



HOPE
United Church of Christ
December 2022

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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

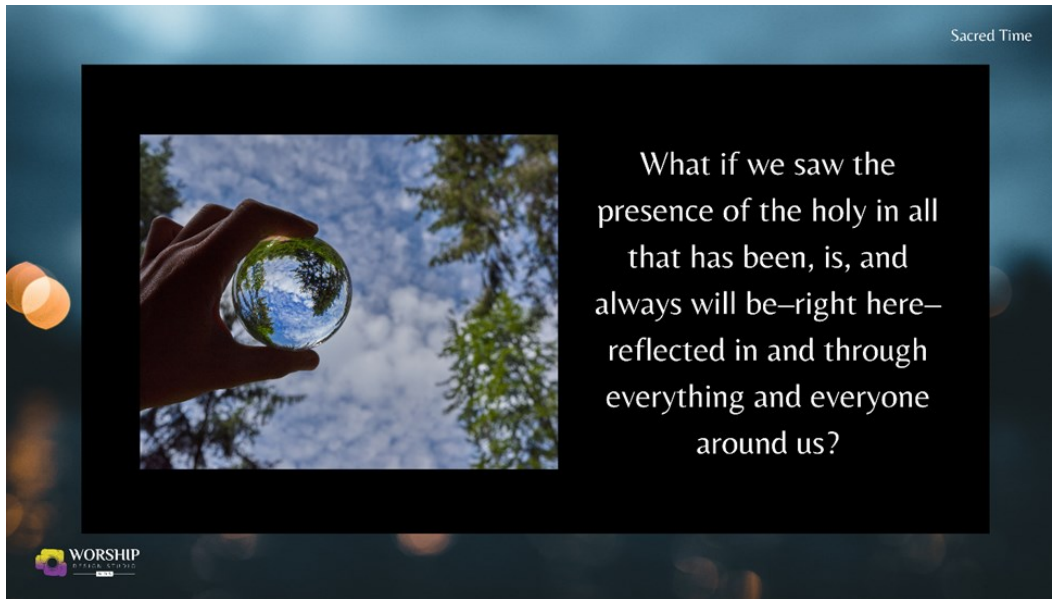


I love the Holiday season! I love the church-y part and the secular part—from the shepherds, Mary and baby Jesus to Frosty, Rudolph and Santa's Elves.! I even enjoy the happy sentimental commercials on television and Christmas shopping. I love decorating the house and wrapping the presents. I often work myself into a tizzy with everything I want to accomplish and inevitably there are items that get eliminated from my to-do list (usually in a sleep deprived melt down). Nevertheless, I still love the sparkle and shine of the holiday season. There are parties and carols and cookies! We spend more time with loved ones and everyone you meet gives a cheery holiday greeting, "Happy Holidays" or "Merry Christmas" or "Happy Hanukkah!" or "Happy New Year"! But then as fast as the holiday season comes; it's over. It seems that by the second week of January we go back to our rude, grumpy ways and forget to even say "hello" or "excuse me" or even "thank you". What if we could hold on to that holiday joy and excitement all year?

What if we saw the holy reflected in everything we saw, and everyone we met, all the time and everywhere? That's what our worship series is celebrating, Reflecting the Sacred. Christmas is the celebration of the hope born in a manger, God coming to dwell with us, the incarnation. All creation has always been imbued with the Creator's brilliance and we are called to shine with this holy light—always!

Let's share where and when we see God shining in the world. Where do you see the love of Christ sparkling above the darkness? As you go through your busy days in December and beyond, post a photo of where you see the sacred reflected in the world. You can email them to me or the church office or post them on social media.

The Reverend's Reflection (continued)



Prayer Bead Ministry

The prayer bead ministry continues to grow. We still have prayer beads available if you would like to purchase them for yourself or as a Christmas gift for someone. We can also make you a custom set if you want to choose colors or a charm to match the person who will receive them. All sales of the prayer beads will be given to the church. Speak with Tonia Patterson if you would like to see what we have left or want to order a custom set.

We would like to offer another five-week class next year. If you would like to participate please let Tonia Patterson, Melanie Goff, or Rev. Karen know and we will set up the class if we have enough interest.

Thank you to all who have supported this new ministry. Contact information for Tonia. Phone # 321-394-6287 or email-toniabandit@aol.com

Blessings

Tonia Patterson

Blue Christmas



A Blue Christmas Service is a time when we can come together and acknowledge the "blue" feelings we have at Christmas time, the reasons for them, and offer them to God. This service is sometimes called “The Longest Night” and is traditionally held on the Winter Solstice, the longest night of the year, December 21st. We think of the holiday season and especially Christmas as joyful and happy, but when we are grieving or feeling a loss, the holidays become triggers for mourning, reminders of our sadness, and often our loneliness. This service is about recognizing that the holiday season is not a season of joy for everyone. Join us as we acknowledge our grief, light candles of remembrance and offer our prayers to God for healing and transformation.

