

On Justice and Healing

I came to HOPE when my therapist nudged me toward finding other LGBTQ+ folks. I had a church that I loved, a small group that I was almost ready to come out to, and a growing community of friends in the lovely land of Wheaton. But I didn't really have any friends who weren't, well, straight. So, I stumbled into Rainbow Faith, a group that promised to "create a safe space for LGBTQ+ faith-seekers to explore the questions and the wonderings of their spiritual life."

Fast-forward a few months, and my life was a bit of a mess. For me, coming out was not something I could do without my faith. Transitioning, to me, was more of a call to follow Christ than to follow my timid heart. I had hoped and prayed that my experience would be heard in the church I had fallen in love with. But the more I followed my call to speak up, the more I saw that I was not welcome in that community.

So, I found myself suddenly feeling lost and alone in my faith journey. Many of my friends urged me to try attending HOPE or another affirming church. Others still insisted I stick it out at the church that invited me to a sort of conversion therapy.

My heart was torn between the possibilities of both belonging and reconciliation. I yearned for the welcoming atmosphere that HOPE and churches like it offered. And yet I also yearned for a world in which non-open and affirming churches started to listen.

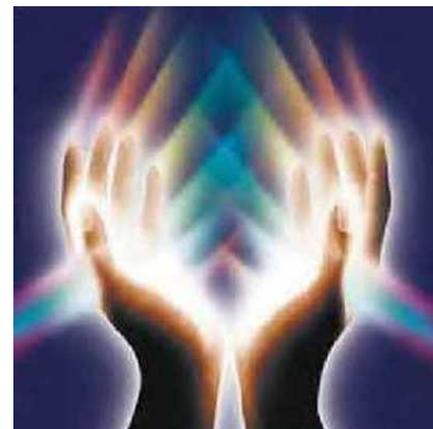
I ended up choosing HOPE, in all senses of the word. I'm still a little war-torn and tired from losing a church home, but every day I'm finding myself a little stronger. A little less alone. And a little more hopeful.

But still my heart yearns for justice. I think of the children and teenagers who are growing up in churches and communities that tell them to be anything but straight and cisgender is to be broken. I want to yell and shout and beg and cry and plead with those who tell us we are not welcome as we are. I want to start the conversation that so desperately needs to happen. And yet I am torn, again.

How do we fight for a world that offers refuge for the hurting while also remembering that God loves the conversion therapist just as much as the one he is trying to convert? How do we create safe spaces for all while seeking healing and wholeness in all of God's church? I don't really have any answers right now, but I urge you to think on them this week.

What does justice and healing look like in your life and in the life of the church? And how can we challenge ourselves to build both safe spaces and, perhaps, bridges instead of barriers?

Parker Hall



Please Note: Due to HOPE UCC's Office Manager being out of the office next week, there will not be a HOPE Happenings. The next issue will be published on March 6.

News & Notes

Cook Book Fundraiser



Have you ever wondered how Jeanne & Trott make Corn Chowder taste so good?! Or what is in Dave's winning Chili?! Or what makes Linda's "Christmas Crack" so addictive?! Have you ever asked, "Who made THAT?" and "Where's the recipe?" at a HOPE UCC pot luck?! Well the craving ends here with a chance for HOPERS to share their culinary greatness!

Over the next several months, we will be collecting recipes from the congregation... Each month will have its own theme... The intent is to compile these recipes and construct a cook book to be sold as a fundraiser for HOPE UCC and its missions - and just in time for Christmas 2019!

For the month of February, "Soup" will be the theme [in honor of our "SOUPer Bowl Sunday" taste testing - and while we have the recipes conveniently out ;)] Please bring your favorite crowd-pleasing soup recipe to church on any Sunday in February or submit via email to Dee Zillmer, deeliriousone@aol.com. THANK YOU!

WORSHIP Ministry needs your assistance!



We'd like to borrow a few items to help our HOPE UCC - Mardi Gras / Shrove Tuesday / Ash Wednesday Pancake Dinner be delicious and successful! We are in need of multiple non-stick electric griddle or frying pans, plastic pancake flippers, crock pots, tongs, and a couple of 25-foot extension cords. Please bring the equipment, labeled with your name, to HOPE by Sunday, March 3rd. It will be put to good use on Fat Tuesday! You will find it clean and ready for pickup Wednesday, March 6th.

If you can help, please email HOPE's Office Manager, Gail, or add your name to the sign-up sheet at the front desk. Thanks very much! We look forward to seeing you at the pancake dinner on Tuesday, March 5th at 6:00 PM.

Bring your appetite and your pancake flipping skills!

Plan to join us at the HOPE UCC - Mardi Gras / Shrove Tuesday / Ash Wednesday Pancake Dinner on Tuesday, March 5 at 6 p.m.

"What is a shrove?", you might ask. And "Why are we eating pancakes at a Tuesday dinner at church?". And "Why are we recognizing Ash Wednesday on Tuesday?".

