



Hopeful Connections

3324 41ST STREET
MOLINE, IL 61265

PHONE 762-1419 FAX 762-4119

HOPEUCCQC.ORG

OFFICE.HOPEUCCQC@GMAIL.COM

PASTOR.HOPEUCCQC@GMAIL.COM

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Looking Forward Together

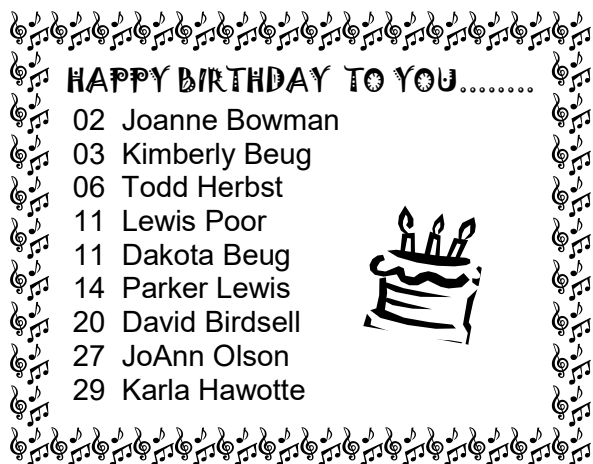
Just as we are putting the Thanksgiving leftovers away, it is already time to prepare for Advent. This season of waiting feels, thankfully, different this year. This time last year we were not meeting in person and we were designing all of our activities, programs, and worship experiences as online gatherings. I am thankful that this year we

are able to re-gather in person for these events while still continuing to connect virtually with those not able to or not comfortable joining us in person. It is good to be able to continue to connect in all the ways we have learned are vital to bring us together.

Each of the four weeks of Advent will center on the question: Do You See What I See? Through exploring the birth narratives in the gospels of Luke and Matthew and the characters depicted within the stories, we will consider what they see when they encounter the fulfillment of God's promises with the news of Jesus's birth. The Wise Men, King Herod, the shepherds, Mary and Elizabeth, and Joseph each have a story – and so do we. What do we see when faced with the news of Jesus's arrival? How do we react to the news that Jesus, the Messiah, is entering our lives? Emmanuel, God with us, is a promise kept, then and now. How do we see this promise and how do we live within that promise? I am looking forward to sharing this worship theme and exploring what we see with all of you.

As you will see in our December newsletter, there are many ways to stay connected, engaged, and spiritually grounded during this Advent season. I hope that you will find a way to deepen your Advent journey through one or all of these opportunities. In a season that the world tells us should be full of busyness, consuming, and stress, my prayer for you is that you will see what the Wise Men, Joseph, Mary, and the shepherds see: the peace and promise of Emmanuel, God with Us, and the love God brings to us each day as we await the arrival and return of our Savior, Jesus Christ.

Merry Christmas,
Pastor Santana



December Scripture

Dec. 5	Isaiah 11:1-10 Luke 2:8-20
Dec. 12	Micah 5:2-5a Luke 1:39-55
Dec. 19	Jeremiah 33:14-16 Matthew 1:18-25
Dec. 26	Hymn Sing

2022 Pledge Update From Your Treasurer

Early in November Hope UCC mailed out our 2022 Mission Plan and Stewardship Information. This packet included the 2022 proposed budget for Hope UCC. If you didn't receive this information please contact the church office and one will be mailed to you.

On November 21st we celebrated Stewardship Sunday at Hope UCC. On that day we reflected on all that we have accomplished in 2021 and discerned how God is calling us to live as God's people and be the church in 2022. We also asked everyone to submit your faith promise of support for Hope UCC's 2022 mission on that day. We thank you for being part of that special service.

We are getting closer to our goal. Here is where we stand so far in our 2022 campaign as of November 29th:

2022 budgeted pledge amount: \$133,360.01

2022 pledge amounts turned in thus far: \$82,225.00

If you haven't submitted your pledge for 2022 yet, I would urge you to do so as soon as possible. If you didn't pledge in 2021 I would encourage you to prayerfully consider doing so in 2022.