On **December 21st at 7:00** Hope UCC will hold a Blue Christmas service on Zoom (321-636-0250).

Another Blue Christmas Service will be offered by Team Global HOPE at UCC



National Ministries. On Monday, **Dec 5, 3pm ET** there will be a virtual worship service with Team Global HOPE at UCC National Ministries for a Blue Christmas worship service. Blue Christmas services

traditionally provide space for those who don't feel so “merry and bright” during the holiday season.

This service seeks to recognize and stand in solidarity with the experiences of those aggrieved or displaced by disaster or forced migration in 2022, from Kentucky, to Ukraine, and beyond. We remember that we are called to stand in solidarity with the captive and the oppressed, and work together with God's guidance to create a just world for all. UCC Clergy and choirs engaged in humanitarian ministries across the denomination will be providing reflective liturgy, music, and preaching during this event. Go to ucc.org to register or for more information.

The Moderator's Moment

Merry Christmas to all of my Hope UCC family. I hope you have a spirit filled Christmas and are able to experience the peace and true meaning of the holiday. I look forward to our Christmas Eve Candlelight service. It is always so special for me. I feeling God's blessings on my life and the joy of having a beautiful church family. I have had a preview of the spectacular decorations that Rev. Karen has planned for our Sanctuary. If you have not been to church recently or attended in-person worship in our Sanctuary, this is NOT a time to miss the experience. You will be amazed with the beauty of our Sanctuary as we Reflect on the Sacred throughout Advent.

I want to spend a moment thanking everyone for making my past three years as Hope UCC's Moderator a joyful experience for me. It was an honor to lead Hope UCC through the turbulent times of the Covid pandemic. As a church we did it, and we did it well. Our membership remained strong, we bent a knee to some difficult Covid guidelines, made some radical changes in how we do worship and managed to come through it pretty darn well. Thank you everyone for being willing to make some changes in how you worship. Three years later those changes have opened new doors for us. We have a state-of-the-art A/V system, we have enthusiastic new members, and we have learned how to be flexible.

As we move into 2023, we must continue to meet the various needs of our church so that we can continue to serve God in the manner God asks us to. I encourage you to pledge, although you may have never done so, this is a year that requires us to make the extra step up to support our church building, our pastor and staff, and be able to support all of our committees as they try to perform services to our community. Please support the Angel Tree during this holiday season that the Deacons have placed at the back of the Sanctuary, by selecting one or more-star gifts. Traditionally we encourage giving of a Christmas gift to the church. If you would like to give a special Christmas gift to Hope during this special season, please mark your check or envelope as "Christmas Offering." If you would like to give a very special offering to Hope UCC, please let Rev. Karen or our Treasurer, Jean Hawkes knows of your intentions.

I know my journey with Hope UCC will continue. I look forward to joining with you along the journey. Blessings and Peace to all of you.
Melanie Goff, 2022 Moderator

Pastoral Relations Committee December 2022

The Pastoral Relations Committee met on November 3, 2022 and spent a good amount of time discussing the Ministerial/Congregational Review results with Rev. Karen. 46% of the Annual Ministerial Review forms were returned, which statistically is a very high result.

What we learned from this review:

- 100% of respondents rated Rev. Karen “Very Effective/Effective” in 4 of the 19 functions
 - ◊ Demonstrates welcome, acceptance
 - ◊ Preparing/Leading Worship
 - ◊ Is an effective preacher/speaker
 - ◊ Helps relate our faith to daily life
- Over 50% of respondents gave a rating of “Very Effective/Effective” in 17 of the 19 functions.
- Responses in the “Somewhat Effective” rating did not exceed 4 persons in any category.
- Responses in the “Not Effective” rating were in 2 of the 19 functions : 1 person in the “Shares leadership with others” function and 3 people in the “Works to bring in new members” function.”
- Over 40% of respondents replied “Don’t Know” in 3 of the 19 functions : “Effective ministry in crisis situations”, “Makes pastoral calls” and “Engages with other religious leaders”
 - ◊ Sample of comments on what Rev. Karen does well:
Embodies the spirit of God’s love; Makes EVERYONE feel welcome; Sermons are amazingly researched and delivery; Relates Bible teachings to modern life; New ways to keep things fresh; Warm, kind and caring.
 - ◊ Sample of comments on what Rev. Karen could improve upon: Welcome those with different labels...continue to talk about the issues, not which side of the line you are on; Encourage church leadership to reach out to new members; Work to encourage church growth; self-care.

