



Tidings of Hope



HOPE United Church of Christ March 2021



Tidings of Hope published monthly by: **Hope United Church of Christ**
2555 S. Fiske Blvd, Rockledge FL 32955-3901

(321) 636-0250 † www.hopeucc.com † hopeuccfl@att.net † www.ucc.org

Submissions for publication may be sent to the Church Office at the above addresses, either electronically or by paper.

The Reverend's Reflection



Usually when I walk outside onto the patio, I hear the hammering of the new construction all around me. Sometimes I hear the hum from the traffic or the roar of the motorcycles especially if it's Bike Week (which seems to last much longer than 7 days and comes more than once a year). But today, when I walked outside, I heard birds singing and my cat purring as he stretched on the warm, sun-soaked concrete. It's springtime.

Spring is unassuming in Florida. If I am not paying attention, I miss its arrival. There is no melting snow or crocuses pushing through the frozen earth. There is only the warmer than warm weather with increased humidity and the rising air-conditioning bill to match. I put away my socks in favor of flip flops once again.

March brings the nearness of Easter and the hope of new beginnings. Last March brought the corona virus and the closing of the church building "for a few weeks". A year later, and we are still "cautiously optimistic" about safely returning to in-person worship. This year, the longing for handshakes, hugs and luncheons far surpasses any anticipation I ever felt for putting away my snow shovel.

Of course, before we get to Easter, we need to go through Holy Week. The irony of Palm Sunday, the foreboding of Maundy Thursday, the horror of Good Friday, and the anticipation of the Saturday Vigil. This year it all feels so familiar. It's as if we have been in Holy Week all year long. We have heard foreboding warnings of infections and death. We have seen horrors unfolding in violence and death. We just reached a horrifying milestone of 500,000 deaths from Covid-19. And we sit vigil, waiting for a new season to come so we can gather once again around the table with family and friends sharing the warmth of hugs and laughter. Lent has never been so tangible.

Hearing the birds singing and feeling the Springtime sun on my face reminded me that hope is on the horizon. The seasons change with or without a global pandemic. My cat will stretch in the sunlight, the birds will sing, and the hibiscus will bloom whether we are worshipping on Zoom or in the pews.

Easter may look different, but resurrection is all around us. May we find comfort and strength in the assurance of God's resurrection and new life in creation and in our hearts.



Right Where You Are

by Mary E. Berg

Be a wave in God's Ocean. Be a fragment of a star.
Be a lantern holding light. Be a beacon where you are.

See the glory of a sunset. See the rising of the moon.
See the glory and the wonder. See the beauty where you are.

Hear the cry of newborn babies. Here the wind whisper in the grass.
Hear thunder rumble in a rainstorm. Let your hearing hold you fast.

Can you hear the glory calling? Can you see amazing grace?
Can you access inner wisdom; In your home, your life, your space?

Prophets came to tell the story. Holy books have said it too.
Life's a love filled, holy mystery. It's in me, the world, and you.

Moderator's Moment

Happy St. Patrick's Day to all. The Council had a very productive meeting on February 9th. We are all working well together. We are envisioning moving Hope UCC and ourselves through this pandemic time, focusing on a time when we will be back in the church building, worshipping together. It won't happen right away but we do see a time coming when we will all be together again.

All of our Committees have met during February and are working on new ideas and projects. Some of our church family have been ill with Covid and are now recuperating. Our prayers have been answered. I host and welcome all Coffee Chat each Tuesday and Thursday. It is space for discussing just about everything, while demonstrating kindness and supportiveness for all. It is comforting to know that we are there for each other, whether it be helping others get their vaccination appointments, discussing the best brand of dishwasher to purchase or much more serious faith-based questions. One of the things I love about meeting with EACH Committee is how wonderful it is to hear how everyone is caring for each other. You have done a great job at creating family here at Hope UCC. All of you inspire me in my faith journey. During the time of Lent, may we all spend some extra time in our faith, praying to be the best servants we can be for the church, for the people, and our earth.

Looking forward we have new Lenten studies, Easter and the joy of Spring coming up. We are going to have our Yard Sale at some point in the Spring. Anyone that feels they can safely volunteer to help with that sale, please contact Growth and Development, Karen Lehr or myself – we'd love to have a list of helpers. We have special birthdays to celebrate coming up.

Please, live carefully, make good choices for your health, and stay safe.

