



Hopedale Community News

Volume 32, Number 6

December 2020

Sunday Services (via Zoom) – Service 10:30 am; open 10:20 am

Dec. 6th -- “The Giver of Every Good and Perfect Gift” - Reflections on St. Nicholas Day. On December 6, St. Nicholas Day is celebrated throughout the world. Come join Diane Wright as we reflect on the legends surrounding this fourth-century Christian, and why early December may be the perfect time for us to reflect on his legacy. Service Leader: Linda Amspaugh

Dec. 13th -- “From the Heart: Life Lessons Learned at the Piano” -- “Practice makes perfect.” We all know the famous saying, but what happens when we strive for perfection? Furthermore, where does this fit within the performing arts? Hopedale’s resident pianist Evan Danielson shares what goes on in the mind of a performer on and off the stage and how it differs from popular beliefs. Join us as we discuss the creative process, stage fright, self-development, and what music can teach us about the human condition. Service Leader: Celia Ellison

Dec. 20th – “The Woods are Lovely, Dark and Deep” – 2020 Winter Solstice. At Winter Solstice, the sun reaches its farthest point south from the equator, and in the Northern Hemisphere, this time is known for many hours of darkness, and for candles lit as we anticipate the return of more sunlight. Join Diane Wright as we think about this particular solstice, in this particular year, and the lessons we may find in the celebrations of this event over human history. Service leader: Doris Bergen

Dec. 24th – **Christmas Eve** – Join us for an intergenerational Christmas Eve service at 7 pm over Zoom. We will be combining readings with live and recorded music. If you have something you would like to contribute (playing a carol on your instrument? reading a short story or poem? watching / hearing something on YouTube?) please let Jennifer Blue know by December 20. Jennifer can be reached at bluejm@miamioh.edu or by phone or text at 513-593-3220. Service leaders: Jennifer Blue and Genevieve O’Malley Knight

Dec. 27th – Let’s “visit” another congregation! Details will be forthcoming!

Notes from Hopedale President Curt Ellison

Facilities Planning

Hopedale’s continuing work on a facilities improvement plan is meant to maintain the good momentum evident for meaningful improvements to our facilities while respecting the values of fiscal prudence, timely efficiency, and transparency about decisions. We’re holding funds from a 2018 Chalice Lighter grant and consulting with contractors, financial

institutions, and potential donors about improvement options. An evolving plan responds to proposals of the Needs & Feasibility Committee who consulted broadly with the congregation, Finance Committee recommendations, and Board deliberations. By the end of the year we hope to have clarity about what may lie ahead for productive improvements. Please plan to join the November 30 Congregational Meeting via Zoom, where our progress will be reviewed.

Congregational Meeting

The Hopedale Congregational Meeting will gather *via* Zoom on November 30 at 7:00 p.m.

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83443020176?pwd=bXpRb3ArNUw4bFFlQ1FMaHhVVUM5QT09>

Meeting ID: 834 4302 0176

Passcode: 597680

If you are unable to use Zoom and wish to attend, contact Celia Ellison @ 513-461-1204.

Next Board Meeting

The Hopedale Board will meet *via* Zoom on December 14 at 7:00 p.m. If you wish to attend, email ellisocw@miamioh.edu or call 513/461-1131 for the Zoom invitation.

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Writing just months after the assassinations of Martin Luther King Jr. and Bobby Kennedy . . . [James] Baldwin penned the following . . . “I will flatly say that the bulk of this country’s white population impresses me . . . as being beyond any conceivable hope of moral rehabilitation. They have been white, if I may so put it, too long; they have been married to the lie of white supremacy too long; the effect on their personalities, their lives, their grasp of reality, has been as devastating as the lava which so memorably immobilized the citizens of Pompeii.” These are sharp words from a man who, despite his own experiences with racial bigotry and injustice and his extraordinary perceptive abilities, consistently held out hope for change in his writings, refusing to dip his pen in the well of racial hatred. When he was young, and a black minister told him that he should, under no circumstances, give his seat to a white woman on public transportation, Baldwin [responded] . . . “But what was the point, the purpose, of my salvation if it did not permit me to behave with love toward others, no matter how they behaved toward me?”

