

Complex world. Thoughtful church.

February 2021
No. 17-02



Clockwise from Top Left: Esther Dant ready for a distanced walk with Pastor Jen on Lake Johanna; Nathan Obrestad, Nick Tangen and our food shelf guru Dean Bronson loading food that Dean delivered to Groveland Food Shelf; Bob Paschke shepherded the recently completed sewer project; City Inspectors signing off on the project; a below-the-floor access point for the drains (near the chapel entrance); quilts recently created by Marty Lewis-Hunstiger for a program called My Very Own Bed (see page 6); (center) our Opening Doors capital campaign logo.

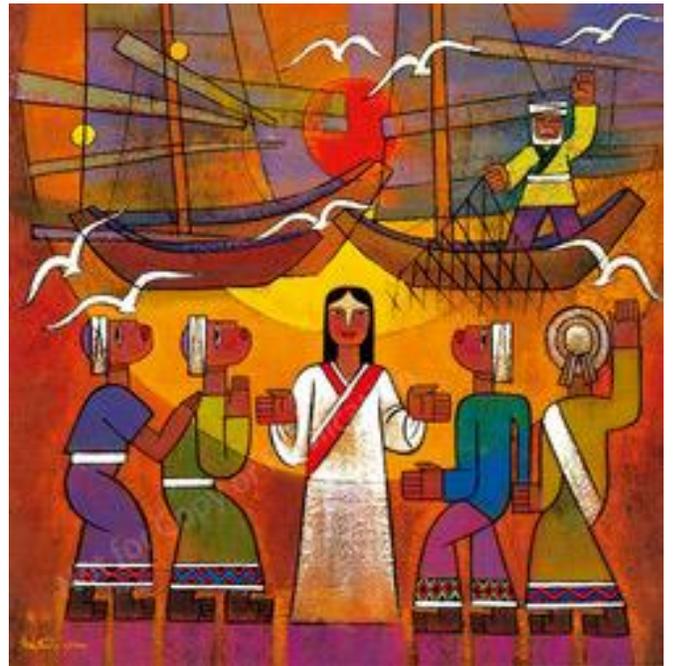
Faith Stories to Navigate these Days

Arts & Environment, Muffi Abrahamson

Artist James He Qi is a master at breathing new life into familiar Bible stories. Inspired by the folk art of China and the middle ages, his bold colors, stylized shapes and compressed space pack meaning into each visual telling. Displayed in Hope's lounge is this exquisite piece (on right), *Calling Disciples*.

Here, Jesus stands front and center clothed in a white robe with a red sash across his heart, red symbolizing humanity, sacrifice and atonement. Fishermen Simon, Andrew, James and John stand alongside Christ in reverential devotion, committed to following him and learning how to "fish for people." On the water, old Zebedee pulls up a net while waving goodbye to his sons James and John, their boats left unattended. It's particularly compelling that Jesus faces us, his hands open, beckoning us, also, to answer his call to follow and serve him.

We might expect a seaside scene to be full of cool, watery blues. But here, this defining moment is unified with a metaphorical element—it's bathed in the glow of a blood red sun at the dawning of a new life of discipleship. A virtual floodlight points to Jesus Christ, the Light of the World, who calls us to boldly follow him and live our days in his light.



He Qi's striking *Peace, Be Still*, displayed in Hope's north entrance, also speaks to us in this present time of overwhelming fear and turmoil. As the story goes, Jesus and his disciples are crossing the Sea of Galilee when a forceful windstorm suddenly breaks and huge waves are swamping the boat—and all the while Jesus is asleep in the stern. Terrified, the disciples wake Jesus and say:

"Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?" He woke up and rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, "Peace! Be still!" Then the wind ceased, and there was a dead calm. He said to them, "Why are you afraid? Have you still no faith?" And they were filled with great awe and said to one another, "Who then is this that even the wind and the sea obey him?" —Mark 4:35-41

He Qi's visual telling fills the canvas. We are as close as we can be to the action—almost in the boat. The disciples are doing everything in their power to keep the vessel from capsizing in the raging sea: taking in the sail, pulling on the oars, praying for survival. They call on Jesus.

