



Tidings of Hope



*HOPE United Church of Christ
April 2021*



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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



Lately I have been feeling very overwhelmed. Even though the end of the pandemic is in sight, the number of cases has been increasing and the CDC is warning about another wave. I never imagined celebrating Easter online once, let alone twice. Last year I thought my head would explode with all the unfamiliar technology and the crazy idea of not gathering together in person. How do we create the excitement and joy of new life resurrection through a screen?! This year we had to do it all again.

As if the pandemic hasn't caused enough anxiety, we have also been reckoning with violence and racism. White people can no longer live with the illusion that we live in a post-racist world. The inequalities in our society are unmistakable. Black and brown people have suffered during the pandemic at much greater rate than white people—more deaths, more poverty, and more impact. The pandemic has exposed racial inequality and white people have been confronted with the ongoing reality of systemic racism. Black Lives Matter protests shed light on how policing has failed the black community and therefore, failed us all. We watched in horror as George Floyd died under the knee of a police officer for 9 minutes and 29 seconds. I will never be the same.

It all seems overwhelming.

The little things I try to do feel insignificant.

Recently, I was reminded of the story of the starfish. It's an old story by Loren Eiseley. It goes something like this.

One day a man was walking along the beach when he noticed a boy picking something up and gently throwing it into the ocean.

Approaching the boy, he asked, "What are you doing?"

The youth replied, "Throwing starfish back into the ocean. The surf is up, and the tide is going out. If I don't throw them back, they'll die."

"Son," the man said, "don't you realize there are miles and miles of beach and hundreds of starfish? You can't make a difference!"

After listening politely, the boy bent down, picked up another starfish, and threw it back into the surf.

Then, smiling at the man, he said, “I made a difference for that one.”



It's an inspiring story. Let's use it as a metaphor for discipleship. With all that is broken in the world, it's easy to get discouraged, impatient or paralyzed by fear and hopelessness. But Jesus shows us that the Kingdom of God is near. We made it through the shock and grief of Good Friday to the joy of Easter morning.

There is hope. There is new life. There is resurrection.

Each of us, as followers of Jesus can make a difference in the world...even if it's one life at a time.



Moderator's Moment

Yes, we CAN see signs of Spring now. My neighbor's azaleas were in full bloom for several days, filling their front yard with a fusion of colors. The orchid tree is once again in full bloom, even though the windy days have ripped its blossoms from the branches. The best indicator of Spring is Hope United Church of Christ's new oak tree, recently planted in our southside yard. It is already showing signs of new leaves and healthy new branches. It'll be a beauty as it grows. Justice and Witness was the driving force in getting the new tree and with raising money for the tree and her upkeep. Thank you to J&W and the committee's supporters who made this all possible. I know they are actively planning a fun event to celebrate our new tree and Mother Earth so stay tuned. You won't want to miss the party.

I found myself busy supporting the March 10th Art & Media sale in our parking lot. Thanks to everyone who worked on the sale – there were so many of us. At one point someone suggested we put the Yard Sale sign up in the front yard of our church and start letting people shop inside the Social Hall. Amazingly enough the minute that sign went up we were full of shoppers. It was wonderful to hear so many people asking “where's the cookout lunch, where's the conchowder, where's the bake sale?” That means so many of our shoppers are repeat shoppers from sale to sale. And that means we are definitely making an outreach to our community. People know us and know they can get household items and good food at a low price. It means they trust us. That means more to us than the \$1,800 we raised on March 10th.

There's whispering going on. I hear it at every church meeting I attend. It seems with Covid-19 vaccinations are well underway and folks are beginning to see the possibility of returning to the church building. We initiated a Covid Task Force of “experts” who will pave the way for us to open our doors safely. We will be able to combine live, in-person worship with our regular Zoom (or some other type of virtual service – (I don't profess to know all the ins and outs of this virtual stuff) services. Purchasing of all the new audio-visual equipment was done in order to be able to provide worship services to meet everyone's' needs. So soon, we will be able to be in our beautiful building or home in our jammies. Whatever you like. Stay tuned because you won't want to miss the celebration when our doors open again.

Our beautiful Memorial Garden has gotten a facelift during the month of March. There were 10-12 volunteers spreading 80 bags of mulch to bring the Garden to life and the walkways were pressure washed. Many other areas of the church have been pressure washed, the front circle has been painted, new gutter covers have been installed.

Our Choir Room is in the midst of renewal. Please take a few moments to enjoy the Memorial Garden. Kudos to everyone that is part of this work.

March 20th was such a grand day for a grand lady. There were approximately 25 cars, filled with well-wishers, signs, balloons and Happy Birthday greetings for Ethel Osterwise. Thank you to Elizabeth, Tonia and Cyndi for helping to organize a caravan of birthday wishes for Ethel's 104th birthday.

Wishing everyone a happy Spring!

The Scrip Program

The Scrip Program is a fund raising opportunity that our church has participated in and continues to do. For most of us, we would put in orders for physical gift cards to be used during the Christmas season. Yet, there is another way to participate and is not too difficult to do. It requires setting up an account with the program and then you can purchase on line electronic gift cards that will be usable in mere seconds after ordering. No more waiting for cards to arrive in the mail, and a partial donation is given directly to the church. You also know instantly how much your purchase contributes.