Pastoral Relations Committee (continued)

Congregational:

- Over 50% of the returned forms responded “Good” in all 11 categories
- Over 10% of the returned forms responded “Needs Improvement” in 4 functions
 - ◊ Supporting our pastor in times of crisis or with health concerns
 - ◊ Praying for our pastor
 - ◊ Supporting our pastor with generating ideas and new programs
 - ◊ Reaching out to include and support our pastor’s family
- 100% of respondents rated the congregation as “Welcoming and accepting of our pastor as the unique individual she is.
- The highest percent (32%) responded that the congregation was “Fair” in “Sharing our concerns in a timely, loving manner
 - ◊ Sample of comments on what the congregation does well: Welcoming and caring; Stepping up to help other; Outreach to the community; Open to new ideas and practices; Finding ways to “be together” through a pandemic
 - ◊ Sample of comments on what the congregation could improve upon: Unrealistic expectations for a part-time pastor; Broaden the leadership pool; Mentor new members and new leaders; Stewardship and fundraising; have activities in the evening to include people who work during the day; publish a directory of committees; plan ahead

PRC would like to thank all of those who participated in this Annual Review. The review enables us to reflect on how our relationship with Rev. Karen is progressing and how we may improve as we move forward.

Betty Capaldo, Chair
Pastoral Relations Committee

Sharing Our Best

We are ending 2022 on a high note. November was full of activity with a combined fall bazaar, blood drive, and food drive on November 12, a Thanksgiving potluck dinner after worship on November 20, celebrating our gifts and our stewardship season, and preparing our sanctuary for Advent and Christmas with the hanging of the greens on November 26. Our theme is “Reflecting the Sacred.”

With helping hands and hearts, we raised over \$3,400.00 at our church bazaar, received over 200 food items for the Central Brevard Sharing Center, and 7 pints of blood at the blood drive-saving 21 lives.



Our next food drive is December 10 from 9-11 in front of the church. Shop the Buy One Get One (BOGO) specials, and please remember “The Least of These” during the holidays. Consider purchasing items for creating meals to feed a family for a week.

Please wear your logo shirts on Sunday, December 18. Our congregational information meeting will be after worship, and we want everyone to show commitment as we review our budget and vote on new officers and committee members.

Ladies’ lunches will continue in January.

Stay tuned for our new fundraising project, our Hope and Heart market coming in January.

God is good all the time. All the time, God is good!



Christmas Potluck and Cookie Exchange

Save the date. December 18th Christian Education is inviting you to join us after church for a potluck lunch. Bring a dish to share and a place setting so we can continue to lessen our environmental impact using paper, single use plastic, and Styrofoam. We will also be doing a cookie exchange. This is a great way to gather a variety of cookies for your family or gifts to give. If you want to participate bring four dozen homemade cookies, and a container to gather your three dozen cookies. One dozen cookies will be put on a sharing table for folks to taste. Three dozen cookies will be placed on a table that you can choose from to take a variety of cookies home with you. If you can please bring a copy of your recipe, or mark them if they have nuts or peanut butter in them for folks with allergies. Our committee will provide ice cream and toppings for dessert. Hope to see you there!

Your Christian Education Committee



Christmas Card Exchange

It is a tradition at Hope Church to have a spot in the Narthex for the opportunity to give Christmas cards to others. If you wish to participate just place the cards in the white boxes. Don't forget to look for cards for you too. This is a fun way to share holiday greetings with each other.

A Christmas Reflection from the Growth and Development Committee

For the past year, we have found out who we are:

Mentors who teach each other how to overcome obstacles

Encouragers who lift each other up

Realists who adapt to change

Responders who rise to the occasion

Yeomen who work unwaveringly for the common good

Caregivers who offer daily assistance

Heroes who face uncertainty with courage

Reactionaries who stand up for justice

Innovators who discover their creativity

Scholars who are learning new skills

Techies who know the ins and outs of Zoom

Minimalists who share their resources

Advocates who minister to the least of these

Seekers who learn to discern the truth

Merry Christmas!

This is a time of reflection, hope, and waiting.

We wish you blessings and peace at Christmas and in the coming year.

Angel Tree

Welcome Our 2022 Angel Tree



She is a beauty and full of silver stars just waiting to be chosen. Kinda like adopting a puppy – but we are adopting a STAR. Each star has a gift idea on the back of the star. Gifts range in prices from a “little” to a “lot.” Please feel free to choose one or more stars to gift to the church. When you choose a star, please place the star and your donation in an envelope. AND very important, include your name on the envelope. Send or give the envelope to the church office. We can keep a record of stars that are shining from your donations and make sure your donation is used for exactly what you desired. If you cannot get to the church and wish to choose a STAR, just let someone at that church know and we’ll make sure you get a star.

