



MARCH, 2026
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Hope

United Church of Christ

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To Our Beloved Church Family,

As many of you already have heard, after much prayer, reflection, and conversation, I have made the decision to retire from pastoral ministry, effective January 9, 2027. I share this news with deep gratitude and a full heart. Serving this congregation has been one of the greatest honors of my life, and I thank you sincerely for the love, encouragement, faithfulness, and understanding you have shown Bob, our family, and me as I have listened for God's guidance in this season of life and discerned this next step. These past eight years have been a profound gift. You have been companions in faith and bearers of hope—not only to one another, but to our family as well. Your compassion and prayers, especially in this long season of grief for us after Charley's death, have been a steady source of strength. I will always be thankful for the ways you have embodied Christ's love so faithfully.

I apologize if this note in our March newsletter is the first you are hearing of our news. Even after following the recommended UCC procedures for informing the congregation which included meeting with our Church Council, the congregation, and sending out a letter to our mailing list, I am sure there are folks in our Hope UCC family of faith who are hearing this now for the first time. Sadly, the Sunday we had our congregational meeting announcing this, the internet was out and we were unable to livestream anything that day. If you did not receive the letter we sent out, it is available on our church website. Again, my sincere apologies for any omissions.

As we settle into this news, your understanding and gracious spirit during this time mean more to me than I can express. I am continually reminded that the strength of the Church is not found in one person, but in the shared ministry of God's people. And you all, the ministers of Hope UCC, are definitely strong.

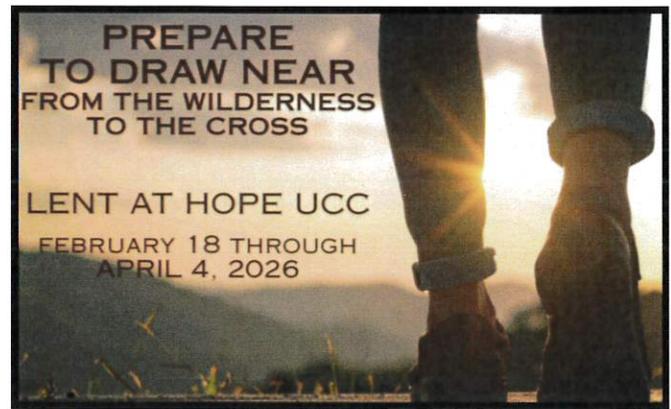
As we look ahead, we will begin the transition process in partnership with our leadership in the Illinois Conference of the United Church of Christ, namely our Associate Conference Minister, the Rev. Kathy Lawes. With her guidance, our Church Council will work to form a Transition Team that will help lead us through the next important steps. This team will assist in reflecting on our ministry, preparing congregational materials, and eventually beginning the search process for new pastoral leadership.

In the months ahead, there will be opportunities for prayer, conversation, and participation as we move forward together. I have every confidence that God, who has guided us this far, will continue to lead and bless this congregation in its next chapter.

Thank you again for the privilege of serving among you. I look forward to walking faithfully with you through this season of transition.

With gratitude and hope,
Pastor Santina

Lent at Hope UCC
February 18 - April 4, 2026



Prepare to Draw Near: From the Wilderness to the Cross

As we enter the season of Lent, we are invited into a sacred journey—one marked not by distance or despair, but by movement toward God. Lent is often misunderstood as a time to stay away from God in shame or self-judgment. Yet at its heart, Lent is a season of preparation: a time to make space, to be honest, and to draw near to the healing love God longs to share with us.

This year, our Lenten worship theme, “Prepare to Draw Near: From the Wilderness to the Cross,” invites us to walk this journey together with openness and hopeful expectation. Faith is never static. It asks us to move—to step into the wilderness places of our lives, to listen for God’s voice, and to trust that God meets us even in uncertainty and struggle.