So, go to **shopwithscrip.com**. From there you will be taken to a page that says sign up or get started. Click on Get Started, then click on join an existing program. Next you will be asked to enter the enrollment code: **#5CLAD9436683**. Then, finish filling in your information and you will receive a confirmation e-mail and the shopping can begin.

An example of how easy this is, while in the checkout line of Target, I pulled up the app and prepared to buy a Target e-card. Once the total was given of \$35.65 I entered the amount of \$40.00 and had the gift card ready to use and then Target sent a dollar to Hope. It's that easy.

There are restaurants, retail stores, gas stations, movie theaters, and hotels just to name a few. Also, for those that do like the physical gift cards, we will be doing a shopping spree in October. Susan Vincent will be taking the orders through October and turn them in by 2nd week of November. The gift cards will then be ready to disperse by early December in plenty of time for Christmas!

So, invest a few minutes and invest in the church as well. Happy shopping.

Stewardship Committee

Technology News

Here is our dream: An inclusive, vibrant worship service for all people, from your couch or from the pew! When we get back to in-person worship in the sanctuary, we will continue to provide access to our worship services through Zoom. There are people who still might not feel safe returning to the church building regardless of CDC Guidelines. There are folks who live far away, shut-ins who can't travel and those who just don't feel up to coming. Our goal is to be inclusive to all who want to attend; in-person or online. It has been so wonderful to be able to share our beautiful worship services with family and friends, some who live out of our area. It's also been fun coming to church virtually, dressed in comfortable clothes—even our pajamas!

The Tech team is so excited to use all the wonderful new equipment that the church purchased. We now have 2 cameras mounted in the sanctuary ready to enhance our worship service. There is also a new computer and other technology needed to maneuver the cameras. We will be able to focus on the musician and then fade into a view of a singer or the liturgist. The possibilities are endless! The worship experience will be more intimate and more dynamic whether you are sitting in the pew or in front of a screen (in your pajamas). We have already begun to practice with the new equipment but are looking for additional volunteers. Lizzet Ruiz, our resident engineer, is a patient trainer and has worked with Paul Capaldo, Tonia Patterson and Jonah Garcia. Wouldn't you like to join that elite team?!

Lizzet and Paul installed all the equipment which saved the church a fortune. We are so grateful for the many volunteer hours they donated. We have many dedicated volunteers to thank. Jonah, who runs the worship service on Sunday mornings is training Shelle Waller and Tonia Patterson to fill in so he can go on a well-earned vacation. Julie Johnson and Paul have become sound board experts. Julie can even sing at the same time as running the sound board!

Another big part of Sunday Cyber Service is the Sanctuary Enrichment Team. The S.E.T. creates a meaningful environment in the sanctuary to enrich the worship experience. Tonia and Julie work with Rev. Karen (most of the time remotely), and of course we get some help now and then from some other helpers. Mark Johnson is great at reaching up to get things off high shelves and is always willing to help when we need him. Jonah has pitched in too (a man of many talents). We also can't forget Giaus Garcia who has helped with the altar set up and even photography. Betty Capaldo and Netta Elam have also shared their creativity on several occasions.

Many thanks to all the people who share their time, talent, gifts and support. We could not have purchased the new equipment without you! Thank you to the people who donated to the Angel Tree, the team that applied for the UCC Grant which we were awarded and all the other donations that make it possible to create a meaningful worship experience.

Remember we always welcome new recruits! if you would like to get involved in any way, please contact any of the Tech Team members. Join us in expanding worship for the future!

Blessings, Tonia

LETTER OF APPRECIATION

My dear Hope friends.

How can I express my overwhelming love and gratitude for the people of Hope?

As Ed was in the last months of his life, we were sustained by the calls and cards and gifts that you sent (especially from the Care Team); they brought smiles to his face. Until the last 30 days, he managed to attend the virtual meeting of the Seekers to study the Wired Word and loved all of you.

After his death, Hope stepped up and provided me with emotional support and love – with so many cards, and with visits and calls. These really helped me get through the difficult days.

We have an **outstanding** Pastor! She was in constant communication with me, visited Ed in his last days (and me after that). One time, she and the VITAS Hospice minister were praying at Ed's bedside, and we were delighted to see Ed respond by mouthing the Lord's Prayer along with them.

The COVID19 virus has changed many things in our lives, including our congregating to honor and remember the recently departed. Because of the restrictions I am having a small, private Memorial service in the Garden, only for family and a few Guardians ad Litem – who we both counted as family. At a later date we will have a Celebration of Life, when I hope we can all join together to exchange stories, memories and love.

Ed loved Hope UCC so much, not least because of the people. Thank you for your love and friendship.

In Christian love,
Ann Coburn.

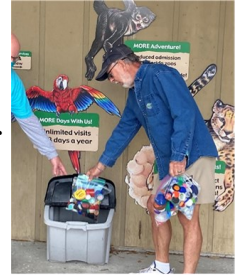
Sharing Our Best

Hope UCC is on a roll serving our church and community.



