



Tidings of Hope



HOPE *United Church of Christ* *March 2023*

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 Reverends Reflection



Do you want to fast this Lent?

In the words of Pope Francis

- Fast from hurting words and say kind words.
- Fast from sadness and be filled with gratitude.
- Fast from anger and be filled with patience.
- Fast from pessimism and be filled with hope.
- Fast from worries and have trust in God.
- Fast from complaints and contemplate simplicity.
- Fast from pressures and be prayerful.
- Fast from bitterness and fill your hearts with joy.
- Fast from selfishness and be compassionate to others.
- Fast from grudges and be reconciled.
- Fast from words and be silent so you can listen.

I'm old enough now to have stories about the "good old days". I don't mean "when I was young, I walked to school a mile in the snow" (Well, I did walk to school, and it did snow in Cleveland, but it was not a hardship). I mean, more like, "I remember the days when there was customer service". Sales people used to assist customers in stores or at the very least, would be pleasant at the cash register as they checked you out. I was in a store the other day where I did not see any salespeople on the floor. When I checked out, there was a salesperson but he did not speak one word or even make eye contact. He put my items in a bag and handed me the receipt without a word. It was as if I was at self-checkout, but he rang everything up.

With all the hardships in the world (racism, poverty, climate change, book bans, women's healthcare), this may seem like a petty complaint, but I think it's a symptom of a larger problem in our society. People are rude, unkind, and inconsiderate. Perhaps the anonymity of social media has made it easier to treat each other with disrespect. The animosity between "US" and "Them" has overshadowed basic humanity. Last week on Twitter, an elected official recommended a national divorce for conservative states. Do we have so much contempt for each other that we cannot occupy the same communities in the *United* States?! The key word is UNITED.

As we are "Lookin for Love" this Lenten season, let us treat each other better. Jesus calls us to love one another, even when we disagree. This list has been going around the internet. I don't know if Pope Francis really said these words or not, but I think the sentiment is beautiful and important.

The Reverend's Reflection (continued)



Imagine the impact in the world if we all spent Lent fasting like this! In little ways and big ways, love would prevail.

Let's look for love in all the right places and let's **BE** love in the world. Let's **BE** the church. We are the body of Christ.

Sink or Swim?

What is the future of Hope United Church of Christ?

Everything is different after the pandemic. Zoom Meetings, masks and social distancing have changed how we gather in church. And some people have stopped gathering at all. The budget discussion at our Congregational Meeting also revealed some questions about the future of our church. Will we be drowning in a sinking ship or sailing into the future spreading the love of God in our wake? Let us be intentional and strategic about our plans as we listen to how God calls us into the future. The Florida Conference of the United Church of Christ has some ideas to guide us.



Strategic Discernment is the opportunity for churches to explore who they are called to be in the present, short-term, and long-term future. It often comes initially as an opportunity to name what they feel they are lacking (Young People, Volunteer Engagement, Money, etc.) and guides churches towards an "Appreciative Inquiry" of their potentials and passions with input from their congregation and neighbors such that churches gain clarity as to what/where they will focus on moving forward. Following this process, with a greater/clearer understanding of the church's specific mission, churches will move forward in ministry-specific subgroups towards a 3-year plan.

It's important that this process be congregation led. Before we begin the formal process, it's clear that we need to do some listening. We will start off with refreshments after worship on March 5, 2023, with a discussion to hear people's hopes and fears for the future of the church. What fears do you have? What do you celebrate about Hope UCC? If you cannot join the discussion on March 5th, send us an email or call someone on council. We want to hear from you.

I don't know what the future looks like, but we can swim together. Let us sail into a bright future!

Moderator's Moment

I am so proud of our church. I have attended all the committee meetings in February. What an awesome group of dedicated people I have networked with at every meeting! Every committee is filled with people who are finding ways to "Be The Church" within the walls of Hope UCC and in our community.

I'm so excited to see the plans from the committees. There will be many opportunities for everyone to participate even if you are not on a committee. Our church needs people to use their time and talent even if it's just helping out with an activity or project. Find something you would love to do and do it! For example, our Care team is a wonderful group of people that sends out cards for many occasions. They are always looking for volunteers and would love to have you participate if this is something you might like to do.

I had the pleasure of volunteering in our new thrift shop, Hope 'n Heart. It is truly a church project with many hands making it a successful new fund raiser and an outreach for our church and community.

Rev Karen, Julie Johnson, and I have been working hard to make sure the SET (Sanctuary Enhancement Team) helps to make our worship a more meaningful visual experience. We welcome input from all of you. We are always happy to have new folks to join us so let us know if you would like to be involved. I'm looking forward to the Lenten season and to see what happens in the sanctuary.