Each week of Lent, we will explore what we encounter along the path from the wilderness to the cross. As we immerse ourselves in the story of our faith, we will reflect on God’s presence in moments of testing, transformation, and deep love. This is not a journey we rush through, but one we walk attentively, allowing God to shape and renew us along the way.

Lent is an invitation to draw near—to God, to one another, and to the truth of who we are. May this season prepare our hearts, deepen our faith, and lead us more fully into the life, hope, and healing revealed at the cross.

We hope you will join us in worship as we journey together through this meaningful season.

Weekly Soup Dinners and Contemplative Worship Services

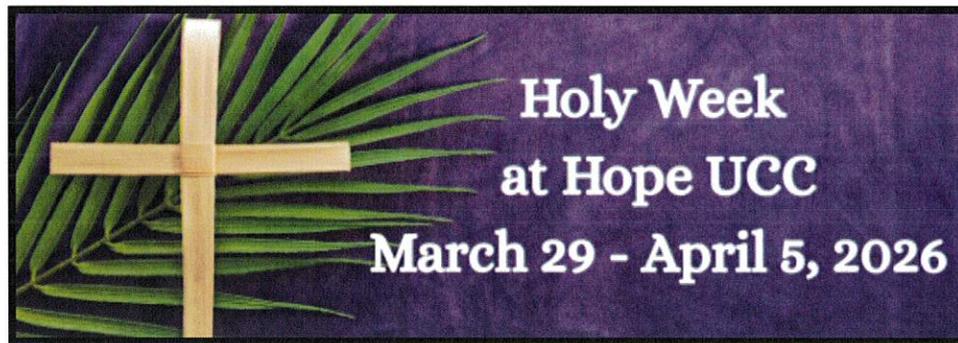
Tuesdays throughout Lent: Soup Dinner at 6:30 P.M. Service begins at 7:00 P.M. Join us for a weekly time together to spend time in fellowship and quiet contemplative prayer and worship. If you would like to come early for a light soup dinner together, be here at 6:30. We will then transition to the sanctuary for contemplative style service, engaging our senses through prayer, music, meditation, scripture, and movement. Join us and share this time in community and deepening of our commitment to a Lenten spiritual practice. Please note the schedule for our Soup Dinner/Contemplative services:

Tuesday, March 3

Tuesday, March 10

Tuesday March 17

Monday, March 23



Palm Sunday March 29 – Prepare to Draw Near: Following Jesus to the Cross

Join us for a service that will explore Jesus's entry into Jerusalem the final week of his earthly life. Our Member in Discernment, Lindsey Svetlick, will preach this Sunday.

Maundy Thursday April 2 – Prepare to Draw Near: From the Water to the Table to the Garden

We will join with our friends from First Congregational Moline to celebrate this special service together at Hope UCC.

5:00-6:00 PM: Draw Near to the Water: A Service of Foot Washing in Hope UCC's Sanctuary

This portion of the evening is optional for everyone, but we encourage your participation. Arrive anytime during this portion of the evening and participate in the ritual of foot washing based on the Gospel of John. Pastor Duane, Pastor Santina, and Lindsey will serve this portion of the evening and will wash your hand if that is your preference.

6:00 PM: Draw Near to the Table: Fellowship Potluck Meal in Fellowship Hall

We will join together for a potluck dinner that will transition into the service of Holy Communion shared at our tables.

6:45 PM: Draw Near to the Garden in Fellowship Hall

Our Tenebrae Service begins with sharing the sacrament of Holy Communion. We will hear the story of betrayal leading us to the arrest of Jesus in the Garden as candles are extinguished.

