



# The Visitor



November 2016

Issue #12-10

Complex world. Thoughtful church.

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*University Lutheran Church of Hope  
is a welcoming, Christian community of faith  
centered in God's grace and  
called to demonstrate God's love for the world.*

## All Saints, Advent, and Christmas Worship

On November 6, we celebrate All Saints Sunday. In addition to our usual tradition of reading names and lighting candles for loved ones who have died, this year the Hope Choir and a chamber orchestra will add music from Gabriel Fauré's *Requiem* to the liturgy. This beloved work, written in 1888, is a setting of the ancient Mass for the Dead typically recited at funerals. Faure's music is lush, mystical, and transporting, set for strings, harp, organ, horn, timpani, and choir. It should be a sublime festival Sunday.

Advent begins at the end of November, which means we will begin a weekly routine of midweek worship. Wednesdays November 30, December 7, December 14, and December 21, we will pray Holden Evening Prayer in the chapel each week at 7 p.m. The service is less than half an hour.

For Sunday worship during Advent, we will explore the idea of Christ's incarnation intersecting with our daily life. In the chancel area, a "set" of sorts will be built, and we will interact with it in various ways. The idea will be to ponder Christ's coming into our very homes or dorm rooms. More on this theme to come in the coming weeks as we prepare and plan.



Looking ahead to the celebration of Christmas at Hope, be advised that our worship schedule changes slightly, as Christmas Day and New Year's Day both fall on Sundays this year. Note the following dates:

Saturday, December 24: Festival services at 4:00 p.m. and 10:00 p.m.

Sunday, December 25: One service at 10:30 a.m.

Sunday, January 1: One service at 10:30 a.m.

Worship will resume at our normal times of 8:30 a.m. and 10:30 a.m. on January 8.

Zach Busch  
Minister of Worship and Music

# Treasurer's Report for September 2016

	Actuals Sep 2016	Budget Sep 2016	Sep 2016 Var	YTD Actuals	YTD Budget	YTD Var
<b>General Giving</b>	37,570	34,575	2,995	320,860	329,625	(8,765)
<b>Rental Income</b>	9,121	8,875	246	64,621	72,709	(8,089)
<b>Total Income</b>	46,690	43,450	3,240	385,481	402,334	(16,854)
<b>Total Expenses</b>	52,909	57,645	(4,736)	366,489	396,075	(29,586)
<b>Net Income</b>	<b>(6,219)</b>	<b>(14,195)</b>	<b>7,976</b>	<b>18,991</b>	<b>6,259</b>	<b>12,732</b>



Total income as of September 30 is unfavorable to budget by \$16.8K. While our revenue is favorable to budget for September, we have a deficiency to make up from being under budget for the past few months. We have been fortunate that this year our expenses have been less than budget, making our net income favorable to budget by \$12.7K.

Total expenses in September were under budget by \$4.7K, and YTD are favorable to budget by \$29.5K. This stems from additional gifts received from the congregation for specific areas of ministry (Thank you congregation!) and from our leaders being mindful of our mission while using our resources wisely (Thank you leaders!).

The Gratitude and Generosity Team will soon be sending out pledge letters. Simply Giving is a great way to evenly distribute your annual giving throughout the year and not have to worry about sending your check or even finding your checkbook. A link to Simply Giving is found on our home page at [ulch.org](http://ulch.org). And don't forget, you can now give via text. If you'd like information on either Simply Giving or texting your donation, let me know. The final installment of the roof replacement has been paid. This brings the cash balance in our Building Fund to \$44K. We are blessed to have a wonderful building to call home. I ask you to think of our home when you receive your pledge letter. If you have any questions, please contact me at [treasurer@ulch.org](mailto:treasurer@ulch.org).

Ruth Hedman  
Treasurer

## Book Sale Results

Our book sale earned \$399.18. Wow! The principal at Marcy Open School asked for U.S. flags for 30 classrooms. There were no flags at the school, and the students had not been taught the Pledge of Allegiance. We purchased flags and brackets, designed for schoolrooms, from the American Legion. The total cost was \$225.95, including shipping



Principal Donna Andrews extended an invitation to the American Legion to come to a school assembly to demonstrate flag etiquette and the Pledge of Allegiance. A woman member of the Legion has a stellar voice, and sang the National Anthem. A Junior ROTC group was the Color Guard. There were inspirational short speeches and a motorcycle! It had flags and lights. A woman rode it into the room. She had used the GI Bill to finance her PhD education. She wore her academic gown, cap, and hood while she told the kids to never give up on their dreams. The students were thrilled.

