

Mt. Hope United Church of Christ

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Whitsett, NC 27377

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Church Pastor

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Accompanist

Ekin Ustunel
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Interim Music Director

Susan Finley

Church Secretary

Stacey Martin
Office hours:
Monday – Friday
9 am – 1 pm

Consistory President

Dallas Belvin

Board of Christian Education

Susan Finley, Director

Outreach & Digital Technology Director

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Mt. Hope Messenger



2021

“Zechariah said to the angel, ‘How will I know that this is so? For I am an old man, and my wife is getting on in years.’ The angel replied, ‘I am Gabriel. I stand in the presence of God, and I have been sent to speak to you and to bring you this good news. But now, because you did not believe my words, which will be fulfilled in their time, you will become mute, unable to speak, until the day these things occur.’” ~Luke 1:17

Silence is an essential character in the birth of Jesus. Even before we learn that Mary was expecting Jesus, Zechariah, Jesus’ uncle, was silenced. For the longest time I believed that Zechariah was being punished for his unbelief. I no longer hold that belief. Could it be that Zechariah was silenced so as not to spew his knee-jerk explanation for the miracle happening in his life? Could it be that Zechariah was too quick to talk, too quick to size up God’s goodness? Too quick to explain away God’s mercy? Could it be that God’s work in the world would have a greater chance to take root in the hearts of those around him if he was silenced for just a little bit? Could it be that Zechariah might have missed the meaning of the angel’s appearance if he had been allowed to talk too soon?

Kathleen Norris, in her book, Amazing Grace, tells a story about teaching noise and silence to her elementary-age art students. “When my hand is up, make all the noise you want to make; when I lower my hand, make no noise at all. Be completely silent.” Each of her classes were able to create complete silence, including no silly faces or holding their breath. In all cases but one, the

classrooms of children always found silence, except for the students who were being barked at all day by a burnt-out teacher (it can happen to the most well-intended among us) a heap of rules, so many that the children had forgotten how to listen. Listening is a prerequisite of silence.

You might think that a lesson on noise and silence would be necessary in music class, however, holding silence brought a level of creativity to her art students that was simply stunning. One boy drew an image, “as still and silent as a tree.” Another third grader wrote a poem turned prayer, “Silence is spiders spinning their webs, it’s like a silkworm making its silk. Lord, help me to know when to be silent.”

On Christmas Eve we will join together and light the Christ candle, hold our own candles in the midst of our own darkness and sing together, “Silent Night.” I began writing this piece on silence in the middle of a high school wrestling match which was anything but silent, a reminder that in the hustle and bustle of Bethlehem in the middle of the census, silence was probably pretty hard to find. The world might not have been silent, but our souls can be silent, ready to receive the goodness of God no matter where we are.” But it takes practice. I wouldn’t advise starting the practice at a wrestling match (wink, wink.)

Silence sharpens the tips of our spiritual ears. What would it look like this Christmas if silence was a character in our Christmas story? Thomas A Kempis writes, “give some thought to what you would do with some time off; hopefully you would review your past time with God. What else? Lock up ye older curiosity shop. Devote more time to reading your spiritual books than your survival manuals. Withdraw from casual conversations and leisurely pursuits. Don’t contract for new ventures, and don’t gossip about old ones. All these having been done you will find more than enough time for meditation with God.

“And in a tiny town in North Dakota a little girl offered a gem of spiritual wisdom that just might help us all when life becomes too noisy and distractions overwhelm us: “Silence reminds me to take my soul with me wherever I go.” Whether in a crowded store or at home in a comfortable chair; whether in a noisy wrestling match or having a quiet cup of coffee, you will always be there. Shhhh...I think I see God’s presence, tall and strong as a tree. No, wait, God is there. Right there in the cries of that baby. And right there, in the toddler’s

delightful squeals. And God is there in the middle of marriage. And God is there in the trying days as teenagers test the waters of growing up. And God is right there...and we don’t want to miss it.

