



HOPEFUL CONNECTIONS

May 2020



This 'In Between' Time

Spring is a magical time of year. I never fully appreciated spring when we lived in San Diego because, quite honestly, it always felt like spring there. But after my first winter in Moline, as I saw the trees starting to produce their buds and realized there were green shoots coming up through the ground I felt an elation that I did not expect. Three years later, as the flowers start blooming and the trees begin to flower and leaf up, I still stand in awe of their beauty. The joy spring brings me is a joy that is shared by so many during this time of year. But this year, spring feels especially important. That joy it brings today is felt more deeply than in previous years. The hope of new life it symbolizes accompanies me and helps to keep me moving forward as I am surrounded by news of this pandemic.

We have been living with our state's Stay at Home order for seven weeks, and its extension, although disappointing, is critically important for the health of our community. What an incredible seven weeks it has been. This pandemic has brought us into a new reality of physical distancing, Zoom meetings, live streamed worship, and a new understanding of the importance of hand washing. I never imagined something like this was possible and now that we are in it, I would like to be able to say that we know the date of the conclusion of all this. As we know too well though, that is not possible yet. I am confident that we will come out the other side of this pandemic a strong community but we will be much different coming out than we were going in. Rev. Cameron Trimble, a UCC minister, compares this time in our church history to that of a caterpillar transforming into a butterfly and offers this reflection:

We are mush right now. We are messy, fragile, unprotected, insecure, unrecognizable, disoriented, developing, transforming, imaginal beings. We are in that liminal space between what was and what can be. Our becoming something better on the other side of this is not guaranteed. But with the right conditions, with the awakening of people to the beauty of our planet and the intimacy of our connection to everyone and everything, we have the chance to become something new...If ever there was a moment for you to become who God has dreamed you to be, it's now. Don't miss the chance. Everything is being made new, especially you.

This is an historic time in our country and a time of huge possibilities for reimagining our future and how Hope UCC will grow into this new future. We have already made changes to ensure that Hope UCC's members and friends are staying connected. There are always ways we can improve, and your ideas and suggestions and feedback are very important in this process. Please continue to reach out to others to check in with them. But also, please let us know how you are doing or how we can better care for you in this time. We are in this together, and most importantly, we are held with love by God throughout it all. I have often said that the Holy Spirit guides us into places we wouldn't enter on our own. Well, here we are. She doesn't ditch us once we are there – Spirit stays with us, empowering us to stay strong and focused on how to live as God's people in this space and beyond.

I pray that you are all staying well and that you continue to feel God's Spirit holding you. I pray that you feel connected to your faith community at Hope UCC as we continue to live in this 'in

between time' – the time between what was before we ever heard the words 'Corona Virus' and what our community looks like after the stay at home order is lifted. Please be assured that through it all – Hope Grows! Let the words of Paul's letter to the Romans assure you of this truth:

For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Stay well and stay hopeful.

With much love,

Pastor Santana

Hope UCC's Open and Affirming (ONA) Journey

Throughout the past two years, Hope UCC has had programs, meetings, discussions, and forums preparing us to become an official Open and Affirming (ONA) congregation of the United Church of Christ. Our congregational vote to affirm our ONA covenant was scheduled for April 26. Unfortunately, we were not able to meet in person for that vote and it will be many weeks until we are able to do so. Even then, we still may not all be in worship together due to the need to continue physical distancing by some of our members. Consequently, on April 23, our Church Council approved a motion to hold our vote to affirm our ONA covenant by a mail-in ballot. Hope UCC's Constitution, while not specifically mentioning a "vote by mail" process, does not exclude the ability to conduct business in this manner, especially under such historically unprecedented and extreme circumstances as the current "quarantine in place" due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Because of the importance of this issue, as well as the uncertainty as to when regular church services will resume, Hope's Church Council felt it was important to conduct this important business by a mail-in ballot.

The Open and Affirming Covenant, as presented at the 2020 Annual Meeting, is as follows:

Hope United Church of Christ invites and welcomes into our faith community persons of every ability, age, race, nationality, economic and social status, faith background, marital standing and family structure, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression. We commit ourselves to the ongoing work of being an ONA (Open and Affirming) congregation, one that lives out the belief that God is still speaking. With God's grace, we journey together in Christian faith.

Every member of Hope UCC will receive a ballot in the mail during the week of May 18th. On this ballot you will have three choices:

Yes– affirming our ONA covenant leading us to become and ONA congregation.

No- opposing the affirmation of our ONA covenant and opposing becoming an ONA congregation.

Abstain- you do not wish to vote in favor or against this issue.

A self-addressed, stamped return envelope will accompany your ballot.

Please return all ballots to Hope UCC's office no later than May 30th.

As outlined by Hope UCC's Constitution, a quorum must equal fifty percent (50%) plus one individual of the average attendance for two (2) months prior to a congregational vote. In this case that average will be calculated from the attendance of January and February, since March 7th was the last Sunday when regular worship services were held at Hope UCC. Therefore, in order to properly conduct this business by mail at least a quorum of ballots must be returned to the church office no later than May

30th. We are grateful for your cooperation in ensuring this quorum is met.

