

Gifts...



The neurologist was examining me when I said, "If this is the way I will live the rest of my life I do not want to live". I was having a very difficult time speaking. I had a brain stem stroke. It affected my eye movements, speech and caused severe vertigo. The room would spin every time I opened my eyes. The neurologist came close to my face and said, "If you listen to what I tell you to do and not get in the way of yourself I can help you get better". I heard what he said. They were words of wisdom and hope. I desperately needed to hear those words because I was scared.

The lower half of my body did not work. I had to learn how to walk again. I remember the day I was wheeled into rehab and I lifted myself out of the wheelchair and on to the parallel bars and I took my first step. I was able to visualize a future of not having to wear a diaper to bed or be catharized. I looked forward to being able to get up out of my bed at night and walk to the bathroom on my own without any assistance from a person or walker.

That first step motivated me to work harder at lifting my leg high enough to get into the bathtub and stand and take a shower on my own. Instead having to be put in a special wheel chair made for showering, pushed into a special shower and having a stranger wash my body. I came to realize how I took walking, something I did every day, for granted.

A doctor held up his finger and said, "Take your finger and try to touch my finger". I heard this sentence several times before, but I never heard the word "try" used in it. I knew my coordination was off. I lifted my hand and tried, missing his finger by several inches; I laughed. The doctor was not amused by my laughter. You might ask why I laughed. You see, I was done mourning about my losses. I had a mind shift and positive thoughts and my sense of humor was kicking in.

The doctor then proceeded to say, "now take your finger and try to touch your nose". There was that word again - "try". So, I told my friend, Jack, who was visiting to watch this. The room was quiet. Jack and the doctor watching intensely. I thought if this was on *Saturday Night Live* this would be funny. It was the perfect set up for a comedy skit. I knew this was going to be funny because I knew I could not do it. So, I slowly brought my finger toward my head, missed my nose and slapped my face. I laughed, and so did my friend saying "Nice, real nice". Again, the doctor did not appreciate our humor.

That incident made me thankful for humor because at that moment that is how I was able to deal with a difficult situation. I was also grateful for my good friend, Jack, who knows me well enough to understand I was using humor to deal with my struggle.

I just shared things I did daily and took them for granted. When they were taken away from me, I realized they were gifts.

- ∞ Being able to hear and not just the sense of hearing but to be able to understand what someone is saying to you is a gift
- ∞ Talking clearly to another person is a gift
- ∞ Walking from one room to the next is a gift
- ∞ Having friends who understand you is a gift
- ∞ Humor and using it to heal is a gift

My journey through rehabilitation made me realize, I need to take time each day to be aware of the rich inheritance of gifts I have around me and be grateful for them. You see the biggest thing I learned through this experience is you cannot take anything in life for granted because it can change in a moment.

Tony Ozzauto

HOPE UCC Partner

Don't forget to fill out your 2019 pledge card soon!
Visit: www.sharehope.org/pledge

News & Notes

Blue Christmas Service – December 21 (7 p.m.)



Christmas can be a painful time for some. It may be the first Christmas without a loved family member who has recently died; it may be a time that has always been difficult. The constant refrains on radio and television, in shopping malls and churches, about the happiness of the season, about getting together with family and friends, reminds many people of what they have lost. The anguish of the death of a loved one can make us feel alone in the midst of the celebrating and joy. We need the space and time to acknowledge our sadness; we need to know that we are not alone. We need encouragement to live the days ahead of us.

Christmas Eve Service @ HOPE UCC (5:30 p.m.)

We will have our Christmas Eve worship service 5:30 p.m. with a Carol Sing beginning at 5:15 p.m. The service will include an Instant Christmas pageant and will end with cookies and hot chocolate. Please bring some cookies if you have a favorite recipe you'd like to share! We will also need many baby dolls to play the role of Baby Jesus. Bring your dolls of all shapes, colors, and sizes that evening. Thank you.



Jesus Has Left the Building and We're Following Him



Jesus Has Left the Building and We're Following Him to ... St. John UCC, 309 Fifth Street, Aurora, for a joint end of the year worshipful gathering on **December 30 starting at 10 a.m.** We will all meet for lunch afterward (place to be determined).

