



Tidings of Hope



March 2024



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.

Thoughts from Reverend Karen Curtis-Weakley

Some days when I watch the news I am overwhelmed with the hate and violence I see. Sometimes the criminals are desperate citizens but even more frightening is when our leaders spit lies and vitriol. How can there be such disregard for people's rights and dignity from leaders who claim to be Christian? I see bumper stickers celebrating assault weapons and swear words. What happened to "Flower Power" and "Save the Whales"? Common courtesy and human decency seem to be extinct these days. Where has compassion and respect gone? I wonder what Jesus would think of how Christianity has been distorted and used to wound others. In this season of Lent when we reflect on the meaning of the cross, how can we make a difference and change the world for good?

Someone sent me this meme from the internet. It is attributed to Pope Francis.

Do you want to Fast this Lent?

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, contemplate simplicity.
Fast from pressures and be prayerful.
Fast from bitterness, fill your hearts with joy.
Fast from selfishness and be compassionate.
Fast from grudges and be reconciled.
Fast from words, be silent and listen.

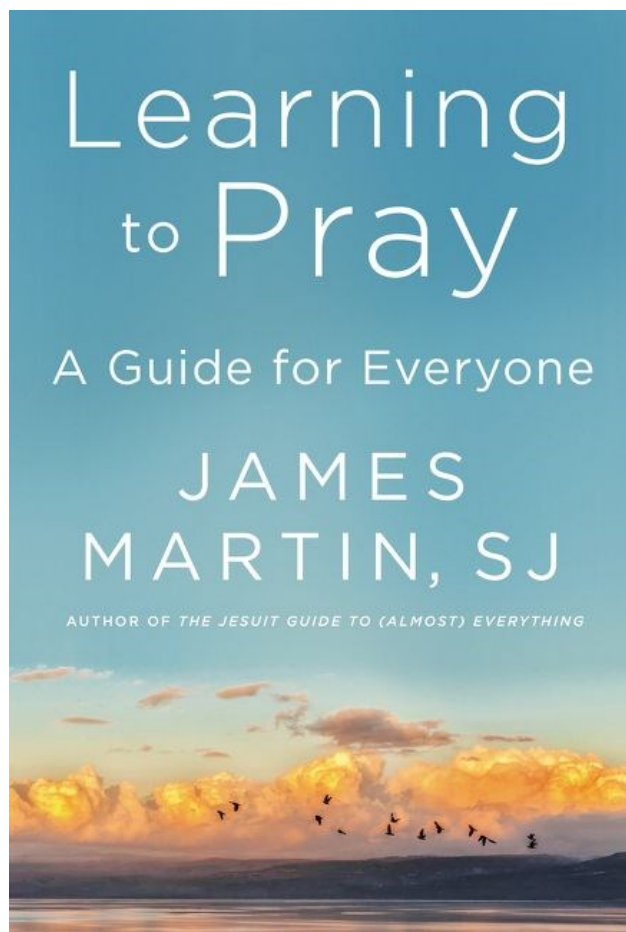


As followers of Jesus, we should be doing this kind of fasting all the time—not just during Lent. If all the people who claim to be Christian would follow the Jesus of compassion and extravagant love, God's kin-dom might be just a little closer. If everyone was kind and compassionate and listened to each other, I bet we could change the world for good.

The cross and crucifixion lead to resurrection and Easter as we celebrate new life. We fill our sanctuaries with spring flowers to remind us of the new life and joy of Jesus. Let's reimagine Flower Power and fill the world with Jesus' message of hope, peace, joy and love!

Book Club

During March, the Hope Book Club will read and discuss *Learning to Pray: A Guide for Everyone*, by James Martin. *Learning to Pray* explains what prayer is, what to expect from praying, how to do it, and how it can transform us when we make it a regular practice in our lives. Martin lays out the different styles and traditions of prayer throughout Christian history and invites us to experiment and discover which works best to feed our soul and build intimacy with our Creator. Father Martin makes clear there is not one secret formula for praying. But like any relationship, each person can discover the best style for building an intimate relationship with God, regardless of religion or denomination. We invite you to read this book and join our discussion on Tuesday, March 26th at 1:30. The zoom meeting ID: 845 6868 2100.



DEACON'S CORNER

As part of her contract agreement with Hope UCC, Rockledge, Rev. Karen Curtis-Weakley is granted sabbatical leave for 2 months. Her leave begins April 3rd, and will extend through the month of May 2024.

It is an important event for Rev. Karen because it provides her with an opportunity to rest, rejuvenate, and return to us with renewed vitality. It is also an important time for Hope UCC because it provides us with the opportunity to use our gifts and “sharpen up” our leadership skills.