As the boat tosses violently, Jesus stands up! He stretches out his arms and his enormous open hands, his body in the unmistakable shape of a cross. It's like Jesus has become the embattled vessel's true mast, boom and sail. He commands the raging sea to be still, and everything instantly changes. The artist captures this miraculous moment by showing before and after all at once—the foreground whips with turbulent waves, but the horizon holds a still line of complete calm.

Jesus and the disciples wear the same rainbow colored clothes, another visual metaphor, identifying them as living in God's covenant to Noah: that God would never again destroy the world by flood. These garments of promise visually bind Jesus and the disciples to each other; but they also set them together in the middle of the human condition between the gamut of turmoil and peace. The boat's bow leads the way adorned with a kind of figurehead, a red rose, a Christian symbol for the sacrificial and atoning blood of Christ. And, flying overhead, the peace dove, representing the Holy Spirit, crowns Jesus with an olive branch, anointing him the one Prince of Peace.

"We are living in a time where there is much violence. There is little peace. We need to listen to the voice of heaven."

—James He Qi

Honoring Gifts, Transforming Culture, Celebrating Community

“Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it.” -1 Corinthians 12:27

Dear ones, have I told you lately how grateful I am for your steady faithfulness? For your bold and humble way of showing up for one another and for the world, day in and day out, week after week, even when the weeks begin to run together, even when hope and fear mingle, when uncertainty runs rampant? Well, I am grateful, immensely grateful.

One of a million or so things that I appreciate about my role in this community is a two-fold opportunity: 1. I get to hear your dreams and worries, your prayers, your failings, your gifts, one on one and in small groups. We talk by telephone or Zoom. You send emails and snail mail. Sometimes we take a careful walk. We squint through teary eyes or steamed up glasses, wearing our masks, and you share who you are, what you are made of—the mundane stuff and the exciting stuff and the spirited stuff, the passions, what God is doing in you and through you. Thank you.

And, 2. I get a pretty good seat to witness the culture of this faith community evolve and coalesce. From 1904 onward, the community has been changing. God’s hold on Hope has been strong but the details of how we worship and interact, for what we speak out and why, how the community interacts, these have changed in ever-so-slight and sometimes big ways. Pillars of the congregation have joined the saints eternal. Pastors and staff have come and gone. Newer voices have found a space. We’ve continued to reflect on the needs of the world and also our own complicity in systems of injustice. Through this, we’ve made intentional changes. Truth be told, this culture should and will continue to evolve. We’re always a work in progress, thanks be to God.

At a Vision and Governance Board meeting in October, Ann Agrimson brought forward an insightful observation, and then she proposed a solution. Ann noticed how at congregational meetings it is common for people to come forward

to speak and begin by saying, I’m so and so, I’ve been a member here for 20 years, 40 years, 60 years, etc., and this is what I think... In most cases, without even trying, we are using our longevity in the community to add validity to our thoughts. This can set up a tough act to follow when a newer member of, say, a year or 2 or 10, rises to speak. Are their insights held in the same regard? Do their opinions hold the same sway?



Ann did not raise this in an accusatory manner, and, similarly, I don’t write about it in that way. Rather, this reminds me of our ever evolving congregational culture AND the abundance of gifts you all embody. We here at University Lutheran Church of Hope seek a culture that honors the depth of experience and history, faithfulness, of longer-time members, and, at once, the fresh ideas and perspectives, the new energy, and the deep wisdom of our newer members of the community. Frankly, all of this is a blessing. We can honor one another for the ways God has and continues to work through us. This can raise tensions, I know. We may wonder: Do I have a place here? Will my reflections be heard with grace? I pray that this community has a space for those who’ve been here a shorter time or a longer time. And, I give thanks for the abundance of gifts I know and see in you, each of you. It’s an exciting and vital time to be the church.

