



Tidings of Hope



HOPE United Church of Christ May 2021



Tidings of Hope published monthly by: **Hope United Church of Christ**
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Submissions for publication may be sent to the Church Office at the above addresses, either electronically or by paper.

The Reverend's Reflection

Before I moved here, I thought Florida's weather was always sunny. I had heard of hurricanes, of course but storms seemed infrequent on the sunny beaches of Florida from my view in Ohio. Obviously, my lack of awareness has more to say about my focus than reality. Ohio is a long way from Florida in miles and in perspective.

Now that I have lived in Florida for 23 years, I know the reality. Hurricanes, thunderstorms, wind and lightning are always a possibility. In the summer, I can almost set my watch to the storm clouds and afternoon rain. I have also experienced the violent force of hurricane winds and driving rain. But even when it's not hurricane season, strong winds can strike in an instant and then disappear. It happened that way last week. The wind came up so strong and so fast, I thought the trees would bend in half. There was hail in the next county—so much that it looked like a blanket of snow. And then it was gone as quickly as it came. The sun came out and the birds started singing. Everything looks different after a storm. The damp green leaves sparkled in the sunlight with lush brilliance. Renewed and refreshed by the downpour of thirst-quenching water and shedding of old leaves.

In the book of Acts we read the story of Pentecost. People from different places gathered together for the Festival of Pentecost. Everyone was speaking in different languages but after a rush of violent wind, everyone understood each other. The Holy Spirit came like tongues of fire. In the midst of chaos and disparity came unity. And the church was born.

We have experienced some storms and chaos in the church today - both literal and metaphorical. And we cannot deny all the differences between us. But Pentecost is on the way. The Holy Spirit will come. The rush of violent wind will bring renewed energy to the church just like it did so long ago in the book of Acts, just like a Florida windstorm.

Everything looks different after a storm. Let us pray for renewal, understanding and unity.

The Holy Spirit comes, and the church and its people are resilient. Amen.



Church Opening

In February, Moderator Melanie Goff consulted with a group of church members with experience related to disease transmission and created a Covid-19 Action Team. The Team consist of Melanie Goff, Karen Lehr, Lori Lindow, Shannon Lindow and Paul Capaldo. The Team was tasked with collecting accurate data on Covid-19 transmission and articulating proper procedures regarding sanitization and minimization of viral spread. The Team created an Action Plan which is available for view in the church office.

Although more people are vaccinated and the number of hospitalizations has declined from the January peak, we are still not 'out of the woods'. The increasing number of Covid-19 variants is problematic.

With vaccination numbers increasing and potentially 70-75% of adults immunized by May 31st, the Team feels we will be in a much better position to consider opening the church. We are hoping for a 'soft opening' of the church sometime this summer.

The Team asks for your continued patience and understanding as we try to navigate through this difficult period.

Thank you,
The Covid-19 Action Team

For more information regarding Covid-19, visit the CDC website are: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/covid-data/covidview/index.html>

Committee Vacancies

Currently, a number of committees are absent one or more members.

Committee vacancies are as follows:

Deacons – 1,
Stewardship – 1, and
Growth & Development – 1

In addition, the tech team is looking for volunteers to assist in the video and audio production of the church service. You don't have to have special computer skills or equipment. The tech team will teach you everything you need to know.

Sharing Our Best

One of our Hope UCC members said it best, “The church is not a building. It is the people who go forth to serve.” Amen.

In April, Hope UCC collected 285 non-perishable food items for the Central Brevard Sharing Center in addition to over \$250.00 in money donations for the CBSC. During the collection, we also collected over 20 jars of peanut butter for the Cocoa High School Fresh Market along with \$60.00 in cash donations for the peanut butter fund. We are the peanut butter church!

We also continue collecting plastic bottle caps for the Indian River Lagoon clean up project initiated by the Florida Institute of Technology. To date, we have collected over 10 pounds of plastic caps.

On May 1, we are having a yard sale, bake sale, and New England Corn Chowder sale in the social hall from 8-2, hosted by all church committees. We hope folks come to volunteer, offer baked items for sale, and of course, to buy treasures of all sorts. Let Karen Lehr and Julie Johnson know if you wish to volunteer. Lunch will be provided for our volunteers.

On May 1, the Big Red Bus will be in front of the church from 9 – 1 for our community blood drive. Betty Capaldo is the contact person for scheduling donors.

