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Hope

United Church of Christ

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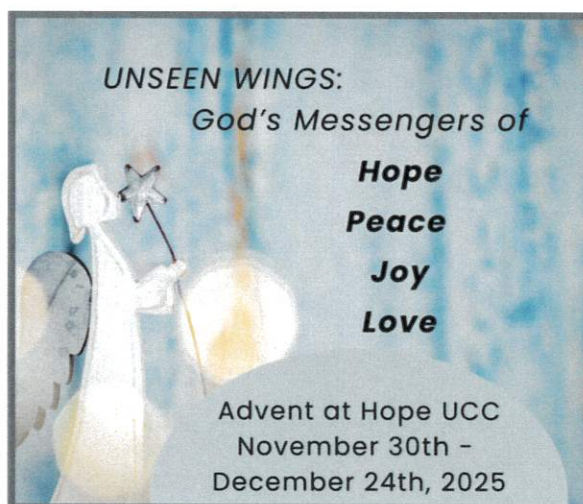
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REV. SANTINA POOR
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A New Season

I hope and pray that as you read this note you are still noticing the many ways that hope makes itself known all around you and within you. Concluding our Roots of Hope worship series with the Story of Hope stewardship theme and then culminating it all with our Thanksgiving service and lunch on November 23rd was a beautiful experience to witness as your pastor. What I experienced throughout these last two months has been Hope UCC's living out Paul's words to the Roman church, *"May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit."* We are called to use that energy to share that hope, joy, and peace. God willing, this is what we will do.

This month we begin a new season in the church year: Advent. Sunday, November 30 is the first Sunday of Advent and together we will focus on Light coming into the darkness as we take this journey preparing for the arrival and return of God with Us – Emmanuel. Our worship series, Unseen Wings: God's Messengers and Guiding Lights of Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love will explore the stories of God's messengers announcing God's of love and light into human history. Each week focuses on an angelic encounter leading up to Christ's birth, as we wait and notice God's presence and messages in our lives. With this theme it is not surprising that angels will be our focus image for Advent this year. Lindsey is leading the weekly Advent Study, Calling All Angels. Our Advent devotional will offer reflections from our congregation about the many ways God has made Godself known to us through a variety of messengers. Our sanctuary will be adorned with beautiful decorations evoking the traditional images for these holy messengers thanks to Mary Tallitsch, Stacy Demarest, and Barb Spies. *(continued on page 2)*



A New Season continued

When there is so much in this world that is fearful and casts shadows of doubt and distrust in our lives, Advent is a time that we face that darkness with the hope and trust and faith in God's promise of new life. The words of the God's angelic messengers feels more important than ever, "Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people." I recently read Rev. Fleming Rutledge's work on Advent. She writes that the original Advent themes were not hope, peace, joy, and love. "...the Medieval church designed the four Sundays of Advent around the themes of the four last things: death, judgment, heaven, and hell—in that order, so that the subject of hell was preached on the Sunday just before Christmas Eve. That was no accident. The idea was—and is—to show how the light of the birth of Christ appeared against a backdrop of darkness, depravity, and despair." That said, be not afraid, I will not be preaching about hell on Christmas Eve! However, as we enter this Advent season as the days are getting colder and darker, hear and hold God's promises close as we wait.

With love and hope,

Pastor Santina

Thank You for Your Commitment to Story of Hope!



This is an incredible community. We are sincerely grateful for your commitment to the Story of Hope that you expressed in this year's stewardship campaign. Your generosity, offered in so many ways through the ways you share your time and talents and resources, are all interwoven allowing Hope UCC to live into our mission. We are so thankful for your support and your hearts full of hope as we share the story together. God is still speaking – and dreaming – within Hope UCC!