As we look toward our annual congregational meeting on February 21 and the weeks of dialogue that precede it, let’s practice this culture-shifting way of communicating who we are in this community. I might rise and begin, I am so and so, and I value X, or I have a passion for Y. Culture changes slowly. I write this inviting you to join me in musing about this body of Christ, the beautiful ways that we come together with our unique gifts and together create faithful community. May we celebrate the unique gifts of one another and the faithful way God is using our community for good.

-Pastor Jen

Music and Worship

Healing and Renewal

Lent begins on Ash Wednesday, February 17, when we return to the solemn and liberating reminder that we are fragile, we are dependent on the earth, and we need love. The second Sunday of Lent last year was the last in-person worship service we had in the sanctuary. It is astonishing and sobering to think back on all that the world has been through in just one calendar year. Mindful of the trajectory of this year—astronomical death and illness from the COVID-19 pandemic, tumultuous political events in our country and worldwide, the world's climate temperature inching upward—the Worship Planning Team has lifted up **healing and renewal** as themes to embrace for the season. We will hear testimony from members of the community around these themes. We will invite healing elements into the worship service through song, senses, and reflection. We will take an opportunity to lift up medicine and caregiving as God-sends, and give thanks for acts of healing and care in light of the pandemic.

Lent is another season where worship opportunities increase—we add a weekly Wednesday service. By this point with online worship, you undoubtedly have a groove and an in-home worship space that works for you. We hope to offer up some ideas in the coming

weeks for how to ready this worship space for the season of Lent with this healing focus. Purple is the color of the season, so look around your home for purple fabrics or items you can use. Perhaps think creatively about



constructing a cross. I'm also hoping we can add an aloe plant to your worship space. If you have an aloe plant, fabulous. If you don't and would like a baby one for your worship space, let me know via e-mail. We can facilitate a pick-up at church that works for you.

As we move into this season, we recognize the well-worn path. And we recognize our companion on the road, healing as he goes, shouldering the cross, dying as we know we all must, and showing us what lies beyond. We are not alone.

Zach Busch
Minister of Worship and Music

Worship and Formation Opportunities in Lent

Healing and Renewal

Sundays—10:30am Worship (Zoom and Live Stream)
Ash Wednesday, February 17—7pm Ash Wednesday Service (Zoom and Live Stream).

During the day on Ash Wednesday, 9am-2pm, the sanctuary will be available for prayer, Holy Communion and ashes. Stop by and access via the north parking lot door.

Supplies—will likely also be available around this time.

Wednesday Evenings (February 24, March 3, 10, 17, 24)—7pm Lenten Service (Zoom and Live Stream)

Healing Prayers—We're contemplating some special healing prayer times available virtually. Watch for more information.

Bible Study—See page 5 for details of two Lenten Bible Study opportunities, Monday evening and Wednesday morning, beginning March 1.

Holy Week—March 28-April 3.



The Heir of All Things: Epiphany Study of the Epistle to the Hebrews Monday Evenings at 7:00 p.m. and Wednesday Mornings at 9:00 a.m.

Long ago God spoke to our ancestors in many and various ways by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by a Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, through whom he also created the worlds. He is the reflection of God's glory and the exact imprint of God's very being, and he sustains all things by his powerful word. – Hebrews 1:1-3

In February, we will continue our study on the Epistle to the Hebrews, a text considered by many to be one of the most beautiful writings of the New Testament. Hebrews focuses on questions of Christology, or the work of Christ, as well as the perseverance of the early Christian community.

This study will be offered twice each week, once on Monday evenings at 7:00 p.m., and again on Wednesday mornings at 9:00 a.m. through February 10th. Join in for whichever study is most convenient.

Readings and Zoom links will be sent to each study group and posted in the Thursday Epistle each week. If you have questions, please contact Nick Tangen at nickt@ulch.org.

