



The VINEYARD

Newsletter of The Lockport
United Church of Christ

An Open and Affirming Congregation

*Open to God's Spirit,
we reach out in Love to the World
and invite All to journey with us*

APRIL – MAY 2024



Welcoming Pastor Hope!

We are so pleased to welcome Pastor Hope Schwartz as our new pastor. She began April 1, and was with us for her first worship service on April 7.

The Council has contracted with Pastor Hope to be our Designated Pastor for one year, with the expectation of calling her to a permanent position at the end of that year, or possibly before.

Pastor Hope will be working half-time, 20-25 hours per week. This will be a shared ministry, with her other half-time hours being spent with Epiphany UCC in Clarence Center. A shared ministry means that we will need to be considerate of her time, as she will have obligations at both churches. The most obvious thing is that she can't be in two places at once on Sunday morning, so both churches will be changing their worship time. Our worship will be moving to 11:00 am.



*So please plan to be with us
to welcome Pastor Hope
in the upcoming Sundays!*

And Remember ...
our Sunday worship service has now
changed to the start time of 11:00 am.

WELCOME OUR NEW PASTOR!

An Itty Bit about Me
by Pastor Hope



My Story

On June 21, 2011, I was invited to attend a worship service at a local church. It was in this service that I had my first known encounter with God, and it changed my life forever. Although I was not sure what to expect as I walked into the church, I hoped for the possibility that my life would never be the same again. And since then, my life has never been the same! God showed up as a Way Maker, showing me that there was another way to be, another way to go, and another way to live. In that moment, God gave me a new beginning.

My Calling

Because God had given me a new beginning I feel called by God to make it possible for others too! I felt compelled and still do, to create opportunities for all people to experience a life-changing, life-giving, and live-saving encounter with God. I want nothing more than to share about God to others, so that all people could experience and encounter God in their own lives. In the biblical scriptures, the call from God is always a call to action. And so, I acted in faithful response to the call to ordained pastoral ministry through religious and theological education, obtaining a Bachelor of Arts in Religion from Houghton College and a Master of Divinity from Northeastern Seminary. All of this led me to the United Church of Christ.

My Passion

My passions within ministry were born from personal experiences in my life. It is God who had turned my pains into passions in ministry, using what I have experienced to help others in the midst of the same or similar struggles and suffering. In likeness to Jesus' own passion, God has used my pain to foster passions for ministry that are near and dear to my heart. Of greatest significance to me is making a difference in the world through actions of faith that meet the needs of the most vulnerable, oppressed, and marginalized persons in society. In the words of John Wesley, my greatest passion is to "do all the good I can, by all the means I can, in all the ways I can, in all the places I can, at all the times I can, to all the people I can, as long as I can."



A Message from Pastor Hope

One of my favorite races to run was the Run for Rover 5k at LaSalle Park in Buffalo in 2013. Unbeknownst to me, LaSalle Park is a dog park. Because of this, there were many dogs present, as participants and recipients of the services provided by the vendors! Benefitting the Pet Emergency Fund, this 5k race was a race for all the animals in our lives.

Because I love dogs, I was excited to experience the beautiful chaos of the dog park. And what I saw in the dog park was **an image of the church**. Yeah – you read that right! Just like at the dog park, people come to church from all walks of life:



Some of us have grown up in the church and know everything about the way the church was and the church is and the way church could be. Just like the dogs in the dog park know where the best places to dig, the best places to play, and the best shady tree, those who've been here for a while can help those who are new find their place among us.

Some of us have come from other churches and bring with us some hurts. Those of us with hurts from other churches might be a bit apprehensive coming into a new church. Just like a dog who was injured in the dog park, it will take time to build trust and feel safe again.

Some of us have known each other for awhile. Like at the dog park, those of us who know one another are aware of the likes and dislikes, the struggles and triumphs, and the gifts and graces of members of the church. We know where they have been and where they are now and where they want to be in the future. Through our relationships with one another, we can help each other live into all that God has for us.

Some of us have come from other churches. Like at the dog park, the spiritual homes we've had on our journey have formed and fashioned us into who we are today. In this way, we can learn from the insights and ideas gleaned from experiences elsewhere, just like the experience gleaned from playing in different dog parks.

Y'all, the Church is like a dog park. Everyone is welcome to come! No matter where you have been, no matter what you believe, and no matter who you are! Everyone can be themselves in the church, just like in the dog park where some dogs are shy, some dogs are outgoing, and some dogs are territorial. Yet without any one of us, the church or the dog park wouldn't be the same! We need those who have been coming to the dog park for years and we need those who have just started coming to the dog park. Those who have been here for awhile know what is familiar to the congregation, yet those who have just started coming bring their own ideas and insights to help break us out of our rigidity and routines. Together, we can transform the church and the dog park into all that God has planned for us today, tomorrow, and forevermore.