***** Donations Needed *****

We are hoping to bring 100 pairs of socks and 100 pairs of underwear (all sizes, ages, colors needed) for St. John's neighborhood clothes closet. Please drop off your donations at HOPE UCC by December 24 or bring with you on December 30. Looking forward to seeing you for this special celebration!

SAVE THE DATE! Open Mic Night @ HOPE UCC

Save the date – On January 25, we want to showcase you and your gifts. Calling all singers, dancers, comedians, writers and other great talents! We provide the mic and a piano, you provide your preferred media. More details will be announced.



Thank you to all who have participated in buying Scrip gift cards this year!

- ❖ HOPE's Monthly Rebates on Gift Orders/Weekly Sunday Card Sales Total through November: **\$464**
- ❖ HOPE's Weekly Rebates on Gift Card Orders/Weekly Sunday Card Sales in December: **\$365**
- ❖ Total Yearly Rebate for HOPE UCC through December 16th: **\$829**

Thanks! Thanks! Thanks!

Sharing Joys & Concerns

Please keep these people & events in your prayers:

- † Please protect Mom's/Linda's slow healing bones/injury, as she has been ordered to begin physical therapy for signs of atrophy. (The Zillmer Family)
- † Please remember that you all are dearly loved by God and our HOPE family. (Nello A.)
- † Please welcome Cloud (our hamster) into your heavenly "habitrail" ... He'll enjoy your ultimate wheels and tunnels! (The Zillmer Family)
- † Let us pray for my neighbor whose son is hospitalized, struggling with depression. Pray her son gets the help he needs. Pray for comfort and hope for him and his whole family. (Jolene F.)
- † Prayers for continued recovery of Les P. and celebrating his wonderful caregiver, Jackie! P.S. – Just got a text from Jackie, saying "Hello to everyone at HOPE! Hope to see you all soon!" (Jane & Nick D.)
- † My surgery day is Tuesday! Pray for courage, skilled surgeon, and speedy recovery! (Jolene F.)
- † Let us pray for the family and the soul of Jakelin Amei Rosmery Caal Maquin, and for the end of violence at our borders.
- † Please pray for my friend, Sasha. First, she, her sisters, and her mother learned they had a genetically-linked cancer-causing condition. Now her daughters have tested positive for the same condition. (Erin C.)
- † May we decenter our whiteness. May we decenter our class. May we decenter our cisgenderness. May we decenter our straight-passing-ness. May we see with poor, queer, marginalized eyes.
- † Prayers of peace for friend, Carol M., who is now in the care of hospice. Prayers of continued healing for Les P. Prayers of good health for my family. (Anna)
- † Please pray for my mental health. My depression and anxiety are really affecting me. Please pray that my psychiatrist/therapist have some solutions for me. (Tanya B.)
- † Prayers for Zach S., who is traveling to Vegas to spend Christmas with his father and brother. (Mark G.)
- † Please hold good thoughts for my sister-in-law's mother, Jean S., who is suffering with physical pain and depression. (Julie A.)
- † Prayers needed for cousin, Adam F., who is coping with chronic pain and other effects from cancer. (Jolene F.)
- † Let us pray for Lila, my great-niece, who was born about a month ago. She is seeing specialists this week because of a chromosome disorder. Pray the doctors can provide the treatment she needs to be as healthy as possible and pray for her parents for comfort and hope. (Jolene F.)
- † Prayers needed for my sister, Kathy, who is in the hospital with the flu and cardiac issues. (Zach)
- † Please pray for our nephew, Eric, who was injured in a construction accident this past week. Four surgeries completed with more to come. We are thankful for pain medications and skilled medical practitioners. Prayers of support needed for him and his family. (The Higgins)
- ☺ With praise, we thank you, Lord, for the improvements we're seeing in Cooper's ears! (The Zillmers)
- ☺ Yay for Jackie T.! She became a great-grandma this week, as baby Haley was born happy and healthy! (The Zillmers and the family of HOPE UCC)
- ☺ Thanks for family and friends coming to visit for the holidays! Pray for safe travels for all. (Jolene F.)
- ☺ Please lift up my dad, Phil F., who is celebrating his 85th birthday this week! (Jolene F.)



