

December 2017

Hope United Church of Christ December Newsletter

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Sundays at Hope

9:00 am

Sunday School

10:00 am

Worship Service

Church Staff

Pastor

Rev. Celestine Slater-
Brooks

Organist

Susan Santi

Office Administrator

Katie Guilford

Treasurers

Doug Sphar

Mary Sphar



*Beware, keep alert; for you do not know when the time will come. --
Mark 13:33*

It is difficult to believe that the Season of Advent is here! It is that time where many of us pick up our December rituals for the Christmas season. It actually started Thanksgiving weekend! I noticed my neighbor's Christmas decorations and lights that weekend. How many of us ask every year, "What is the rush?"

In the Gospel of Mark, those who would have heard this passage were at a time in their lives and in that community of faith where they were experiencing persecution - even death. The people had revolted against the oppressive reign of Rome. In that, the Jewish temple at Jerusalem was destroyed. Everyday living was not easy. According to this Gospel, things were going to get worse for these folks before it would get better. Even still, in faith they believed that Jesus would come. They believed that God's righteousness would reign. This was their hope in that time. It is our hope in our uncertain times.

In Psalm 90 it says, "For a thousand years in your sight are like yesterday when it is past, or like a watch in the night. So teach us to count our days that we may gain a wise heart." So is there a reason to rush? We can't do anything about how fast time passes. But, we can slow down, even in Christmas season. As we wait for the peace, love and hope of the revelation in Jesus Christ's birth, let us keep alert for where and when God is present in these uncertain days of our lives. Let us keep alert for opportunities to offer God's presence in the life of another.

Blessings,
Pastor Celeste

Dec. Sundays

Communion

12/3, 10:00 am

Stewardship Meeting

12/3, 11:30 am

Care Team

12/3, 11:30 am

Election and
Informational Meeting

12/10, 11:30 am

Christmas Potluck

12/17, 11:30 am

Christian Ed.

12/17, 11:30 am

Christmas Eve Service

12/24, 7:00 pm

At the Tuesday, November 14 Council meeting, the following 7 members were appointed to the Search Committee: Ann Coburn, Rev. Bill Flynn, Peggy Hayes, Mark Johnson, Tonia Patterson, Kelly Rogers, and Doug Sphar. This committee will work with Rev. Dr. Raymond Hargrove to find a designated pastor for Hope Church. If you have any questions, please see a member of the Search Committee or a member of Council.

Council Clips

November 2017

Council: The Council announces the formation of the Transitional Search Committee: Ann Coburn, Rev. William Flynn, Margaret Hayes, Mark Johnson, Tonia Patterson, Kelly Rogers and Doug Sphar. The committee will begin by updating Hope UCC's recent church profile and sending it to Rev. Dr. Raymond Hargrove of the FL UCC Conference. Once that is received, Rev. Hargrove will provide the profiles of interested candidates to the committee for review.

The Council approved the PRC recommendation to change Rev. Celeste's last day in the pulpit from January 7, 2018 to January 14, 2018. This is in anticipation of having Confirmation on January 7, 2018 and that the pastor continues on the payroll through January 15, 2018.

The Treasurer reported that through October, revenue was \$115,828 and expenses were \$100,846. The Yard Sale, as of the end of October, was at \$4,600.

Stewardship: 18 pledging units have pledged \$60,540 for 2018. The Neighbors in Need offering brought in \$1,664 which is sent to the Conference office.

Christian Education: The committee plans to meet with confirmand's parents in regards to the anticipated Confirmation class schedule.

Trustees: An "Angel Tree" will be set up in the back of the sanctuary.

Growth and Development: The FACT Christmas Party will once again be held in our Social Hall on Friday, December 15th from 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. We are told that food items are not needed but volunteers to help serve would be appreciated.



