



Hopeful Connections

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Reimagining Our Future with God



The corn fields are absolutely beautiful right now. Last week I pulled over to admire their beauty. That beautiful golden blanket on top of the rich green foundation had the perfect shading and contours. It was a breezy day, and the way it swayed with the wind took my breath away. I had parked on an elevated spot so I was looking down at this masterpiece and it occurred to me that from this perspective it looked like a solid object – literally like a rich luxurious carpet. I drove down closer and it was at eye level that the rows became clear. The pathways the farmer

created many months ago as he or she planted the seeds feel much narrower now that the corn is growing into magnificent stalks, but they are still there. The farmer can still navigate his/her way through the fields finding the path and doing the work that must be done for the care of the plants and the eventual harvest of these crops.



There are days that I feel like life is like that elevated perspective of the solid golden blanket of the cornfield: just a solid block (lovely as it is) that looks impossible to navigate through to the other side. It is in that moment I have to pause and breathe and remember that if I change my perspective – even just a little – suddenly the path becomes much clearer. It still may be narrow, a little uncomfortable, and even a little confusing (corn maze, anyone?), but it is definitely there.

As we continue to navigate this pandemic together, my constant prayer is for the health and safety of all of our Hope UCC community and your families and friends near and far. I also pray that we continue to have the heart and the eyes to continue to see the pathways that will lead us through this present time into a future that will bring new blessings and opportunities to grow in faith and Spirit and live as God's people. Yes, things are different now than they were on March 13, and there is not doubt that October will be different than September, but how is God speaking to us in all of the change? How are we called to a future filled with Hope? How do we find the pathways that lead us there? Together, we will navigate the way forward as we reimagine what our future looks like. A future with God leading us and guiding us. Throughout September we will be focused on the Book of Exodus and studying the story of our faith ancestors' journey to a new life as the people of God. Let us be inspired by their story as we reimagine all that God makes possible in the days, weeks, and months ahead.


Hope Grows!


Yours in the journey,

Pastor Santana


HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO YOU.....


- 08 Marcella Park
- 09 Paul Bowman
- 12 Ginger Hostetter
- 12 Reagan Hawotte
- 13 Duane Park
- 14 Dean Herbst
- 28 Rev. Santina Poor





September Scripture

Sept. 6	Exodus 12:1-14 Romans 13:8-14 Matthew 18:15-20
Sept. 13	Exodus 14:19-31 Psalm 103:1-13 Matthew 18:21-35
Sept. 20	Exodus 16:2-15 Psalm 105:1-6, 37-45 Matthew 20:1-16
Sept. 27	Exodus 17:1-7 Psalm 78:1-4, 12-16 Matthew 21:23-32
Oct. 4	Exodus 20:1-4, 7-9, 12-20 Psalm 19 Matthew 21:33-46

Prayer Shawl Ministry

The dog days of summer are waning, so it's almost time to dust off those crochet hooks and knitting needles. While we will continue to make prayer shawls for our friends and neighbors, there is still a lot of miscellaneous yarn in the clear tub in the storage room waiting to be used up. So if anyone would like to create granny square or scrappy afghans for the Humility of Mary domestic abuse shelter, please help yourself to this yarn stash and knit or crochet a unique afghan for those in need. Currently there are 3 afghans ready to be donated to the shelter, and it would be great if we could add a few more. Obviously we don't yet know when we will resume our monthly get togethers but, in the meantime, please continue to pray for one another, for those in need, for those affected by recent disasters, and for the blessings our lovingly crafted shawls and afghans will bring to others. Until we can gather again, take care, be well, and stay safe!!

What Does Resurrection Look Like to You?

It is not too late to return your Resurrection Cross to Hope UCC's office. We're still collecting them and will add them to our Resurrection Gallery. Please drop them off at the church either during office hours: Monday – Thursday, 9:00- 2:00 or bring it anytime and leave it by the front door. We promise to bring it in! If you didn't get a cross, we still have some so come by and pick one up! Thank you for sharing your sacred creativity with your church family.



Worship Together Outdoors in the Park!
September 13 at 10:00 A.M.