The remainder of \$173.23 from the sale was given to the school. It will be used to purchase outdoor flags, representing the many countries where Marcy students have roots.

Ruth Fingerson

## “Since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses...”

Confession time: I love—really love—All Saints Sunday. And (I mentioned this in a class once and was mercilessly teased), I often catch myself smiling as we get to the part of the Apostles’ Creed about the Holy Spirit and the holy catholic church (think church universal, ecumenical, wide, broad) and the communion of saints.



I love sharing Holy Communion with those who can’t make it to church, remembering together that our Sunday table (read: Holy Communion) extends all the way to their kitchen tables and nursing home rooms. And I love that the table stretches even further to cross time and space with seats enough for the beloved communion of saints who have died and gone before us, and those yet to be imagined.

In some traditions, people pray to the Saints (that’s capital S Saints) and in our tradition and in my life of faith the saints (that’s lower case s saints) surround us. They inspire with their witness. They encourage us with their daily living. They face mortality by living deeply. They show us by their very lives how it is we can be faithful and human, beautiful and broken, saint and sinner, all at once.

Truth be told, I need this fleshy encouragement and their zany, mundane, fragile way of being faithfully human always, but especially now, right now, as we move into the last days of this election cycle. The sense of divisiveness and despair, anxiety and exhaustion, is palpable. These saints have a way of lifting me above this fray – not so far that I am disconnected, but far enough that I can remember what it all means. That’s important. We all live day by day. God holds our very lives, indeed the world. We walk together in the times of not-knowing, the waiting-for-results, the holding-our-breath-on-election-night, the seeking-justice, just a little more honest about how precious and fragile this life really is. It’s a good reminder for me, and for each of us.

May we be a community of saints in which there is space for the hopeful, fragile times to teach us again how to live faithfully all the time. Thanks be to God for this life and faith we share, and for the witness of the saints who surround us.

Pastor Jen

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## Let's Talk College Student Spirituality

Grace, Hope, and Lutheran Campus Ministry will team up on Sunday evening, November 13, from 5 to 7 p.m., for a potluck supper and a chance to engage with a panel of Lutheran Campus Ministry leaders as they reflect on their spirituality, what they seek in worship and faith, and how they connect. We'll meet here at University Lutheran Church of Hope. Please bring a dish to share and a willingness to listen and reflect together about how we do meaningful ministry in the midst of a university setting.



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## Thanksgiving Eve Worship at Hope

We at University Lutheran Church of Hope are hosting the annual neighborhood ecumenical Thanksgiving Service on Tuesday, November 22 at 7:00 p.m. A choir will gather to practice at 6:00 p.m., and there will be PIE! Plan to bring a pie to share, and consider adding your voice to this pickup choir. Can you take the lead in organizing the pie social following worship? Talk with Pastor Jen. Watch for more information to come.



# FAITH FORMATION NEWS



## Faith Formation for All Ages

### Faith Formation Update

We are two months into this year's Faith Formation classes! What a two months they have been. During September and October, as a group we introduced Faith5 and started learning ways we can practice faith in the home with our families. In our individual classes, we spent time learning new songs and Bible stories, and sharing our thoughts about God. In November we start the month with an intergenerational event, as well as planning for our Christmas Program. We are excited to show the work of the students who wrote the script, a fun and creative way to share the good news of Jesus' birth. We are looking forward to November and all it has to offer.

In regard to Faith5, we want to be sure each and every one of you is given all the tools needed to help practice sharing your faith in the home. That is why we have been emailing *Taking Faith Home* sheets out to families with children ages birth to 18. These sheets will also be posted on our Facebook page and printed versions will be available at the Welcome Center every Sunday. If you would like to know more about *Taking Faith Home* sheets, stop by the office or email either Monty or Ashlei. Blessings to you all!