Dec. Birthdays

Susan Santi
12/1

Susan Vincent
12/2

Lucrecia Elam
12/12

Celestine Slater-Brooks
12/12

Al Gordon
12/14

Carolyn Hinman
12/16

Rebecca Carroll
12/17

Dottie Dertzo
12/18

Dottie Gingrich
12/18

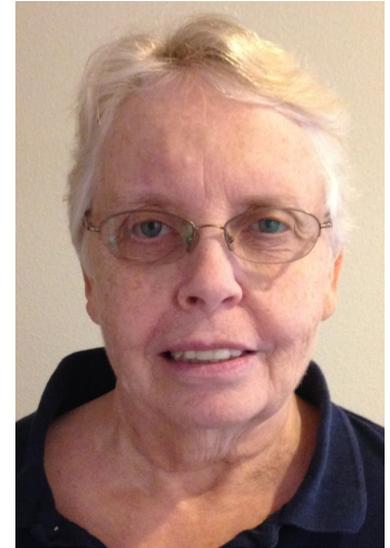
Lori Lindow
12/25

December Anniversaries

Melanie Goff & Karen
Lehr
12/14

Getting To Know You

Rev. Linda Beane was born in Peoria, Illinois. She has a brother, Bill, who is 3 years younger. He is married to Diana and they have two daughters. They live in Lake St. Louis, MO. Bill has his doctorate in Social Sciences. Linda's mother was a teacher and her father went from being a car salesman, to selling Moorman Feed, to being a "gentleman farmer", to working for the Department of Agriculture. Growing up Linda's family attended the Methodist Church and then an American Baptist Church.



After graduating from Tremont High School in IL, Linda attended MacMurray College to get her BA. She then taught music, specializing in stringed instruments, in Granite City for 5 years. During this time she began her studies for a master's degree in Music Education at Southern Illinois University in Edwardsville, taking a year off from teaching to complete her degree in record time. She returned to teaching, using the Suzuki Method for strings and completed 21 years of teaching altogether. During this time, she attended the Central Christian Church.

She began attending the St. Louis Metropolitan Community Church and took courses by mail from Samaritan College for two years, 1985 to 1987, to become a certified minister. She then became a pastor at Gainesville Metropolitan Community Church for 3 years to complete requirements to become ordained. She was ordained in 1991 by the Board of Elders at their bi-annual conference in Los Angeles. Following her ordination, Linda became the Assistant District Coordinator of the MCC for the State of Florida. During that time she established classes for Samaritan College in different churches so that students no longer had to study by mail, and began a scholarship program.

In 1993, she moved to Cocoa Beach and worked in the church, Breaking the Silence. She met Tonia Patterson and her sister, Terri, at that time. She was living with her mother who had Alzheimer's, but eventually had to place her in a nursing home in Illinois, near her brother. Then she moved to Tampa to be a caregiver for a friend. She



Wheelbarrow Ministry

Jan - Canned Fruit

Feb - Cereal

Mar - Pasta

Apr - Spaghetti
Sauce

May - Instant Mashed
Potatoes

Jun - Dried Beans

Jul - Peanut Butter

Aug - Jelly & Jam

Sep - Canned Meats

Oct - Shampoo,
Shaving Cream,
Deodorant,
Disposable Razors

Nov - Cranberry
Sauce

Dec - Rice

We've received 74 units of cranberry sauce. Please visit the Sharing Center website at www.sharingcenter.org for more information about the Sharing Center.

started a UCC church there and met Rev. Clarice Mitchell at that time.

In May of this year, Linda moved in with Tonia on Merritt Island. She brought her 2 Siamese cats, Taffy and Tuffy. On December 5th, she is anticipating surgery for a shoulder replacement.

She enjoys reading and cruising. She has been to Alaska and Panama Canal. Linda already sings in the Hope Choir and serves on the Worship Committee. And she is renewing friendships from Breaking the Silence and her UCC affiliations. Welcome Linda.

Yard Sale Fall Oct. 27 & 28, 2017

The Fall yard sale had a few new additions this time.

Clothes were placed in the choir room, not my first choice but we had such a large donation of items we needed more space for those items. I borrow 18 tables to use in the social hall and they were packed. The clothes in the choir room were ok, except that the people working in there were very disconnected from everything going on in the social hall not as much fun!