Lenten Bible Study – Stories of Healing Mon Evenings at 7:00 p.m. and Wed Mornings at 9:00 a.m. Beginning March 1st

In Lent, University Lutheran Church of Hope will focus on themes of healing and renewal. During Lent, we will host a Bible Study on Monday evenings and Wednesday mornings focused on stories of healing from across scripture. Each week we will focus on a different story and will incorporate media and additional readings as supplements. We'll consider the differences and similarities between healing narratives in the ancient and modern world, as well as thinking theologically about what it means to seek and find healing in Christ.

Readings and links will be posted in the Thursday Epistle each week and will also be emailed to the assembled groups. Questions? Contact Nick Tangen at nickt@ulch.org

Sunday Forums in February

We are pleased so many of you have participated in the Sunday Forums. Additionally, in case you missed some forums or would like to **watch one again**, check with Nick Tangen (nickt@ulch.org) or Nathan Obrestad (nathano@ulch.org) to get the University Lutheran Church of Hope private link to the recorded programs. **Most are being recorded.** Also, we are aware that it is most courteous to our presenters whenever possible to **have your camera active** so the presenters can talk directly to us more easily. Thanks.

February 7 - Wholeness, Not Perfection - Pastor Esther Dant, member of ULCH, will discuss her recently finished painting, "Printing of the Etching" and other works of art. Join us and learn more about her creative process and her love of beauty in many forms. She will share lessons learned in these pandemic times - hard and surprising!

February 14 - 2021 Budget Presentation - As our congregation begins another year of ministry, we will review the proposed budget for 2021. Our treasurer, Emma Carpenter, will share how we are doing and where we are headed in the upcoming year. Come, learn, and ask your questions.

February 21 - No Forum - Plan to attend the Annual Meeting following the worship service.

February 28 - Racial Justice in Housing - Are you concerned about housing disparities in Minnesota? Craig Freeman will join us to speak on the work of Beacon Interfaith Housing Collaborative and how housing is a racial justice issue in our community. Beacon Interfaith is organizing for the Minnesota Legislature affordable housing and rental assistance bills. Learn more about what you can do to help support passage of this legislation.

A New Place for Hope Quilts

For many years the Hope Quilters have met on Monday mornings in Fellowship Hall. Many of the finished products went to other parts of the world via Lutheran World Relief. In recent years, the finished quilts have stayed local; donated to Sharing and Caring Hands, Families Moving Forward, Central Lutheran Free Closet, and given to newly baptized members and long-time staff members who are leaving.

The pandemic has changed how we work, but repurposing fabric remnants into useful things is still one of our passions. We still meet every Monday morning, but now in a group phone call. There's only room for 6 people on the call so we take turns: Pauline Hendrickson, Shelley Jutila, Marty Lewis-Hunstiger, Carmen Macoskey, Carol Messler, Gretchen Peik, Ann Rolle, Arloene Stevens, and Robin Wille. Most of the people sewing at home have made masks; Marty has made quite a few quilts, given to Central Lutheran in the fall.

Now via true Hope connectivity, we have a new option for our quilts. Sonja Peterson knew of a

nearby non-profit called My Very Own Bed. They provide twin bed frames, inner spring mattresses, pillows, and bedding to children ages 2 to 17 for newly housed families. You can learn all about them at www.myveryownbed.org/ A great thing about the quilts they use is that they only need to be a minimum of 48" x 80" but can be any size and configuration beyond that, which is how many of our quilts turn out because they are from remnants of all sizes. So far Marty has brought seven quilts there and has three more ready. These recent ones incorporate fabric from Sharla Aaseng and Nathan Obrestad, our quilting closet, and Hidden Treasures Thrift Store remnant shelf. We will still give quilts to other places too.