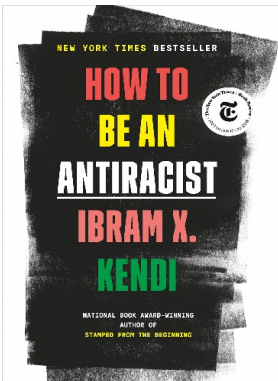
Hope UCC's Worship and Music Ministry is planning a special way to celebrate the beginning of our new program year with our annual Kick Off Sunday worship together, in person, outdoors at Phipps Prairie Park in Silvis. For the health and safety of everyone, we will continue to follow all CDC and State of Illinois health and safety guidelines for this gathering – properly worn masks covering mouth and nose and social distancing will be required for attendance. Please bring a chair (although there are a few picnic tables available for seating). If you would like to stay for lunch, please bring your own lunch (we are unable to have a potluck at this time due to safety concerns). We completely understand and support your decision if you choose not to attend in person. It is important that you make the decisions that are best for you and your family! We will livestream the worship service in order to make sure anyone not able to attend in person can join us virtually via technology. ☺ Phipps Prairie Park is located at the end of 12th Street (off of Avenue of the Cities) in Silvis. Bring your walking shoes so that you can enjoy the many hiking trails that are available there on a post-worship walk. Any questions? Please contact the church office: 309-762-1419 or office.hopeuccqc@gmail.com. We are looking forward to starting our new program year with a joyful, and safely masked and distanced, gathering.

Children's Sunday School Begins Again!

We are so excited to renew our children's faith formation programming in September. Sunday school will look a little different, but will still be a special time for our youngest sojourners to spend time with the Word and in prayer from the comfort of their homes at a time that is best for the schedules of our busy families. Our Faith Exploration Ministry is putting together monthly 'Sunday School in a Box' kits for anyone who would like to share this special time and wonderful material with a child in their lives. We even have special preschool curriculum for our youngest friends! Your Sunday school box will have everything you need for each week. Pastor Santina will upload a new video each Sunday on Hope UCC's YouTube channel with a special message for the kids. You can do the lesson any time that fits your family's schedule. We hope you will email us pictures or videos of the work your child is doing. Our goal is to create a special time for children to grow in faith with the special grownups in their lives – we do not want to add to the pressure so many families are experiencing with on line learning and remote education. We hope that in this time together, you all find the same joy and love in sharing these stories that we have on those Sunday mornings of the past when we were gathered around the tables in our classrooms at Hope UCC. If you have any questions or would like to make sure you receive a kit, please contact the Hope UCC office: 309-762-1419 or office.hopeuccqc@gmail.com

Youth Group Resumes in September

Calling all youth: 6th – 12th grade!! Watch your mail (postal, email, text) for information about our first meeting using Google Meet and Zoom. We are going to spend time welcoming our new members, catching up with everyone, and planning what we can do safely together. Please watch for the notice and invite a friend!



Four Session Discussion on *How to Be an Antiracist*

Working toward an end of racism in America requires an understanding of our national and local history. Join in an effort to grow together in learning how we can better love and serve all people by reading and discussing *How to Be an Antiracist* by Ibram X. Kendi. In a time when most people profess that they are “not racist,” Dr. Kendi’s acclaimed book provides a clear understanding of what makes a policy or a person “racist” or antiracist.” Antiracism is a transformative concept that reorients and reenergizes the conversation about racism—and, even more fundamentally, points us toward liberating new ways of thinking about ourselves and each other. Examining racism through multiple lenses including power, biology, ethnicity, body, and culture, Dr. Kendi helps readers see the many forms of racism clearly,

understand their poisonous consequences, and work to oppose them in our systems and in ourselves.

We will gather on Mondays in October in a hybrid Zoom/in person meeting. Please use this time to order the book and start reading for this schedule:

Oct. 5: Chapters 1-4 Oct. 12: Chapters 5-9 Oct.19: Chapters 10-13 Oct. 26: Chapters 14-18

If you need technical assistance ordering the book or financial assistance, or have any questions, please contact Pastor Santina. Please register for this program by calling or emailing the church office: 309-762-1419 or office.hopeuccqc@gmail.com

Share the Joy of Hope UCC

Hope UCC's social media presence on Facebook and YouTube has helped us stay in touch and stay connected with each other. It has also extended our circle of members and friends far beyond our Quad Cities Area. Please consider how you can get the word out about Hope UCC. If you have not already, please make sure you hit 'like' on our church Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/hopeuccmoline> as well as subscribing to our YouTube channel (even if you don't ever use YouTube, it helps our channel) https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC_5KL_8zBH0mMHE-_98uXlg?view_as=subscriber.