Courage for your Advent journey—
Pastor Kristin

Mt. Hope United Church of Christ Consistory Meeting 10-14-21

Members Present: Gloria Apple, Lorie Arrington, Dallas Belvin, David Blakesley, Janet Ellis, Cathy Gossett, Bob Hamlett, Joe Hughes, Cole Levens, and Jim Turner

Pastor Present: Pastor Kristin

Trustees: Freddie Gossett, Dean Greeson and Stan Buff

Maintenance: Bennie Gerner

Board of Christian Education: Susan Finley

The meeting was called to order at 6:06pm. A quorum was established and Dallas welcomed all and opened with prayer.

Steeple Leak – Bennie Gerner and Bob Hamlett reported the final figures they have and we need to make a deposit to get on the list.

Land – We swapped land and also sold 2-1/2 acres @ \$5000.00 per acre. These transactions were with the Consistory’s approval.

Lighting of the Christ Candle

We celebrate our past:

Approval of the Minutes: Lorie Arrington made a motion to accept the minutes as presented and Bob Hamlett seconded. Motion carried.

Treasurer’s Report: Joe Hughes presented a report on September. The beginning balance for September was \$167,690.34 and the monthly income was \$17,439.44. Expenses were \$25,734.15 which resulted in an ending balance of \$159,395.63.

Cole Levens made a motion to accept the treasurer's report as presented and Dave Blakesley seconded. Motion carried.

Pastor's Report: Pastor Kristin reported we had two church events this month, World Communion and the spiritual gifts inventory activity (of which we will have a follow-up later). On our 5 for 5 giving, we collected for Neighbors in Need on World Communion Sunday. The next collection is the Christmas Fund around Christmas Eve. This was our first year to do the WISE/Crop Walk combination. We collected \$3060 in donations to be shared with the groups. We had NAMI (WISE) representatives present for our walk. Mt. Hope Church is geographically located within Guilford to serve different needs. We had two weddings Jason & Brooke Hughes and Andrew and Ekin Beach. November 7th is the time change.

Prayer of Confession
Words of Assurance
We present our offerings

Committee Reports:

BOCE – Susan Finley reported they met September 19th. On October 3rd they provided a Dr. Seuss breakfast of green eggs and ham and watched the reading of the book at the picnic shelter. Be the Church for November 21st will be based on Dr. Seuss' "The Zax". We will be making placemats to send to Alamance Plaza with their Thanksgiving meals. Be the church for December 5th will be based on Dr. Seuss' "How the Grinch Stole Christmas". We will be making clay star ornaments for the residents at Alamance Plaza, our shut-ins. The children and youth at Mt. Hope will receive treat bags following the Christmas Pageant. The Pageant will be incorporated as part of the worship on December 12. The children's Christmas Pageant rehearsals will begin October 10th following worship for children ages 3 through 5th grade. Christmas pageant will be December 12th. Their next meeting will be Sunday October 17th.

Maintenance – The clearing at the picnic shelter has begun. HVAC contract is up for renewal from \$2616.00 to \$2700. Bob Hamlett made a motion to renew our contract with AC Corporation for \$2700 starting Nov 1st 2021-2022. Joe Hughes seconded. Motion carried.

Stewardship- Gloria Apple reported the church cleanup is still a work in progress due to complying with our social distancing Covid policy. Gloria requested funds to have the floor in the new Hope's Pantry room be done while the room is empty. Painting is in process. Bob Hamlett made a motion to approve spending up to \$2500 from the building and maintenance fund. Janet Ellis seconded. Motion carried.

Evangelism – They are assisting with Mobile Meals and WISE team. Over the past several years the church has begun outreach and mission programs to fulfill our mission statement. We do not currently have a constitutional structure that supports this important and vibrant work of the church. Jim Turner made a motion to present this revision to the constitution at our November meeting to the congregation. Cathy Gossett seconded. Motion carried.