The word shrove originated from "shrive" which means to confess. Shrove Tuesday, which originated during the Middle Ages, is the day before Ash Wednesday, the beginning of the season of Lent. Lent is a time of abstinence. Shrove Tuesday is a time to celebrate and indulge yourself before Lent. Some Christians, past and present, do not eat foods such as meat, fish, fats, eggs, and milk. To prevent the food being wasted, families would feast and consume the food that would not last the forty days of Lent.

The English ate pancakes to use as much milk, fat, and eggs as possible. The French described the feasting as "Fat Tuesday" or Mardi Gras. Carnival, which is derived from the Latin *carne[m] levare*, meaning "to take away the flesh", is another term associated with Shrove Tuesday. It has links with the Romans and ancient Europeans celebrations of the Spring Equinox. The carnivals in Eastern Europe include energetic groups of people in large masks parading and playing jokes on bystanders. New Orleans and Rio de Janeiro also celebrate with elaborate costumes, masks, dancing, and feasting.

Come for the pancakes. Stay for the ashes.



HOPE UCC Game Night

Back by popular demand! Mark your calendar now! March 9 will find you at the Higgins' home for GAME NIGHT 2019! Family friendly evening from 7 to 9 p.m. Bring a drink, a snack and a willingness to play a game or two!





Meet Us for Brunch!

Join us Sunday, March 24, for brunch at Courtyard Banquets (3S200 Illinois Route 59, Warrenville). All you can eat with an endless amount of choices for \$14.95.

Limited Office Hours Next Week

Our Office Manager, Gail, will be on vacation starting Thursday, February 22 through March 4. HOPE UCC's Office Hours will be limited. If you have need of assistance during this time, please call Pastor Lucas' cell (720-378-2858). Thank you!



SOUPer Bowl Success!



Thank you all who participated in the annual **SOUPer Bowl** gathering. Good soups, good bread, good conversation, and a raffled off football (to Zach). One of these days, we should go to the parking lot and play a pickup game! We came up just shy of our goal to gather 53 cans of soup to donate, but I'm sure some more may dribble in soon. As for the 100 square FUNdraiser, I'm sure you know already who's won (except Melody J), but here they are:

Q1 Bill Z.

Q3 Barb Z.

Q2 Dan K.

Q4 Barb Z. (yes, she won 2 quarters)

Barb & Bill are on a lucky streak! I'm sure the only person hoping that last field goal didn't hit was actually Barb. I know Linda J. was really rooting for it! Bill, Dan, and Barb (and Barb), you can pick up a \$25 Script (Manna) card from the pool – OR – if you want to choose another from the entire list and can wait until the next church order to get it, that will be fine also. Just let the Manna seller know that the card is your prize!

Thanks all. Looking forward to **SOUPer Bowl 54** next year. Well, not our 54th, but we definitely have a good run going!

These HOPE UCC groups meet regularly... Join us!

- Explore Your Faith Breakfast – Meets weekly on Wednesday mornings at 7:30 a.m. Join us at Quincy's Restaurant, Naperville for fellowship and discussion.
- Evening Explore Your Faith – Meets twice a month at HOPE UCC. Join us at 7 p.m. for conversation and fellowship. Next meeting will be on March 5.
- Women Out to Lunch – Gatherings are on the third Thursday of the month at noon at Giordano's Pizza, Naperville. Great food and camaraderie. Next get-together is February 21. Hope to see you!
- Rainbow Faith – As a ministry of HOPE UCC, we are committed to being welcoming, inclusive, affirming, and loving of all who wish to join. Some of us are brand new to reentering the life of a church, others of us are skeptical of faith, and others of us are still fearful after the hurt the church has caused us. This is a place where all, no matter who you are, or where you are on life's journey, are welcome to be present, build relationships, and wonder, question, and explore your faith. Please join us for our next meeting from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. on February 24.
- The Landing – HOPE's Youth Ministry's mission is to foster a loving and safe environment for young people that nurtures the discovery of their own identity as a person of faith. Invites relationships between youth and their larger faith community and; that encourages wondering about their connection to the complex and changing world around them.



Sharing Joys & Concerns

Please keep these people & events in your prayers:

