



Hopeful Connections

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Welcome 2021: A Hopeful (& Hope-Filled) Year

Happy New Year. This is typically a time when we are getting our celebrations planned. If you're like me, you stay in on New Year's Eve, but still look forward to the holiday and the world-wide hoopla and the day off that follows. But, as we have said approximately 4,000 times this year, this year is different. As I reflect on all that has happened in 2020 and anticipate what 2021 will bring, I feel a sense of relief and gratitude but they are deeply shaped and impacted by feelings of sadness, grief, and anger. When I sit with these feelings and contemplate all that has happened, all that has brought us to this moment, I begin to recognize another feeling rising within me: hope. In the midst of the sadness and loss and chaos of this year, we have witnessed so many good things and have grown and stretched ourselves in ways we had not previously imagine. I am so thankful for the blessing of witnessing all of this. Yes, there are days that I feel like I am just getting through it, but there are also days that I feel strengthened and can look up and face what is to come. My daily prayers have included recognizing something good I have seen that day and thanking God for the grace and strength to identify it (some days this has been a big challenge). This gives me hope.

Every time I hit the 'go live' button on Sunday morning at 10:00 a.m. and we are able to worship together, I am filled with hope. As I see the images of people receiving the Covid vaccination, I am filled with hope. When I see eyes smiling above people's masks, I am filled with hope. When I remember that God is with us, holding us throughout all the highs and lows of 2020 and will remain with us always, in 2021 and beyond, I am filled with hope, and I pray that you are as well.

As we enter 2021, we do not know what lies ahead, but we do know that our path is lit by the Light of God - the Light whose birth we celebrated together last week and continue to celebrate as people of faith. At this time each year I read and reflect on this meditation written by the great African-American theologian, educator, and civil rights leader, the Rev. 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 and the hope this brings. Hope grows!

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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.


With love and prayers for a happy, healthy, and safely regathered New Year,
 Pastor Santana

January Scripture

Jan. 3	Isaiah 60:1-6 Matthew 2:1-12
Jan. 10	Genesis 1:1-5 Mark 1:4-11
Dec. 20	1 Samuel 3:1-10 John 1:43-51
Jan. 24	Jonah 3:1-5, 10 Mark 1:14-20
Jan. 31	Psalm 111 Mark 1:21-28
Feb. 7	1Corinthians 9:16-23 Mark 1:29-39

HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO YOU.....

08 Walter Lysell
 10 Brian Williams
 18 James Clemons
 24 Lee Blunt
 25 Dorothy Burdick
 28 Becky Newton
 30 Karen DeLathower
 31 Jerry Blunt



Thank you

*Thank you all for your thoughts, prayers & cards on the death of our dad. Also, thank you Prayer Shawl Ministry. The shawls are so soft & cozy. We think of our parents when we use them.
 Love from Dan, Barb & Judy Hawotte*

*Thank you all for the cards and facebook messages for my 80th birthday. It was really appreciated!
 Jo Ann Oslon*

Star Words 2021

Epiphany falls on Wednesday, January 6, and will be our worship focus Sunday, January 3. Epiphany celebrates the light that is revealed through Jesus's birth. As has been our tradition for the past two years, we will again celebrate Epiphany with receiving Star Words for the New Year. Star Words are an activity to help guide us through the year – each star has a word on it and you will receive them in the mail this year. You will find extra stars in your envelope – we hope you will pass the extra(s) on to a friend to use as a spiritual tool this year. Star Words are available for everyone – young and old. Keep the star close all year and use this 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. Happy New Year and happy new Star Word!

Pastor Emeritus Status for the Rev. Parker Lewis

Parker Lewis served as pastor of Hope UCC for almost 19 years. Additionally he has held his ordination in the United Church of Christ for 26 years. He accomplished much in his tenure at Hope UCC, steering it through many transitions and mission focuses. He brought Hope UCC into partnership with Quad Cities Interfaith and Churches United QC. Parker was (and still is) active in the Illinois Conference UCC and the Western Association of the Illinois Conference. Now, as a member of the congregation, he and Kathy share their gifts in many ways, continuing to enrich our faith community and our Quad Cities Community with their involvement and support here at church in the bell choir, helping with Sunday school, volunteering with One Human Family and the food pantry at Church of Peace UCC.

The designation of Pastor Emeritus is honorary and does not carry any work or ministry obligations or expectations. It is a way for us to say thank you to Parker for all he has done for this congregation and the many lives he has touched throughout his tenure here. Hope UCC's Church Council voted to affirm this designation for Parker at our December meeting. Normally, we would have a presentation during worship with a reception to follow. However, during this pandemic, we will have to do it virtually during our livestream service and Annual Meeting on January 17. Please join us in celebrating and thanking Parker for his loving pastoral ministry at Hope UCC.

Annual Meeting

Our congregational annual meeting will be held January, 17, 2021 via Zoom. The annual report will be available prior to the meeting date in an email or mailed form. Bob Tallitsch and Grady Birdsell will set up an opportunity to answer questions and get input from members who do not have the technology to attend the Zoom meeting.

Giving Tree Thank You!

A big thank you to all who helped provide gifts for the Mmelwe Family! Hope UCC's Mission and Outreach Ministry delivered the Christmas gifts on December 23 to this very thankful family. The school supplies, coats, warm clothing and shoes, toys, and grocery gift cards will all be used with very grateful hearts! Thank you!

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 also depends 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 a deceased individual. These funds are used to fund a list of special needs as recommended by the Trustees and 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.
- **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, Pam in the church office. Thank you for your continued support of Hope UCC's mission!

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12-29-2014

MY NEW YEARS RESOLUTION THIS YEAR IS
TO DO THE THINGS I SHOULD HAVE BEEN
DOING LAST YEAR