



Tidings of Hope



HOPE

United Church of Christ

February 2022



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The Reverends Reflection



Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I **do not** give to you as the world gives. **Do not** let your hearts **be** troubled, and **do not** let them **be afraid**. John 14:27

“Do not be afraid.”

The Bible is full of the message; **“Do not be afraid”**. But when I listen to the news, I am afraid. Our airwaves are full of terrifying portents that I never imagined I would see, maybe worse than rivers of blood, locusts and frogs. Banning books, swastikas on buildings and bridges, restricting voting, denying women’s rights over her body and millions of deaths from a global pandemic sound like a scene from a dystopian novel rather than the 6:00 news. For some reason lawmakers think that books are more dangerous to children than guns and masks and vaccinations are more dangerous than ventilators and death from corona virus. I hear people denying facts, denying science, and denying rights. It makes a person want to hide under the covers until it is all over.

Instead, I turn to the Bible. **Do not be afraid**. Jesus had the courage to speak up for justice and truth, to heal the brokenness in the world and to bring light into the darkness. We are called to love God completely and to love others as fiercely as we ourselves. Standing for peace and justice may be difficult, and it may be dangerous. When the powerful feel threatened, they will keep their power at all costs—even deceit and violence. But we are not alone. We have the power of the Holy Spirit with us and we have each other. Jesus calls us to follow, follow together. Suddenly, I’m not so afraid.

When day comes we ask ourselves, where can we find light in this neverending shade? The loss we carry, a sea we must wade. We've braved the belly of the beast, we've learned that quiet isn't always peace and the norms and notions of what just is, isn't always justice. And yet the dawn is ours before we knew it, somehow we do it, somehow we've weathered and witnessed a nation that isn't broken but simply unfinished.

...Scripture tells us to envision that everyone shall sit under their own vine and fig tree and no one should make them afraid. If we're to live up to our own time, then victory won't lie in the blade, but in in all of the bridges we've made.

...But one thing is certain: if we merge mercy with might and might with right, then love becomes our legacy and change our children's birthright.

...we will rebuild, reconcile, and recover in every known nook of our nation in every corner called our country our people diverse and beautiful will emerge battered and beautiful, when the day comes we step out of the shade aflame and unafraid, the new dawn blooms as we free it, for there is always light if only we're brave enough to see it, if only we're brave enough to be it.

Amanda Gorman, excerpts from "The Hill We Climb"



Moderator's Moment

Valentine's Day LOVE to all!!

February came in with a chill for us Florida folks, but we here at Hope UCC are just as warm and loving as always. January was a busy month for the Budget Committee as they met many times creating what seems to be a wonderful, balanced budget – passed unanimously by our congregation. Great job, Budget Committee. And thank you to you, our congregation for showing your belief and faith in the missions of Hope UCC. We will be able to keep us warm in the winter and cool in the summer, in addition to compensating our Pastor and continuing in our mission work. Thank you to everyone.

Valentines Day is upon us. You might just want to show a little love and remember a Hope UCC friend or acquaintance with a Valentine's card, showing your appreciation and love for their being a Hope friend or member. Everyone likes to get a little somethin' somethin' special in the mail. You can get the latest membership list by calling Hope UCC office and asking Sandy to send you a directory.

Do you ever sit quietly sometimes in prayer thinking about, “what more could I do for Hope UCC?” “What can I do to help?” I do! And, come on – I know you do too. Well, I can answer that question for you. We NEED a few good people to step up and fill two positions in our committees. We have an opening in Growth and Development and one in Deacons. We need YOU! Being on a Committee can be very rewarding – you get to know other people really well, you laugh a lot, you learn how to use Zoom, you kick start your brain into thinking about church, other than just on Sundays and most of all you get this warm and fuzzy feeling in your heart from doing something for others. We kid around a lot about Growth and Development being the party Committee – because G&D plans a lot of fun events. We're involved in cook-outs, yard sales, Christmas cookie sales, Blood Drives and Logo Shirt Sunday and MORE! Deacons is “the Committee of your heart.” Deacons decorate the church for various church holidays and work with Rev. Karen to create the beautiful services we have each week; they work with the Tech Team and serve in many ways with all spiritual matters of the church. And the best part is, no experience necessary. We'll welcome you with open arms and show you the way. Please join one of these Committees. Contact Rev. Karen if you have any questions or are interested in joining.

Have a great month everyone. I'll see you on Sunday.
Melanie

Sharing Our Best
From the Growth and Development Committee



Being the church is what we do! Although we were unable to meet for in-person worship most of January, we still have wonderful remote services; our food collections the second Saturday of each month serve our central Brevard Sharing Center clients; our Justice and Witness peanut butter ministry supports the Cocoa High School Fresh Market families; and we are now hosting quarterly blood drives at Hope UCC in the front circle. The first blood drive of 2022 is Saturday, Feb. 19.

