

October Whispers 2025

Hope United Church of Christ



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Hope Happenings

Debbie Mader, Worship Committee

The Bring A Friend/Fill a Pew service on September 14th was a great success with 148 in attendance, including 30 children. Pastor Gene had an inspiring and engaging message (Who knew he was a magician!) Hopefully we'll see many new faces at future services!

The Christian Ed team created two large mystery baskets that were given away in a drawing: one for a guest, and one for a member who brought a guest.



Thank you to Dar Schmidt for baking loaves of bread which were distributed to the guests. Did you know she also provides the loaves that are broken and blessed each month for Communion? They're made from scratch using an old Schmidt family recipe.

Thanks also to Nancy Simons for making the tags attached to each loaf with a "thank you for coming" and invitation to come again. She also created bookmarks that were handed out to each of the children. Extra bookmarks, including for adults, are available in the back of the sanctuary. Feel free to take one!



To top off this special event, a potluck lunch was held in the fellowship hall, hosted by the Circle of Hope. Thanks to those who brought one of the many varied dishes to pass and/or assisted in set-up and clean-up.



Worship Leadership

October 5th – Communion served

Liturgist: Bryan Hahn

Ushers: Ron Kramer, Lori Hahn

October 12th

Liturgist: Flower Ramsey

Ushers: Jan Lamers

October 19th

Liturgist: Andrea Neault

Usher: Ben Bodoh

October 26th

Liturgist: Kelly Mathwig

Usher: Lori Hahn

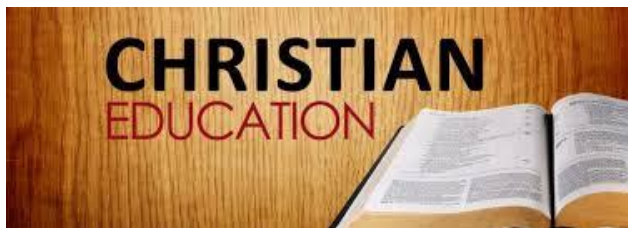
Circle of Hope

Barb Hahn

The Circle of Hope has Halloween, Thanksgiving & Christmas quilts for sale.

Twin---\$40

Baby/Lap---\$25



- The **first Sunday of each month** is family worship. (No Sunday school classes)
- **Bible Study** meets Tuesdays from 4:00 – 5:00 pm. We would love you to join us!



All Saints Day on November 2nd, we will be celebrating All Saints Day and honoring Iva Fischer and Carol Lanzerotti. As you enter the sanctuary on November 2nd, please feel free to go up to the front Altar area to light a candle in remembrance of a lost loved one if you would like.



Join us for Youth Group

Grades 6 – 12

We meet every other Sunday following worship. All our welcome, invite your friends for fellowship & fun!!

Lunch is provided. Questions:
hopeucc.sundayschool@gmail.com



Join us for our annual **Fall Clean-Up** on Sunday, October 26th, immediately after the service. We'll be focusing on both exterior and select interior areas to freshen things up before winter.

The Maintenance Committee will be preparing a list of tasks and needs in advance, so everyone can bring the appropriate tools and supplies.

We appreciate your help and look forward to working together as a community!

From the Pastor



Dear Friends and Family of Hope Church,

I hesitate to make political comments but find recent events necessitating some sort of pastoral reflection and response. When it comes to political discourse, I think we (our American society as a whole, not just a few isolated individuals) are being pushed and pulled by people who in a different generation might have deemed to be

extremists. Voices that once were considered to be outliers are now seen as normative. Somewhere along the way, hate became an acceptable response to those with whom we disagree.

I suppose, given the lessening influence of Christianity in our culture, this should not be so surprising; but I still find it lamentable. Hate doesn't just spill out in the tragic events in which we have political leaders killed – Minnesota State Representative Melissa Hortman at the beginning of the summer and political activist Charlie Kirk at the end – it also changes the way we interact and communicate with one another destroying the very bedrock of a democracy which depends on the voice of the people being made known and a republic that requires we work cooperatively with people from a broad spectrum of viewpoints and positions.