Monty Lysne

Congregational Faith Formation Coach



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## Rethinking Sunday Morning - continued

Four members of Hope attended a seminar, Rethinking Sunday Morning, at Luther Seminary July 27-29. At the beginning of the event, participants were asked to keep three questions in mind throughout: What is one thing not working in your setting? What is one strength of your setting? What is one experiment you'd like to try? In previous *Visitor* issues, Kirsten Mebust and Sara Tufvesson Doure reported on what they learned. In this issue, we hear from Brian McCaffrey and John Setterlund.

**Brian McCaffrey:** According to speaker John Vest, we live our lives within concentric circles of loyalties. The first and second circles are the most intimate: family and friends. The third circle is groups that are spheres of influence (which has included the church). The fourth and fifth circles are looser affiliations or networks. Society is moving away from third circle loyalties out towards networks. Sunday School attendance has dramatically declined in the last 40 years. (The demographic has also shifted.) Presentations focused on either bringing the church into the intimate circle or redesigning as a network.

Rich Melheim's presentation led toward greater intimacy. He rejects the Sunday School approach to faith formation in favor of bringing children as well as the stranger into the inner circle of worship and community life. This redesign is based on the "Faith 5". Here are two examples of how this is used:

- Families commit to a process of daily reporting their highs and lows to each other (if necessary, by phone or skype). They read scripture, hold hands, and pray for each other. This is best done before bed because then the brain works on the prayer through the night. This can also work in church as part of the prayers of the people.
- Many parts of the liturgy can be accompanied with hand gestures to include body memory. There is a commitment to work the actual liturgy into daily practice, including the Biblical text, allowing a greater depth of familiarity with the story.

Continued on p. 5

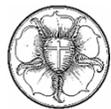
# Sunday Forums

(9:30-10:20 a.m. in Heritage Hall, below the Sanctuary)



**November 6: Stories of Hope.** Breaking with our usual pattern during Stories of Hope, we will be hearing the stories of individual's faith just as the years before, but this time with a new twist. With a panel of individuals, varying in age, we will see just how different faith may look for us during different phases of our lives.

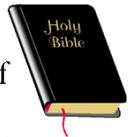
Parents, guardians, and members of the congregation, join your children during this intergenerational event to teach them stories of your own faith, and maybe even hear what their faith story looks like so far! We will be introduced to new ways of talking about our faith with the help of Ashlei Buhrow, our interim Faith Formation Minister. As we promise in the baptismal service, we are committed to support and pray for one another as we grow in our life in Christ. This will help you to live into that promise. Watch for more details as the day comes closer when we celebrate the faith of all the saints now among us.



**November 13: Women of the Reformation -- More Than Katie!** While many know of Katie Luther and how she met and married Martin, few know of other women who had real influence in the reformation. Come and hear about several women, including a prominent hymn writer and even a territorial ruler, who didn't hesitate to voice their reforming thoughts and act accordingly. Our presenter, Mary Jane Haemig, ThD, is Professor of Church History at Luther Seminary and Director of the Reformation Research Program. We are fortunate to have Dr. Haemig with us for this timely topic.

**November 20: Welcome Back University Students "Reprised".** Not everyone could participate in the Welcome Back Students event on September 4, so during this Sunday Forum John Bablitch and his team will provide an overview. They will share highlights, stories, and pictures. There is room for more people to be involved in this vital form of keeping our walls porous. On this last Sunday after Pentecost, come to hear about this exciting way of living our faith as we are engaging and re-engaging our community.

**November 27: Opening the Heart and Soul for Christ's Coming.** On this first Sunday of Advent, Hope member Brian McCaffrey will lead us in the spiritual practice of *Lectio Divina*, a reflective and prayerful reading of scripture. *Lectio Divina*, a Latin term meaning "divine reading," describes a way of reading the Scriptures whereby we let go of our own agenda and open ourselves to what God wants to say to us. While this form of prayer originated among Roman Catholic religious, it has become a valued practice by many Christians. Attendees will benefit most by arriving at the beginning and staying through the whole time.