In December, our Angel Tree blessed us with donations for ceiling paint for our breezeway behind the sanctuary, a new Pride flag, batteries, a new bathroom light fixture for the family restroom in the narthex, feather sale flags for our fundraising events, a six-foot ladder, and Luminara candles for the SET committee.

Our next logo shirt Sunday is Feb. 20, so be sure to wear your shirt to represent your commitment to our church community. If you would like to order a shirt, please contact a member of Growth and Development.
We are blessed!



Hope UCC Hosting a Blood Drive: February 19, 2022

The Growth & Development Committee has set the first of four blood drives at Hope UCC for 2022 with the OneBlood organization in Rockledge.

The first date is for Saturday **February 19, 2022** from **9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.** The Big Red Bus will be parked in the circle in front of the church. The remaining blood drive dates are: May 28, September 17 and November 12.

Everyone who is eligible is urged to participate! Oneblood staff will determine if you are eligible when you check in. There will even be a “thank you” gift for those donating blood!!

Some basic guidelines to donate: You must be 16 yrs old (with parental permission) or older; you must weigh at least 110 lbs. There are a few instances where a person may not donate and you can find those on the website: oneblood.org

Covid-19 Information: Oneblood has updated the safety precautions and ALL donors are required to wear a mask. If you don't have a mask, one will be provided for you.

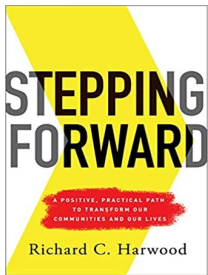
All blood centers are regulated by the FDA and must follow strict guidelines on how they operate. OneBlood meets all FDA guidelines and all team members follow strict safety protocols including:

- All OneBlood phlebotomists wear medical gloves that are changed for each donation.
- All donor-touched areas and equipment are disinfected after every donation. This includes, donor beds, registration tablets, blood-pressure cuff and hemoglobin sensors.
- A sterile collection set is used for every donation.
- Every donor receives a mini-physical that includes a temperature check to ensure donors are healthy and well on the day of donation.
- Only people who are healthy are eligible to donate blood.

Social Distancing at Blood Drive - OneBlood has implemented social distancing safety protocols: Mobile Locations: Only four donors will be permitted on the Big Red Bus at any one time. Please be aware that Oneblood does NOT test for COVID-19. You should contact your health care provider if you want to be tested.

There is no cost to the church but we are asked to have at least 10 donors committed to donate prior to the blood drive. You may **choose a time-slot** which are at 15-minute intervals, ex. 9:15 a.m., 9:30 a.m., etc. You may register a time slot with oneblood.org or email Betty Capaldo at bcapaldo31@gmail.com or text Betty at 401-323-7041 with your desired donation time. Walk-in donors are also welcome.

Book Club February 2022



For the February Book Club selection, we will read and discuss Stepping Forward: A Positive, Practical Path to Transform Our Communities and Our Lives, by Richard Harwood. As the title says, this book is a practical guide to how we can bring people together when our society is increasingly divided. What will it take to overcome mistrust and restore our belief that we can get things done together as Americans? In Stepping Forward, Richard Harwood gives us a new and inspiring blueprint to rediscover what we share in common and actively build upon it. He argues that these efforts must start in our local communities. Harwood shows us how we can reach within and beyond ourselves to address our shared challenges and create more purpose and meaning in our lives by being a part of something larger than ourselves and truly making a difference in our communities, refocusing on the desire for good in each other, unleashing a greater sense of shared responsibility, finding the courage and humility to take such a path. Americans are yearning for answers to the country's rampant polarization, hate speech, and gridlock. Stepping Forward shows us how to channel our frustrations, energies, and aspirations to get on a more hopeful path. We invite you to join us by reading this selection during February and joining our discussion group on Tuesday, February 22nd at 1:30. The zoom meeting ID is 845 6868 2100.

HOPE Book Club Reading List 2021 - 2022

| | |
|-----------|--|
| September | <u>Caste: The Origins of Our Discontents</u> - Isabel Wilkerson |
| October | <u>The Kindest Lie</u> - Nancy Johnson |
| November | <u>The Henna Artist</u> - Alka Joshi |
| December | <i>Christmas Break</i> |
| January | <u>Leave the World Behind</u> - Alam Rumaan |
| February | <u><i>Stepping Forward: A Positive, Practical Path to Transform Our Communities And Our Lives</i></u> - Richard Harwood |
| March | <u>The Undocumented Americans: A Homecoming</u> - Karla C. Villacencio |
| April | <u>One Night Two Souls Went Walking</u> - Ellen Cooney |
| May | <u>You'll Never Believe What Happened to Lacey: Crazy Stories About Racism</u> - Amber Ruffin and Lacey Lamar |

What do you think?