. . . But even with his stubborn orientation toward love, Baldwin saw that any progress could come only if whites, and white Christians, specifically, could wrestle with the difficult truths of the intertwined histories of blacks and whites in America. “If we are going to build a multiracial society, which is our only hope,” Baldwin said [in 1968] . . . “then one has got to accept that I have learned a lot from you, and lot of it is bitter, but you have a lot to learn from me, and a lot of that will be bitter. That bitterness is our only hope. That is the only way we get past it.”

From Robert P. Jones, White Too Long: The Legacy of White Supremacy in American Christianity, 2020



RE CONNECTION

Genevieveaok (at) yahoo (dot) com **Genevieve O'Malley Knight, RE Coordinator** 513-593-3275

Religious Education Committee: Jennifer Blue, Peggy Branstrator, Adriane Ruther, and Valerie Elliot
(Board liaison)

Recently -

In November, the elementary kids attended a Zoom Religious Education class about voting and our fifth principle.

Art Re-distribution Project -

In collaboration with the 2020 Hopedale Cookie Exchange, we are seeking to re-distribute some children's artworks. Some refrigerators or display walls are likely overflowing with colorful crafts and creations, and others are sorely in need of just this sort of decoration. Please bring donated artworks to the Cookie Day drop-off time, and pick some up at the pick-up time. Artworks may be purchased by leaving a donation to TOPSS, and of course you may still take home some artwork if you cannot donate at this time. See the "Around Hopedale" section of this newsletter for (distanced and contact-less) drop-off and pick-up details. You may also drop off your artworks at Genevieve's house prior to Cookie Day.

Upcoming -

On January 3, 2021 the Sunday Service will include participation of some of the kids so we will have some Sunday morning Zoom classes in December to prepare. There is also a special art component for kids who choose to join. Join us for Zoom discussion and crafting before church services on December 6th and 20th. Details will be in weekly e-mails.

Notes from the Social Justice Committee

By Liz Woedl and Libby Earle

Social Justice Committee Members: Libby Earle, Liz Woedl, Mary Fox, Peggy Branstrator, Bethany Smith, Russ VieBrooks

There is a danger of being Zoomed to death, but there have been some significant events taking place in the ether, which we would like to report on.

UUJO 2020 Annual Assembly Saturday November 21, 2020

Samuel Prince's opening words portrayed our democracy as being on fire and that only justice could put out that fire. He was followed by Rev. Connie Simon from First Church of Cincinnati. Rev. Connie spoke of the need to repair connections. How do we center the experience of the marginalized? How do we know what Justice looks like? How do we reach out to conservative entrenched persons? Trump voters aren't in a place now to hear. We cannot speak only of racial justice because racial justice is climate justice, is economic justice, is criminal justice...

Following the business meeting Rev. Dr. Susan Smith, Crazy Faith Ministries of Columbus, Ohio spoke. Dr. Smith is a dynamic speaker. (*See links below for recorded speakers. You won't be disappointed!*) She said that like our infection with Covid 19, we

are an infected nation. The seeds of racism were planted in our founding, in the Constitution, and like a virus they never go away; they wait to spring up again. Dr. Smith's latest book, *With Liberty and Justice for Some: The Bible, the Constitution, and Racism in America*, published by Judson Press, 2020 would be an excellent choice for a Hopedale book report.

Morning Opening and Rev Connie Simon

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qOHaoWXrzuM>

Afternoon with Rev Dr Susan Smith

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ochb8ozAtSA>

Business meeting

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1VRF6n91f5s>

Please visit <https://uujo.org/> to complete the UUJO survey on justice priorities for Ohio.

Beloved Conversations

Rev. Kierstin Homblette Allen (Congregational Coordinator for Beloved Conversations) from the Meadville Lombard Theological School participated in a Zoom conversation on 11/16/2020 with area members of UUCGC churches to answer questions about the program Beloved Conversations. This is work that we as individuals and as a congregation need to do if we are to be effective partners with POC in building a just Beloved Community. **The work is a major commitment in time and in money.** We can probably find the money.

The program work is defined as being *within, among, and without*.

The “within” consists of two semesters, both required before moving on to the next level of work. We will be joining the Spring semester and then the Fall semester. Time commitment: 6 lessons every 2 weeks about 8-10 hours of homework (reading, reflection, etc.), 6 discussions in pod groups of 1 ½ hours each, 4 large group facilitated meetings. You may or may not know the members of your pod. Each semester is \$150 each. Each semester has two parallel groups: white folks and black folks because we need to do the internal work separate before we can work together.