Tonia Patterson donated a storage unit full of items and Ann and Ed Coburn donated a garage full of tools. Plus all the other donation that come in before hand really helped reach a new high total, fast approaching \$4,900.

In order to prep the tools and several other items needing work, workers started October 17 two weeks before the sale, this prep work consisted of clothes prep, furniture assembly, tools cleaned and making sure all electronics were working.

This is the first yard sale I've had an accurate count of lunches sold, Friday 9 hot dogs, 5 hamburger, and 17 cheeseburgers were sold.

On Saturday 20 hot dog, 10 hamburger, and 22 cheeseburgers were sold.

I think the yard sale was very successful!

Simone is going to learn the ins and outs of working the whole yard sale and I will work with and teach her.

Thank you one and all for all the help!

In prayer, Karen

December at a Glance

Happy Seekers
12/1, 10:30 am

Hanging of the Greens
12/2, 9:00 am

Book Club
12/5, 1:30 pm

Trustees
12/5, 7:00 pm

Choir Practice
12/6, 5:00 pm

Deacons
12/6, 6:00 pm

Pastoral Relations
12/7, 10:00 am

Happy Seekers
12/8, 10:30 am

Council
12/12, 6:30 pm

Choir Practice
12/13, 5:00 pm

Happy Seekers
12/15, 10:30 am

Tidings Deadline
12/18

Choir Practice
12/20, 5:00 pm

Growth & Development
12/21, 10:00 am

Happy Seekers
12/22, 10:30 am

4th Friday Lunch
12/22 Noon

Annual Gathering

On Friday, October 13 and Saturday, October 14, I attended the 2017 Annual Gathering of the Florida Conference as a delegate from Hope Church. Peggy Hayes was the second delegate and Pastor Celeste attended as clergy. Dyanne Edds attended as Chair of Nominating Committee for the Conference (she is also on Board of Directors) and Eileen Norrington attended as minister with ordained ministerial standing in the Florida Conference so she has voting privileges, along with Giles, so we had quite a delegation for our small church.



Because I was a last minute substitute for Melanie Goff who was called away to care for her sister, I drove to Daytona Beach each day. Friday's meetings were held at the Hilton Daytona Beach Resort. I attended two workshops - the first on Bricks to Mission, led by Chuck Hollingsworth from UCC Cornerstone Fund. The main emphasis was that Mission should guide building, not the reverse. Cornerstone helps churches eliminate building that is not useful for ministry and has helped churches throughout the conference downsize, relocate or share their building with others. Interestingly, he mentioned that individuals can invest with Cornerstone, not just churches - something we all might consider because their interest rate is much higher than a local bank.

The second workshop was Giving Made Fun, led by Jennifer Brewer. She demonstrated several themes for stewardship programs and I have already helped our stewardship pledge drive with one of her ideas. She is available for free to any church in the conference who would like to "pep up" their stewardship program. Maybe next year??

Most of the remaining programs and activities were described by Peggy Hayes in her November Tidings report but I also wanted to mention the many informational booths and displays available. Most offered free items, such as keychains, highlighters, and brochures. One booth, Say Yes to Second Chances, gave delegates the opportunity to sign a petition to restore voting rights to nonviolent felons. This reduces recidivism rates and saves taxpayers money.

Choir Practice
12/27, 5:00 pm

Happy Seekers
12/29, 10:30 am

Please mark your calendars for our annual Election and Informational Meeting on Sunday, December 10th, following worship. At that time we will receive and vote on the recommendations from the Nominating Committee for the slate of officers and committee members for 2018, and also get information about the proposed budget for 2018. This is the best way for you to be informed about planning for 2018. Voting on the Budget will take place at the Annual Meeting on Sunday, January 14th, 2018, following worship.

There's a sign up sheet in the Narthex for readers for the 6:30 pm Christmas Eve service.

Do You Know???

This person designs many of our bulletin covers.