We have high hopes for meeting in person again in June – we can safely distance in Fellowship Hall as we enjoy and support each other and make old fabric new again. If you're interested in joining the group, let any of us know. We'll squeeze you in on a Monday morning call, and let you know when we start meeting in person again.

Compassion Care Ministry

The Compassion Care Ministry leaders at Hope will be offering training sessions again in early 2021. Contact Pastor Barbara, Muffi Abrahamson or Ann Agrimson if you would like to participate in the training sessions and consider becoming a Compassion Care minister.

Compassion Care ministers are lay members of our ULCH congregation who complete a series of training sessions designed to help them hone their skills for deeper listening and confidential care. After completing the training, Compassion Care ministers may be available to care for those who may be dealing with a life crisis such as a serious illness, the death of a loved one, the pain of a broken relationship, or other life situations where care is needed. Confidentiality is key to this ministry of trust and deeper listening. Compassion Care ministers meet monthly with Pastor Barbara for additional training and to give updates, but they do not share names or identifying information of anyone who is receiving care. A Compassion Care relationship is typically a year long, although it may run longer or shorter, depending on the mutual agreement between the CC Minister and the receiver.

ULCH members and friends who wish to be connected to speak with one of our Compassion Care ministers may contact Pastor Barbara or Pastor Jen to help facilitate that connection.

Pastor Barbara
Pastor for Care and Nurture

Gift Cards for Immigrant Neighbors

Over the last 2 months we have received an incredible outpouring of gift cards from many of you! They have made a big difference, so thank you for your continued generosity. There is still an ongoing need for gift cards, especially Visa gift cards that can be used anywhere. If you would like to donate some gift cards, please drop them off at the church office. Nick Tangen will ensure they get into the right hands. Thank you again for this wonderful display of generosity and compassion. Questions? Contact Nick Tangen at nickt@ulch.org

Support for the Alvarez-Gutierrez Family

Our friend Mario remains in ICE detention as of the writing of this article. While he and his lawyers continue to make progress on Mario's asylum case, his family continues to require support. The GoFundMe that has been shared online is still active and can be contributed to, so if you are able to donate, please do. If you are someone who is seeking a way to pass along stimulus money to those

in greater need, please consider supporting this family.

And as always, please continue to offer your prayers. Prayers for Mario's release, prayers for his wife Elizabeth and their children, prayers for his extended family, and prayers for a just immigration system that no longer targets and destroys families.

If you have any questions, please contact Nick Tangen at nickt@ulch.org

Birthdays Among Us

You are invited to make a contact with Hope members and friends with birthdays this month. Reach out with a frozen porch visit, or send a card, a note, a text, an email or a phone call to celebrate the birthdays of our dear ones who are 80 years and older. Some members whose names are on our birthday list may be younger than 80, but living at home with assistance or residing in a care center or assisted living situation. Some are caregivers themselves. Let's help them know we remember, we care and we love them!

JANUARY BIRTHDAYS

Jan 2 Millie Casperson
Jan 4 Sandy Robinson *
Jan 22 Karen Johnson
Jan 29 Nita Anderson *

FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS

Feb 3 Paul Quie
Feb 24 Jack Parry

MARCH BIRTHDAYS

March 1 Leona Reyelts

*A note from Pastor Barbara: Due to sharper eyes than mine, I published January dates again to include two names I missed last month. And just for good measure, I'm adding March as well.

Centering Prayer Thursdays at 11:00 a.m.

"After saying farewell to them, he went up on the mountain to pray." Mark 6:46

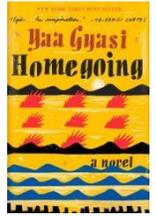
In Centering Prayer we follow the lead of our Lord who retreated from the busyness and the bustle of the world to pray. We rest in God and practice the healing motion of releasing our attachment to our thoughts.

Join us on Zoom every Thursday morning at 11:00 a.m. for a time of check-ins, reflection, and silence in Centering Prayer. Zoom links can be found in the Thursday Epistle or by contacting Nick Tangen at nickt@ulch.org.