Whether politician, media pundit, or common folk, when we refer to other human beings as "vermin" that needed to be "[rooted] out"; call judges "monsters"; or describe those Americans who have differing views as "scum" and accuse them of "terrorism" or "trying to destroy our country," then we are throwing gasoline on an already inflamed public discourse. Engaging in aggressive, divisive, and dehumanizing rhetoric toward those who disagree with us -- such as labeling others as "enemies" and "traitors" -- simply aggravates extremism and contributes to the normalization of political violence in our society. We don't have to agree with everyone, but we need to learn to disagree in a more agreeable manner. If you know someone who is struggling with this, speak up, say something; let us help one another do better. If you are getting your news from someone who behaves this way, find a more neutral source. If you hear politicians speak like this (especially if they represent you or your preferred party), let them know you are going to vote for someone else next time. The power to correct this behavior is with us. And correct it we must or the deaths of Melissa Hortman and Charlie Kirk will be followed by even more. That isn't the US I want to live in, so let's reclaim the conversation, tone down the rhetoric, and remember that we can do better, then do it.

May God and God's peace be with you.

Blessings,

Pastor Gene

5 Practices of Fruitful Congregations: Risk-taking Mission and Service

Back in June, I shared with you the interesting fact that healthy, growing, fruitful congregations share a few characteristics in common: they engage in Passionate Worship, practice Radical Hospitality, offer Intentional Faith Development, value Risk-taking Mission and Service, and are noted for their Extravagant Generosity. Bishop Robert Schnase has termed them the **5 Practices of Fruitful Congregations**. Each month since then we've taken a deeper look at one of these practices. This month we want to examine the importance of **Risk-taking Mission and Service**.

Mission and Service are such a fundamental aspect of a congregation's life, that failure to practice them may lead to the deterioration of a church's vitality and ability to continue making disciples of Christ. Their absence surely will inhibit any ability to make an impact for the kingdom of God. Yet, important as they are, I find this pair scares us more than any other of the practices that lead toward fruitfulness in the life of a congregation.

I think I know the reason why – comfort zones. Unlike the other vital practices of a fruitful congregation, this one requires that we be willing to risk stepping outside of our personal comfort zone.

Those areas we have discussed previously can largely be done within the confines of our congregational building. Risk-taking Mission and Service may or may not require sacrifice, but it certainly does require that we stretch ourselves in ways we may not be accustomed to and, also, that we become engaged in ministry beyond the four walls we normally call our church home. Further, it is different because we engage in this sort of mission and ministry not for our own benefit, but to make a difference in the lives of others.

I submit to you that this is something I already see in the character of our membership. Any time I go out into the community, I find Hope Church members serving and engaged. Whether it be on the library board, at the Weymont food pantry, projects the PTA is doing with the school, or an active American Legion, Hope Church is well-represented. This is a great start!

Yet, following Jesus is a journey, and on our faith-walk Jesus is always calling us higher up and further in as we discover more and more what it means to be in the kingdom of God. For some, the next step in that journey might mean not just collecting cans goods for the food pantry, but delivering them, stocking the shelves, or volunteering to help with distribution. Where else might that journey take us?

One of the stories I've heard multiple times is that Hope used to offer a Thanksgiving meal to the community. True, those who first organized the dinner may not be with us any longer, but we all know how successful teams function -- "next man (or woman) up." It doesn't even have to be at Thanksgiving, but reaching out to bless others is endemic to the identity of any organization that wishes to identify itself as part of the body of Christ. (Psst, those who told me this story kept on telling me that they got as much or more out of it as they gave.) Others might find themselves collecting

something different like items for a mitten tree at Christmas or to create flood buckets needed by the Red Cross when responding to natural disasters. Someone else might noticed that foster children often are given nothing more than a garbage bag for all their worldly possessions and do a luggage drive to collect gently used suitcases. Other times the church's mission might be a call to provide space for other groups that are looking for a place to meet in our community. It's all about training ourselves to see a need and then figuring out how to meet that need.

Imagine the ideas for mission and service that might be generated by an entire congregation of people who had learned to put themselves in other people's shoes.

I was recently asked if there was a safe place for youth to get together in our community. Is that a need? If so, how might it be met? It might be that we don't do it ourselves but facilitate the process by working cooperatively with others.

And don't be limited to just local concerns. Jesus called his disciples to both local and global ministries. Our understanding and vision of ministry must expand to encompass all that Jesus spoke of when he sent his disciples forth into the world. Does that require us to learn about ways to partner with the body of Christ in other places, near and far? Do we limit ourselves to sending money, or do we make ourselves available personally for hand-on works of service and ministry? How big dare we dream?