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## Rethinking Sunday Morning – continued from p. 4

**John Setterlund:** It was a pleasure for me to attend this conference together with approximately 400 others. My thanks to University Lutheran Church of Hope for making my and three other members' participation possible. When things are changing fast in the church and in the world, many traditional programs do not seem to achieve the results we have hoped for. This conference was designed to address these concerns and to consider alternative plans. One particularly powerful challenge was stated by Rolf Jacobson: "When things begin to fail, do not simply work harder at the existing model." This advice encourages us to find a "better practice" and/or to redefine our underlying goals. Faith formation, especially among children and youth, is one goal of high priority. Family life throughout the week is surely the most important facet of faith formation at home, while inter-generational activities at church encourages it. The weekly worship service remains central to the church's life and witness, but the theories and practices of worship need constant attention and assessment. No matter how historic our traditional worship patterns are, neither they nor any of the participants "have always been this way." Changes will happen to the congregation, and, says Jay Beech, we can either be carried along with it or navigate it. To "navigate" takes careful, consensual decision-making, not deferring simply to personal preferences. We need to consider Sunday morning more seriously for those who are peripheral and occasional attenders, with greater focus on serving the neighborhood.

# Congregational Life

## Dates to Keep in Mind

**November 6:** All Saints Sunday: Intergenerational Stories of Hope, Fauré *Requiem* during service

**November 9:** Hope Diamonds Senior Group trip to Minneapolis Institute of Art.

**November 11:** Moonlight Madness Youth Group Event

**November 13:** Stewardship Sunday, Fellowship meal, College Student Spirituality Discussion

**November 22:** Thanksgiving Eve (Tuesday) Worship

**December 1:** Beer and Hymns at Blarney's Pub

## Life Events at Hope

We're a community of faith called to hold one another in prayer. Below are a few of the life events affecting our community. We need your help to know what we can pray for; please alert a pastor or contact the church office.

We include in prayer...

**Baptism:** Gus Daniel Govaert, son of Jesse and Matt Govaert (great grandson of Leona Reyelts), on Oct. 16.

**Affirmation of Baptism:** Brinnen Morgan and Stella Robinson, on Oct. 30.

**Significant Illness or Recovery:** Those living with illness, cancer, recovery, uncertain diagnosis, chemical dependency and mental health struggles, especially Hannah Kiresuk, Kathy Knudson, Grace Wagner, and Chuck Lewis. We also include a number of our homebound members who have recently experienced falls.

**Births, Deaths, Marriages, Moves, Retirements, Transitions:** Asti Swain at the death of her brother Charles Lindbergh. God is with us through it all.

**This month's Fellowship Meal is November 13** after the 10:30 a.m. service. This is our chance to deepen relationships and get to know one another. Undergrad and graduate students are our guests and eat free. The cooks are always grateful for those who can help set up and clean up. Mark your calendars for the holiday smorgasbord on December 11. Watch for more details to come.

**Beer & Hymns** at Blarney's Pub Basement in Dinkytown, Thursday December 1 at 7:30 p.m. Join us at Blarney's Pub to enjoy some brews and sing some favorite hymns. Musicians from University Lutheran Church of Hope and Grace University Lutheran Church will lead the group in a rousing hymn sing. Everyone's invited, so be sure to bring a friend! If you have any questions, please contact Nick Tangen at [nickt@ulch.org](mailto:nickt@ulch.org).

## Youth Group Activities

### Moonlight Madness.

Youth in grades 6-9 are invited to join us for an all-night adventure across Minneapolis! Moonlight Madness is set for November 11 from 9 p.m. to 7 a.m. We will spend the night eating pizza and playing games at Augsburg College, winning prizes and playing laser tag and mini-golf at Grand Slam funplex, going to the movies, and, finally, bowling at the Mermaid. If you are interested in attending, please contact Jim Vitale at

[jvitale001@luthersem.edu](mailto:jvitale001@luthersem.edu)

### Youth Christmas Party

Advent begins at the end of the month and Christmas is just around the corner. Join us as we continue the tradition of our youth Christmas party! The date, time, and location are yet to be decided, so keep your eyes peeled and your ears open for more information. This year we invite parents and families of all our youth to the party. We hope you can join us for this fun and festive gathering! Questions? Please contact Jim Vitale at

[jvitale001@luthersem.edu](mailto:jvitale001@luthersem.edu)

## Sharing of Faith Stories November 6

November 6 will be a day for all members of the congregation to mark on their calendars! Young, old, and every phase in between: beginning at 9:30 a.m. during the Sunday Forum, we will all gather as members of Christ's body to join in a sharing of faith stories. While Stories of Hope have been presented differently in the past, we hope to see all ages together that morning to celebrate the faith stories of Hope in inspiring and active ways. We will give more details via social media and the weekly bulletins as the date approaches. So mark November 6 as a day you won't want to miss, and join Ashlei and Monty to hear and share faith stories.