Music & Worship – They will meet next Thursday

Meals4kids – Gloria Apple reported for the time being Backpack Blessing Program of Greensboro has agreed to supply the food for Nat Greene so Meals4kids food bags are on hold. The school did ask for help for Christmas gifts for the kids so we will be doing the Angel Tree again this year. Gloria stressed to the school that if they heard of anyone needing more help to please contact us as Mt Hope is willing to help in anyway.

Greensboro Urban Ministry – David Blakesley delivered 118 lbs. a couple of weeks ago and 57 lbs. of squash.

Blessing Bag Ministry – Lisa Moser reported that this ministry is on hold due to covid. She authorized the Consistory to revamp this ministry if needed.

Social Concerns – The wishing welling project is still active with the fundraiser goal gauge to keep our progress on this ministry visible. Our goal of \$3000 is to build a well in another country.

Communications Team – Lorie Arrington reported they are looking into the best option for a new device for Ekin. They are testing out an app for the youth. Alex, Ben and Wes Royal are working to improve WIFI. Jacob Arrington has agreed to help on the historical committee and is trying to get certified with Google. Everyone needs to go to our church's website when possible. The more hits we

receive on our website increases our presence on the Google search engine.

Historical Committee – Bill Craft donated a computer to be used to digitize historical documents.

We offer our concerns for the future (New Business)

Outdoor Ministry – The clearing has begun.

Task Force – Janet reported they met yesterday. They are allowing small groups to meet in the NFH, yoga will be moving inside to the NFH since the weather is getting cold and everyone needs to continue to wear their mask at church.

This will be in effect until January 2022.

Stained Glass Windows – Bill, Dave and John have one stained glass window completed. It is going to need to be put on a pedestal, it has battery operating lights behind it.

Consistory needs to approve this completed window before John does the remaining one.

Congregational Meeting – We will have our annual congregational meeting on November 14th.

Lorie Arrington made a motion to approve the proposed 2022 budget and Dave Blakesley seconded. Motion carried.

Consistory - Bob Hamlett and Dave Blakesley have completed their terms.

Dora Moore, Lorie Arrington, Cathy Gossett, and Gloria Apple's term will end 2022.

Janet Ellis, Dallas Belvin, Cole Levens, and Simon Clark are up for reelection. Joe Hughes and Jim Turner are completing the first year of their term.

Trustees- Freddie Gossett has 2 years left on his term, Dean Greeson is up for reelection and Stan Buff is serving his second year. Dallas will make an announcement on October 31st about the congregational meeting on November 14th and open the floor to nominations for Consistory and Trustee positions open.

On September 16th Consistory voted by email to approve \$100 for rent from the Community Resource Fund to help someone in need. Nine approved and two abstained. Motion carried.

October 21st Mustard Seed Clinic will have a virtual lunch on zoom.

Joe Hughes made a motion to approve sending the deposit of \$4368.00 to Campbellsville out of the Contingency Fund to put our name on the list for work to begin in April 2022. Janet Ellis seconded. Motion carried.

Prayers of Intercession

Kristin closed in prayer

Charge and Benediction

Meeting adjourned 9:06pm

Next meeting November 11th at 6pm (Revised to Nov 4th)

Respectfully Submitted,
Gloria Apple, Secretary



Ekin Ustunel

What is a QR code?

QR is short for "quick response" and is a type of "barcode" that newer phones are capable of reading. This code can store a lot of information, and is a quick way to connect to the source without clicking, tapping, entering or typing a specific information.

Why do I need to know this?

We will be utilizing QR codes in worship and many other situations that might require fast, quick access to information. But beyond that, if you decide you like the efficiency of QR codes you will have many other chances to use this newly found skill! A lot of stores and businesses utilize QR codes and scanners for many different things such as internet access, parking, business cards, payment options; healthcare facilities for patient information and airlines for plane tickets during boarding.

What device/app do I need to be able to scan?

If you are using an Apple device, iOS 11 or later versions will have built-in QR readers. If you have an Android phone, it needs to run Android 9 to have that feature, but again this might be different for each phone.