The program goes next to work “among” (among the congregation) and then to the work “without” (into the community). This is very much an evolving program.

Please give thought to participating in this program. There are many additional resources that we can use to broaden our understanding of anti-white supremacy work and our place in systemic white supremacy. Perhaps members who are interested in Beloved Conversations need to have a discussion.

Harvest the Power Justice Convergence & Teach-in report

We were not able to attend all sessions. Libby attended three discussions and viewed several films. Please visit <https://huucsj.org/> to learn more about this teach-in. One consistent theme was that the entire history of colonizing this country has been the effort to erase Native Americans. Whether through confiscated and dishonestly “purchased” lands, destruction of communities, disease, enforced poverty, broken treaties, forced assimilation such as Indian Schools, Constitutional denial of both citizenship and Native sovereignty, or the concept of “blood,” the European white population has tried to make the First People non-people. Our task is to learn this history and identify how the practice continues today through cultural and political processes. I think we will learn that our own wellbeing on this shared planet is tied to the wellbeing of Native Peoples.

Environmental Corner

By Peggy Branstrator
(jonwb@earthlink.net)

Oh NO! Not Again?

When HB #6 was first proposed nearly two years ago numerous advocacy groups warned about the many ways this bill would benefit the fossil fuel industry at the expense of the environment and electric ratepayers. The most well known portion of the bill levied a surcharge on electric bills to raise over a billion dollars a year for subsidies to four electric generating facilities – two coal-fired and two nuclear powered – benefitting mostly one company (First Energy). These plants are so old and obsolete that it costs more to generate electricity than the selling price and they were scheduled to be decommissioned. They are highly polluting and/or unsafe. But the bill passed anyway and First Energy scrapped plans to close them.

Earlier this year we learned that \$60 million was spent on bribes to Ohio Legislators to help secure passage and, just last week, the Chair of PUCO (Public Utility Commission of Ohio) resigned after his office was raided by federal officials.

For months Ohio Legislators, Governor DeWine and members of his administration have been promising to totally repeal HB #6. But as of this writing it is still on the books, scheduled to go into effect January 1. A majority of the Ohio House and Senate from both parties have co-sponsored the repeal bills but the leadership has refused to put them up for a vote. As far as I know they are still sitting in committee waiting for hearings to be scheduled.

Every environmental group I belong to (and that's not a small number!) has been trying to unblock the logjam. Citizen action right now is urgently needed. Since HB 6 is due to go into effect January 1 and holiday recesses are imminent, time is short.

Since both current Oxford area representatives (Representative Candice Keller and Senator Bill Coley) voted against HB6 originally and neither is on relevant committees, they are not in a position to do much. But several Hamilton and Cincinnati area representatives are in leadership positions on these committees and contacting them and/or Governor DeWine, could be especially useful.

I attended two webinars about this recently and have contact information, voting records, etc., that I can pass along to anyone willing to write letters or make phone calls. Email me.

Thanks for your patience about this -- it's more than an environmental issue; it's also a social justice issue. It is estimated that HB#6 will "only" cost the average household about \$8 a month but that can be a lot to families that are already struggling, especially now. And most of the benefit goes to one large multimillion-dollar corporation!



Congregational Life

knightcm@miamioh.edu

By Celia Ellison, VP

513-461-1204

I appreciate everyone's grace as we try to provide some of our regular programming in very new ways – some things work better than others!

I am especially thankful for all the ways that our community continues to support one another this year -- walking together; chatting via email, phone or zoom; providing a meal; running an errand or sending a card. Let's keep this up!!

Reminders:

If you want to take a turn with one of the jigsaw puzzles that have been circulating amongst us (Votes for Women or two-sided Frank Lloyd Wright/Falling Water) please let me know and I'll deliver the puzzle to you.

Updated directory should be available and coming to you soon!

Around Hopedale



You are invited to **The Great Cookie Hostage**
hosted by the Social Justice Committee
Also featuring the *Mitten Tree* and *Children's Art*

Saturday December 12, 2020

Hopedale Unitarian Universalist Community
3870 Millville-Oxford Road

Drop off times for cookies 10AM to 1PM
Cookie pick up between 3PM and 6PM

RSVP Libby Earle mearle1945@gmail.com
or call or text 513-319-1540

MASKS AND SOCIAL DISTANCING REQUIRED

Details. For many years we have looked forward to gathering at Jennifer Blue's home for the Hillary Rodham Clinton cookie exchange. Sadly we cannot do that this year, but we can turn our loss into someone else's gain by helping to feed our community. The cookies will be "held hostage" and your donation to the Talawanda Oxford Pantry and Social Services (TOPPS) at pick up will free them!