Thank You

We wish to thank Santina for the hospital visits, prayers and Allure visits. Thanks to the visitation committee for the visit and goody bag at Allure. Thanks to everyone for the thoughts, cards and prayers for Larry.
Karen and Vicki Ohrberg

Men's Breakfast

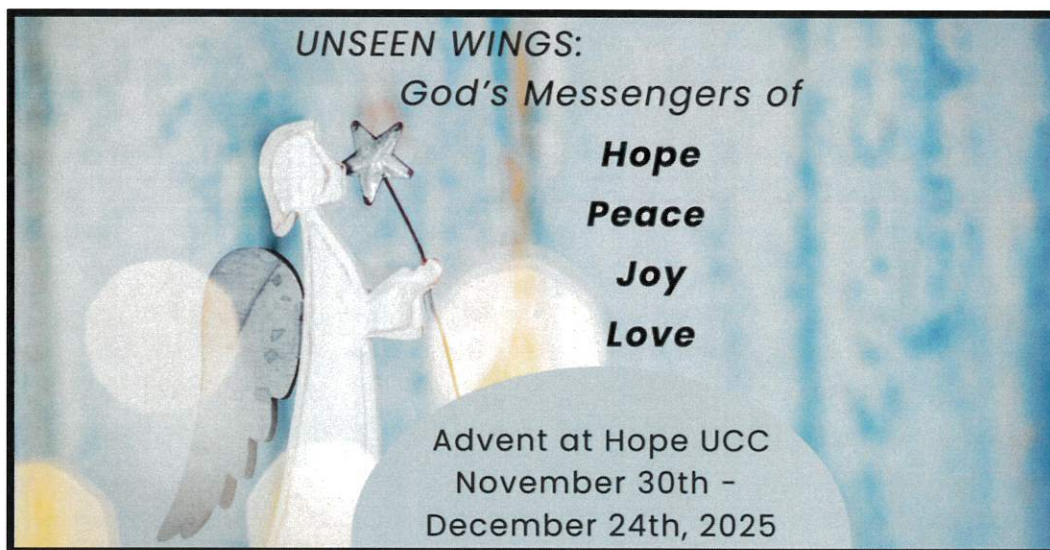
Don't forget to put this gathering on your calendars! We meet the first Saturday of each month at Deerfield Family Restaurant at 8:00 A.M. See you December 6 and January 3. Please see Josh Powell with any questions.



Visitation Ministry Date Changes

Visitation Ministry will gather and visit our homebound friends on Wednesday, December 3rd. We will meet at Culvers for lunch and then go out on our visits.





Advent 2025 Worship Series

Unseen Wings: God's Messengers and Guiding Lights of Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love

"Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people." —Luke 2:10

Advent at Hope UCC will be filled with stories of prophetic messages of Good News from God. Each week focuses on an angelic encounter leading up to Christ's birth, as we wait and notice God's presence and messages in our lives.

November 30: Unseen Wings: Angels Bringing Hope

Finding Hope in the Silence

Isaiah 2:1-5, Psalm 122, Luke 1:5-25

December 7 Unseen Wings: Angels Bringing Peace

Peace in Uncertainty

Isaiah 11:1-10, Psalm 72:1-7, 18-19, Matthew 1:18-25

December 14 Unseen Wings: Angels Bringing Joy

Finding Joy in Trusting God

Isaiah 35:1-10, Luke 1:47-55, Luke 1:26-38

December 21 Unseen Wings: Angels Bringing Love

Love Made Known

Isaiah 7:10-16, Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19, Luke 2:8-20

Advent Candle Lighting Theme

This year our Advent Candle Lighting ritual will merge the Story of Hope with our theme of God Messengers of Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love. Each Sunday will highlight an era of Hope UCC from our past to our present (and future!) that reveals a message of hope, peace, joy, and love.

November 30 focuses on The Hope-full Era: The merger of Plymouth Congregational and Gordon Memorial.

December 7 focuses on the Peace and Hope UCC Era: The building and flourishing of Hope UCC.

December 14 focuses on the Joyful Union Era: The joining together of Hope UCC and Union Congregational in 2018.

December 21 focuses on the Love and Hope Grows Era: Celebrating our most recent new members.



Christmas Gift Book Extravaganza with Ruth Circle
Two Opportunities to Help: December 17 & December 23!

EVERYONE is welcome to join the ladies of Ruth Circle to provide books for the families at Moline Housing Authority's Annual Christmas Party at Spring Valley.