We all know that church has changed during the pandemic. What will church look like after the pandemic? PRC (Practical Resources for Churches — a nonprofit, 501 (c) 3, non-denominational, education-based service organization providing consultants, educational webinars, workshops and resources) wanted to hear from churches about those changes. They sent out a survey and here are some of the responses. Our church leadership found these results informative and inspirational and wanted to share them with the congregation. What do you think?

What did you or your congregations learn over the last 22 months that you will continue in the future?

- Virtual meetings work fine
- We can still be connected with technology. We had not live streamed or even recorded our worship services before (or any meetings or classes) and we will definitely continue to live stream worship, have some hybrid classes and meetings. and communicate more with technology. We also opened a food pantry for those in our zip code and we will continue to collect and distribute food on a weekly basis
- How to do hybrid worship using Zoom and Facebook Live. Also, how to hold meetings using the Zoom platform
- Zoom church
- We will continue with morning devotions weekdays at 9:30 on zoom, which is led by our parish ed steward, or one of the deacons, and occasionally by other congregation members. The group has called themselves "Zoomers" and look forward to pre-devotion check ins each morning and reflection on Bible topics and chapters.
- We learned that there is a real desire to have the church service on Face Book live even when we are in person worshiping. We are able to reach shut-ins, people away for the season, and those not feeling well. We even have regular on line attendees who have never been to our church, some from across the country.
- We learned new ways of connecting with the congregation outside of the walls of the church. We now have dedicated live streaming of our services, knowledge of how to host Zoom meetings, and ways of hosting and attending our Community Groups both online and in-person. We learned that just winging it with our praise team just doesn't work when there is an online/ recorded congregation. What might be passable when we're all together can seem cringe-worthy when viewed online.
- We learned that we were able to take chances - to do things we had never thought we could do, particularly in the area of technology.

- Definitely using Facebook Live. We have more people watching us remotely than come to the church. Members that moved out the area are able to worship with us again. It's been a great way to reconnect. We also have local members who have not been able to worship at the church due to physical limitations before the pandemic. It's one of the silver linings from this pandemic.
- Individual communion cups containing bread and juice to take to our seats.
- Facebook Live church reaches those who are uncomfortable attending or who cannot attend for whatever reasons, especially when the person doing the video is responding in a positive way to those who are joining us online - "Great to have you with us this morning", "Welcome", "Hello and wonderful to have you joining us", etc.
- Masked and distanced Handbell choir can be done more easily than singing choir - we will continue to play!
- More opportunities for people besides the temporary pastor to share a message.
- As an older pastor, I learned to live-stream our worship and how to host a Zoom meeting and use its features; our whole congregation learned to Facebook and Zoom. We plan to continue an online ministry. I also got creative about sending home activity bags about Advent and Lent, hoping families would do some faith activities in the home- don't know if this will continue. My purpose was to empower and increase the talking about faith within families - don't know how to measure that - but I think it's a vital thing that should become a part of the family home.
- That we are truly flexible and don't mind being so Yeah, we don't like spending so much time on SCREENS, but it's better than NOT seeing anyone! There are lots of terrific resources out there and it's great to learn of them. (Work of the People, etc.)

Can you name something the congregation did before the pandemic that you will not be doing in the future.

- Not returning to in-person meetings.
- We did have a designated time of Coffee Fellowship between Discipleship Hour and Worship which we will not be bringing back anytime soon.
- We are also looking at having the education hour for children not be on a Sunday morning but instead be on Wednesday nights.
- We have heard that many families only wish to give one hour to church on Sundays.
- One thing I think we will not return to is the shaking of hands for the passing of the peace. We have all become more germ aware.

- For many years Trinity partnered with [Journeys|The Road Home](#) as a host to homeless families and individuals on Friday nights. This included providing dinner, a safe place to sleep, breakfast, and a sack lunch for the next day. We no longer host overnight guests at the church. Instead, we prepare and deliver meals to the same population who are being housed in local hotels. We are continuing this ministry, but in a new way - which is far more comfortable and dignified for the clients!
- Don't know
- While it's not set in stone, it appears that we will no longer be doing monthly potlucks as part of our communion Sunday. The fear that the pandemic brought is still alive and well, regardless of how little we are being directly affected by it. It is sad, but true. We will not be taking prayer requests from the gathered congregation going forward, something that was part of our weekly services. With so many people continuing to watch online and unable to participate, and the feeling that passing a microphone might spread disease, our deacons have moved to a prayer card model that is turned in with the offering instead.
- Most likely not printing bulletins. We have TV screens and everyone follows the service on the monitors. It has saved us money by not needing paper. Plus it saves trees!
- The Minister was on-site 5 days a week. The congregation learned that they can get in touch with me quite easily when I work from home
- Passing the Peace handshaking, Rummage sales, possibly no offering plate being passed; having a plate in the entry is doing well and more anonymous.
- We are eager to return to the activities we had prior to the pandemic, so I don't know of anything we will not do again. At least at this point!