Celebrating Birthdays

12/24 Julie Hapke
01/04 Ravinia Zillmer
01/05 Antoinette Evans
01/08 Anna Ahonen
01/18 Jackie Pierce
01/22 Emily Fosen
01/24 Milo Cooley
01/25 Bill Zigterman
01/27 Becky McCabe

If we've missed your birthday, please email
HOPE's Office Manager at
HOPE@shareHOPE.org.

HOPE LIBRARY

You may reserve items (books, videos or tapes) by calling HOPE's Office Manager at (630-922-0470) during office hours; by checking them out at HOPE UCC any time it is open; or by calling **Les & Jackie Pierce**, HOPE Librarians, at (630) 369-0485.

HOPE'S Leadership

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|---------------------------------------|------------------------|
| Pastor | Lucas King |
| Moderator | Mike Manderino |
| Des. Moderator | Erin Cooley |
| Past Moderator | Becky McCabe |
| Treasurer | Les Pierce |
| Secretary | Julie Hapke |
| Registrar | Jane Trotta |
| Community Life | Shannon Lane |
| Education | Marie Higgins |
| Pastor-Parish | Tim Higgins/Jay Hruska |
| Marketing & Communications | Jenn Revoldt |
| Missions | Jolene Fiscella |
| Resource & Operations | Nick Dempsey |
| Worship | Mary Kroening |
| Librarians | Les & Jackie Pierce |
| Photo Archive | Anna Ahonen |
| Webmaster | Jenn Revoldt |

Quest

ADULT QUEST – Sunday 9 a.m. @ HOPE UCC

This Sunday's topic is a TED X talk entitled "Freedom of Speech and Controversy".

Every other Sunday, Pastor Lucas will be leading a new Adult Quest series at 9 a.m. - Bible Study. Now, let me assure you this is not your normal, boring, dusty, Bible Study. We'll be delving into the focus passage for the morning and exploring some of the background, context, and surrounding knowledge that will help you get even more out of the sermon and a bit deeper into the stories of our faith tradition. Try it...you might like it!

Here are the upcoming scriptures, in case you'd like to read in advance:
December 16 – Luke 3:7-18

KID'S QUEST – Sundays during Worship

HOPE UCC's Christian Education for children. Teaching kids about Community, Scripture, Values and Service through participatory learning.

HOPE United Church of Christ

1701 Quincy Avenue, Suite 27
Naperville, IL 60540-6684

The Reverend Lucas King

Pastor Lucas' Cell – 720-378-2858
Pastor Lucas' Email – pastor@sharehope.org

Office Phone – 630-922-0470
Office Email – hope@sharehope.org
Website – www.sharehope.org

Office Hours:

Tuesday - Thursday - 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

**Deadline for additions or corrections to the next issue of
HOPE Happenings is January 2, by 12 p.m.**

Announcements for Sunday due by Wednesday of each week.

Thanks!