For devices that do not have this feature, free third party apps are available in App Store or Google Play Store.
Apple: *Quick Scan - QR Code Reader*
Android: *QR code reader & QR code Scanner*



How can I scan a QR code?

To use your built-in camera:
Simply open the camera, point it at the QR code and look for the banner that will show up on top and tap it to see the source of the code. Applications might have specific directions on how to scan.

Pat Huizinga
160 Waxwing Court
Cedar Springs, MI 49319

Brianna Chapmon
6845 Derby Run dr.
Whitsett, NC 27377

Let's try this!

QR code 1:



QR code 2:



Mt. Hope Church,

Thanks for the books. They mean a lot to me. Mt. Hope has been so good to me. May God bless the church and all the work that everybody there does! Love and Prayers, Evelyn Thomas

My Mt. Hope Family,

Thank you so much for the cards, calls, food, flowers and prayers you have sent to me after the death of Aunt Ruth. A special thank you to Miss Emma for her call that touched my heart so deeply. You all have helped make it a little easier this past week. Please continue the prayers they are needed, she was a big part of my life. Lots of hugs, Brenda Curry

Mt. Hope UCC Congregation,

Thank you all for the kind words, cards and visits made to me and my family after my mother's death. Sincerely, Elaine Layton

A big thank you to all the "elves" that came to decorate our beautiful church! It was a wonderful night of fun and fellowship to start the Advent season!

We would like to thank Donnie and Janet Ellis for moving and organizing our Nativity Closet. It looks great!

W.I.S.E Moment

SEASONAL AFFECTIVE DISORDER

You may go through short periods of time where you feel sad or not like your usual self. Sometimes, these mood changes begin and end when the seasons change. People may start to feel “down” when the days get shorter in the fall and winter and begin to feel better in the spring, with longer daylight hours.

In most cases, symptoms for Seasonal Affective Disorder, or SAD, start in the late fall or early winter and go away during the spring and summer, this is known as winter-pattern SAD or winter depression. Conversely, some people may experience summer-pattern depression, though it is less common.

Symptoms may include—

- Feeling depressed most of the day, nearly every day
- Losing interest in activities you once enjoyed
- Experiencing changes in appetite or weight
- Having problems with sleep
- Feeling sluggish or agitated
- Having low energy
- Feeling hopeless or worthless
- Having difficulty concentrating
- Having frequent thoughts of death or suicide
- Oversleeping (hypersomnia)
- Overeating, particularly with a craving for carbohydrates
- Weight gain
- Social withdrawal (feeling like “hibernating”)

You can talk to your doctor if you have concerns.

There is help and treatment for SAD. For more information, visit:

<https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/seasonal-affective-disorder>

COPING WITH HOLIDAY STRESS

“The most wonderful time of the year” can actually be the most stressful time of the year for many.

With the holiday season just around the corner, it’s important to manage your holiday expectations and be kind to yourself. Of all the things on your holiday preparation to-do list, the most critical one is maintaining your mental health and practicing



We would like to thank Dee Greeson and Becky Stafford for the great organization in our storage room.

We would like to thank Ray and Sharon Mims for cleaning out and organizing our Christmas Room.

We would like to thank Emma and Kathryn Vaughn for sorting all the Easter Eggs so they may be stored in our decoration room.

We would like to thank Linda Shue for organizing our decoration room located on the 3rd floor. Pictures are attached for everyone to see. You did an awesome job!



We would like to thank Stan Buff and Mike Vaughn for the wonderful job they did converting our manger to make it easy to move and store. You did a fantastic job!



self-care, especially during the winter months when stress can be compounded by Seasonal Affective Disorder. The following are a few key tips for avoiding the stress of the holidays:

- **Make a budget.**
- **Come up with a plan.**
- **Find the best time to shop.**
- **Spend time with loved ones.**
- **Don't feel pressured to uphold family traditions.**
- **Stay hydrated.**
- **Find time to exercise.**
- **Pamper yourself.**
- **Indulge without overconsuming.**

and perhaps most importantly...