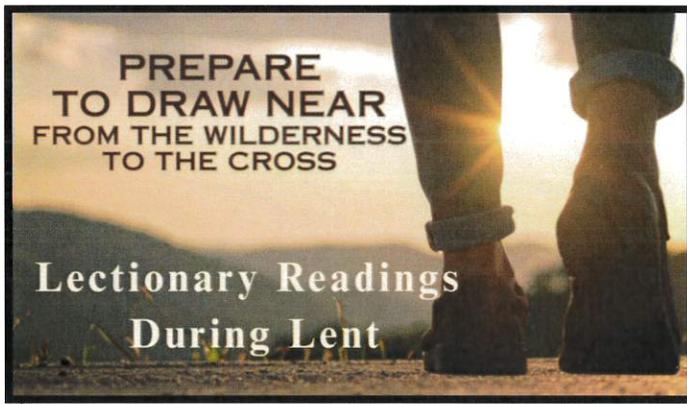
*If you are not able to join us for dinner, we hope you will join us for the rest of the service. Please arrive close to 6:45 so we can share the evening with you.

Good Friday April 3 – Draw Near to the Cross

We will again join with our friends from First Congregational Moline to share this special service. We will gather at 7:00 P.M. at Trimble Funeral Home for this service. We chose this location for a very specific reason. In today's society, we gather to mourn our beloveds, process our loss, make arrangements, and celebrate the lives of our beloveds in funeral homes. As we share the Good Friday service and hear the scriptures, reflections, and sing the hymns that all explore the death of Jesus on the cross, we are reminded of how his death deeply impacted his family, friends, and even those who despised him. We will once again be blessed by the combined vocal choirs of Hope UCC and FCC UCC Moline in this worship service. Following the service, there will be an opportunity to gather downstairs in the event space at Trimble's for further reflection and conversation about the Holy Week journey. We hope you will join us for this special service.

Easter Sunday Celebration and Festival Worship – Draw Near and Rejoice at the Empty Tomb

Our Easter Sunday worship will be a joyful celebration of the promise of New Life. Join us a 10:00 AM for a special worship service with special music, Holy Communion, and joyful fellowship.



March 1, 2026 Lent 2

Prepare to Draw Near: Stepping Out in Faith

Genesis 12:1-4a; Psalm 121; Romans 4:1-5, 13-17; John 3:1-17

March 8, 2026 Lent 3

Prepare to Draw Near: Meeting God at the Well

Exodus 17:1-7; Psalm 95; Romans 5:1-11; John 4:5-42

March 15, 2026 Lent 4

Prepare to Draw Near: Learning to See

1 Samuel 16:1-13; Psalm 23; Ephesians 5:8-14; John 9:1-41

March 22, 2026 Lent 5

Prepare to Draw Near: From Death Toward Life

Ezekiel 37:1-14; Psalm 130; Romans 8:6-11; John 11:1-45

March 29, 2026 Palm Sunday

Prepare to Draw Near: Following Jesus to the Cross; Matthew 21:1-11

Order Easter Lilies and Flowering Bulb Plants

Order Easter Lilies and Flowering Bulb Plants in memory or in honor of a loved one for Easter morning. All orders are due to church office by Monday, March 23rd. Please fill out the information below and return with your payment. Please note 'Easter Flowers' either on the memo of your check or on the envelope. All plants are \$15 each and you are welcome to take your plant home with you following the Easter Service on April 5th. Thank you!



Easter Lily and Flowering Plant Order Form
Order your Easter Lily and Flowering Plants
in memory of and/or in honor of a loved one.
All orders are due by Monday, March 23rd.

Quantity (\$15 each) _____

Your Name _____

In honor of/in memory of (please circle one):



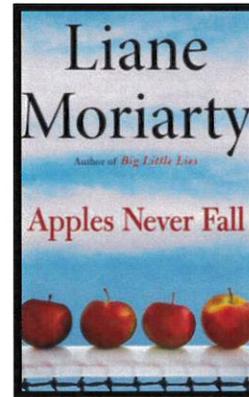
As always, if you note any inaccuracies or missing birthdays of any friends or members, please do not hesitate to let the office know, and we will correct and update our information in an expeditious, speedy, quick, prompt, swift, and efficient manner.