- † Let us pray for my youngest daughter, who has developed cardiac and kidney problems two years after removal of one kidney due to cancer. (Sally B.)
- † Prayers for my cousin, Danny, who is still recovering from the thyroid issue. He now needs open heart surgery to clear two blocked arteries. Many challenges ahead. Prayers appreciated. (Barb Z.)
- † Please pray for everyone struggling with mental health issues – depression, anxiety, PTSD, etc. May they know they are not alone, get access to the help they need, and find inner peace and comfort. (Jolene)
- † Prayers of healing and peace for the first responders and the five innocent victims in the Aurora shooting. Peace for the families affected. (Anna)
- † Let us pray for the wisdom to find the path to end the epidemic of gun violence in our nation. (Robb)
- † “There is a strange comfort in knowing that no matter what happens today, the sun will rise again tomorrow.” Love to all! (Tanya)
- † Let’s pray for Josh’s colleague, Tony, who is the brother of one of the victims of the Aurora shooting. Please pray for Tony and his family. (Erin C.)
- † Please pray for the family of Gene Sievers and the celebration of his life. I was privileged to get to know him as a new HOPE attendee. (Sally B.)
- † Prayers needed for my friend, Laurie R. and her mom. Laurie’s mom suffered a stroke, seizure, and then fell and broke her hip this week. Laurie’s mom is moving from assisted living to a nursing home or hospice tomorrow. Pray for comfort and peace for both. (Jolene F.)
- † Prayers of peace and love for my friend, Sarah, whose eight-year-old granddaughter had a cardiac arrest and passed away on Thursday. (Anna)
- † Please pray for Brandy, a family friend, who has been in ICU and is critically ill. They have not found a cause. (Erin G.)
- † Let us pray for my brother, Ben, who admitted himself to detox and then rehab for treatment of alcohol addiction. Pray that he has love, support, and healing. (Molly)
- † Prayers that no one hurts themselves with the move this week. (Anna)
- † Let’s pray for peace – in our relationships, our homes, our communities, in our world. Pray for safety and comfort and healing for victims of violence. Pray that perpetrators get help to change, too. (Jolene)
- ☺ My extended family has grown. My sister-in-law’s daughter had her third son, Oliver Emanuel. (Ellen)
- ☺ I am very thankful for all the folks who stepped up when I asked for volunteers. Y’all are making my Moderator tenure start off very smoothly! (Erin C.)
- ☺ Give thanks for all the HOPERS and family and friends who’ve been praying and looking out for me the past few weeks. (Jolene)
- ☺ This week is my dad’s birthday and my goddaughter, Elise’s, birthday. (Erin C.)
- ☺ Prayers of thanks – Derek made it safely to his new home in Los Angeles. (Anna)



Celebrating Birthdays

02/28 Nello Alessandri
03/11 Teri Manderino
03/20 Linda Ley
03/22 Janelle Manderino
03/22 Dee Zillmer

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

Pastor	Lucas King
Moderator	Erin Cooley
Des. Moderator	Dan Keil
Past Moderator	Mike Manderino
Treasurer	Les Pierce
Secretary	Barbara Roethel
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 – @ 9 a.m. HOPE UCC

Adult Christian Education
February 24 - Pastor Lucas

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 March 5, by 12 p.m.**

Announcements for Sunday due by Wednesday of each week.

Thanks!

UPCOMING EVENTS @ HOPE UCC

<p>February 21, 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>February 21-March 4</p> 	<p>HOPE UCC Office Manager - Out of Office</p>
<p>February 24, Sunday</p> 	<p>New Partner Class @ HOPE UCC (11 a.m.)</p>
<p>February 24, Sunday</p> 	<p>The Landing (Youth Ministry) @ HOPE UCC (11:30 a.m.- 1:30 p.m.)</p>
<p>February 24, 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>February 27, Wednesday</p> 	<p>Explore Your Faith Breakfast (7:30 a.m.) Meets at Quincy's Restaurant, 1112 E. Ogden Avenue, Naperville.</p>
<p>March 3, Sunday</p> 	<p>Confirmation Classes Continue @ HOPE UCC (9 a.m.)</p>
<p>March 3, Sunday</p> 	<p>New Partner Class @ HOPE UCC (11 a.m.)</p>
<p>March 5, Tuesday</p> 	<p>HOPE UCC - Mardi Gras / Shrove Tuesday / Ash Wednesday Pancake Dinner See article for more information.</p>
<p>March 5, Tuesday</p> 	<p>Evening Explore Your Faith (7 p.m.) Cancelled due to Pancake Dinner. Meets at HOPE UCC, Naperville, on the first and third Tuesday of each month.</p>
<p>March 6, Wednesday</p> 	<p>Explore Your Faith Breakfast (7:30 a.m.) Meets at Quincy's Restaurant, 1112 E. Ogden Avenue, Naperville.</p>
<p>March 9, Saturday</p> 	<p>HOPE UCC Game Night @ Higgins' Home (7-9 p.m.) See article for more info.</p>
<p>March 10, Sunday</p> 	<p>The Landing (Youth Ministry) @ HOPE UCC (11:30 a.m.- 1:30 p.m.)</p>
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<p>March 13, Wednesday</p> 	<p>Explore Your Faith Breakfast (7:30 a.m.) Meets at Quincy's Restaurant, 1112 E. Ogden Avenue, Naperville.</p>
<p>March 13, Wednesday</p> 	<p>PADS Dinner @ First Congregational UCC, Naperville</p>
<p>March 17, Sunday</p> 	<p>Confirmation Classes Continue @ HOPE UCC (9 a.m.)</p>