You may also call the office and simply state that you will keep your regular giving to the church at the same level as your 2021 giving, or increase it, or, if needed, decrease it.

Thank you for your past, current, and future support of Hope UCC's Mission plan. If you have any questions feel free to contact me, either by e-mail, phone, or in person.

With sincere thanks,
 Bob Tallitsch
 Treasurer, Hope UCC

How grateful Ray & I are of the good natured understanding and loving support of fellow Bell Choir members and long history of church members.

*Blessings,
 Ray & Suzanne Cutler*

Thank You

I'd like to thank everyone who had a hand in my going away reception. Everything from planning and decor, to cooking and cleaning up. It was so nice to be able to see and visit everyone all at once, something I'm not normally able to do. Thank you all for the gifts, kind words and well wishes. I will take with me many wonderful memories from my time here, and from the people of Hope Church. Thank you especially to Pastor Parker and Pastor Santina for your many years of kindness, friendship and patience. As my time in the office may be over, my time at Hope Church will not. I'm sure I will not be able to stay away for long.

*Much love to you all,
 Pamela Becker*

Thinking of our members in school

Mission and Outreach would like to invite the congregation to remember our members who are at school right now. You could send a card or message to let them know we are thinking of them.

Thank you. Barb Hawotte

Charles Poor
2100 I street NW
(please note the I is as in eye....not a one)
Lafayette Hall
Room 401
Washington DC 20052

Tyler Demarest
New Hall East 310F1
501 Annie Glidden Rd
DeKalb, IL 60115

Josh Powell
2003 3rs Street
Moline, IL 61265



Reel Theology December 10: *It's a Wonderful Life*

Bring the family and enjoy this all church movie night watching and discussing the 1946 Christmas classic *It's a Wonderful Life* starring Jimmy Stewart and Donna Reed. We'll have hot chocolate and angel cookies as we share this film together. Bring your own dinner at 5:30 if you would like to eat together before the film begins at 6:00. This film is rated PG.

NEW DATE: An Illustrated Faith: Deepening Our Spiritual Journey through Creative Journaling Saturday, December 4 at 3:30-5:00 P.M.

Families of one and families of many are invited to join the Faith Exploration Ministry for this fun and informative afternoon workshop. Reverend Lisa Gaston will lead us in this spiritual practice. No artistic background or experience is necessary for this practice which is found to deepen our engagement with scripture and prayer practices. Many have found that Bible journaling brings a new awareness of scripture of texts they have heard and read for many years, because engaging with it creatively offers a fresh perspective to them. This is a fun and meaningful time together designed for all ages to share together so please bring your children and/or grandchildren. Childcare will be available for children under the age of 5 (please let the church office know if you will need childcare).

Faith Exploration will provide the materials for journaling so please let us know you will be attending. RSVP with the church office either by calling or emailing:

309-762-1419 or office.hopeuccqc@gmail.com

We will have refreshments provided at 3:30 and the program will begin at 3:45. A \$5 donation is suggested.

Please contact the Faith Exploration Ministry members with any questions: Laura Black, Sue Grchan, Kim Powell, and Jan Birdsell.



Angel Tree at Hope UCC

Our Mission and Outreach Ministry has once again connected Hope UCC with a newly resettled family in the Quad Cities with whom we are able to share our gifts. In addition to this family, we have an opportunity to provide toys and supplies to the students at Rock Island Academy. Mission and Outreach has a special tree set up in Fellowship Hall holding the angel tags with the gift information on them. The Jamal Family is a family of parents and older children who need household items. The elementary school needs smaller toys for their incentive box as well as children's sized mittens, gloves, and stocking caps. Please take an angel tag

which lists a specific request from the Jamal family or the school.

Please return the Jamal Family gifts wrapped with that tag attached. The gifts for the school do not need to be wrapped. All gifts should be brought to church (either under the tree in Fellowship Hall or to the church office) Monday, December 20 so the gifts can be delivered to the Jamal Family and Rock Island Academy in time for Christmas. If you would like to simply make a donation to be used to purchase the gifts that would be appreciated too! Please indicate 'Angel Tree' on your check or envelope. That money will be used to purchase additional items for the family and school.