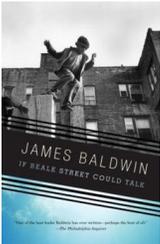
Hope Book Club

On February 14th at 6:00 p.m., the Hope Book Club will meet by Zoom and discuss: *Homegoing*, by Yaa Gyasi.

Homegoing follows the parallel paths of two sisters from Ghana and their descendants through eight generations: from the Gold Coast to the plantations of Mississippi, from the American Civil War to Jazz Age Harlem. Yaa Gyasi's extraordinary novel illuminates slavery's troubled legacy both for those who were taken and those who stayed—and shows how the memory of captivity has been inscribed on the soul of our nation. <https://www.penguinrandomhouse.com/>



Mar. 14: *If Beale Street Could Talk*, by James Baldwin



Please contact Sonja Peterson if you'd like to join us and she will send you the Zoom link. Please also send Sonja your book suggestions at 612-242-8711 or speterson@dunnwald.com

Children's Ministry at University Lutheran Church of Hope

Sunday School on Sundays at 9:45 a.m.

Each Sunday morning kids PreK-Grade 5 are invited to join us on Zoom for a time of check in, Bible study, and games. The Zoom link can be found in the Thursday Epistle and the Sunday Morning Worship email.

We know what a challenge the past year has been for parents and kids, but we are so happy to still have opportunities to connect and share the Gospel with one another. If there are particular ways that our teachers or leaders can support you and your family, please let us know!

Craft Materials for Sunday School Families

The Children's Ministry Team is making craft supplies available to Sunday School families to pick up at church. It also gives families an opportunity to spend time in the sanctuary or chapel.

Please come when the church is open from 9:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. weekdays. We will also make some evenings available - watch for dates in the Thursday Epistle.

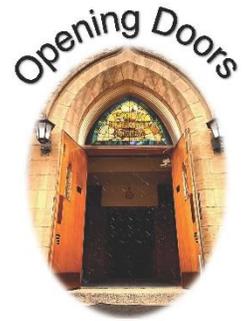
Some simple things to know when you come: Mask up, ring the doorbell to get into the church, sign-in, sanitize your hands, enjoy picking out craft supplies then sign-out. If you have time, spend a moment in the chapel or sanctuary.

Ann Beane, spirit.beane@gmail.com
Children's Ministry Team

February 2021

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2	3	4	5	6
	9:00 AM Zoom - Quilters 7:00 PM Epiphany Study - Hebrews	11:00 AM Zoom - Staff Meeting 6:30 PM MHNA Land Use Committee 6:30 PM Zoom - Personnel Committee 7:15 PM Zoom - Executive Committee	9:00 AM Epiphany Study - Hebrews 7:00 PM Zoom: Holden Evening Prayer Around the World	11:00 AM Zoom - Centering Prayer 6:30 PM Zoom - AA Group		
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
9:30 AM Zoom: Sunday Forum 9:45 AM Zoom: Sunday School Check-In 10:30 AM Worship - Zoom and Livestream	9:00 AM Zoom - Quilters 5:30 PM PEASE Community Foundation 7:00 PM Epiphany Study - Hebrews	11:00 AM Zoom - Staff Meeting 8:00 PM Worship Planning Team	9:00 AM Epiphany Study - Hebrews 5:30 PM Zoom - Compassion Care Team 6:00 PM Zoom - Facilities Team	9:30 AM Zoom - Dorcas Circle 11:00 AM Zoom - Centering Prayer 6:30 PM Zoom - AA Group		
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
9:30 AM Zoom: Sunday Forum (Budget Review) 9:45 AM Zoom: Sunday School Check-In 10:30 AM Worship - Zoom and Livestream 6:00 PM Book Club	9:00 AM Zoom - Quilters	11:00 AM Zoom - Staff Meeting 4:00 PM Sanctuary Coalition Meeting 6:30 PM Zoom - Vision & Governance Board	9:00 AM ASH WEDNESDAY- Sanctuary Open (until 2pm) 6:00 PM Children's Ministry Team Meeting 7:00 PM Ash Wednesday Service (Zoom/Live Stream)	11:00 AM Zoom - Centering Prayer 6:00 PM Zoom - SE Como Hope Connections Group 6:30 PM Zoom - AA Group		
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
9:45 AM Zoom: Sunday School Check-In 10:30 AM Worship - Zoom and Livestream 11:30 AM Zoom: ULCH Annual Meeting	9:00 AM Zoom - Quilters 6:00 PM ZOOM-Bible & Brews	11:00 AM Zoom - Staff Meeting 7:00 PM Zoom - Racial Justice Team	6:00 PM Zoom - Sanctuary & Immigration Team Meeting 7:00 PM Zoom: Lenten Service 7:30 PM Zoom: Choir	11:00 AM Zoom - Centering Prayer 6:30 PM Zoom - AA Group		10:00 AM Oblates Centering Prayer
28						
9:30 AM Zoom: Sunday Forum 9:45 AM Zoom: Sunday School Check-In 10:30 AM Worship - Zoom and Livestream						