## Gratitude and Generosity Committee

**Anticipating Stewardship Sunday November 13.** Events leading up to it:

**Sunday, November 6:** Ann Wagner shares her Generosity Moment during the service.

**Sunday, November 13:** Stewardship Sunday. Offering of Pledges; interactive children's sermon. Guest preacher Rev. Barbara Lundblad

**2016-2017 Ongoing:** Generosity Stories, collected and compiled by Molly Broin and Ann Beane.

Please submit your stories any time to [molly.broin@gmail.com](mailto:molly.broin@gmail.com) or [spirit.beane@gmail.com](mailto:spirit.beane@gmail.com)

With new staff and energy swirling around here at Hope, the potential is great for many new and renewed ideas that are being considered by the whole congregation. The Gratitude and Generosity Committee encourages you to think prayerfully about your pledges of time and talent in the coming months. Both are crucial to the life of University Lutheran Church of Hope and its ministry. May you ponder the gratitude and generosity that you have experienced in your own life. Blessings!

**Coins for Children.** The Gratitude and Generosity (G&G) Committee has started a new idea that will involve children more in our effort to bring the G&G to the forefront throughout the year. About once a month, during the service, you will have the opportunity to contribute your extra change as the children bring around G&G cans. We hope to hear lots of clanking going on. The money will go to two causes. The first is the play area planned for the courtyard; the hope is to have it built sometime next spring or summer. The second cause will be determined by the Sunday school children. The first "Coins for Children" happened on October 9 and more than \$80 was collected. Keep watch for the next opportunity. Thanks so much for your help in this effort!

Ann Beane

Gratitude and Generosity Committee

### Dear Friends at Hope,

What are the messages we take in about money? A common phrase I grew up hearing was, "We're not just poor, we're below the poverty level." Yikes. That's pretty poor.

We wore clothes from Goodwill or hand-me-downs, but life on the farm was still good, with taxpayer money funding what we called commodities, and what you might call food assistance. We never went hungry. Loans from Grandma Wagner, never repaid, also helped make ends meet. Families stick together.

At our small Catholic church, my father, who was very devout, tithed. It wasn't much, and our oppressive priest had ways of letting us know we were not valued. We sat in the back pew, wearing our worn but clean church clothes. The more well-to-do family sat closer to the front. Our church only had two families. The priest rarely looked our way, except when he was preaching on sinners going to hell. I didn't think of us as sinners, just poor.

What is it about money and power? Even at school, the well-to-do kids thought they had the right to bully me and my siblings, and to be cruel to us and other poor farm kids.

But there is also power in resiliency and faith. A memory stands out: When I was ten years old, a fretful child who worried about how the bills were getting paid, I had calculated how much we could save if we gave up Schwan's ice cream and Dad's cigarettes. He was a three-pack-a-day smoker. I presented my numbers to my father. He gently put his hand on my head and said, "Thank you, but we still get to live. You are not giving up your ice cream." Maybe he just didn't want to give up his cigarettes. But the message stuck with me: We are worthy of small pleasures. He had faith that we would get by, and we did. We would get to have ice cream.

As a family we worked hard on the farm, morning til night. Every night we knelt around our parents' bed for bedtime prayers. Most Friday nights, we went what we called "bumming" to visit our cousins. On Sundays we had brunch at Grandma's. All of these experiences informed my sense of community. My church did not.

In the years since leaving home, I have "visited" many churches, my heart seeking a sense of spiritual community. I am so grateful to have found this community at Hope. From the first, I felt like a highly welcomed guest. The warmth surrounded me. But I did not quite feel like a member until I made the commitment and filled out a pledge card. How strange to experience this positive power of money, and to see that it can enhance my faith. Family sticks together, and I do my part. I have found my home.

## President's Perspective and Vision & Governance Update

At our Vision & Governance meeting on October 11, we had several guests: Craig Nelson from Facilities; Ashlei Buhrow, our Interim Faith Formation Minister; Pastor Kate Reuer Welton from Lutheran Campus Ministry (LCM); and Dr. Ibrahim Bitrus, our Nigerian Theologian in Residence.

