



To the Fellowship of Believers, with connection to God and to each other through Hope United Methodist Church of Edwardsburg, blessings to you in the Grace of Christ.

Dear friends, the time is upon us: **The Vote!**

Some of us have been dreading it, some deeply desiring it, some upset we didn't do it sooner, some wishing we wouldn't do it at all. This month, Hope United Methodist Church will hold a membership-wide polling on our desired direction relative to human sex and sexuality. Individual members will have the opportunity to select either a Traditional Path or an Inclusive Path, that we as a church might better understand who we are and where we are going.

Our congregation represents a diverse spectrum of theological understandings and practices, and just like the vote itself, some hold firm Traditional beliefs, some bold Inclusive beliefs, most land somewhere in the middle with slight leanings one way or another, and many wish we just wouldn't talk about it at all. Let us first, before any other discussion or steps forward, hold tightly to the fact that we have been drawn together as one body in Christ, for reasons beyond our theological leanings, but because of our faith in Christ Jesus alone. And may that knowledge of God calling us one, despite our differences, give us the courage to move forward in grace.

Beyond all the turmoil surrounding the greater United Methodist Church, we at Hope UMC are creating time and space for this vote to take place for two basic and powerful reasons: to know who we are, and to know where we are going.

First, it is essential to our faith and future to know who we are and the diversity that exists within our fellowship. Many at Hope have a few people with whom they are deeply connected, several people they know and love but aren't quite so deeply connected, and even more people with whom they simply exchange Sunday morning pleasantries. While we likely know the stances of our closest friends, it is impossible for us to truly know the hearts of every smiling face in this place. While the vote won't fully disclose every individual theology in the church, it will give us a solid grasp of the leanings and diversity within our church body. It is essential to faith for us to realize that we represent a spectrum of understanding, to know about what the ratio of those understandings are within this body, and to realize that that ratio is different within every church, worldwide... but it is always a ratio... always a spectrum. It gives us identity. It allows individuals within the church to know there are others, on either side of their stance, making up this community of faith. It allows us to properly express, to newcomers and to the community, where we stand and where we are going. And, when we identify as diverse in understanding, we gain grace for accepting other churches with different ratios along the same spectrum. *(Continued on next page)*

Second, it is essential to our faith and future that we claim that identity as our path forward. As individuals, when the church claims its identity and path, one may then decide if that identity fits their personal theology and if it fits who they are and where they wish to go, rather than just sitting, wondering, and receiving no solid answers. As a church, it gives us not just a path forward but a gauge to determine the speed at which we ought to move in that direction. If the results reveal us to be 90% to 10%, in either direction, it becomes clear to us that we can take swift, grace-filled steps in that direction. If the results are 55%/45%, in either direction, we must claim that diverse identity and slowly proceed with grace. And if the results 70%/30%, in either direction, we know to take intentional, graceful steps in a definite direction at an intentional, graceful pace.

If you are a member of Hope United Methodist Church, you are invited to vote in this matter. Your vote matters, and we hope you will take this opportunity to prayerfully cast your ballot. Voting will take place at the following times:

Sunday, October 2nd, 8am to Noon

Wednesday, October 5th, 6pm to 8pm

Sunday, October 9th, 8am to Noon

Here is a sample of the ballot, to help you be prepared to cast your vote:

Please choose the statement that best represents your vision for the future of Hope United Methodist Church.

☐ Hope United Methodist Church should maintain the **Traditional View** of scripture and our theology should indicate that homosexuality is inconsistent with Christian teaching. As such, Hope United Methodist Church will not accept practicing homosexual clergy or allow the performance of homosexual marriage.

☐ Hope United Methodist Church should adopt the **Inclusive View** of scripture and our theology should indicate that all are welcome to participate in all aspects of faith. As such, Hope United Methodist Church will accept LGBTQ+ clergy and will allow LGBTQ+ marriage within the church.

Please, if you have any questions, comments, or concerns, don't hesitate to reach out to Pastor Nate @ 586.229.567 or @ pastornatestarkey@gmail.com. Or, if you are available to help with the vote witnessing, processing, or counting, we welcome you to do so.

Wherever we may go, may we go in the Peace and Grace of Christ Our Lord.

In His Love,

Pastor Nate Starkey

And I am convinced that nothing can ever separate us from God's love. Neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither our fears for today nor our worries about tomorrow—not even the powers of hell can separate us from God's love. ³⁹No power in the sky above or in the earth below—indeed, nothing in all creation will ever be able to separate us from the love of God that is revealed in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 8:38-39)