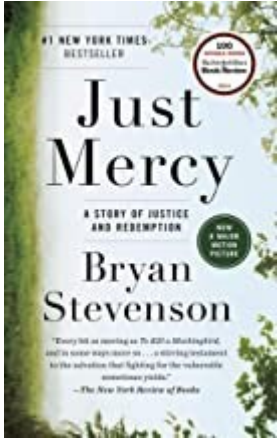
On May 12 and 15, we will host another non-perishable food drive for the Sharing Center from 9-11.

Then, on May 15, we invite members of Hope to stay after the food drive for the Earth Day celebration cook out hosted by Justice and Witness at noon. Bring your own beverages, chairs, canopies, or beach umbrellas, and of course, your masks. We will be socially distanced around the memorial garden, observing safe practice guidelines given by our Covid Task Force Team. Contact Peggy Hayes and Tonia Patterson if you can provide donations of hamburgers, hotdogs, buns, packaged chips, and grab and go fruit for the Earth Day Celebration. Money donations are accepted, too.

We are the church!



Book Club - May 2021



The May Book Club Meeting has been changed to June 15th. The Book Club will read and discuss *Just Mercy: A Story of Justice and Redemption*, by Bryan Stevenson. This is a true story written by the founder of Equal Justice Initiative in Montgomery, Alabama and it recounts his experiences as a lawyer working to assist those desperately in need.

In this book, Bryan Stevenson, world-renowned civil rights defense attorney, works to free a wrongly condemned death row prisoner. After graduating from Harvard, Bryan might have had his pick of lucrative jobs. Instead, he heads to Alabama to defend those wrongly condemned. One of his first, and most incendiary, cases is that of Walter McMillian who, in 1987, was sentenced to die for the murder of an 18-year-old girl, despite a preponderance of evidence proving his innocence.

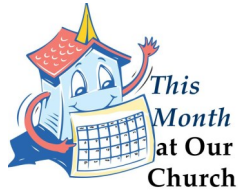
In addition to reviewing this inspiring book, the Hope Book Club will discuss book selections for next year and choose monthly readings for meetings resuming in the fall.

We hope you will join us and help determine readings for next year. Our meeting will be on zoom, Meeting ID: 854 4236 5460, on Tuesday, June 15th at 1:30.

HOPE Book Club Reading List 2021

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|----------|--|
| 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>
Tim Clydesdale and Kathleen Garces-Foley |
| May | <u>Just Mercy</u> - Bryan Stevenson |





- 5/2- Communion Worship
Zoom Mtg. No. **874-1336-0966**
- 5/9 - Worship
Zoom Mtg. No. **874-1336-0966**
- 5/16 - Worship
Zoom Mtg. No. **874-1336-0966**
- 5/23 - Worship
Zoom Mtg. No. **874-1336-0966**
- 5/30 - Worship
Zoom Mtg. No. **874-136-0966**

Yard Sale

May 1st - 8 am to 2 pm

Blood Drive

May 1st - 9 am to 1 pm

Drive Through Food Drop-Off for Central Brevard Sharing Center

May 12 & 15 - 9 am to 11 am

Earth Day Celebration

May 15 - 12 Noon

Book Club

June 15—1:30 pm

Zoom Mtg. No. 854 4236 5460



- 5/6 - Jonah Garcia's Birthday
- 5/12 - Janice Ellison's Birthday
- 5/13 - Shelle Waller's Birthday
- 5/14 - Cyndi Leonard's Birthday
- 5/15 - Rebecca & John Carroll's
Anniversary
- 5/23 - McKenzie (Cathcart) Martin's
Birthday

Ongoing Events at Hope

Happy Seekers

Fridays at 10:00 am

Zoom Mtg. No. 974 3773 0735

Coffee Hour

Tuesdays and Thursdays at 9:30 am

Zoom Mtg. No. 425 599 5598

Theology on Tap

Wednesdays at 7:00 pm

Zoom Mtg. No. 321 636 0250

UCC Florida Conference and Celebrate Florida

Please use these links for the United Church of Christ Florida Conference and the Conference "Celebrate Florida" Newsletter

UCC Florida Conference - <https://www.uccfla.org>

Celebrate Florida Newsletter - <http://www.uccfla.org/celebrateflorida>