Craig shared concerns about several areas of the facility that need attention, and thanked everyone on V&G for their willingness to listen and engage with the Facilities group as they look to the future. We assured him that everyone is always welcome at V&G meetings, and that we look forward to hearing from Facilities in the future.

Ashlei was invited to V&G to observe church governance and to talk about her experiences at Hope since joining the staff in early September. She is a first-year student at Luther Seminary and is coached by Monty Lysne as they work together in Faith Formation.

Pastor Kate was invited to give an update on LCM, its relationship with Hope, and plans for the future. LCM is a very active community, reaching out in many ways to University students. Pastor Kate will be with us both as a guest preacher and presider in the coming months.

Dr. Bitrus was also with us to observe church governance. In his time with us he has blessed us by bringing the message, presiding at a Sunday Forum, and sharing in a wide variety of ministries. Please greet him and make him feel welcome.

We discussed 2017 plans for liaisons and staff as we put a budget together for next fiscal year. Thank you in advance for your commitment in both time and money to the ministry at Hope. As leaders, we do our best to plan our budgets for next year wisely and faithfully. Yours in Christ,

John Rydeen  
Congregational President

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## Hope in the World: Sheridan Story Packing Event

Hope's participation in the Sheridan Story food distribution ministry has begun. We have distributed sacks of nutritious, non-perishable food to student backpacks at Marcy Open School on fourth Fridays in September and October. In November there will be an opportunity to join with other churches in our neighborhood for several hours to fill sacks with food that will be distributed to elementary school students who are food insecure in future weeks and months.

Please consider reserving Sunday afternoon, November 13, 3:00-5:00 p.m. to help pack. It will be a good time together with others doing something important for neighborhood school children. This packing afternoon operates on the "many hands make light work" principle.

Please let Pastor Jen or me know if you are able to help out – you can contact me at [reldevik@msn.com](mailto:reldevik@msn.com). The packing site is at the new Sheridan Story warehouse, 2723 Patton Rd. (just off New Brighton Blvd. and County Road C) in Roseville. Thanks.

"Some days we have nothing in the fridge, but because of the food every Friday, I am able to make dinner. I just want to say thank you so much."

-Parent

Bruce Eldevik  
Hope in the World

## From the Visitation Pastor

The **Hope Diamonds Senior Group** is the updated name for our University Lutheran Church of Hope Seniors. This was a decision made by our planning meeting last week. Another decision made was to add events in between our quarterly meetings.



Plans are in place for a trip on November 9 to the Minneapolis Institute of Arts to see “Martin Luther: Art & Reformation.” Lutherans are celebrating Martin Luther and 500 years since the Reformation which brought about religious revolutions and cultural and societal change. Join us on this trip through history. There will be artifacts and art to surprise and challenge you. Our trip is Wednesday, November 9, with a tour scheduled for 10:45 a.m. There is a limit of 20 for our group tour. A sign-up sheet is available at the Welcome Center. Special ticket price with Thrivent discount is \$10. Transportation may be arranged if needed. Contact Marilyn Asp for questions at 763-862-5685.

**Our next quarterly meeting and luncheon** will be December 21. We will have a time of caroling with possibly some surprise visitors! Our program will be “Home Building in Guatemala,” by Arloene Stevens’ family. They say, “In July 2016, a group from Abiding Savior Lutheran Church in Mounds View, MN traveled to San Raymundo, Guatemala to build a house with the organization, Casas por Cristo. The house was built for a family of 5 in 4 days. It was a life-transforming experience for those who went.”

Speaking of life-transforming experiences, Donna Neste shared this message with me:

“When my son was in high school, the Hope Youth group took a week-long trip to Mexico to build a house for a family living in cardboard boxes on the street. Before he left, I told him that the trip he was about to take would change his life, and indeed it did. The first thing he said to me when he got off the plane was, ‘You were right, mom. This trip changed my life.’ After he graduated from high school, he lived with a Mennonite missionary couple for six months, and then with a pastor and his family in Honduras doing missionary work for a year. He still keeps in touch with the Honduran pastor, and I think it is why he has chosen to go into nursing.”