Joyce Gordon

Florida grants only 8% of appeals compared with up to 93% in other states. I spent some money at the display from Ten Thousand Villages that sells handcrafted designs by makers in villages around the world, helping to break the cycle of poverty in developing countries. Ask to see my trivet from the Philippines and my bag from India. Many other displays represented the Insurance Board, Global Ministries, etc. and had representatives to answer questions. Finally, the Closing Worship, held at Seabreeze UCC, was so inspiring. The church itself is historic and picturesque, built in the Spanish Mission style out of ocean rock, tile roof, a courtyard with a huge fountain and a cross. Many of us spent time resting on benches there. The organist and the choir presented inspirational music. The service around the theme, "Make Glad the Deeper Waters," included a sermon by the Gathering's guest speaker, Molly Phinney Baskette, and communion with her and John Vertigan, our Conference Minister. I hope you will take the opportunity to be a delegate in the future, or attend as a guest. It is a very uplifting experience.

Respectfully submitted, Jean Hawkes

Search Committee '17

At the Tuesday, November 14 Council meeting, the following 7 members were appointed to the Search Committee: Ann Coburn, Rev. Bill Flynn, Peggy Hayes, Mark Johnson, Tonia Patterson, Kelly Rogers, and Doug Sphar. This committee will work with Rev. Dr. Raymond Hargrove to find a designated pastor for Hope Church. A designated pastor, as differentiated from an interim pastor, is one who is called for a specific period of time to achieve goals that the committee will establish. At the end of that time, usually a year or more, the congregation will have an opportunity to determine whether we will call the designated pastor to become our settled pastor or we will form a Ministerial Search Committee to find another person to serve as our settled pastor. In contrast, an interim pastor cannot become the settled pastor. Council voted to direct the Search Committee to explore calling a designated pastor as soon as the necessary preliminary work of updating the church profile and creating goals for the designated pastor are completed. Rev. Dr. Hargrove will begin working with the committee within the month. If you have any questions, please see a member of the Search Committee or a member of Council.

Beginning on Sunday, December 3rd, we will have boxes available in the Narthex for the Christmas Card Exchange. Instead of mailing cards to your Hope Church family, you may bring them any Sunday before Christmas. Just place each card in the box labelled with the beginning letter of your friend's last name. If you would like to donate to the church whatever you save in postage, there will be a box at the back of the sanctuary. Remember, check each week to pick up cards that have been brought for you!! We have been doing this exchange for several years, and it is always a fun activity.



Christmas Season Events

Advent Film Series
Every Sunday in
December, 9-9:45 am

Blue Christmas Service
Friday, December 22nd
at 6:30 pm

December 24th,
Christmas Eve
Traditional Service at
10:00 am
Candlelight Service at
6:30 pm

Hope UCC Youth Activities

Hope's Confirmation Class is under way! Four youth have been attending regularly. So far the youth have explored what they have been taught to believe and what they ACTUALLY believe. They are in the beginning stages of taking the risk of stating what they believe. They are learning that their experiences affect their beliefs. They are learning not everyone believes the exact same thing at the exact same time in the exact same way. They are learning they have a voice and their voice can be trusted.

In the month of December, they will be reading liturgy for Advent, doing a service project at the Sharing Center and attending worship at another church. The purpose of these three is to expose the youth to participating in worship, serving God in the community and that we are called as the Church to be one with each other.

They will be exploring the Bible, how God, Jesus and Holy Spirit are active in their lives and the world and most importantly, that God loves them unconditionally. Amen!

Our confirmands are:

Heaven Elam
Petro Pinheiro
Gabriela Pinheiro
Ja'Sky (Heaven's friend)

If you see them attending service, please tell them how excited you are that they will be confirmed in January. Yes! January 7th will be confirmation Sunday this year for Hope's Youth. Please plan on attending to welcome these young people into the life of Hope United Church of Christ.



Not the Norm

Peach-colored roses on a Christmas card? It's a bit surprising, I admit. But even the more traditional red Christmas poinsettias are being gradually upstaged by new varieties in pink, white, speckled and bi-colored. And have you seen the double ones, or those with jagged edges? They cost more, but they sure are showy! There are no longer any hard and fast rules about Christmas flowers or any other decorations used to set apart what is more and more being dubbed "The Holiday Season."