This year you are invited to bake your wonderful confections and drop them off at Hopedale in the morning between 10AM and 1PM. Mark the container with your name and approximately the number of cookies and if they contain any know food allergens (nuts, eggs, dairy, gluten). Also note if you have any food allergies. We always need a few extra so that we can take cookies to our folks who can't get out. The committee will divide

up the cookies and pack in the containers that we furnish, giving everyone an assortment for you to pick up in the afternoon.

Also, you can continue to support our community by bringing donations for the Mitten Tree of mittens, hats, and small items like socks and underwear.

New this year: Children's Art. You can cheer things up at home by making a donation to purchase art from Hopedale kids (big and little) with proceeds also going to the TOPSS.

DUE TO THE EXTREME RISE IN COVID 19 CASES IN OHIO, WE MUST LIMIT PHYSICAL CONTACT.

Between 3PM and 6PM you can return to Hopedale to pick up your assortment. When you arrive at the church, call Libby Earle's cell phone 513 319-1540. You will be told when you can enter and maintain social distance OR we will run your cookies out to your car, collect your donation and pick up mitten tree items. If you remain in your car, please let us know if you would like any of the Children's Art.

If you come in, your cookies will be waiting in the foyer. Knock on the door if you don't have a phone. You may also leave items for the mitten tree there. Children's Art will be displayed on bulletin boards. There will be a donation basket for "Cookie Ransom" and "Children's Art" in the foyer.

Staying Connected

A Message from Rev. Susan Frederick-Gray, President, Unitarian-Universalist Association

"As we anticipate the holiday season and create new ways to connect and celebrate this time, let's remember the joy and love present in our hearts and in our communities. Let us also make space for grief and honor the memories of those who have passed away this year. May we feel the unseen but real threads that binds us all. We are not alone. We are powerful. Our communities are powerful. And we belong to each other.

"In this season, may you find restorative space to lean into what you love and what makes you feel connected. May we find strength in our faith, and in the foundation of our families, friends and the people who came before us. While there is much work ahead, may we also make room to breathe and rest, and time to connect with our community and those we love."

Happenings at Hopedale

"The Great Cookie Hostage" event takes place on Saturday, December 12, 2020. See details in "Around Hopedale."

The HUUC Board will meet on Monday, December 14, 2020 at 7:00 pm, via Zoom. Contact Curt Ellison (ellisocw@miamioh.edu) if you would like to the Zoom invitation.

Beyond Hopedale

Guest at Your Table 2020 -- “The Meaning of Home.”

For many of us, our relationship with home has intensified this year. The pandemic has given many of us new appreciation for, and concerns about, the places we call home and the centrality of these places in our lives. This year during Guest at Your Table, we invite you to witness stories of our partners around the world as they tell you about home. The stories are available at the UUA website – UUA.org.

The tradition of Guest at Your Table is to put a box on your table and, at each meal, put in a few coins -- from Thanksgiving through New Year’s Day. If you would like to participate there are different ways to do so: If you like the symbolism of putting change in a box on your table at mealtime, please do so – there was a template in the weekly email sent November 20th to make your own box – or contact Celia Ellison who will bring you a box. Instead of Hopedale collecting all the change we ask that you turn your change into a check and mail a check made out to HUUC to our Treasurers’ address, indicating a GAYT donation. Then the Treasurers will make one payment to the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee (UUSC) from Hopedale. Or you can simply write a check and send it directly to the UUSC, indicating that it is a GAYT donation. Send to Guest at Your Table – UUSC, PO Box 808, Newark, NJ 07101. Donations should be sent by mid-January.

Support Hopedale

Update on status of pledge payments: as of October 31st (one-third of the way through our fiscal year) we have received 30% of pledges for this year. Let’s keep it up!

Pledge payments or donations can be made to Hopedale UU Community by mailing them to our Treasurers: Richard and Judy Schlub, 2849 Stone Mill Way, Hamilton, OH 45011.