**Compassion Care.** Recently, our Compassion Care Ministers received training to offer Holy Communion as part of their visits. Members were taught a simple service that can be taken to care centers, hospitals, or homes. Each practiced with a partner speaking the words and offering the bread and wine. It was a very special time. Friendly Visitors will soon receive this same training to bring communion more often than monthly to our homebound. Ann Agrimson has joined our Compassion Care leadership team; we are grateful for her talents and deep compassion so evident in her life.

Peace,  
Visitation Pastor Esther Dant

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## Blessing of Animals October 2



## Check Your Privilege

Ten University Lutheran Church of Hope members attended “Journeying Towards Justice: Privilege and Race in Our Church” on October 7-8. More than 400 people, mostly from Lutheran churches, joined in a day and a half of learning, worship, planning, and goal setting. Different churches had different reasons for attending, but the general feeling among participants was that we as Christians can no longer ignore the racial inequities that exist in our society, and perhaps especially here in Minnesota. Our Hope team was energized and challenged by much of what we heard.

One phrase I did not hear was “Check your privilege,” but it’s a phrase I have heard over the years. It occurred to me during the conference that I have never given much thought to what it means. As a matter of fact, I realized that I had been thinking of the word “check” as it’s used in “coat check.” So checking my white privilege would be like leaving my prejudices at the door while I went into the party.

A little research (thank you Google) reveals that the phrase relates more to recognizing the privilege I have received in various situations, merely due to my pale skin. And this **was** something we talked about at the conference. This recognizing and naming systemic racism is not about individual guilt, because one’s privilege is not a result of anything personal that a person has or hasn’t done. It also doesn’t accuse white people of not working for what they have. Rather, it is a neutral pointing out of differences based on race. Confronting systemic racism begins with simply recognizing it – and that is easier said than done, especially when the benefits accrue to us. It turns out that I can’t just drop my bias at the coat check, because there is a whole system of bias, not just mine. One thing the conference reminded us to do is to pay attention and name the privilege.

So much lively conversation. So much justice to pursue. Our team has momentum and will be developing an action plan to keep this important issue in front of us. Look for announcements about the Racial Justice Task Force in the Thursday Epistle, the Hope *Visitor*, and the bulletin. All those who are interested are welcome to join us. Whether we call it “Checking Our Privilege,” “Journeying Toward Justice,” or just “Getting to Work,” we will appreciate your prayers, and look forward to your support as we embark on the difficult but important work of addressing racial inequity.

Karen Westwood  
Racial Justice Task Force

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## Pastor Esther’s Retirement

Many have heard the news that Pastor Esther Dant, our Visitation Pastor at University Lutheran Church of Hope, plans to retire at the end of January 2017. Esther loves her ministry and serves our congregation so well. At 76 years old (!), some greater flexibility and her own passions can take the lead. On January 22 we will celebrate Esther, giving thanks for her years of ministry at Hope and beyond, and we will pray her into retirement and this new leg of her journey. In the coming months, the Personnel Committee will begin a search for a pastor to serve part time in many of the same areas Esther has served: visitation, Hope Diamonds, Compassion Care, and Friendly Visitors. Watch for more information.

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## 2017 Women’s Retreat

Inviting All High School through Golden Age Women to the 2017 Women's Retreat, "Connecting from Within and Without – Weaving Faith in Relationships," at Dunrovin Retreat Center Friday night through Sunday morning, January 27-29, 2017. Save the date for a weekend in which you will gain more insight into how our faith can be integral in building relationships. Saturday morning is the only structured time, so there are lots of opportunities for crafts, hiking/skiing at William O'Brien State Park, massage, a Stillwater trip, etc. The cost will be somewhere in the \$200 range for two nights and 4 meals. Scholarship money is available (talk to Pastor Jen). People can come for part of the day as well. Registration starts in December. Stay tuned for sign-up. Questions? Contact Ann Beane at [spirit.beane@gmail.com](mailto:spirit.beane@gmail.com) or Beata Rydeen at [beatarydeen@comcast.net](mailto:beatarydeen@comcast.net)

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Deadline for submitting articles is the 15th of every month, for the following month's issue.

Copies of the current issue of *The Visitor*, as well as back issues, are at [www.ulch.org/VisitorArchive.asp](http://www.ulch.org/VisitorArchive.asp) or by contacting the church office.

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