“What is a Ministry Sabbatical?”

Adapted from *Ministry Sabbaticals: A Pastor's Guide*, by Dace Clifton November 17, 2020

Let us start with a working definition. *A Ministry Sabbatical is a planned time frame that allows a leader the opportunity to step away from his or her usual ministry responsibilities for a specific purpose.*

This definition has three main parts:

First: A sabbatical is *a planned time frame*. A sabbatical is not a leave of absence. Nor is a sabbatical an extended vacation. Sabbaticals are carefully planned events that are designed to benefit both the ministry of the pastor and the church. This planning is usually done well in advance and should involve the pastor, the church leadership team, and the church body.

Second: A sabbatical allows pastors *an opportunity to step away from usual ministry responsibilities*. Pastors cannot be “on-call” during a sabbatical. Nor should they be preaching, teaching, counseling, or doing anything that is a regular part of their ministry. Sabbaticals are unique in that they give pastors space and opportunity to disconnect from their usual role and function. A sabbatical is an intentional disconnect from the regular demands, decision making, and responsibilities of normal ministry life.

Third: A sabbatical should have *a specific purpose*. This purpose usually falls into one of three categories: rest and recovery, addressing a specific issue, or advanced study.

The rest and recovery sabbatical is the most common, and during that time, pastors often participate in enrichment activities which help them grow spiritually, physically, and mentally.

We all need a chance to “re-set” to be successful, well-rounded individuals.

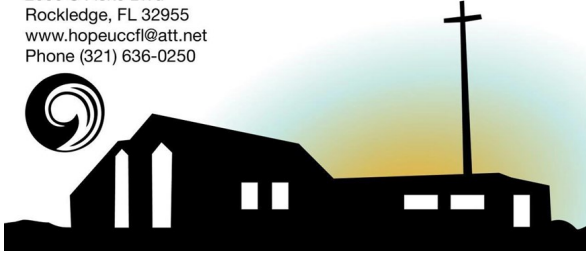
Your Hope UCC worship team encourages everyone to “show up,” “step up,” and “live up” to the expectations we have all come to appreciate.

During this season of Lent, reflect on ways you make a difference, and ask yourselves what you can bring to the table.



Thrift Shop
Open the 2nd & 3rd
Friday and Saturday of each month
Hours are 10am-2pm

Hope United Church of Christ
2555 S Fiske Blvd
Rockledge, FL 32955
www.hopeuccfl@att.net
Phone (321) 636-0250



Total income for Jan. was \$1270.73 which included online sales of \$642.00

Income from the new Square was \$23.50 which is reflected in that total.

Total expenses = \$280.60 included two new wire racks with wheels were \$213.96

Misc. that includes stores supplies of:

17.11 for store items repair kit,
\$42.03 for soda's and water, \$7.50 for zip bag and rubber bands.

Total money turned in was \$990.13 toward budget line item of \$11,000 for year.

Work days for pricing, stocking shelves, and moving racks etc. to Narthex was three using social hall and church store rooms from 10:00 to 3:00 each day.

8-10 people were used to work in the thrift store during open hours.

Store hours are 10:00 to 2:00, but helpers work 9:00 to 2:30 usually, putting items out, signs out, cashiers-counting and getting supplies ready for opening.

Melanie's additional hours online sales hours vary, but usually consist of, listing and going to church for sales are about 5 hours a week.

Karen's additions hours consisted of shopping and purchasing items needed for store and working to organize and stock shelves when needed= 15-20 hours.

In January, Karen spent 10 to 15 additional hours to make accounting sheets to be used for the rest of the year for the store.

Blessing from Melanie and Karen

An Open Letter to Our Florida Neighbors including The Governor, the Education Commissioner, and members of the FL State Legislature

Submitted by

The Rev. John D Vertigan, Conference Minister On Behalf of 45 Florida Conference UCC Congregations

The United Church of Christ (UCC) in Florida has been a part of the faith community in FL since 1884 and a part of our nation since its very beginning. Our faith is rooted in scripture and Jesus' commandment to 'Love our neighbors as we love ourselves' (paraphrase Luke 10:27). Our commitment to education began with our denominational ancestors, who were founders of Harvard College, seminaries and other institutions of higher learning,

including six Historically Black Colleges & Universities (HBCU) and more recently, New College. In addition to supporting institutions of higher learning, we are also invested in supporting our children and youth through public education. It is our love for and our commitment to our children that compels us to write regarding the new education policies being enacted in our state. Again, we follow the words of Jesus, who said, "Let the children alone—let them come to me. The kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these." (The Inclusive Bible).