If you have any questions feel free to contact any member of the ONA Committee. We hope that you will prayerfully consider your vote on this important matter in the life of Hope United Church of Christ.

Respectfully,

Your ONA Committee:

Jan Birdsell	Kathy Hobson
Sue Grchan	Walt Lysell
Becky Newton	Caridad Ramos
Bob Tallitsch	

Sunday Worship With Hope UCC

We are continuing to live stream Sunday worship each week. You can also watch the videos any time after worship as well. We understand that not everyone has access to digital format for worship and we will continue to send out the worship plans each week for you to use in your weekly devotional time. We hope you are finding the packets helpful. Please continue to check your mailbox at home, your email, and the church website for continuing updates and information.

To be part of the live stream, go to the church Facebook page each Sunday morning at 10:00 a.m. (Central). You don't have to have a Facebook account to be with us. You'll find Hope UCC at www.facebook.com/hopeuccmoline. Please 'Like' and follow Hope UCC Moline so you will be notified of announcements and when we have new information.

Our You Tube channel is: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC_5KL_8zBHOmMHE-_98uXlg?view_as=subscriber. Please subscribe to our You Tube channel to receive notifications of when the new videos are posted.

Livestreaming and creating a You Tube channel were never things we considered before this pandemic. We are grateful to be able to offer these different ways to be together each week. It is not the same as our time together in person in the Hope Sanctuary - however, Spirit is present and creating a new thing through all of us as we come together each week! Join us and invite a friend! God is still speaking – even when through the internet!!

Supporting the Ministries and Mission of Hope UCC

Thank you for your ongoing support of Hope UCC with your financial contributions, pledges, and offerings. Your gifts enable us to continue to share God's love and change lives through worship, authentic welcome and fellowship, and service. Thank you for your generosity and support. We now have two ways to support Hope UCC:

- ♥ Electronic Giving: Hope UCC is now able to offer e-giving through Breeze Management System to make it safer and easier for you to give anytime. You are able to safely donate electronically using your credit card or ACH transfer.
- ♥ Donate by Mail: If you prefer to make your donations by mail or by dropping it off at the church office, please make your checks payable to Hope UCC. Our address is :
Hope United Church of Christ
3324 41st Street
Moline, IL 61265

If you have any questions about donating to Hope UCC please email or call our church office: office.hopeuccqc@gmail.com or 309-762-1419. We thank you again for your generous support of Hope UCC!



Weekly Contemplative Service: The Quiet Table

Did you know Hope UCC has two worship services each week? Our weekly contemplative service, The Quiet Table, offers a time together to quietly pray, reflect on scripture, and share Holy Communion. We gather on Thursday evenings, 6:00-6:30 p.m.

Contemplative worship is a style of worship that immerses us in rest and peace. Each week the service incorporates different spiritual practices such as centering prayer, Taize chants and meditative music, times of silence, and Lectio Divina. This style of worship comes to us as a moment of rest and of peace in the midst of our busy lives. For the 30 minutes of the service our goal is to find in that quiet space together, a place for us to hear God clearly as we worship the Holy One together.

Currently, we gather for this worship service through Zoom: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87907973969>
Meeting ID: 879 0797 3969

The invitation and login details will also be posted on Hope UCC's website: www.hopeuccqc.org as well as our church Facebook page: [facebook.com/hopeuccmoline](https://www.facebook.com/hopeuccmoline)

We hope to see you at The Quiet Table.

Mission and Outreach Ministry

The Mission and Outreach Ministry had planned to take a group from Hope to Aurora to pack bags for the Feed Our Starving Children program on May 16th. However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the May 16th date has been cancelled. As of now, we are rescheduled for Saturday, August 8th. We now have 40 spots to fill, as opposed to the 37 we had before. Our time slot is still 11:30 to 1:30. Please let me know if you would like to participate. I will be getting more information out in the next few months. However, we know that once again this could be canceled due to the pandemic. But for now, we have the opportunity to volunteer and be a part of this wonderful program.

Barb Hawotte
Mission and Outreach Ministry

May Birthdays

03 Hunter Toye
19 Marcia Curtis
23 Grady Birdsell
29 Leona Powell

May Scripture

May 3 - Acts 2:42-47, John 10:1-10, Psalm 23
May 10 - Acts 7:55-60, John 14:1-14, Psalm 31:1-5, 15-16
May 17 - Acts 17:22-31, John 14:15-21, Psalm 66:8-20
May 24 - Acts 1:6-14, John 17:1-11, Psalm 68:1-10, 32-35
May 31 - Acts 2:1-21, John 20:19-23, Psalm 104:24-34, 35b



Congregation Sympathy is extended to the family of Pamela McDermott. Pamela passed away April 15. She was the former wife of Peter McDermott and mother of Matt and Sam.