But ultimately, what makes risk-taking fruitful is not how frequently, how much, or how big a ministry is. We must also allow ourselves to be pushed beyond the circle of relationships and practices that have historically defined our routine church commitments and on to new possibilities as revealed by eyes that see God's vision for our world. This becomes how we reflect Jesus' call to love one's neighbor, demonstrating faith in bold, outward-facing ways that make a lasting impact. For the goal of risk-taking mission and service is to transform lives – not just the lives of those receiving help, but those providing it as well.



Birthdays

- | | |
|-------|------------------|
| 10/01 | Mackenzi Selsing |
| 10/03 | Dawn Mason |
| 10/03 | Lunabelle Lemke |
| 10/04 | Julie Hahn |
| 10/04 | Ruth Rolstad |
| 10/06 | Nicole Steiger |
| 10/10 | Jodi Dailey |
| 10/10 | Tony Dering |
| 10/16 | Lori Bodoh |
| 10/17 | Leo Gerrits |
| 10/17 | Sherry Behm |
| 10/18 | Julie Merritt |
| 10/18 | Carolyn Langner |
| 10/18 | Aaron St. Louis |
| 10/20 | Phineas Lemke |
| 10/23 | Marlyn Hahn |
| 10/23 | Andrew Mielke |
| 10/26 | Michael Budaj |
| 10/26 | Mark Schoenick |
| 10/29 | Robert Lederer |



Anniversaries

- | | |
|-------|-------------------------|
| 10/10 | Kevin & Pam Welch |
| 10/12 | Ronald & Denise Gehrke |
| 10/12 | Tony & Katrina Dering |
| 10/24 | Madeleine & Brian Lemke |

Hello!!!

Hello! I just wanted to take a quick minute to introduce myself. My name is Kris Treml and I am the new office manager. I have lived in this area my whole life. I am a wife to my husband of 33 years, Mom to two children, & Grandma to 4 grandchildren with one on the way! I love to spend my time with family making memories, camping, gardening and thrifting. I am excited to be part of the Hope UCC family, my office hours will be M-W-T from 9am – 1pm.



Introducing the 7 at 6 Dinner Event

We're excited to launch a new ongoing event designed to bring our Church Community closer together-**The 7 at 6 Dinner Event!** This initiative is all about fostering meaningful connections, encouraging collaboration, and providing a special opportunity to recognize and celebrate one another. Here's how it works:

- Each dinner event will be hosted by a volunteer host who opens their space to welcome **7 guests**.
- Guests will sign up via a simple sign-up sheet to join a dinner gathering.
- The dinner starts at **6 PM**, creating a relaxed and intimate setting perfect for sharing stories, giving praise, and strengthening bonds.
- This is a great opportunity to meet new people, engage in genuine conversations, and highlight the amazing contributions within our community.

We encourage everyone to participate either as a host or a guest — let's make these dinners a warm, welcoming tradition that brings out the best in all of us.

Sign Up sheets will be available on the bulletin board.

BY THE NUMBERS

		<u>Income</u>	<u>Expenses</u>	<u>Attendance</u>
<u>Monthly Average</u>				
January	\$ 8543.97	\$ 5839.22	50	
February	\$ 7426.45	\$11186.30	59	
March	\$13958.67	\$ 9865.19	50	
April	\$16935.87	\$21885.70	59	
May	\$15183.15	\$12141.06	60	
June	\$10601.60	\$10654.98	49	
July	<u>\$ 8369.20</u>	<u>\$17583.07</u>	52	
	\$81,018.91	\$89,155.52		

October 2025

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Sat
		4:00-5:00 p.m. Bible Study	1 5:30 Choir	2	3	4
5 10:15 Worship Noisy offering	6 6:30 p.m. Council Meeting	7 4:00 – 5:00p.m. Bible Study	8 5:30 Choir	9	10	11
12 10:15 Worship SS Classes Youth Group after worship	13 5:30 Board of Christian Ed Mtg 6:30 Council Mtg	14 4:00-5:00 p.m. Bible Study	15 No choir	16 5:30 Stewardship Meeting	17	18
19 10:15 Worship SS classes CE teacher recognition	20 Whispers Deadline	21 4:00-5:00 p.m. Bible Study	22 5:30 Choir 6:30-7:30 Confirmation	23	24	25
26 10:15 Worship SS classes Youth Group after worship Fall Clean Up	27 9:30 Piano tuning	28 4:00-5:00 p.m. Bible Study	29 5:30 Choir 4:30-6:30 Confirmation	30	31	