I am always willing to hear from you if you have ideas or concerns about how we serve you. Reach out to me if you want to talk about them. Our Members at Large (Edward Hamilton and Elizabeth Smith) are always willing to hear your concerns and ideas also. Reach out to them at church or by phone, they work for you! Edward Hamilton is in the sanctuary almost every Sunday and Elizabeth Smith is available for the Zoom folks.

Blessings my friends
Tonia Patterson

Time for Raise Right (Scrip)

Get ready to buy gift cards for Spring!

Cards for movies (AMC), restaurants (Wendy's, Bonefish Grill, Carrabba's, Pizza Hut), Shopping (Publix, Target, Walmart, Walgreens).

These are just a few of the 500+ offerings. Lists of merchants will be available Sunday in the narthex.

We made \$350 on the December order. Let's see if we can top that!!
Susan Vincent

Hope 'N Heart Thrift Store Grand Opening

We opened our new Hope 'N Heart Thrift Store on February 10, 2023 to happy crowds from the Rockledge/Cocoa community. We heard lots of folks telling us how happy they were that they had a local thrift shop in their hometown. There were lots of smiles everywhere. On Saturday Julie Becker and her grill crew set up and served hamburgers and hotdog lunches.

Our second week of opening brought more people and more smiles. Julie and her crew *tripled* their sales of lunches from the grill. Reverend Karen spent Saturday, February 18th meeting and greeting people shopping at Hope 'N Heart and at the grill.

If you would like to volunteer for a work shift at Hope 'N Heart or to be a part of the grill crew, please contact Melanie at her email, mellgoff@aol.com. Her phone number is 321-480-8434.

Hope 'N Heart is open the 2nd and 3rd Friday and Saturdays of each month. We will be open March 10 & 11 and March 17 & 18, from 10am – 2pm We are accepting donations of all kinds; clothing, household items, books, shoes, and furniture. Let your friends and neighbors know we are accepting donations. We can provide pickup for big items.

Christian Education News

The Christian Ed. Committee is hard at work making exciting upcoming plans for 2023. Our first endeavor was Souper Bowl Sunday on February 12th. We collected 270 food items which included soup, as well as raising \$164.90 in monetary collections. Everything that was collected was given to the Central Brevard Sharing Center.

Christian Ed. is also making plans for the upcoming Lent season by hosting an Easter Egg Hunt Saturday, April 8th from 11am to 12 pm.

All are invited, including the community, to come and join in the fun. There will be popcorn, cotton candy and face painting. This will coincide with the monthly opening of the 'Hope N Heart thrift store.

In collaboration with Growth and Development, they will be providing hot dogs, chips and drink for a small fee or love offering. At this time, Christian Ed. is seeking donations of plastic eggs for the Egg Hunt. There will be a plastic bin to collect the donated eggs placed outside in the Narthex.

The other upcoming event will be a new Lenten series for 'Theology on Tap' titled 'Empty Altars' by Diane Butler Boss starting Wednesday, March 1st through the six weeks leading up to Easter.

So please stay tuned for future upcoming events as Christian Ed. will continue to plan for the rest of the year. Since there are no Children's Messages at this time, Christian Ed. is having the children participate in the worship service (lighting the candle, taking up offering, being a greeter etc.). Respectfully Submitted by Denise Cotton

A Lenten Challenge

Our sister church in Naples has challenged their congregation to give up using single use plastics during Lent. I'm asking our congregation to take up this challenge too. You can find a copy of their challenge letter on our greeter table in the narthex. We can also send you a hard copy if you wish. Just let me know. Let's use this time to "**Love**" our earth and reduce the amount of single use plastics we use.

Let's look at some ways to do this.

Plastic Bottles—Use a reusable drinking bottle.

Grocery Bags - Take your own bags into the store and use them, or for small purchases refuse the bag and carry them out without one.

Straws and Cutlery - Purchase reusable straws and bring them with you when you go out to eat. Wash and reuse plastic cutlery.

Take out containers - Bring your own reusable containers from home.

While plastic is easy to use, it is not easily disposable. It can take thousands of years to decompose, especially when it sits in a landfill. It's choking our waterways, and sickening and killing our wildlife. Plastic can also clog drains fostering the spread of disease and cause flooding.

It's not easy giving up using single use plastics, but the truth is we can choose to live differently and reduce the amount we use. It may even develop into a brand new habit that can help us love our earth!

You're invited to take up a **Fast from Single-Use Plastic!**

Blessings, Tonia Patterson

Growth & Development Has Plans for You!

During our January meeting we started brainstorming together to create a list of ideas on ways to reach out to the community. There were so many ideas that we then prioritized and categorized the list into immediate and future.

Immediate ideas include refreshments after service and resuming monthly Pot Luck events in our social hall. March Pot Luck is scheduled March 12. On the same day the team is planning a Cake Walk. This would be my first time participating in a Cake Walk, it sounds like fun and it involves eating cake it has to be good!