Questions?? Call, text or email me. I’m here to help you.
Melanie, Your Moderator

Thanksgiving 365

I want to thank my wonderful Hope Church family for all the positive remarks for my message on November 20th. It was my honor to share the words of my heart with all of you. I would like to share with you the thankful cards that were placed in the cornucopia that Sunday.

Overwhelmingly the responses were family, friends, our music worship leader, Hope Church, and our pastor. Other responses were spouses, pets, daily bread, blessings of God, jobs, renewing love, safe travels, Jesus and his forgiveness. health, life, teachers, family gatherings, Environmental Activists, nature, wildlife, and massage therapists. A church that is inclusive, lgbtq+ acceptance and community. Peace of mind and beautiful music.

So you can see we have a lot to be thankful for.

Blessings my friends,
Tonia Patterson

Letter from Joyce Gordon

Sharing Health Challenges and Gratitude

I live each day as it comes, and my faith has never been stronger. I am uplifted each day by communion with those things that come from the amazing, faithful, uplifting, always available love of God that flows through me minute by minute at times, filling me up, making me eager to see the wonders of God's love and how it manifests itself in so many beautiful, and often surprising ways. Sunrises on the ocean, and sunsets through the glass door in my entranceway are often breathtaking, and I now have a "smart phone" that has a super good camera that I use most every day. The beach out the balcony offers me a wide world of people of all ages on the beach, and watching the cruise ships come out from the Cape. My wild imagination tells me all kinds of stories about those beachcombers, and sometimes I spend two or more hours making up stories about what they are doing. Living vicariously can be a very healthy pursuit!

The good outweighs the burdensome things. And my gratitude for being able to still learn more and more about the world and its people is strong and healthy. I can honestly say that all is well with my soul!

I am currently recovering from that new strain of flu that is now afoot in the world, and thankfully I had had a flu shot a short time before that I believe has helped me to be able to lessen the flu's effects. Again, it is the healing power that is available to everyone if they choose to open their doors to let the SON shine in!

Way too much of I, I, me, me in this email. I miss seeing you all, but thoroughly enjoy the notices and the monthly newsletters. My computer is less and less compatible with the new systems that are making it more and more difficult to figure out how to work around the programs to be able to create the kind of art that I love to do. I still do some art work, but at present am working on gathering my poetry and essays together, possibly for some kind of publication. I pray that God will grant me enough time to accomplish this task before it is too late.

You all are an amazing force for good that is so needed in this world. I pray for you all the time, and will continue to do so as long as I am able.

With God's blessings, and God's love filtering through me to you all,

Namaste, Joyce

HOPE Book Club Reading List 2022 - 2023

September	<u>The Daughters of Yalta: the Churchills, Roosevelts and Harrimans</u> - Catherine Grace Katz
October	<u>All That She Carried: The Journey of Ashley's Sack, A Black Family Keepsake</u> - Tiya Miles
November	<u>Fox and I: An Uncommon Friendship</u> - Catherine Raven
<u>December</u>	<u>Christmas Break</u>
January	<u>The Ministry for the Future</u> - Kim Stanley Robinson
February	<u>The Genius of Women: From Overlooked to Changing The World</u> - Janice Kaplan
March	<u>Joan Is Okay</u> - Weike Wang
April	<u>The Taking of Jemima Boone</u> - Matthew Pearl
May	<u>Taste: My Life Through Food</u> - Stanley Tucci





- 12/4 - Communion Worship
- 12/11 - Sunday Worship
- 12/18 - Sunday Worship
 - Pot luck Lunch & Cookie Exchange
- 12/21 - Blue Christmas Service
- 12/24 - Christmas Eve Candlelight Service

Zoom Mtg. ID. for Worship Services
321 636 0250

Drive Through Food Drop-Off
for Central Brevard Sharing Center
December 10th.

Ongoing Events at Hope

Happy Seekers

Fridays at 10:00 am
Zoom Mtg. No. 875 1767 3994

Coffee Hour

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

Theology on Tap

Wednesdays at 6:30 pm
Discussing the book
“Every Thing is Sacred”
by Richard Rohr

Zoom Mtg. No. 321 636 0250



- 12/2 - Susan Vincent's Birthday
- 12/12 - Netta Elam's Birthday
- 12/14 - Melanie Goff & Karen Lehr's Anniversary
- 12/17 - Rebecca Carroll's Birthday
- 12/19 - Gerry Adams' Birthday
- 12/25 - Lori Lindow's Birthday



Hope UCC Ministry for the Sharing Center



In November we collected over 200 food items for the Central Brevard Sharing Center. There will be another drive through food drop-off on December 10th.