December 17 at 10:30 A.M.: Instead of the monthly meeting there will be a set up party at the Spring Valley Community Room where the books get organized displayed. Afterwards we'll have lunch at Village Inn.

December 23 at 12:00 P.M.: The Big Day! Meet at the Spring Valley Community Room to help children and families select and wrap the books they select. This is a super festive and fun afternoon getting to know so many neighbors! Please put this on your calendar and join the fun. Please see Barb Hawotte, Dorothy Burdick, or Ginny Hookey with any questions.

Christmas Eve at Hope UCC

Please join us for either or both of our services on Wednesday, December 24 as we celebrate Christmas Eve together.

2:00 P.M. Candlelight and Communion

This is a traditional service with hymns, message, and sharing the Sacrament of Holy Communion together.

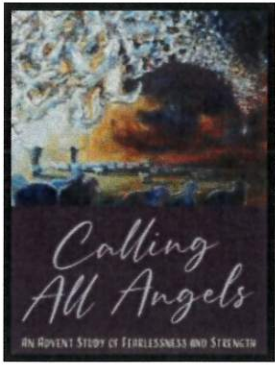
5:00 P.M. Lessons and Carols and Candles

This service of Lessons and Carols will feature many Christmas hymns that we will sing together as well as special music from our Handbell Choir, vocal choir, and guest musicians interspersed with the scripture readings from both the Hebrew Scriptures and New Testament that tell the story of the promises and arrival and anticipated return of the Messiah. We will conclude by singing Silent Night together as we share the Light that has come to us. All are welcome at both of these services – you are encouraged to share this invitation to join these services with anyone seeking a place of welcome and joy on Christmas Eve.



Argrow's House at Hope UCC on November 30

On Sunday, November 30th, Hope UCC will welcome a representative from Argrow's House of Healing and Hope who will tell us about their mission and healing work in our community. Argrow's House offers a variety of free services for women healing from violence and abuse. Services range from domestic violence support groups, yoga, spiritual direction, massage therapy, art therapy, and a workforce development program. They have also started a bath and body business where women healing from abuse can create beautiful, all natural bath and body products that provide a living wage for themselves in a safe space that celebrates who they are. Following worship, Argrow's House will have a variety of these products available for sale in Fellowship Hall – do some Christmas shopping and support a great cause!



Advent Devotional Study: Calling All Angels

Tuesdays, December 2, 9, & 16 at 6:00 P.M.

"What would we do if we weren't afraid? What would change in our relationships, in our vocations, in our congregations, maybe even in our communities and in our world - if God's people led with a courage and vision that was always, first and foremost, unafraid?" ~ Erin Wathen

Where might you journey? Where might our congregation journey? Where might we sojourn together?

Join Member in Discernment, Lindsey Svetlick, for an Advent Devotional Study starting Tuesday, November 18th at 6 pm. We are reading "Calling All Angels: An Advent Study of Fearlessness & Strength" by Erin Wathen. Class meeting dates are Tuesday, December 2, 9, and 16th. Please see Lindsey with any questions. Zoom participation is available!

thank you

Thank you to our amazing kitchen elves who prepared and organized and cleaned up the Thanksgiving lunch on November 23rd. Kathy Lewis, Caridad Ramos, Donna Werner, Kathy Hobson, and Julie Bustard did an amazing job getting those turkeys, dressing, and potatoes ready. Thank you also for the work you did along with Barb Spies, Jan Birdsell, and Marcella Park, and many others who helped clean up. Thank you to this congregation for the fellowship shared in this beautiful place of Hope!