March Birthdays

Eleanor J. Niska	March 03
Carole Keenan	March 04
Debbie Duke	March 08
Robert Rada	March 15
Brian Hawotte	March 16
Kathy Hobson	March 17
Deana Reed	March 21
Elizabeth Carvey	March 22
Barbara Hawotte	March 22
Stacy Demarest	March 24
Marie Timmer	March 25
Kathy Negaard	March 29
Elaine Guy	March 31

Hope UCC Book Club: March 30, 2:30 PM

Join the Hope UCC Book Club to discuss this month's selection, *Apples Never Fall* by Liane Moriarty. We meet on March 30th at 2:30 P.M. at Hope UCC and all are welcome. See you there!

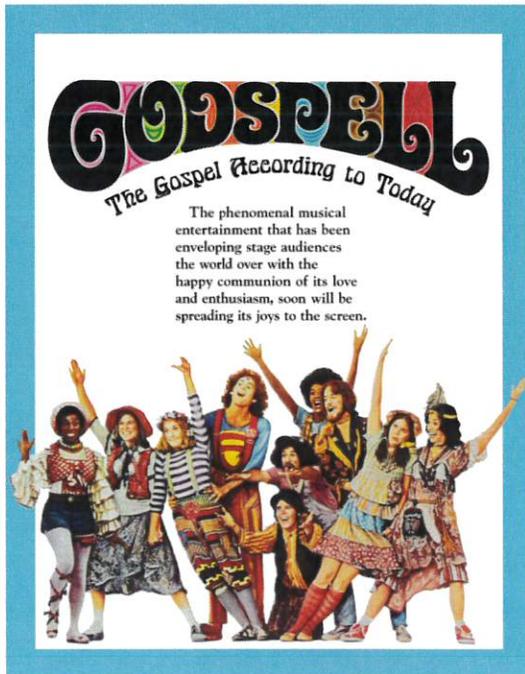


Ruth Circle Gathering March 16 at 1pm

Ruth Circle will be meeting Monday, March 16 at 1pm in Fellowship Hall. All women of the church are invited to come and enjoy food, fun and fellowship. Please see Dorothy Burdick for more information.

Men's Breakfast March 7 at Deerfield Restaurant

We meet the first Saturday of each month at Deerfield Family Restaurant at 8:00 A.M. See you March 7. Please see Josh Powell with any questions.



Reel Theology March 13: Godspell

Dust off your favorite pair of bell bottoms and join us to watch, sing along with, and discuss the CLASSIC musical film, Godspell. This musical from 1973 is a modern-day (hooray for the 70's!) retelling of the Gospel of Matthew and features some of the best sing along numbers for us all to sing together. And guess what? Godspell is rated G!! All ages are welcome to join the viewing, singing, and discussion. If you would like to eat together before the film, please bring your own dinner at 5:30. The film will begin at 6:00 with the discussion and dessert to follow.



Souper Bowl Sunday

A big thank you to Julie Bustard for planning this great event and preparing such delicious soups for this event. And thank you to all who participated and helped raise funds for our Hope UCC Scholarship Fund. \$270 was donated for this fund and we are grateful!

Thank You, Judy Hawotte!

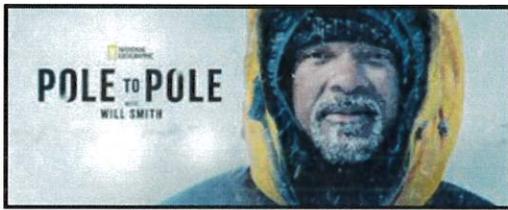
Many thanks to Judy for stepping into the kitchen coordinator role this winter. We are grateful for your stewardship of this ministry. Thank you for making sure the supplies are stocked and the kitchen is kept in such great shape.

...Let There Be Light! Thank You, Bob Church!

We are so grateful to Bob Church for making sure our parking lot is well lit and for the new lights installed outside the red windows. Bob worked with local electricians to fix our parking lot lights (the squirrels were the culprits). And if that wasn't enough, he designed and installed the lights to brighten the red windows in the front after hearing that request from some of our members. You can enjoy those lights if you are in the sanctuary in the evening - they are really wonderful! AND Bob also replaced the drippy faucet in the small sink in the church kitchen. WOW! Thank you for all you do here, Bob!!