The future idea category includes a quarterly Community Market. A lot of details have to be worked out, but the thought is that a community market can be both a community outreach program and a fund raiser. That thought is Hope can host an outdoor market. Our Hope Church can raise funds by renting out space to different vendors as well as having our Hope booth. This will give us an opportunity to talk to people in the community and share the vision of our church. We are hoping to pull something together before it gets too warm. All ideas welcome!

Hope Growth & Development team members are:

Julie Becker, Denise Valdez-King, Diana Short, Susan Vincent, Ann Coburn and Jonah Garcia.

The Deacons Corner

Our Deacons, Sanctuary Enhancement Team, and Tech Team are working diligently to support the worship service both in person and on zoom.

We invite volunteers to serve as weekly or monthly lectors, pass out bulletins, take up the collection, acolyte (light the candles), help decorate the sanctuary, learn the audio visual for zoom, and share the message when the pastor is away.

Signup sheets are available on the greeters table in the narthex for ushers to take up the collection, and lectors who assist the pastor with special readings during worship.

We also encourage everyone to attend our special worship services during the season of Lent. Our Ash Wednesday service was held on February 22nd, and Deacons are planning a special Maundy-Thursdays service for Thursday, April 6 at 6:30 in the social hall where they will provide soup, bread, beverages, and dessert. Please add your name to the signup sheet on the greeters table in the narthex if you plan to attend.

Here is the updated profile of our committee:

General Description of the Deacons Committee

The Deacons, together with the Pastor, oversee the spiritual life of the church.

A Deacon's responsibilities include preparations for worship:

securing and preparing ushers and acolytes; preparing communion elements; changing paraments to follow the seasons of the church; maintaining candles; sanctuary preparation; all special services including funerals, where they assist the Pastor with tending to the details of receptions following funerals and memorial services. The deacon of the month will count the collection with the Trustee of the month after worship. The Deacons also coordinate with the Tech Team and Sanctuary Enhancement Team to support services. The Pastor coordinates with a Deacon regarding disbursement from the Good Shepherd Fund. The six members of the Deacons are elected by the membership and serve a term of three years. Currently, the Deacons are meeting the fourth Thursday of each month at 7:00 pm on zoom.us unless special meetings are necessary.

The Chairman of Deacons will serve as Chairman of the church Safe Conduct Committee, following guidelines set forth by the UCC Safe Conduct Policies and Procedures ([Florida Conference \(uccfla.org\)](http://FloridaConference(uccfla.org)))-"Abuse Prevention Resources".

Blessings and Thanks

Julie Johnson-Chairman of Deacons

Christian Education News

The Christian Ed. Committee is hard at work making exciting upcoming plans for 2023. Our first endeavor was Souper Bowl Sunday on February 12th. We collected 270 food items which included soup, as well as raising \$164.90 in monetary collections. Everything that was collected was given to the Central Brevard Sharing Center.

Christian Ed. is also making plans for the upcoming Lent season by hosting an Easter Egg Hunt Saturday, April 8th from 11am to 12 pm.

All are invited, including the community, to come and join in the fun. There will be popcorn, cotton candy and face painting. This will coincide with the monthly opening of the 'Hope N Heart' thrift store.

In collaboration with Growth and Development, they will be providing hot dogs, chips and drink for a small fee or love offering. At this time, Christian Ed. is seeking donations of plastic eggs for the Egg Hunt. There will be a plastic bin to collect the donated eggs placed outside in the Narthex.

The other upcoming event will be a new Lenten series for 'Theology on Tap' titled 'Empty Altars' by Diane Butler Boss starting Wednesday, March 1st through the six weeks leading up to Easter.

So please stay tuned for future upcoming events as Christian Ed. will continue to plan for the rest of the year. Since there are no Children's Messages at this time, Christian Ed. is having the children participate in the worship service (lighting the candle, taking up offering, being a greeter etc.). Respectfully Submitted by Denise Cotton

Church Keys

Trustees are trying to update the list of who has a church key. If you have a church key, please contact Paul Capaldo: pscapaldo@gmail.com.

Thank you

A Generous Donation

Ann Coburn has generously donated Ed's power wheelchair and shower chair for church use.

It will be kept in the South closet in the social hall and there will be a sign out sheet kept in the office.

Greetings from Stewardship

The Stewardship committee is known for asking for money on a regular basis to support the wider church's various missions. Stewardship is also known for encouraging giving through Pledging every fall (It's even called *Stewardship Season*). We want to take a moment and expand our congregation's definition of Stewardship.

The word stewardship means, ***taking care of something like a large household, the arrangements for a group or the resources of a community.*** We are all stewards (it says so in the book of Genesis!) and would like to help take care of each other as well.