UPCOMING EVENTS @ HOPE UCC

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| <p>December 20, Thursday</p>  | <p>Women Out to Lunch (Noon) Join the women of HOPE on the third Thursday of each month. Lively conversation, great food & warm fellowship is waiting for you at Giordano's Restaurant at 119 S. Main Street, in downtown Naperville. Parking is available in the lot across from the restaurant or the Van Buren Parking Building.</p> |
| <p>December 21, Friday</p>  | <p>Blue Christmas Service @ HOPE UCC (7 p.m.) (Please see article.)</p> |
| <p>December 23, Sunday</p>  | <p>Confirmation Classes Continue @ HOPE UCC (9 a.m.)</p> |
| <p>December 23, Sunday</p>  | <p>Rainbow Faith @ HOPE UCC (1-3 p.m.) HOPE's ministry to support those in the LGBTQ+ community who are looking for a place to wonder and explore their faith. Find out more at: www.meetup.com/Rainbow-Faith-LGBTQ-Christians/ If you have questions, would like to participate or support this ministry, please contact Pastor Lucas.</p> |
| <p>December 24, Monday</p>  | <p>Christmas Eve Service @ HOPE UCC (5:30 p.m.)</p> |
| <p>December 25-27</p>  | <p>HOPE UCC Office CLOSED – Merry Christmas! The next issue of HOPE Happenings will be published January 2, 2019.</p> |
| <p>December 26, Wednesday</p>  | <p>Explore Your Faith Breakfast (7:30 a.m.) Meets at Quincy's Restaurant, 1112 E. Ogden Avenue, Naperville.</p> |
| <p>December 30, Sunday</p>  | <p>Jesus Has Left the Building and We're Following Him (Please see article for more information.)</p> |
| <p>January 1, Tuesday</p>  | <p>HOPE UCC Office CLOSED – Happy New Year!</p> |
| <p>January 2, Wednesday</p>  | <p>Explore Your Faith Breakfast (7:30 a.m.) Meets at Quincy's Restaurant, 1112 E. Ogden Avenue, Naperville.</p> |
| <p>January 6, Sunday</p>  | <p>Confirmation Classes Continue @ HOPE UCC (9 a.m.)</p> |
| <p>January 9, Wednesday</p>  | <p>Explore Your Faith Breakfast (7:30 a.m.) Meets at Quincy's Restaurant, 1112 E. Ogden Avenue, Naperville.</p> |
| <p>January 9, Wednesday</p>  | <p>PADS Dinner @ First Congregational UCC, Naperville (6 p.m.)</p> |
| <p>January 13, Sunday</p>  | <p>The Landing (Youth Ministry) @ HOPE UCC (11:30 a.m.- 1:30 p.m.)</p> |
| <p>January 13, Sunday</p>  | <p>Rainbow Faith @ HOPE UCC (1-3 p.m.) HOPE's ministry to support those in the LGBTQ+ community who are looking for a place to wonder and explore their faith. Find out more at: www.meetup.com/Rainbow-Faith-LGBTQ-Christians/ If you have questions, would like to participate or support this ministry, please contact Pastor Lucas.</p> |
| <p>January 15, Tuesday</p>  | <p>Evening Explore Your Faith (7 p.m.) Meets at HOPE UCC, Naperville, on the first and third Tuesday of each month.</p> |
| <p>January 16, Wednesday</p>  | <p>Explore Your Faith Breakfast (7:30 a.m.) Meets at Quincy's Restaurant, 1112 E. Ogden Avenue, Naperville.</p> |
| <p>January 17, Thursday</p>  | <p>Women Out to Lunch (Noon) Join the women of HOPE on the third Thursday of each month. Lively conversation, great food & warm fellowship is waiting for you at Giordano's Restaurant at 119 S. Main Street, in downtown Naperville. Parking is available in the lot across from the restaurant or the Van Buren Parking Building.</p> |

COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS

(This is the spot to share your personal announcements.
Submit items to the HOPE UCC Office by Tuesday, 2 p.m.)



Double Yolk Restaurant in Aurora

Is opening its doors on December 25 to provide a Christmas meal to 500 people in need. From noon to 4 PM, the restaurant will be offering a traditional holiday meal of ham and all the trimmings at no cost to individuals and families struggling with hunger.

Space is limited, you must register in advance.

Tuesday, December 25
Noon - 4 PM

1555 Butterfield Road
Just east of Farnsworth on Butterfield

You must RSVP by December 15 between 8 am and 2 pm Mon-Fri by calling
630-851-3466

If you are interested in volunteering some of your time on Christmas Day to help support this event, please contact the restaurant.

*"We want to open our doors and share the holidays with individuals and families in need, those who are hungry, homeless or otherwise might spend Christmas alone".
Tammy McCarthy - owner*



TRANSMOGRIFY COUNSELING SERVICES Holiday OPEN HOUSE!

Join us for an open house geared to anyone in the LGBTQIA community that does not have a welcoming place to spend the holidays. There will be food & refreshments provided. Please join us as Jameson Pagano and his children will be there to host.

Please RSVP to:
transmogrifycounseling@gmail.com

Date: 12.24.2018

Time: 3-6pm

Cost: Free

Location: TransmogriFY Counseling Services
682 W. Boughton, Unit B



TransmogriFY Counseling Services

Our primary focus as therapists is to help individuals and their families discover who they are and the uniqueness and greatness within them. TCS empowers and advocates to achieve a more equitable society and fosters an ever-improving quality of life for the LGBTQ community.

Location:

682 W. Boughton, Unit B
Bolingbrook, IL 60440

Website:

<http://transmogrifycounseling.com>