Blessings,
Melanie



Sharing Our Best

On February 3 and 6 Hope UCC Rockledge hosted a drive through drop off food drive from 9-11 and collected 310 non-perishable food items for the Central Brevard Sharing Center. Peanut butter for the Cocoa High Fresh Market was also collected and approximately 40 jars were delivered to Cocoa High. A \$20.00 donation was also given to the Central Brevard Sharing Center. Thank you to all who participated!

On March 3 and 6, we will host another drive through drop off food drive from 9-11, focusing on Easter food items including canned hams, fruit, sweet potatoes, mashed potatoes, green beans, cream of mushroom, chicken, and celery soups, stuffing, gravy, and anything else to make a happy holiday for the Central Brevard Sharing Center food pantry clients. Please no glass containers, and please check to be sure the food has not expired. Please also bring peanut butter for the Cocoa Fresh Market and plastic bottle caps for the Indian River Lagoon water cleanup initiative from the Florida Institute of Technology on March 3 and 6.

On Friday, March 12 at 10:00, Hope UCC is hosting World Day of Prayer sponsored by Church Women United. All are welcome to attend virtually. The zoom ID is 973 9314 0760.

Saturday, May 1, Growth and Development is hosting a blood drive through One Blood. The Big Red Bus will be at Hope UCC Rockledge from 9-1. Please schedule an appointment through Betty Capaldo.

Good News!!!

In January 2021 Hope UCC applied to UCCFL for a grant. The money we requested was \$2,500. It was to be used to help defray the cost of our extensive new audio/visual equipment purchased in September and October of 2020. The new audio/visual equipment was necessary as we anticipated returning to worship services in our building, and also still wanting to be able to produce a quality virtual service for those folks preferring to attend services via Zoom or live-streamed on Facebook. The new audio/visual equipment allows the Hope UCC to reach so many more people. In February we were notified our grant request was approved and “the check is in the mail.”

Thank you to UCCFL staff for approval of our request.

Thank you to the grant writers, Melanie Goff, Betty Capaldo and Rev. Karen.

Justice and Witness Team Update

Greetings to our wonderful friends in the Hope congregation from your Justice and Witness Team.

In spite of the frustration our whole community experiences due to COVID-19 restrictions on gathering together, we have been active and have a few updates to share with you.

The live oak tree that we have been longing to plant on the Hope grounds as an expression of our love for the Mother Earth has at last been planted! Rockledge Gardens delivered a beautiful 30-gallon-sized tree on January 29. A number of our congregants were there to assist and to prayerfully bless the tree. Those with expertise in such matters pronounced the soil to be magnificent, so we are encouraged that the tree will take hold and thrive. Rumor has it (or a source with excellent information?) that the reason for the fertility of the soil in that particular part of Hope's land is the previous existence of a pig farm. Who knew?

We look forward to celebrating the arrival of the tree when we can safely get together, and watching it grow through the seasons.

Our partnership with the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Central Brevard continues to bless the students at Cocoa High School and their families through the Cocoa High School Fresh Market. For those new to Hope, here is a brief summary of the Fresh Market and Cocoa High. The high school has over 1700 students, with poverty widespread in the student body. Through a partnership with Second Harvest Food Bank, the Fresh Market provides fresh produce and non-perishable food to the students every Friday during the school year.

The market obtains the produce free of charge and buys the non-perishable food from Second Harvest at 19 cents per pound. The late Mayor of Cocoa, Jake Williams, was the principal driver until his death. Another volunteer has stepped up, but having stand-by volunteers with a pickup truck is of course a good idea. Once a month Second Harvest makes a delivery of the fresh produce.

The school social worker, Katherine Warrick, and a Cocoa High teacher, Arianne Rivera (assisted when possible by her husband Oscar, a social worker at the Viera VA) organize the students to unload the deliveries and set up for distribution. Financial contributions and volunteer drivers are welcomed!

In addition to being supportive of the Fresh Market, Hope volunteered to serve as “The Peanut Butter Church.” We have a bin in the narthex at Hope for the collection of peanut butter whenever we have food drives or other events at the church. Our monthly deliveries to the high school supplement the food provided from Second Harvest, and ensure that the social worker has something to share with hungry students at any time. This month we took 35 jars of peanut butter and 5 “snack packs” to Cocoa High.