Blessing Box News

Have you noticed a difference at the church entrance? After 5 years we spent some time evaluating the Blessing Box ministry and discerned that having it closer to the entrance of the church and lowered a bit would facilitate better access to the items for our guests. Also, it allows better access for our volunteers who keep it stocked. We will make sure the signage on the post out front invites guests to find the new location. Eventually we will put a smaller box out front on the original post so that we can keep snacks available for folks who are walking by. HUGE thanks to Bob Church for getting the Blessing Box moved and to Bob, Dan, Dean, MJ, and Bob who helped install it and to Caridad for organizing the landscaping renovation necessary for the move. *If you would like to help keep the Blessing Box filled, please see Caridad Ramos, Ginny Anderson, or Donna Werner for information and the sign up sheets in Fellowship Hall. Donations for the Blessing Box are always welcome: canned fruits & vegetables & beans, shelf stable milk, small creamy peanut butter, canned meats/fish, small sized hygiene products, pastas, canned or powdered soup mixes, and pasta sauce. Thank you!*



Charley's Pantry News

For almost 2 years we have supported the micro pantry that operates through the Nurse's Office at Rock Island Academy after Nurse Heather saw a need for the students to have food in their homes over the weekend. Hope UCC regularly provides a variety of non-perishable food items as well as clothing items that are needed. Nurse Heather is amazing as she gently discovers who needs help through her conversations with students and their teachers. Two weeks ago Nurse Heather sent home bags of food for 46 children. What an incredible gift she is sharing in ensuring these families feel security in such a time of frightening uncertainty regarding increasing grocery costs and decreasing governmental support. We are grateful to be able to be part of helping her make this food security possible for so many children and their families. Thank you for supporting this ongoing ministry that we share with Rock Island Academy.

Save the Date for Hope's Annual Meeting on January 25

Please plan to stay for Hope UCC's Annual Meeting on Sunday, January 25 following worship. We will discuss and vote to approve Hope UCC's 2025 Annual Report and our 2026 Proposed Budget. These will be available for preview prior to the Annual Meeting. All are welcome to stay for the meeting: EVERYONE has voice in these meetings, however, members of Hope UCC may vote.

Reports for the Annual Report are due to Connie in the church office by January 18th. Thank you!

Office Holiday Schedule

Hope UCC's office will be closed December 24-26 and December 31-January 2.



December Birthdays

As always, if you note any inaccuracies or missing birthdays of any friends or members, please do not hesitate to let the office know, and we will correct and update our information in an expeditious, speedy, quick, prompt, swift, and efficient manner.

Joanne Bowman December 02
Kim Beug December 03
Lewis Poor December 11
Zoie Fuller December 13
John Anderson December 16
David Birdsell December 20
JoAnn Olson December 27
Karla Hawotte December 29

Birthday Corrections!

Our apologies for omitting the birthdays of Aaron and Christina Rider in October and November.

Christina Rider October 10
Aaron Rider November 11

Welcome New Members

It is a joy to welcome new members to Hope UCC. On November 2 we welcomed the following friends into membership during our 10:00 a.m. worship service:

Barb Spies
Robyn Carter
Nanc Kinley
Aaron Rider
Christina Rider
Grace Rider
Lawrence Rider
Michael Free
Marcia Free
Zoie Fuller
Christine Ragsdale

WELCOME TO HOPE UCC!



December

HOPE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

2025

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
30	01	02 10am-Lectonary 6pm Advent Devotional Study Birthday: Joanne Bowman	03 11:30am Visitation Committee 6pm Vocal Choir 6:30pm-Bell Choir Birthday: Kim Beug	04	05	06 8am-Men's Fellowship at Deerfield Family Restaurant-Silvis
07 10am Worship Service with Communion	08	09 10am-Lectonary 6pm Advent Devotional Study	10 6pm Vocal Choir 6:30pm-Bell Choir	11 Birthday: Lewis Poor	12	13 Birthday: Zole Fuller
14 10am Worship Service 1pm OWL 3pm Open Door Youth	15	16 Birthday: John Anderson 6pm Advent Devotional Study	17 10:30am Ruth Circle at Spring Valley 6pm Vocal Choir 6:30pm-Bell Choir	18	19	20 Birthday: David Birdsell Birthday: Eric Leuth
21 10am Worship Service	22	23 12pm Ruth Circle at Spring Valley	24 OFFICE CLOSED 2pm Candlelight & Communion 5pm Lessons & Carols & Candles	25 OFFICE CLOSED	26 OFFICE CLOSED	27 Birthday: Joann Olson
28 10am Worship Service	29 Birthday: Karla Hawotte	30 Birthday: Evelyn Smith	31	01	02	03