New Bulletin Board

Thank you to Barb Spies and Jan Birdsell for our beautiful Lent bulletin board in the hallway. It is inspiring!



Save the Dates: New Program Starting April 13!

A Journey of Soul and Soil: Pole to Pole

In his most **transformative** quest yet, Pole to Pole, Will Smith invites us on a *26,000-mile pilgrimage* from the frozen silence of the South Pole to the crown of the North Pole. This National Geographic series is less about the miles traveled and more about the connection rediscovered.

Across seven continents, Will moves through the world not just as a traveler, but as a student of the Earth's ancient rhythms. From the thin, sacred air of the Himalayas to the vast, communal wisdom of the Kalahari, each step serves as a meditation on our *shared humanity, spiritual connection, and our sacred responsibility to the planet and each other.*

This isn't just a survival story; it's a breathtaking look at the interconnectedness of all life. As Will faces his own fears in the depths of the Amazon and the solitude of the Arctic, he reminds us that even in the most extreme corners of the globe, we are never truly alone.

Experience the wonder of our world and find your own "center" through this epic global odyssey starting in April. We will meet twice a week to watch and discuss the spiritual, global, and environmental themes and ideas in this pilgrimage story.

Week 1: April 13th & 16th

Week 2: April 20th & 23rd

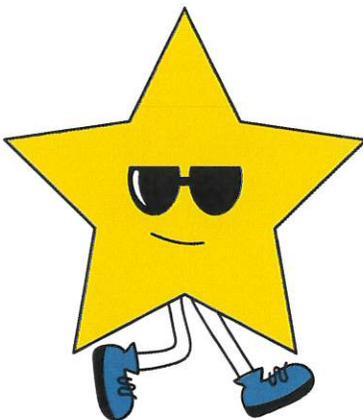
Week 3: April 27th & 30th

Week 4: May 4th & May 7th

Dinner: 5:30 pm - Bring your own dinner

Show: 6 pm - Watch one episode together

Conversation: 7 pm - Let's talk about it!



Youth Group News

All youth grades 6-12 are welcome to join us for the following events:

March 8: We will provide the treats and serve for Fellowship Hour following worship. After that we will have pizza and hand knit prayer shawls under the expert guidance of Stacy Demerest. We will also discuss summer plans at this gathering.

April 19: Mark your calendars and save the date because we will be making and serving dinner at Christian Care. Meet at church at 3:30 to cook and then we will head to Christian Care to serve. and return to church by 7:00 P.M.

Please watch for notes from Lindsey and see her if you have any questions.

Pastor Santina's Study Leave

Pastor Santina will be out of the office from Monday, March 9 - Friday, March 13 (but will be there to sing and enjoy Godspell at Reel Theology).

Doing Ministry Together



New Ministry Opportunity! Monthly Dinner at Christian Care

Did you know that Hope UCC provides and serves dinner at Christian Care on the 3rd and 5th Sundays of the month? Would you like to share some joy with our neighbors and help prepare and/or serve this monthly meal? No experience cooking for a crowd is needed! Sign up with a group or individually. The sign up sheets are in Fellowship Hall and we have lots of information about recipes for a crowd and our 2026 Mission and Outreach budget has increased to reflect this ministry and the costs associated with it so that ingredients for the meal will be covered. Thank you for hearing God's Spirit calling you to care for our neighbors! If you would like more information about this ministry, please see Caridad Ramos or Kathy Lewis. Thank you!