ALISON STRYCKER	10/01
JOYCE PROCTOR	10/01
TERI GIPSON	10/03
CHAD REID	10/05
MELANIE REID	10/05
BARRY OBERLING	10/06
GENEVA WEINGART	10/07
DALE BLUNIER	10/07
JERROLD R JONES	10/07
PAT STOVER	10/07
JULIA SHEETS	10/08
DAMION CORP	10/08
CAROL UDELL	10/08
JACK WEILER	10/09
RYAN HILL	10/09
DEBBY DITSON	10/09
JAMES SNYDER	10/09
VINCE DUIS	10/10
PAT OWENS	10/10
BRENDA MORTIMER	10/11
BRIAN BURKS	10/12
CAMDEN ANDERSON	10/13
CARSON MANFRED	10/14
SUSIE EDGERTON	10/14
SUSAN MILLER	10/14
POLLY RIENKS (BOTT)	10/16
KRISTEN WEGNER	10/16
DAVID HOIEN	10/16
EVAN KNISS	10/16
SUE RINEHART	10/17
MELLODY BUZALSKI	10/17
JOHN UDELL	10/18
SHIRLEY MASTEN	10/18
CAMRYN CLAIRDAY	10/20
VICKI BAKER	10/21
SANDY ACKELS	10/22
CLIFF WILLIAMSON	10/22
WENDY EMMETT	10/23
CHEYENE MASTEN	10/23
BRISTOL BORN	10/24
MICHELE BLACK	10/24
DELLA HOLDREAD	10/27
TRAVIS STRONG	10/27
SARA CLAIRDAY	10/28
BEN MORGAN	10/29
KEVIN MARLING	10/30
TIFFANY MANFRED	10/31
TOM HEBRON	10/31



JANICE & DAN ROSS	10/01
PAT & GARY OWENS	10/02
VICKIE & RON FLICK	10/02
DACIA & ED KIRKLAND	10/02
TIFFANY & TONY MANFRED	10/04
KATHY & CHARLIE DEW	10/05
DIANE SEIFERT & MARTY EBY	10/07
SHERRY & DOUG SAYLES	10/12
JULIE & ROBERT J. BYRD	10/12
ANNA & TONY LEININGER	10/13
DONNELDA & JOHN LOHR	10/15
KELLY & VINCE DUIS	10/17
ASHLEY & RANDY JOHNSON	10/18
PAM & JIM CHAPMAN	10/19
MELANIE & GEORGE REID	10/20
KATHY & BOB FULLER	10/20
SUE & MIKE MORGA	10/21
MARY ANN & BILL DAVIS II	10/23

Hope's online Prayer Chain has faithfully continued during the pandemic. To have a prayer concern added call **Melissa at Hope, 269-663-5321**, and leave your request on her answering machine. Or email your request to Marti Bartels, **mbbartels@aol.com**.

SHUT-IN PRAYERS

Those Hope members listed below are restricted to home or nursing facility. The term shut-in reflects that their condition warrants "shut inside" or not able to leave the home on a regular basis. Should you have additional people to add to the list please call the church at 269-663-5321 Ext. 2.

Please remember these people in prayer: Bob Fuller, Ardith & Carl Higley, Verlaine Hoffman, Sherry Leininger, Grace Werner, Ray and Nourma White.

FINANCE QUESTIONS?????

If you have a question about how the church finances work, please contact Dawn Weingart at extension 6 or Pastor Nate at extension 8 at 269-663-5321. We also have summaries of the information that has been published in prior newsletters in the office.

FINANCES

Current Hope Financial Information Month of August Ministry Fund Summary

Ministry Fund Donations: \$ 16,331
 Ministry Fund Expenses: \$-15,413
 Surplus for the Month: \$ 918

Monthly Budget amount: \$ 18,208

All August bills have been paid. Our Ministry Fund balance is \$66,568. Thank you for your continued support!

August Mortgage & Mission Fund Allocation:

\$167.10 Missions
\$1,503.85 Capital Improvements
 \$1,670.95 Total Donations

Parsonage Mortgage Update:

\$998.58 Regular Mortgage Payment - Mortgage Fund

Current Parsonage Mortgage Balance = \$128,093 after the September 2022 Payment.

Our projected payoff date is August 2036, which is 45 months earlier than the original payoff date!

Did you miss the June Time to Talk?

We had a great chance to discuss how the church finances work and discuss our vision for Hope's Future. Handouts are available in the office if you missed picking up one at church.



Messy church is now open to all ages!

Join us October 23rd at 6pm! We'll have dinner together, play together, then split into appropriate age groups for discussions and fun!

SEPTEMBER LT MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

Financial Report: Church finances have improved over the past couple of months and expenses are being met. The LT discussed ideas for additional funding for Capital Improvements including the potential redirecting of designated funds, such as the Steeple Fund and the Memorial Fund. It was noted that application has been made for an unclaimed fund in the amount of \$7,000.00.

Trustee Report: The LT voted unanimously to replace the entire roof over Reese Hall. After reviewing the submitted proposals, the LT has determined that Mike Neely has offered the best price and lifetime guarantee of the shingles, and will contract with him for the installation of the new roof.

General Report: The Annual Charge Conference has been scheduled for November 2, 2022, at 7:30 p.m. Although the conference will take place via Zoom, the congregation is invited to attend and participate. Details will follow regarding the location (Sanctuary or Reese Hall) in which the Charge Conference will take place.