Let us be like the dogs in the dog park who come just as they are, but leave each week changed by having been at the dog park.

Let us be like the dogs in the dog park who come with their favorite toys and share them with others by sharing our gifts and graces in the church.

Let us be like the dogs in the dog park who come to play together and spread the excitement and energy of fun, faith, and fellowship far and wide!

Abundant Blessings, Pastor Hope



*Worship Themes for
April and May*

Eastertide Season

April 7 thru May 12

Jesus appears to his disciples following the resurrection with messages of hope and promise for them and for us.

Pentecost Sunday

May 19

The early church is born when the Holy Spirit is visited upon the believers with wind and fire!

Trinity Sunday

May 26

We celebrate the Holy Trinity ...
God, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

Free Dinner Schedule

Edna and her crew of helpers continue to prepare and serve free dinners each month to assist those in our community who struggle with food insecurity.

The dinners are served on the 4th Wednesday of each month, between 5:00 and 5:30 PM, and available as take-out only.

Upcoming dinners are planned for **April 24 and May 22**. The menus have not been announced yet, but you can sure they will be good! If you can help serve or make desserts, please contact Edna to volunteer.



*Help Us
Keep In Touch*

E-mails are a great way for us to get in touch with members when there is a need – Snow cancellations, a meeting change, etc. If we don't have yours, please take a moment to send an e-mail note to Cyndy, then we'll have yours on file when we need to be in touch quickly.



THE VINEYARD

A publication of The Lockport
United Church of Christ
98 East Avenue
Lockport, New York 14094
(716) 433-2545

*The Vineyard is published
bi-monthly to keep members
and friends informed about
programs of the church
and news of its people.*

Submissions Welcome
**Deadline for Next Issue:
May 19, 2024**

CHECK OUT OUR WEBSITE

Our complete newsletter and lots of other information is available on our website at:

lockportucc.com

*RECEIVE YOUR NEWSLETTER
VIA E-MAIL*

If you would like to receive your newsletter via e-mail, just send your e-mail address to Cyndy. It's a quick and easy way to get your newsletter, and it will save the church money.



Like us on
facebook

HOW TO REACH US

Church Office

98 East Ave. 433-2545
lockportunited@roadrunner.com

***If you are Hospitalized
or in need of Pastoral Care***
please contact
the Church Office

Happy Spring!
To Our
Shut-in Members

Lucinda Hohle - Jean Boots
Absolut Care - 4540 Lincoln Dr.
Gasport, NY 14067



Linda Layer - Kevin O'Connor
Mt. View Assisted Living
5465 Upper Mountain Rd.
Lockport, NY 14094

David Payne
Lockport Rehab & Health Care Center
909 Lincoln Avenue - Lockport, NY 14094

Thank you from Pastor Rick

Thank you so much for the many good wishes and kind gestures as I return to retirement! I have been deeply blessed by the experience of serving as your pastor for the past two and a half years. You have shown me what a deeply committed small congregation can do to serve its community while learning and growing spiritually.

It was such a pleasure to see everyone who showed up on Palm Sunday for worship and the farewell dinner afterward! The meal was delicious, and the many expressions of love were deeply appreciated by both Leroy and myself.

We wish you much joy as your new pastor joins you on the first Sunday of April. I anticipate hearing many good things in the future about the ministry of Lockport UCC as you move forward in faith!

Peace and much love,

Rick





**Bible
Study
Groups**

Tuesday Bible Study
Our **Tuesday group** continues to meet at 10:00 am in the Mayflower Room. See Nancy Sy if you would like to join them or need more information.

Thursday Bible Study

Our **Disciple group** also meets weekly on Thursday evenings, 5:30 to 7:00 pm, in the Chapel. If you'd like to join us, please let Cyndy know so we can have study materials prepared for you.

Strengthen the Church UCC Offering

God calls us into community. One where "no matter who you are or where you are on life's journey, you're welcome." God wants our whole Christian movement to be a "big tent" where all can be genuinely welcomed.

The Strengthen the Church Offering supports congregations and initiatives that help us live into the United Church of Christ's "big tent" vision. Funds raised support leadership development, new churches, youth ministry, and renewal initiatives in existing congregations. Your conference and the national ministries work together to use these funds for projects that matter now and for the future of our movement. Through this offering, we further our commitment to being a multi-racial/multi-cultural church that is accessible to all.

We will be accepting donations to the Strengthen the Church offering throughout May. There will be offering envelopes in the narthex at church, or just mail your gift to the church. Please make checks payable to Lockport UCC.