This is often interpreted as a reminder to value the qualities of children and to be open and accepting towards everyone, regardless of their age or status. It also serves as a call to nurture and protect the young ones, allowing them to grow and develop freely, as well as an invitation to welcome the most powerless among us.

We believe that love of neighbor means supporting the autonomy of one's faith and education, honoring the dignity of all, and promoting inclusion are ways of defining the beloved community. To build a beloved community, we must ensure our children are taught the richness and complexities of our collective past, the good as well as the bad. Teaching children a comprehensive understanding of history will foster empathy, critical thinking, and a deeper sense of unity and will empower them to recognize injustice and discrimination and work towards a more equitable future. Yet it seems that our new educational curricula are focused on making students comfortable rather than challenging them to analyze and evaluate.

(Continued)

Further, language expressing slavery as a benefit to African Americans is reckless and harmful; in worst cases, leading to acts of violence like what we witnessed in Jacksonville on August 26, 2023. Moreover, we are concerned about the dropping of the AP African American history curriculum in favor of what seems to be a much less comprehensive one, especially Prager U, which purports only one viewpoint. To build a beloved community, one that embraces all its members, we must acknowledge the struggles, triumphs, and contributions of every individual and community that has played a part in shaping our state and nation. A beloved community is not built on obtuseness or the erasure of history. It is built on a strong foundation of knowledge, understanding, and respect for one another. By equipping our children with a holistic view of history, we give them the tools to challenge prejudice and bigotry. We create a generation of leaders who recognize the immense value of embracing diversity and promoting social justice.

Furthermore, we are concerned that our policies and rhetoric toward LBGTQ+ students, parents, teachers, and faculty feel targeted and less safe. We are concerned that books lifting up diversity and the struggle for justice have been taken off library shelves, sometimes as a response to self-censorship because of the political atmosphere that has been created. We are concerned that the mission of New College has been changed and new leadership, some without educational credentials, hurriedly put in place. All of these actions threaten the building of the beloved community. Just as we are asking you, our educational and political leaders, to remember your responsibilities for the educational policies of our state for all our children and to engage with educators, historians, and community leaders to design an inclusive framework that truly reflects the complexities of our shared past, we acknowledge our own responsibility in the education of our children and youth. We re-commit to providing a safe space for children and youth to learn about one another and about the vision for a Beloved Community. We express our gratitude to our dedicated educators and librarians and commit to supporting them in helping nurture our children and youth. These educational experts care deeply and play a vital role in shaping the future leaders of our society. They inspire, challenge, and open young minds to the wonders of knowledge. But too many of them now feel under attack and are contemplating leaving their profession and/or the state. Let us work together to create a beloved community where every child grows up with an understanding and appreciation for the diverse tapestry that has been woven throughout history. In the words of Jesus, "Let the children come."

Growth & Development

Growth and Development is having its first monthly "Hope UCC Market" this Saturday, March 9 from 10 am - 2 pm.

The Hope UCC Market will be working in conjunction with Hope 'N Heart Thrift Store on the 2nd Saturday of the month.

The Hope UCC Market will have food for sale and will also be the host for vendors.

Vendors who have signed up for March 9th:

Scentsy, Jewelry by Mart, Warrior Goddess Consulting LLC, Jenn's Creations, Fun-n-such without the work, DnK SweetTreats, Plum Vision Artworks, The Selfcare Trifecta, Utility to Prints, Cake & Company, Tangy Crust, Melbourne Tea & Herb, Spikey Crochet, Toffee with a Twist, Cosmetic Confections, Crochety Octopus.

There is no charge for this event!

Feel free to stop by an visit, and volunteering is always welcome.

Hope UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

**Saturday
March 9th
10am - 2pm**

Hope
**COMMUNITY
MARKET**

2555 S. Fiske Blvd
Rockledge, FL
321-636-0250

STEWARDSHIP NEWS

Hello to Everyone,

The month of March is a busy time for the Stewardship Committee. There will be 3 different collections taking place this month.

The first is the Lenten Offering this offering is held each year during Lent and the funds collected are applied to the general funds of the church for operating expenses. There are envelopes within the boxed set of envelopes and there are plain envelopes at the back of the church for those not using a boxed set.

One Great Hour of Sharing this offering is one of 4 special missions that we partake in yearly. The theme for this year is “It’s time to Share the Light,” the money collected for this is used to support the disasters, refugees, and development ministries of the United Church of Christ within wider ministries. This collection will take place on March 10th.