On February 2, our Justice and Witness committee planted a live oak tree for earth day, honoring our covenant of loving creation.

Since February Hope UCC has collected over 5 pounds of plastic bottle caps to support the Florida Institute of Technology's clean water initiative. The Central Brevard Zoo is the drop off place, and they were thrilled to receive the bottle caps.



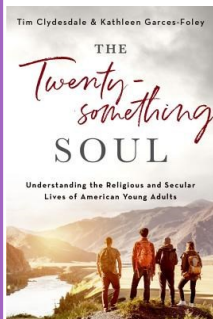
To honor our covenants of loving our neighbors and children, on March 3 and 6, we continued our monthly food drive through, drop off collection for the Central Brevard Sharing Center and peanut butter collection for the Cocoa High Fresh Market. We collected 565 items as well as over \$300.00 in cash donations.

On March 20, we honored Ethel Osterwise with a birthday parade in honor of her 104th birthday. Little did we know we would be gifted with cupcakes as we offered birthday wishes.



A loving church community gives thanks for God's abundant love.

Book Club - April 2021



During April, the Hope Book Club will read and discuss *The Twenty-something Soul: Understanding the Religious and Secular Lives of American Young Adults* by Tim Clydesdale and Kathleen Garces-Foley.

As summarized on Amazon, “Today's twentysomethings have been labeled the ‘lost generation’ for their presumed inability to identify and lead fulfilling lives, ‘kidults’ for their alleged refusal to ‘grow up’ and accept adult responsibilities, and the ‘least religious generation’ for their purported disinterest in religion and spirituality. These characterizations are not only unflattering -- they are wrong.

The Twenty-something Soul tells an optimistic story about American twenty-somethings by introducing readers to the full spectrum of American young adults, many of whom live purposefully, responsibly, and reflectively. Some prioritize faith and involvement in a religious congregation. Others reject their childhood religion to explore alternatives and practice a personal spirituality. Still others sideline religion and spirituality until their lives get settled, or reject organized religion completely. Drawing from interviews with more than 200 young adults, as well as national survey of 1,880 twenty-somethings, Tim Clydesdale and Kathleen Garces-Foley seek to change the way we view contemporary young adults, giving an accurate and refreshing understanding of their religious, spiritual, and secular lives.”

The Book Club will meet on Tuesday, April 27th at 1:30. The zoom meeting ID number will be 854 4236 5460. We hope you can join us to discuss *The Twenty-something Soul*.

HOPE Book Club Reading List 2021

January	<u>Florida (Short Stories) - Lauren Groff</u>
February	<u>Radical Compassion: learning to love yourself and the world with the practice of RAIN - Tara Branch</u>
March	<u>Mother Country - Irina Reyn</u>
April	<u><i>The Twenty-something Soul: understanding the religious and secular lives of American young adults</i></u> <i>Tim Clydesdale and Kathleen Garces-Foley</i>
May	<u>Just Mercy - Bryan Stevenson</u>



Hope UCC Hosting a Blood Drive: May 1, 2021

The Growth & Development Committee has set the Spring blood drive date with the OneBlood organization in Rockledge for Saturday **May 1, 2021** 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.

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:

All successful donors will receive the COVID-19 Antibody test with donation. Results are back in about 4 days in their OneBlood account.

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.

Is it Safe to Donate Blood?

The U.S. Surgeon General and the FDA have stated that it remains safe to donate blood and that it is safe to attend blood drives.

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.

Thank you!



***UCC Florida Conference
and Celebrate Florida***

Please use these links for the United Church of Christ Florida Conference and the Conference “Celebrate Florida” Newsletter

UCC Florida Conference - <https://www.uccfla.org>

Celebrate Florida Newsletter - <http://www.uccfla.org/celebrateflorida>



4/4 - Easter Sunday
Communion Worship
Zoom Mtg. No. **874-1336-0966**

4/11 - Worship
Zoom Mtg. No. **874-1336-0966**

4/18 - Worship
Zoom Mtg. No. **874-1336-0966**

4/25 - Worship
Zoom Mtg. No. **874-1336-0966**

Drive Through Food Drop-Off
for Central Brevard Sharing Center
April 10 - 9 am to 11 am

Book Club
April 27
Zoom Mtg. No. 854 4236 5460

Blood Drive
May 1st - 9 am to 1 pm

Vacancy on Stewardship

The Stewardship Committee is looking for a person to volunteer to fill the remaining two years of a term. If interested, contact: Paul Capaldo, Cyndi Leonard or Denise Cotton



4/3 - Jerry Bates' Birthday
4/12 - Pat Munchbach's Birthday
4/15 - Lissa Curtis-Weakley's Birthday
4/20 - Norman Montague's Birthday
4/23 - Kelly Rogers' Birthday
4/26 - Jean Hawkes' Birthday

Ongoing Events at Hope

Happy Seekers
Fridays at 10:00 am
Zoom Mtg. No. 916 6472 2064

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