And so, too, that once familiar phrase, "Jesus is the Reason for the Season," is now being overshadowed by bright flashy ads on TV, the internet and in glossy newspaper flyers hyping us to get out our plastic money and purchase those must-have, can't-live-without, newest and most novel things for those special people on our lists.

But despite the disparities, I think there are some similarities between those who remember first why there is a Christmas at all, and those who think more about buying white or pink or bi-colored jagged edged poinsettias and the cutting edge gifts in this year's marketplace.

For example, just as the newer varieties of poinsettias are a break in past traditions, so, too, was the birth of a baby in a manger who was Jesus Christ, Lord and Savior — Jesus, the Christ in Christmas — Jesus, the Reason for our Season. And most everyone would agree that gift-giving is a long-standing Christmas tradition. We love to give gifts and receive gifts. We love to be surprised and to surprise others with that just-right, one-of-a-kind gift that lets both givers and receivers know they are special and cared for "enough to have given or to have been given the very best." (Thanks to Hallmark's slogan that is tweaked a bit!)

Similarly, those who celebrate the surprising, tradition-breaking and world-changing event that happened over 2,000 years ago know it is the finest gift that God could give. But this gift was not just for a season, never goes out of style, and was for everyone who would accept it. The gift was renewed hope, a new way of living and loving, giving and forgiving. It was more than just a glimpse of God's glory for one day out of a year. It was an up close and personal one-of-a-kind gift that would last for all time and beyond.

Freshly cut roses sent by wire that arrive at your door at Christmas fade and are eventually discarded. And peach-colored roses hand drawn and bubble-jet inked on a hard-copy snail-mailed Christmas card -- if kept long enough -- will eventually yellow and crumble. And even an e-card can be blown away with the push of a finger on a keyboard or a touchpad. But this is as close as I can come to giving something that is untraditional and original from my hand and heart to yours. It is my way of celebrating and remembering, with joy and with you, that Jesus was and will always be our real reason for the Christmas Season.

May God's everlasting gift of love be with us all as every season unfolds, no matter where we are on life's journey.

Merry, Merry ~ Joy, Joy ~ Peace, Peace ~ Hope, Hope ~ Love, Love ~ Always and Ever,

Joyce A. Gordon ~ 2017

Proposed Slate of Officers and Committee Members for 2018
 Hope United Church of Christ
 December 10, 2017

Position	Term	Replacing
Moderator: Kelly Rogers	01/18-12/18	Jean Hawkes
Assistant Moderator: Rev. Bill Flynn	01/18-12/18	Jennifer Therrien
Co-Clerks: Jean Hawkes/Julie Johnson	01/18-12/18	Betty Capaldo
Co-Treasurers: Doug and Mary Sphar	01/18-12/18	
Deacon: Jerry Bates	01/18-12/20	Brian Horton
Deacon: Janice Reilly	01/18-12/20	Rebecca Carroll
Christian Ed: Denise Cotton*	01/18-12/20	
Christian Ed: Denise King	01/18-12/20	Jeanette Horton
Christian Ed: Cyndi Leonard	01/18-12/19	Rita Gleason
Trustee: Simone LeDay	01/18-12/20	John Carroll
Trustee: Shannon Cathcart*	01/18-12/20	
Pastoral Relations: Margaret Hayes (P)	01/18-12/20	Julie Johnson
Pastoral Relations: Barbara Smith* (M)	01/18-12/20	
Stewardship: Ray Rood	01/18-12/18	Jennifer Therrien
Stewardship: Cyndi Leonard	01/18-12/20	Netta Elam
Church Growth & Dev: Melanie Goff*	01/18-12/20	
Church Growth & Dev: Susan Vincent	01/18-12/20	
Member-at-Large: Margaret Hayes	01/18-12/18	Rita Gleason
Member-at-Large: Mary Miceli	01/18-12/18	Cyndi Leonard