Covid Task Force

A Covid Task Force has been formed for Hope UCC. The unfortunate outbreak of Covid with four of our families made us realize that we needed to have some better safety precautions in place regarding the use of our building, with the hope of keeping everyone safe. The Task Force is made up of the Moderator, the Chair of Trustees, and three congregation members experienced in science/biology and current Registered Nursing protocols. With the consultation with Rev. Karen the Task Force will be creating safety protocols and making decisions about when the building needs to be closed and reopened (from a Covid outbreak). As you can imagine it is very heartbreaking to hear when anyone in our church family becomes ill and it is a VERY DIFFICULT decision to make regarding opening/closing our building and it is too much for one person to have to make that decision. Opening/Closing our building has nothing to do with any punitive measures, but it sure feels that way. That is why we prefer to rely on the expertise of science and current nursing protocols and church leadership that this Task Force can bring forth. Most importantly, we want all to be healthy and safe.

Capital Campaign Update

At the end of January 2021, we reached the half-way mark in our capital campaign in time, and have exceeded the half-way mark in contributions.



In July, 2019, our church began a capital campaign called “Raise the Roof,” to replace monies borrowed from our investment fund. Back in July, 2018 we voted to borrow money to replace the roof damaged by Hurricane Irma. We decided to “borrow” \$90,000 to replace the roof, purchase an electronic sign for the front of the church, and replace damaged gutters. We agreed at the 2018 meeting that we would replace what we borrowed by holding a capital campaign.

So we began the campaign in mid-2019 and we took in pledges for a 3-year period. Total pledges were \$85,995.00. We officially began getting contributions from the pledges in August 2019. Since then we have also received contributions from individuals who did not pledge. To update you on the campaign at the 1 ½ year mark, we have received \$51,255. We still have 1 ½ years to go on our campaign pledges and are making great strides toward reaching our goal. If you made a pledge to the capital campaign back in July, 2019, remember that you still have 1 ½ years left to complete your pledge. If you never made a pledge to the campaign, it is never too late. We invite anyone who did not pledge in 2019 to join us in repaying/replacing the funds used for repairing and updating the church facility.

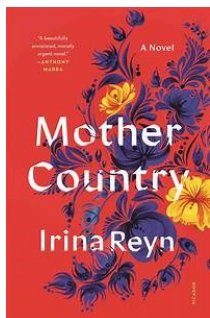
Please let the church office know if you are interested in joining our capital campaign with a pledge for the remaining 1 ½ years, if you want to make a non-pledge contribution, or if you have any questions.

Church Update

Trustees are doing a long needed update to the choir room, replacing the wallpaper with paint, repairing and painting the ceiling to name a few things. Also, Trustees have added to the room a wall hung tv, a table with dvd player to be able to use the room for classes or any instructional class that needs a tv. Thank you to Paul and Betty for donating the tv, my friend Darlene for donating the DVD player and Bob Munchbach for doing the install.

Please be careful at this time if you have need to enter the room for any reason!
Thank You, Karen Lehr

Book Club March 2021



In March, Hope's Book Club will read and discuss Mother Country by Irina Reyn. In this book, Irina Reyn explores what it means to be a mother in a world where you can't be with your child. This mother-daughter story takes readers from Ukraine (1980's to 2015) to New York (2014-2015) and highlights both the post Soviet impact on the Ukrainian population and the ups and downs of being an immigrant.

The main character, Nadia's daily life in south Brooklyn is filled with small indignities: as a senior home attendant, she is always in danger of being fired; as a part-time nanny, she is forced to navigate the demands of her spoiled charge and the preschooler's insecure mother; and as an ethnic Russian, she finds herself feuding with western Ukrainian immigrants who think she is a traitor. Putin speaks of "reunification" of Crimea and Russia. The one reunion Nadia has been waiting for - with her beloved daughter - is delayed by the Department of Homeland Security. But when Nadia finds out that her daughter has lost access to the medicine she needs to survive, she takes matters into her own hands.

Mother Country is a story of mothers and daughters...and their resilience. Please join our discussion group on Tuesday, March 23rd at 1:30 pm. Virtual meeting will be held on Zoom, Meeting ID: 854 4236 5460.

HOPE Book Club Reading List 2021

- | | |
|--------------|---|
| January | <u>Florida (Short Stories)</u> - Lauren Groff |
| February | <u>Radical Compassion: learning to love yourself and the world with the practice of RAIN</u> - Tara Branch |
| March | <u>Mother Country</u> - Irina Reyn |
| April | <u>The Twenty-something Soul: understanding the religious and secular lives of American young adults</u>
<i>Tim Clydesdale and Kathleen Garces-Foley</i> |
| May | <u>Just Mercy</u> - Bryan Stevenson |



Thank You!!



**UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST
FELLOWSHIP OF CENTRAL BREVARD**
(Chapel in the Woods)

(321)632-0992

Mailing
P.O. Box 237164
Cocoa, FL 32923-7164

Location
1261 N. Range Road
Cocoa, Florida

February 2, 2021

Hope United Church of Christ

Dear Beloved Partners in the Cocoa High School Fresh Market:

This is to gratefully acknowledge your donation of \$1145 (two separate donations totaling \$1145) made during calendar year 2020 for the Cocoa High School Fresh Market. Your donations are helping us feed the hundreds of students who come to school hungry at Cocoa High.

All donations to the Cocoa High School Fresh Market are tax-deductible. Please retain this letter for your tax records.

Kind regards,

Sara Ann

Sara Ann Conkling
Social Justice Chair

More Thanks!

This is a thank you note from Rachel, case worker with DCF, whom we helped by assisting a mother and children who were being reunified. They were being moved into a home. The home had no furniture and the mom and children had no belongings. We allowed them to "shop" at the yard sale, free of charge for whatever they needed.

"I wanna say thank you so much again for allowing this family to come and take these items! It means so much for families to see that other people care and love for them! Life is such a struggle but when you know there's people behind you to help you it makes your struggle a lot easier! I can't thank you enough."

Rachel

Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer. - Romans 12:12

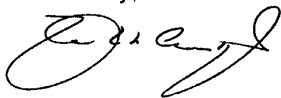
Dear Friends:

Thank you for your generous gift to the CWS Blankets program. As families and communities around the world recover from emergencies and struggle in the face of unprecedented challenges, you are standing with them. Now more than ever, we are so grateful for your generous support.

Your contribution provides warmth, comfort and hope to neighbors near and far. It provides a tangible reminder to migrant families that they are not alone as they seek safety. It wraps refugees in warmth as they arrive in the United States to build a new future. It provides comfort to our neighbors who have lost homes or are struggling in the face of extreme challenges. Around the world, your support means relief and hope.

Because of you, Church World Service is able to respond when disasters occur and support is needed. Thanks to your compassion, we can--and will--change lives.

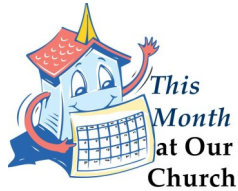
Sincerely,



Rev. John L. McCullough
CEO President Emeritus
Church World Service

*To stay informed on how you're helping people in need, at home and around the world, visit cwsglobal.org and follow us on **Facebook**, **Instagram** and **Twitter**.*





- 3/7 - Communion Worship
Zoom Mtg. No. **874-1336-0966**
- 3/14 - Worship
Zoom Mtg. No. **874-1336-0966**
- 3/21 - Worship
Zoom Mtg. No. **874-1336-0966**
- 3/28 - Worship
Zoom Mtg. No. **874-1336-0966**

Drive Through Food Drop-Off
for Central Brevard Sharing Center
March 3 & 6 from 9-11 am

World Day of Prayer
March 12 at 10 am
Zoom Mtg No. 973 9314 0760

Outdoor Yard Sale
March 13 - 8 am - 2 pm

Book Club
March 23rd
Zoom Mtg. No. 854 4236 5460

Ongoing Events at Hope

Happy Seekers
Fridays at 10:00 am
Zoom Mtg. No. 916 6472 2064

Coffee Hour
Tuesdays and Thursdays at 9:30 am
Zoom Mtg. No. 425 599 5598



- 3/20 - Ethel Osterwise's Birthday
3/22 - Karen Jolly's Birthday
3/26 - Denise Cotton's Birthday

Lenten Study **Wednesdays in Lent -7:00 pm**



Join us during Lent as we explore what it means to follow Jesus. Innovative theologian and pastor, Brian McLaren will guide us through videos and reflection as we seek to enliven our faith and follow the Way of Jesus. McLaren asks us to reflect on questions such as, "Is the Christian faith a pathway, a way of life, or is it a parking lot, a warehouse, a system of belief and a system of sin management and death preparation?" McLaren calls us to rediscover the Way and live life to the fullest.

Join us on Zoom ID# 321 636 0250