Verification of Membership commenced on September 18th and another opportunity for member verification will be offered on Sunday, September 24. This is to ensure that members only will be voting regarding Inclusivity on October 2 and October 9. An additional voting opportunity will be offered on Wednesday, October 5, 2022, from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. at the church.

Pastor's Report: Pastor Nate indicated that he has reached out to several homebound members and persons who are now residing in care facilities, by phone call or personal visitation in order to better engage and connect with their specific needs. The LT will be looking to replace four (4) team members commencing January 2023, as four current members will be completing their terms at the end of 2022. Please advise Pastor Nate or Jim Weingart if you are interested in serving on the Leadership Team.

MISSIONS UPDATE

Thank you for your generous support of the Ministry Fund & Missions Fund. Your generosity has allowed us to bless others. Here is a summary of how we have used these funds locally and globally through September 15 this year:

\$10,000.00	Mission Support in Michigan Conference Ministry Share (\$17,503.50 total Ministry Fund)
\$1,166.56	Michiana Family Center Fundraiser
\$992.50	Hope Emergency Fund – 12 Families assisted so far this year
\$720.00	2 Ethiopian School Children Support
\$600.00	Ukraine/International Humanitarian Support
\$420.00	Annual Conference donation – UMCOR - Bishop Judith Craig Children's Village, Haiti Artisans for Peace International, International Disaster Response
\$100.00	UMCOR - U.S. Disaster Response – KY Tornadoes & Denver Fires
Countless	Edwardsburg Food Pantry – matching gift cards, food, personal care supplies

Look for further Financial Mission opportunities for CROP Walk, Stuff a Bus and Christmas Offerings.



Family Game Night

Friday October 14th at 6pm

All are welcome!

Bring a craft or game and snack to share if you'd like!

Keep our Service People in Prayer



Joshua Adams, Charles Berry, Andre Brower, Phil Bryden, Sam Chaput, Jonathan

Ditson, James Gallo-way, Justin Gerou, Dakota Kizer, Andrea Long, Alyssa Malott, Josh Marner, Jay Moore, Brandon Morgan, Jessica Ramus, Jason Salter, Dylan Smallwood, Jeff Starr, and Tyler Wilson.

To keep the list of service people accurate, would you please notify Melissa in the Hope office or Shirley Andrews if your listed loved one is no longer serving. OR if a name should be added, let us know. Thanks.

Trunk or Treat

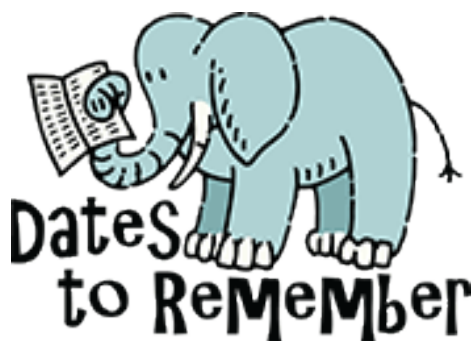


October 30th at 2pm

Trunk designers and candy donations needed!



Wednesday, October 12th 3-5pm
Here in the Hope parking lot
 Volunteers welcome, please arrive at 2:30pm!



- Pastor Appreciation Month
- World Communion :
- Sunday, October 2, 2022
- Reformation Sunday,;
- October 30, 2022
- Reformation Day, October 31, 2022

WHO ARE YOU

I walk a path and people I see as I walk that path.
 Sometimes one may stop to share a word or two.
 Others pass me by and journey along their own path.
 People are all different with different missions on minds.

I walk about with a smile on my face that all can see.
 Some see it and recognize it as a joyous spirit.
 Others may smile back and pass me by, not interested.
 People see differently the true meaning of this smile.

I sit with a tear in my eye from my pain I feel inside.
 Most nervously pass by turning away down their path.
 One may stop and reach out a hand or share a word.
 People don't know if the pain is in my heart or my body.

I sit alone anxiously awaiting a conversation to have.
 Most have busy lives and don't take time to share.
 One may stop by or call and share a word or two.
 People are occupied with their lives and their own paths.

Each day my mood may change or remain the same.
 I'll search each day for someone to fill the void I feel.
 Good or bad I seek to find fellowship with someone.
 My mind or my Spirit question where to find answers.

We are all people with lives to live and paths to follow.
 The choice is ours for how we search for fellowship.
 The need is always there to not feel alone and lost.
 I need to love all people whether stopped or passes by.

Psalm 145:18 *Lord is near to all who call on Him.*

Jer 33:3 *Call to me and I will answer you.*

Isa 41:10 *So do not fear for I am with you. Do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you. I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.*

We are never alone and can always, with the help of the Holy Spirit, call on God for help and fellowship.
 May you find God's Love in all circumstances of your life whether through another's blessed words or the Holy Spirit within you. *Deb and Tony Lang*

Campfire Sing-along

Saturday October 15th at 6pm

Rides from the parking lot to fire available.