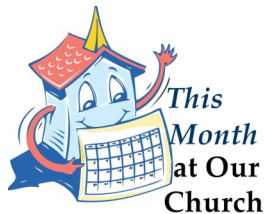
What do you miss the most from before the pandemic and how do you bring it into the future?

- Miss in person socializing
- We missed soup kitchen and men and women breakfasts with Bible discussions
 - Honestly, hugs and close contact. To be able to reach out and touch each other for comfort, for understanding, for fellowship has been missing for me personally and for many of the disciples in my congregation. I noticed that when we had activities outside, people seemed to be freer to shake hands, pat folks on the shoulder and embrace. Hopefully this can continue with more outside events.
- I miss the clarity, predictability, and comfort of pre-pandemic routines. It will take creativity, courage, failure and time to discern new patterns and gaps, transform ministries, and build them up as we move forward.

- Group meals
- We miss having a pastor. Our supply pastors have been great but it is not the same thing. We are waiting for candidates to call but there are not any options for us at this time. The wait is getting tiring.
- We are missing some of the fellowship social functions from pre-covid. I hope there will still be strong interest to resume them once everyone feels safer.
- Sunday school with the kids. Our mostly-older volunteers from before see children as "germ magnets" (unfortunately that is a quote), and are unwilling to be in the classroom with them. This has led to a decline in our already small family demographic in the congregation. Zoom/online class just isn't appreciated as much (especially with so many kids already overwhelmed by screen time). We are looking into multi-generational service models (we're not ready for intergenerational) to bring into the sanctuary
- Fellowship!!! Just about every member of the church misses fellowship. We did start to serve prepackaged snack and drinks outside in the Spring and we do provide even now in the cold weather. We shiver and talk with one another but we really can't wait to sit in Fellowship Hall again with coffee & hot tea with homemade cake, cookies, etc. and talk for an hour or more with our church family. We are hoping that as more people become vaccinated and the covid cases come down, we will be able to start again but limiting how many people sit at table to give some distance between each other.
- I miss in-person meetings. Zoom is great, but sometimes, you just need to be with people.
- Singing without masks - I guess when the threats are over?
- Potluck dinners - one solution is take-out containers but then fellowship is not there. Miss seeing the people who are not there - not sure what the solution could be?
- I personally miss the Fellowship hour after worship, getting together with people at potluck suppers, the larger groups we had in-person for worship and singing out unafraid, the Turkey Supper as a sit-down meal (we skipped one year, then did it carry out the 2nd year). I miss going out to eat with no thought of infections, too. The pandemic has really - what - changed? ruined? - our sense of fellowship with one another - we have adjusted somewhat, but it's not the same. Our numbers have gone way down, too, with older folks being careful and parents not bringing their young children. It's been a difficult 2 years to keep our spirits up and stay connected.
- SINGING, SINGING, SINGING. Well, that's me, anyway. Watching people's faces. We're looking at new ways of 'being church', including more outdoor gatherings, more small group gatherings and more activities that are outside of our church building.

Important Information - The Covid Task Force has decided that the safest course of action is to continue with worship only on Zoom for the first 2 weeks of February. Although the positivity rate is declining, it is still very high. When we reopened the Sanctuary in July, the positivity rate was less than 5%. Currently the positivity rate in Brevard County is over 30%. Therefore, the Covid Task Force felt the risk of indoor gathering was still too great. There will be another meeting mid-February to reevaluate. We are so grateful that we can still be connected through the miracle of technology! If you need help with Zoom, don't hesitate to call the office so we can help.

Let's stay safe and take care of each other!



- 2/6 - Communion Worship
- 2/13 - Worship
- 2/19 - Blood Drive
- 2/20 - Worship
- 2/22 - Book Club
- 2/27 - Worship

Zoom Mtg. ID. for Sunday Services
321 636 0250

Ongoing Gatherings via Zoom

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. 425 599 559



- 2/2 - Ed Hamilton's Birthday
- 2/5 - Denise King's Birthday
- 2/11 - Jacquie Park's Birthday
- 2/13 - Angela Hamilton's Birthday
- 2/18 - Christie Scheirer's Birthday
- 2/21 - Jeannie Roberts' Birthday
- 2/22 - Heaven Elam's Birthday
- 2/27 - Joyce Gordon's Birthday

**Hope UCC Ministry
for the Sharing Center**

In January, we collected 252 items and \$120 in cash for the Central Brevard Sharing Center.

There will be another drive through food drop-off on February 12th from 9 am to 11 am.