Also, a very easy way to let other folks know what good things are happening at Hope UCC is by clicking the 'like' and 'share' buttons when you see Facebook posts from our church. This is a very simple way to invite others to church! Thank you for being part of this special faith community!

Covid Task Force September Update

During the month of August we had 2 'soft opens' during worship using the plans put together by the Covid Task Force. Our goal was to see, in practice, how all the planned procedures actually work. We learned some valuable lessons and hope to continue to implement the changes as we progress.

There is a real desire for many in our congregation to safely gather in person for worship once again. This separation has been especially hard for those without the ability to join the services via technology. We continue to monitor the information from Rock Island County Health Department, the State of Illinois Department of Health, and the Centers for Disease Control to gauge our status in Rock Island County. In addition to this information, we continue to receive feedback from our congregation regarding their comfort and discomfort with different procedures and ideas. It is a lot to discern. However, faithfully caring for our community's health and safety is the primary goal in all of this. We continue to monitor the testing results for our county and until there is *at least* a 2 week decline in positive cases, we should **not** consider resuming in person worship, in doors, with 50 or fewer people inside the sanctuary. At the time of this newsletter, we have not seen this decline.

The good news is that Hope UCC' Church Council has approved the following worship plan in their August Council meeting:

1. While continuing to livestream and record our worship services, Hope UCC will have an in person worship service at Phipps Park on September 13 to celebrate our annual Kick Off Sunday – the traditional start of our new program year. All in attendance **MUST** wear a mask covering their nose and mouth and household seating will be separated by the 6 foot distance requirements.
2. Beginning Sunday, September 20th, Hope UCC will hold outdoor worship services in the back parking lot (weather permitting). People will park and place their chairs at the end of their cars or in the grassy areas; those that park in front can bring chairs and sit in the Memorial Garden or other grassy areas. The parking spaces are 8 feet wide which allows for the safe spacing between seating areas. All in attendance must wear masks during the service and while on church grounds. We will take reservations so we know who will be in attendance. The same safety rules that apply in the building apply outside during this service- properly worn masks and social distancing are required.

Services will continue to be livestreamed from this outdoor space.

3. When the weather does not permit us to worship outside, congregation will stay home and participate via livestream as we have previously done. On these days, those without access to the technology for livestream or videos will be able to join us during the worship service in the sanctuary.

Please remember that your health, safety, and comfort are a priority in all of this. If you are uncomfortable or feel unsafe gathering in person outdoors, we encourage you to stay home and worship from that space. We are blessed to be able to join in worship with you from your home. This is a very important issue and we completely affirm your decision.

We will continue this plan until the time arrives that the numbers in Rock Island County allow us to resume in person gatherings, indoors, with some measure of safety. At that time, we will have multiple in person services available so that we are able to keep attendance well below the 50 person limit at each service.

There will undoubtedly be some hiccups as we enter this new way of gathering and we ask for your patience, grace, flexibility, and prayers as we move forward safely and with great faith. One thing is certain - whether we are gathered in person or virtually, in a park, in our homes, or in a parking lot – we are gathered as the Body of Christ, held in loving care by God, redeemed by Jesus the Christ, and guided by God's Holy Spirit! Can we get an amen?! We thank you for your continued support and prayerful patience throughout this challenging time. God is still speaking and Hope UCC will continue to faithfully listen.

Your Covid Task Force: Caridad Ramos, Lisa Powell Williams, Jan Birdsell, Kathy Hobson,
Judy Hawotte



08-24-2009

I DON'T UNDERSTAND HOW A BENEVOLENT
GOD CAN LET BACK-TO-SCHOOL HAPPEN TO
GOOD PEOPLE