In the spirit of taking care of one another, the Stewardship Committee would like to provide an opportunity to encourage healthy spending and budgeting. As we enter this Lenten Season, we encourage each of you to try to eliminate unnecessary spending during March. Pay all your essential bills, of course, but do your best to avoid non-essential spending for the month. Consider if that Latte is a necessity or if you really need the immediate gratification of the drive-through. At the end of the month, you might be surprised at how much money you saved. You might be able to boost your savings account or add to your Pledge (we had to suggest it).

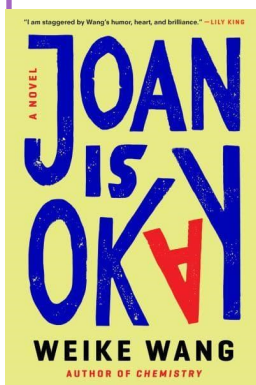
For example, a family of 4 eats out once a week and spends anywhere from \$35.00-\$75.00 depending on the restaurant. If you choose the Lenten challenge you could potentially save \$140-\$300. If you could do that every month, you might fund a family vacation by the end of the year!

If you choose to take the challenge, we encourage you to share what you learn with the Stewardship Committee, and we will write a summary for the May Tidings. Remember, God called us to be good stewards. Are you up for the challenge?

The Stewardship Committee



Book Club February 2023



In March, the Hope Book Club will read and discuss the novel, “Joan is Okay” by Weike Wang. Joan is a thirty-something ICU doctor at a busy New York City hospital. The daughter of Chinese parents who came to the United States to secure the American dream for their children, Joan is intensely devoted to her work, happily solitary, successful. She does look up sometimes and wonder where her true roots lie: at the hospital, where her white coat makes her feel needed, or with her family, who try to shape her life by their own cultural and social expectations. Once Joan and her brother, Fang, were established in their careers, her parents moved back to China, hoping to spend the rest of their lives in their homeland. But when Joan's father suddenly dies and her mother returns to America to reconnect with her children, a series of events sends Joan spiraling out of her comfort zone just as her hospital, her city, and the world are forced to reckon with a health crisis more devastating than anyone could have imagined. “Joan Is Okay” touches on what it means to be Chinese-American right now; working in medicine at a high-stakes time; finding one's voice within a dominant culture; being a woman in a male-dominated workplace; and staying independent within a tight-knit family.

We hope you will join us on Tuesday, March 28th at 1:30 on zoom to discuss this book. The meeting ID is 845 6868 2100.

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
December	Christmas Break
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



**Zoom Mtg. ID. for Worship Services
321 636 0250**

- 3/2 - Christian Ed. Meeting
- 3/3 - Happy Seekers
- 3/4 - Justice & Witness Meeting
- 3/5 - Communion Worship
- 3/7 - Trustees Meeting
- 3/8 - Care Team Meeting
- 3/10 - Happy Seekers
- Hope 'n Heart Thrift Shop
- 3/11 - Hope 'n Heart Thrift Shop
- 3/12 - Worship
- Growth & Dev. Potluck
- 3/14 - Church Council
- 3/16 - Stewardship Meeting
- 3/17 - Happy Seekers
- Hope 'n Heart Thrift Shop
- 3/18 - Hope 'n Heart Thrift Shop
- 3/19 - Worship
- 3/23 - Deacons Meeting
- 3/24 - Happy Seekers
- 3/26 - Worship
- Pastoral Relations Meeting
- 3/28 - Book Club



**Birthdays & Anniversaries
This Month!**

- 3/16 - Elizabeth Smith's Birthday
- 2/22 - Karen Jolly's Birthday
- 3/23 - Richard & Janet Rupp's
Anniversary
- 3/26 - Denise Cotton's Birthday

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

Zoom Mtg. No. 321 636 0250

**Hope UCC Ministry
for the Sharing Center**

In February we collected 270 food items and \$164 for the Central Brevard Sharing Center.





MARCH 2023

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1	2 7 pm Christian Ed.	3 10:30 am Happy Seekers	4 10 am Justice & Witness
5 10am Communion Worship	6	7 7 pm Trustees	8 10:30 am Care Team	9	10 10:30am Happy Seekers 10 am—2 pm Thrift Store	11 10 am Justice & Witness 10 am—2 pm Thrift Store
12 10am Worship 11am G&D Potluck	13	14 Care Team 6:45pm Council	15	16 7 pm Stewardship	17 10:30am Happy Seekers 10 am—2 pm Thrift Store	18 10 am—2 pm Thrift Store
19 10am Worship	20	21	22	23 7 pm Deacons t	24 10:30am Happy Seekers	25
26 10am Worship 11 am Pastoral Relations	27	28 1:30 pm Book Club	29	30	31 10:30am Happy Seekers	