Easter Offering this offering is collected annually on Easter Sunday. The funds collected are applied to the general funds of the church for operating expenses. There are envelopes in the boxed set and plain envelopes will be put out at the back of the church on March 31.

May this month be filled with many blessings,

Stewardship



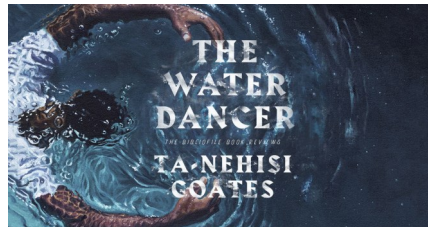
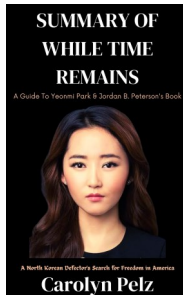
HOPE Book Club Reading List 2024

April

While Time Remains: a North Korean defector's search for freedom in America - Yeonmi Park

May

The Water Dancer - Ta-Nehisi Coates



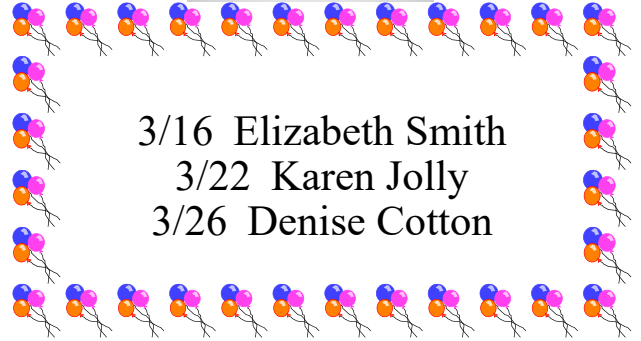
Don't forget your donation to the Wheelbarrow Ministry when you come to worship!





Zoom Mtg. ID. for Worship Services
321 636 0250

- 3/3 Communion Worship
- 3/5 Trustees Mtg
- 3/8 Thrift Store
- 3/9 Thrift Store
- 3/9 Community Market
- 3/10 Worship Service
- 3/10 Christian Ed. Mtg.
- 3/11 Justice & Witness
- 3/12 Council Mtg.
- 3/13 Care Team Mtg.
- 3/15 Thrift Store
- 3/16 Thrift Store
- 3/17 Worship Service
- 3/17 Stewardship Mtg.
- 3/21 Deacons Mtg.
- 3/22 Game Night
- 3/23 Women on The Move
- 3/24 Worship Service
- 3/24 Dessert Walk
- 3/26 Book Club
- 3/26 Growth & Dev. Mtg.
- 3/28 Maundy Thursday
- 3/31 Easter Worship Service



3/16 Elizabeth Smith
3/22 Karen Jolly
3/26 Denise Cotton



Happy Anniversary!
Rich & Janet Rupp

Ongoing Events at Hope

Coffee Hour
Tuesdays and Thursdays at 9:30 am

General revenue needed each
month: \$10,450.00
Total received in
February: \$9,323.12

Women on the Move



Hello Women of Hope UCC, Our women's' lunch group started many years ago. Originally it was named, Ladies Lunch. We changed the name a couple of years ago to Women On The Move. We meet each month on the 4th Saturday of the month at different local restaurants. Each month the women attending select a different restaurant to join together for lunch. It is essential that we take reservations so we can let the restaurant to expect us. We usually are 10-15 of us. The purpose of Women On The Move is simple - we have lunch and chat. No agenda. We support each other and stay away from negative talk or gossip. I make the reservations each month, send out the emails and reminders. You are welcome to invite a neighbor, friend or relative. Women only, please.

If you think you are not on the Women On The Move mailing list and would like to be on the mailing list, or if you are on it and wish not to be, please email me and let me know at: Mellgoff@aol.com.

Melanie

Mellgoff@aol.com

Hope Church has a lot of ministry going on. We are a praying church and we know the power of prayer. One of our ministries is the Prayer Chain. We have a dedicated group of people who pray for people regularly. If you know someone or you are in need of prayer you just let us know. We do ask that you get permission from the person first and we do share last names if the person approves. It is confidential unless the person says otherwise. At this time I am the administrator of the Prayer Chain. You can contact me with the information and the prayer chain is sent. We have had people say they do feel our prayers and we feel honored to participate in this ministry. We always welcome new members so if you are called to participate please let me know. I fondly call us Prayer Warriors and we love what we do.

My contact information is:

Tonia Patterson

321-394-6287 (Feel free to text or call)

toniabandit@aol.com