The Angel Tree will be in Fellowship Hall throughout Advent. If you have any questions about the Angel Tree, please see any of the M&O Ministry team: Kathy Hobson, Barb Hawotte, Ginny Anderson, Lisa & Brian Williams, Donna Werner, and Jenny Hookey. Thank you!



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

December 4: Illustrated Faith Workshop: 3:00-5:00 P.M. - Bring your family and join us as we use our creativity to deepen our spiritual journey.

December 5: **No Youth Group**

December 10: A Night at the Movies –“It’s a Wonderful Life”- Join together our Hope UCC community for an intergenerational movie night to watch and discuss this Christmas classic together.

December 12: 3rd Sunday of Advent: Joy - We’ll meet at church at 3:00 and

head over to either Walmart or Target to do a little Christmas shopping for our church Angel Tree. We’ll be back at church no later than 4:30.

December 19: Blue Christmas Service at 2:00 P.M. - This is a special service that will offer time and space for sharing grief and worry in the midst of a season of joy. You are absolutely welcome to attend. This service will end right before Youth Group begins so please note that Youth Group is going to begin a little later than usual at 3:30. Thanks!

December 19: 4th Sunday of Advent: Love ***Youth Group meets at 3:30-4:30 today*** - We will have a Christmas party and gift exchange

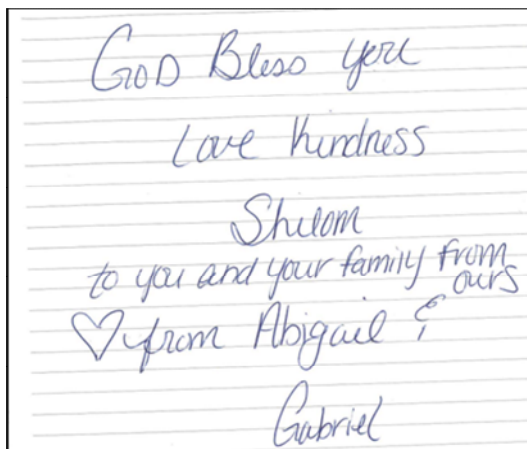
December 24: Christmas Eve 1:00 P.M. Traditional worship service with Communion. 5:00 P.M. Lessons and Carols service (In person and live streamed- *in person depends on Covid and weather*)

December 26: No Youth Group



Blue Christmas Service December 19 at 2:00 P.M.

In the midst of this season where we see ‘JOY’ almost everywhere we look, what do we do with the grief and loss we carry? It can be challenging to face the joy and happy chaos of the Christmas season when we feel grief, sadness, anxiety, or pain. Our ‘Blue Christmas’ service at Hope UCC is a space to claim those feelings and find hope in the compassionate love of God. All are invited to join in sharing and hearing prayers, scripture and music that acknowledges that God’s presence is there for those who mourn, for those who struggle and that God’s word comes to shine light into the darkness.



Hope UCC Blessing Box Ministry Update

Our Mission and Outreach Ministry has been taking good care of the Blessing Box this month keeping it stocked and monitored. Each day they find that our neighbors have been able to find items they need and thanks to your generous support, we have had enough supplies to keep it restocked this month. Thank you for helping to keep this important ministry going! If you would like to help keep the Blessing Box stocked and monitored, please let anyone on the M&O team know and they will provide the information on what is required. We recently received this note of thanks from a neighbor who found what she needed in the Blessing Box. Thank you again for your support of this wonderful ministry.

Christmas Eve Worship Service Schedule

At this time, our plans for Christmas Eve worship are that we will gather in person for the services. Of course, Covid and weather can possibly force us to change our plans, and we will publish that information if it is necessary. The Service of Lesson and Carols will also be live streamed.

1:00 P.M. Traditional Worship Service with Holy Communion

5:00 P.M. A Service of Lessons and Carols

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Thanks to Leon Cowle

12-21-2000

NOT SO SILENT NIGHT