Opening Doors Capital February Campaign



Can you feel the energy?

By the time you read this, you should already be well aware of our *Opening Doors Capital Campaign* running from February 1, 2021 to January 31, 2024.

In January the following happened:

1. Our Opening Doors video laid out the goals of our campaign in an inspiring way. Go to www.ULCH.org/openingdoors to watch the video again.
2. You should have received a pledge card in the mail
3. During Sunday services you heard from several people talking about the numerous ways the doors of our church welcome us in and send us out: Garvin Davenport, Leena Haugland, and John Pignatello.

As we write this in mid-January, we don't know how the pledging has gone, but we are confident that it will have been a great success. The energy and love for this congregation and building shines through whenever we talk with each other. Look for another article in the March Visitor that will share whether we reached our goal or not.

If you haven't had a chance to give or pledge, please do so now. Go to www.ULCH.org/openingdoors to fill out a pledge card. If you have any questions, contact the *Opening Doors* co-chairs, Karen Westwood(763-742-0923, westwoodkaren@yahoo.com) or Mark Nelson(612-963-3634, mninmn@live.com).

Campaign Team: Deb Bordsen, John Bablitch, John and Ann Beane, Jack Dant, Garvin Davenport, Mark Nelson (co-chair), and Karen Westwood (co-chair)

Bible & Brews – February 22nd at 6:30 p.m.

Exactly what it sounds like...bring your Bible, your favorite brewed beverage, and a penchant for laid-back, but totally engaging conversations about faith, scripture, and current events. We will meet on Zoom, and the link can be found in the Thursday Epistle. You can also email nickt@ulch.org to retrieve the link.

Life Events

Welcoming children and baptism - We pray for those in our congregation who are awaiting children and holding hope in joyful and painful times, including thanksgiving at the birth of Jasper Henrik, child of Solveig Mebust and grandchild of Kirsten and Bruce Mebust; and Calvin Lee, child of Kari and Matt Olson.

Marriages - We pray for all those preparing for marriage, and for all relationships of commitment.

Deaths - We pray for all who grieve the loss of loved ones, including Hilary and Joey Moliter, Lincoln and London, and Diane Greve, at the death of Merle Tank-Kleinhans, their grandma/great-grandma/former mother-in-law.

Significant Illness - We pray for those living with illness, cancer, recovery, uncertain diagnosis, hospice, chemical dependency and other addictions, and mental health struggles, including Wendell Martinsen (Leona Reyelt's brother), Ruth Lundquist, Jean Hillesland, Stewart Herman, Oswald "Mutt" Doure and infant granddaughter Danai, Steve Ganzkow-Wold, Jack Parry, Steve Schreuder, Miriam Hougen, Edward Nyhus, Peter Ostroushko, Janet Carpenter, Hannah Kiresuk, and Chuck Lewis.

