



Hopeful Connections

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Happy New Year!

What surprises await us in this new year? How is God calling us into new ways to serve and love God's creation? What will God reveal and how will God be made known to each of us on our journeys this year? These are some of the questions I am carrying into 2022. These questions definitely carry weight and keep me awake at night. But more importantly, they also fill me with hope and create a renewed energy and excitement within me.

I don't know about you, but I need that hope more than ever right now, because current events are exhausting. The new Covid variant is raging as I write this. As we remain vigilant in our safety guidelines at church and in our community, we continue to see the devastating impact of this virus. Thankfully, we are able to continue to safely gather in person for those comfortable doing so as well as online for those who are away or feel safer gathering virtually. However, gathering for worship is only one, albeit very important, part of our mission. Our time together in worship and praise is what encourages us to carry God's love into our community and world. It is love that is to be shared through our embodiment of God's love as we care for and love God's creation and one another *and* through invitation to others to gather and grow with us.

I absolutely love being in worship with you all. Each Sunday feels like a Spirit-filled gathering that renews my soul and recharges my Spirit. I pray that you find this true for yourselves as well. God brings everything together for us in our worship. I am so grateful for all who volunteer to make our worship happen: our liturgists, greeters, Communion preparers, and tech crew (and our Worship and Music Ministry volunteers who coordinate all of them), and to our staff: Bridget Ramirez who prepares and distributes information and bulletins and Mary Tallitsch and Ben Holmes who collaborate with me and share their immense gifts to bring a deeper worship experience for us all through their musical offerings.

Each new year brings new opportunities and challenges. 2022 no doubt holds both for us. But we are entering this new year ready to go and meet all of that 2022 brings. In the next few months, Hope UCC's leadership will begin the discernment process necessary to begin a Strategic Plan for our congregation. As Church Council members meet with consultants in order to determine how to best begin this process, be assured we will keep the congregation updated on what is happening and how the whole Hope UCC community will be part of the process. A Strategic Plan will serve as road map for Hope UCC as we move into our future by providing us with a clear direction through identifying our priorities, clarifying our mission and values, and bringing in all the voices and history that are represented at Hope UCC to increase our success in the planning. Congregations who have developed Strategic Plans find the clarity and renewed energy for mission and discipleship and growth. Stay tuned for more information about this process and how you will be able to be part of it!

As I do each year before New Year's Eve, I spend time with this meditation written by the great African-American theologian, educator, and civil rights leader, the Reverend Dr. Howard Thurman. I share it with you 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 2021 as we anticipate with love and hope all that 2022 brings. Hope Grows!

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.


Happy New Year and peace always,
 Pastor Santana

January Scripture

Jan 2	Jeremiah 31:7-14 John 1:10-18
Jan 9	Isaiah 43:1-7 Luke 3:15-17, 21-22
Jan 16	Psalm 36:5-10 John 2:1-11
Jan 23	Nehemiah 8:1-3, 5-6, 8-10 1Corinthians 12:12-31a Luke 4:14-21
Jan 30	Jeremiah 1:4-10 1Corinthians 13:1-13 Luke 4: 21-30

HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO YOU.....

08 Walter Lysell
 09 Bridget Ramirez
 10 Brian Williams
 24 Lee Blunt
 25 Dorothy Burdick
 28 Becky Newton
 30 Karen DeLathower
 31 Jerry Blunt



*Dear Friends,
 Thank you for the memories you have shared of Cliff and the numerous ways you have supported me.
 Love, Della*

Hope Book Club

We invite you to read *A Single Thread*, a novel by Tracy Chevalier, then join us for discussion January 31 at 6:00 p.m. at Hope United Church of Christ.



Did You Know? Designated Funds Edition

Did you know that Hope UCC has six Designated Funds that you can contribute to in memory or in honor of someone or simply as a donation? Each of these funds are restricted in how they monies can be used and require Council approval to be used. It is the intention they will provide funds for projects and other things that are not included in Hope UCC's budget. In addition to these six funds, we also have a Pastor's Discretionary Fund that relies on contributions to be sustained. Each of these funds are included in Hope's monthly financial reports which show their balances and expenditures.