Our Church Cemetery

Plots in St. Peter's Cemetery are available for \$800 each. If you would like to purchase plots, or have other questions about the cemetery, just call Dan Holler and he will be happy to help you with that.

Weekly Vine

In the Weekly Vine, we share the full sermon from that week, some highlights from our service, and also any prayer concerns or news that comes up. **If we don't have your e-mail, you will not receive it unless you contact us.**

If you would like to receive the Weekly Vine, just contact Cyndy and provide your e-mail address. If you are receiving it and would rather not, let Cyndy know that, too.



*General Fund
Financial Summary*

**February 1
thru March 24**

Income from	
Pledges & Offerings	4,400.00
Total Expenses	10,796.32

If you have questions about our finances, please feel free to contact me. I am always happy to speak with you.

Cyndy Corrieri, Treasurer

Little Food Pantry

Please continue your generous support of our little food pantry in the front yard of the church. The need is great, and thanks to you, we are doing a lot to help needy families in our own community.

Little Library

Our little library is also very popular. Please refrain from bringing any adult books at the present time because we have a large supply on hand. We continue to need children's books, however, so if you have an opportunity to donate those, they would be most appreciated.

RIP Medical Debt Relief

Please don't forget our ongoing mission to help alleviate medical debt for people who are living with the burden of crushing debt from medical bills.

This organization is able to buy \$100 worth of debt for every dollar donated.

Change and small donations are welcome, so please keep adding to our little collection box in the narthex.



April Birthdays

4 Edna Stubbs
13 Tammy Dodge
25 Tom Zuercher



May Birthdays

3 Susan Hagenbach
3 Don Henning
5 Elaine Babcock
18 Linda VanderWeide
31 Lucinda Hohle



5-31-1997

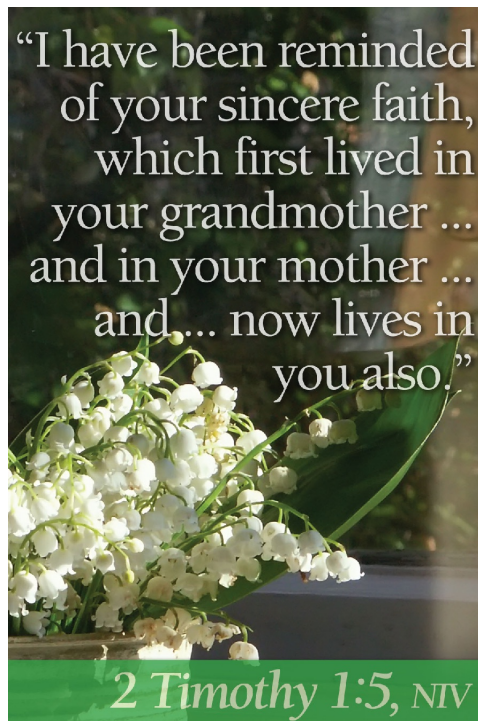
Mike & Christine Derby-Cuadrado

In Our Prayers

Donna Dye-Sholk's mother passed away on February 10.

Bobbi Gritzmacher & Linda Rongo's mother passed away on March 18.

*We send our condolences and
offer our prayers to these families.*



Mother's Day May 12th

*Happy Mother's Day
to all of the Mothers,
Grandmothers, and
women who have
been mother figures
in our lives.*

*Easter Sunday is over ...
but that is just the beginning ...*

To Begin at the Beginning
by Martin B. Copenhagen

Whatever else the disciples would come to understand about what had happened, they knew from the start that the resurrection was not simply about what had happened to Jesus; it is about what happens to all who trust in Jesus, and about what can happen to all who claim this story as their own.

The resurrection is not simply the assurance that Jesus was victorious over death; it is also a promise that we can share in that victory with him.

The resurrection does not mean only that Jesus was triumphant over evil; it also assures us that evil will not be ultimately triumphant in our own lives.

The resurrection is a promise offered to all.

Saint Jean Vianney said of Easter, "Today one grave is open, and from it has risen a sun which will never be obscured, which will never set, a sun which bestows new life."



PENTECOST

*On the day of Pentecost ... all of them
were filled with the Holy Spirit ...*

Exuberant Spirit of God
by Jim Berry

Exuberant Spirit of God,
bursting with the brightness of flame
into the coldness of our lives
to warm us with a passion for justice
and beauty,
we praise you.

Exuberant Spirit of God,
sweeping us out of the dusty
corners of our apathy
to breathe vitality into our
struggles for change,
we praise you.

Exuberant Spirit of God,
speaking words that leap over
barriers of mistrust
to convey messages of truth
and new understanding,
we praise you.

Exuberant Spirit of God,
flame
wind
Speech,
burn
breathe
speak to us
fill your world with justice
and with joy.