also to those that also donated books, wrapping paper, scotch tape, and to and from labels. Also thanks so much for the group that came to church the previous week and helped sort the books into appropriate age groups. Dan Hawotte and Eric Leuth delivered the boxes to Spring Valley. Hopefully, we will have better weather next year. I can't help but smile when I recall one little girl who climbed off Santa's lap and headed to the book tables. She reached up and took a big colorful book and ran back to Santa and said " Santa....this is what I want for Christmas!" -Barb Hawotte



January Dates to Remember ****hybrid: zoom & in person***

Tuesday, January 10, 24, & 31: Lectionary* 10:00a.m.
January 8: Epiphany Sunday & Budget Forum
January 10: Trustees* 1:00 p.m.
Mission & Outreach* 6:00 p.m.
January 13: Reel Theology 6:00 p.m.
January 17: Adult Confirmation Class* 6:30 p.m.
January 18: Worship & Music Ministry* 4:30 p.m.
January 26: Church Council* 6:30 p.m.
January 29: Annual Congregational Meeting

Hope UCC Book Club

Hope's Book Club January selection is *The Story Keeper* by Lisa Wingate. All are welcome to join the discussion on January 30 at 6:00 P.M. in the Bronze Room at the Moline Public Library.