- **Mission & Outreach Fund**: These funds are used for projects that provide service and outreach and facilitate the witness of the congregation through the support of mission and outreach programs beyond those covered in the operating budget.
- **Memorial Fund**: Memorial funds are those gifts given to the Church to honor the memory of a loved one. These funds are used to fund a list of special needs as recommended by the Trustees and other ministries, and approved by the Church Council.
- **Faith Exploration and Youth Fund**: This fund supports programs of an educational nature that enhance the faith formation and service programs of our children and youth and our congregation.
- **Worship and Music Fund**: Provides for the upgrading and maintenance all elements of worship including the bells and chimes, piano, and organ, the addition and maintenance of other musical instruments, technology, and for other projects that shall enrich the worship experience at Hope UCC.
- **Building and Maintenance Fund**: Provides for the funding of improvements and repairs to the church building, all the grounds of the campus, and physical plant.
- **Union Congregational Legacy Fund**: These funds are legacy funds from Union Congregational Church and will be used to fund special projects and needs as recommended by the Union Congregational Legacy Fund Committee to the Church Council for approval.
- **Pastor's Discretionary Fund**: Provides assistance in a variety of ways to members & friends of Hope UCC as well as those with no connection to our church in need of assistance. 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.

If you are interested in donating to any of these funds or would like more information about Hope UCC's Designated Funds, please contact Hope's Treasurer, Bob Tallitsch, Pastor Santina, or our Office Administrator in the church office. Thank you for your continued support of Hope UCC's mission!

Hope UCC Annual Meeting

Hope UCC will meet for our Annual Meeting following worship on January 23rd. At this meeting, the 2021 Annual Report will be presented, the 2022 Nominating Slate will be affirmed, and the proposed 2022 Budget will be voted on by members of the congregation. All are welcome to attend this annual event: friends of Hope UCC are welcome to ask questions and offer their comments but only members of the congregation are eligible to vote during the meeting. The 2021 Annual Report will be available in the first part of January and the proposed budget has been distributed already. Any changes made to the proposed budget by Trustees and Church Council will be available as they are made. Please contact our Treasurer, Bob Tallitsch, or Council President, Grady Birdsell with any questions about the proposed budget. The Annual Meeting will be available via Zoom as well as in person on January 23rd. We thank you for your continued support of all that we do at Hope UCC!

Thank you!

Thank you to all who helped fulfill all the wishes on our Angel Tree this year! Lots of happy students at Rock Island Academy are enjoying your gifts and everything was delivered to the family with whom World Relief connected us. Thank you, Kathy Hobson & Jenny Hookey for de-



Youth Group News for January

Youth Group meets Sundays from 3:00-4:15 P.M. unless otherwise noted.

January 2: Happy New Year: Resolutions and plans!

January 9: Epiphany: How is God's light leading you? Star Words

January 16: No Youth Group

January 23: Jesus's Mission: What is our mission?

January 30: Mission continued

Happy New Year and Happy Epiphany!

Epiphany is celebrated on the 12th day of Christmas which, this year, falls on Thursday, January 6. 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 tradition for the past three years, 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 9th. We will mail out Star Words to anyone who would like to receive one but will not be in worship - simply notify the church office you would like to have one mailed to you. Happy New Year and happy new Star Word!

Pastor Santina's Time Away

Pastor Santina will be away visiting family in Norfolk, VA January 13-16. Rev. Mariah Marlin-Warfield and Rev. Becky David will provide emergency pastoral care during her absence. Please contact our Office Administrator Bridget Ramirez to connect with them. If you need care when the church office is closed, please contact Kathy LeMaster and she will connect you with Pastor Mariah or Pastor Becky.



Reel Theology January 21: CODA

Join us to watch and discuss the compelling and thoughtful film, *CODA*, on January 21st at 6:00 P.M.

This film is about Ruby, identified as a CODA (Child of Deaf Adults). Ruby is the only hearing person in her deaf family. When the family's fishing business is threatened, Ruby finds herself torn between pursuing her love of music by wanting to go to Berklee College of Music and her fear of abandoning her parents. This film is rated PG-13. As usual, bring your own dinner at 5:30 if you would like to eat together before the film begins at 6:00.



I VOW TO MAKE MORE RESOLUTIONS NEXT YEAR