Hope UCC's Good Neighbor Team Ministry

The Good Neighbor Team (GNT) is a ministry that partners Hope UCC with World Relief QC to accompany, befriend, and support a recently resettled refugee family. In December we were partnered with a family of 4 who resettled in East Moline. Lindsey Svetlick has been coordinating this ministry project and there is always room for more volunteers who would like to help with the many adventures this ministry brings. Being part of this ministry also offers the opportunity to volunteer in other ways with World Relief as well, such as helping at their monthly food pantry, ESL classes, and many other ways. Please see Lindsey for more information or email her: lindseysvetlick@gmail.com

Here are some updates on what is happening in this beautiful ministry:

- Mnahil has received her driver's license!
- Julie and Caridad helped the children with their Valentines.
- The job search has begun! The GNT is helping Mnahil find employment that works around her school schedule and her children's school schedules.
- Housing questions: the GNT is assisting Mnahil navigate some very complex housing questions.
- When Ramadan is over, we will organize 'family dinners' with Mnajil and her children.

Thank you for your support of this ministry. Your prayers for Mnajil and her children and God's Spirit guiding us in this partnership are greatly appreciated.

Blessing Box Requests



Thank you for your continued support of this important ministry! If you are at the store and would like to pick up a few extra items for the Blessing Box, we would be grateful! Thank you for your donations of the following items:

- canned fruit
- canned meats and fish and other protein
- smaller size jars creamy peanut butter
- individually wrapped snack items like granola bars
- hygiene supplies
- shelf stable milk
- soups, and grain mixes

Blessing Box Volunteers Welcome!



Thank you for your continued support of this important ministry! One very important way to support this ministry is by volunteering to help keep the Blessing Box filled. You can do this either by keeping our inventory organized or by coming by to check the Blessing Box and refilling it as necessary (or both?). Refills happen 3 or 4 times a week but you can just sign up for a once a week section. Please see Julie Bustard, Caridad Ramos, or Donna Werner for more information and to volunteer. Thank you!!

March

HOPE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

2026

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
01 10am Worship Service	02 6pm Citizenship Class	03 10am-Lectionary 5pm Grief Support 6:30pm Lent Dinner & Service Birthday: Eleanor Niska	04 6pm Citizenship Cl 6pm Vocal Choir 6:30pm-Bell Choir Birthday: Carole Keenan	05 Pastor Stantina Study Leave	06 Reel Theology Dinner 5:30pm Film 6pm Pastor Stantina Study Leave	07 8am-Men's Fellowship at Deerfield Family Restaurant-Silvis
08 10am Worship Service Birthday: Debbie Duke	09 6pm Citizenship Class 6:30pm Flute Rehearsal Pastor Stantina Study Leave	10 10am-Lectionary 6:30pm Lent Dinner & Service Pastor Stantina Study Leave	11 6pm Citizenship Cls 6pm Vocal Choir 6:30pm-Bell Choir Pastor Stantina Study Leave	12 Pastor Stantina Study Leave	13 Reel Theology Dinner 5:30pm Film 6pm Pastor Stantina Study Leave	14
15 10am Worship Service Christian Care Dinner Birthday: Robert Rada	16 1pm-Ruth Circle 6pm Citizenship Class Birthday: Brian Hawotte	17 5pm Grief Support 6:30pm Lent Dinner & Service Birthday: Kathy Hobson	18 6pm Citizenship Class 6pm Vocal Choir 6:30pm-Bell Choir	19	20	21 Birthday: Deana Reed
22 10am Worship Service Birthday: Barb Hawotte Birthday: Elizabeth Carvey	23 6pm Citizenship Class 6:30pm Lent Dinner & Service 6:30pm Flute Rehearsal	24 10am-Lectionary 6:30p-Church Council 5pm Grief Support Birthday: Stacy Demarest	25 11:30am-Visitation 6pm Vocal Choir 6:30pm-Bell Choir Birthday: Marie Trimmer	26	27	28
29 10am Worship Service Christian Care Dinner Birthday: Kathy Negeard	30 2:30pm-Book Club 6pm Citizenship Class 6:30pm Flute Rehearsal	31 10am-Lectionary 5pm Grief Support Birthday: Elaine Guy	01	02	03	04