Separation, Divorce, Retirement, Moves, Graduations, New Beginnings, the Pandemic, and this ongoing civil rights movement - God is with us through it all.

Annual Meeting on February 21, 2021

The University Lutheran Church of Hope Annual Congregational Meeting will be held on February 21st after 10:30 a.m. worship, beginning at approximately 11:30 a.m. on Zoom. See the communication in the week prior for the Zoom link for the morning (worship and meeting). Most years this meeting happens in person in Fellowship Hall. Additionally, most years the meeting takes place a bit earlier in February. At its November meeting, the Vision and Governance Board voted to adjust our practice in order to meet by Zoom and also to approve this later date of February 21.

The meeting will include a look back on Hope's ministry in 2020, approval of the 2021 budget, affirmation of congregational leaders for the coming year, and thanksgiving for the steady leadership and contributions (time, leadership, financial, labor, prayer) that ground the community.

The annual report will be available a week prior to the Annual Meeting (by February 11th at the latest). Given these virtual times, the report will be available in pdf on the website. Also, some hard copies will be available for distribution at church (call if you'd like one mailed to you). Since no paperwork can be distributed at the meeting, the booklet will include additional resources.

Congregational treasurer Emma Carpenter will do a budget review during the Sunday Forum (begins at 9:30 a.m. on Zoom) on February 14. Regarding the budget and other items, it will be most effective this year if we can have as much conversation as possible prior to the meeting. If you see something in the budget that you wonder about, seek out Emma or other officers or board members. If you have a big concern or resolution, let us know ahead of time. All of this helps us prepare for a smoother Zoom-based meeting where significant debate or complicated voting procedures will be more challenging or not possible. A small group of leaders has arranged for a method of voting that incorporates Zoom features like "raising your hand," using the chat line, and, for those unable to interact with Zoom in these ways, calling one of the vote "tellers" to cast your ballot. We promise to clearly explain these methods as the meeting begins. Please plan to participate in the meeting at 11:30 a.m. on the 21st and in the weeks prior, review the annual report and reach out with questions.

The Treasurer's Report will be included in the Annual Report later this month.

President's Report

We begin this New Year with hope and expectation for a more just and compassionate political environment. We are witnessing unprecedented political turbulence in this time of transition, and we pray for peace and reconciliation as we move forward with a new administration in Washington. These last 4 years have challenged us as a congregation to embrace even more deeply our faith commitment to a truly just society where all are welcomed, respected, nourished, sheltered, and seen as children of God. Thank you for the many ways that you are blessing our broken community and world with your work toward justice and reconciliation.

The New Year holds anticipation for an end to the worldwide COVID-19 pandemic. These COVID days have been long and challenging as we continue to manage physical separation from friends, family, church, and experiences that create loving and supportive community in our lives. There is great hope on the horizon as the rollout of the various vaccines become more available. It will be a glorious day of celebration when it is safe enough to worship together in-person. We are all immensely grateful to our deeply thoughtful and talented staff and volunteer leaders who have made possible such meaningful virtual worship during this extended pandemic.

Solar Update: As you know, our congregation voted last June to install solar panels on Hope's flat roof and on a canopy in the parking lot adjacent to the building's north entrance. We were anticipating installing the canopy and its array in December and January. Unfortunately, we were informed the week before Christmas that the subcontractor who was to install the canopy structure has pulled out of all of their projects. Sundial Solar, the company we have hired to install our array, had four solar canopies in the pipeline and is now scrambling to find a new subcontractor to build these structures. This is a significant setback, and I will keep you updated on future developments as we continue to pursue the transition of our building's electrical consumption to solar energy. Thank you for your patience. If you have any question, feel free to contact me at tac2180@msn.com or 612-414-3532.

Tim Abrahamson, President

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 all the world.
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