- **Be kind to yourself.** All you can do is your best and your best is good enough. It's impossible to please everyone, but we are often our own harshest critics.

For more information, visit:

<https://nami.org/Blogs/NAMI-Blog/December-2018/Avoiding-Holiday-Stressors-Tips-for-a-Stress-Free-Season>



During worship service on November 14th the Women's Fellowship honored individuals in recognition of their Christian Leadership, Valued Services and Faithful Support to Mt. Hope Church. Donations were made in their honor and certificates were presented to:

Andrew Beach

Cindy Hyle

Mary Reece (Memorial)

Ekin Ustunel

Pastor Kristin Vaughn

Mike Vaughn

Our December meeting will be on Tuesday, December 14th, 6:30 p.m. in the new fellowship hall. Ladies, bring your favorite finger food and a small wrapped item for our special gift exchange. How exciting it will be to have fun and fellowship

while enjoying these delicious goodies! In January, Marcia will resume the study of her wonderful book, *Holy Moley God! You've Got to be Kidding!* **Christmas Blessings to all from the Women's Fellowship!**



We got our holiday season off to a great start on November 21st. We learned how to handle conflict, and how not to handle conflict, with a little help from Dr. Seuss' Zax, Sesame Street's two-headed monster, and Robin Williams. Missed it? Check it out on Facebook. We were also reminded to be thankful for all of our blessings. Thank you to the Handbell Choir and the Choir for leading us in our musical celebration of all that God have given us, and done for us.

Thank you to everyone who helped with our November 21 Mission: Be the Church. We made 76 very cute placemats with traced hand turkeys, to which feathers were added. A good time was had by all, and I am sure that the Alamance Plaza residents will appreciate our efforts. One of our esteemed members, who really enjoys raking leaves, said it was even more fun than raking leaves! Thank you, Mary Catherine!

Thank you, also, to everyone who contributed food, money or time to make Thanksgiving Day lunch a reality for the residents of Alamance Plaza, as well as a few others who needed a warm lunch. This is such an important ministry for Mt. Hope.

Advent has arrived! Please join us on Sunday, December 5 for worship to find out what Dr. Seuss' *The Grinch Who Stole Christmas* has to teach us about the gospel. Then, please join us in the Fellowship Hall for our Mission: Be the Church. We will be making clay ornaments for the residents of Alamance Plaza, our shut-ins, and our children and youth participating in this year's Christmas Pageant. You may want to wear old clothing, as clay can be messy!

Our annual Christmas Pageant will be Sunday, December 12 during worship in the new Fellowship Hall. Come join us for "The Gift of a Son," presented by our children and youth. But this year's pageant will have a spot for everyone! Please be sure to bring or wear your robe. Yes, your robe, unless you have a Biblical costume lying around at home to bring instead. No one will be asked to talk, but we might need you to stand in as "an extra" in the pageant! And we will be singing some of your favorite Christmas Carols, so be ready to make a joyful noise! It should be quite a celebration of Christmas. You don't want to miss it!

Of course, we will have a special guest from the North Pole who is very excited to see and talk with the children immediately following the pageant. The treat sacks for the children and youth will also be available for pick up immediately following the pageant. For anyone unable to pick up the treat sacks on the 12th, they will be available for pick up in the church office Monday through Friday, December 13th through 17th from 9:00 a.m. until 1:00 p.m. each day.

The children and youth will have their final pageant practice on Sunday, December 5 at 4:00 p.m. in the New Fellowship Hall. We need ALL of the participants at this final practice, please!

Christmas Eve will be live and in person this year! We all missed being together last Christmas Eve, so come, spend time with your church family, and celebrate the true meaning of Christmas.

Calendar Notes –

The choir will not meet December 29.

The next BCE meeting will be Sunday, January 16 at 1:30 p.m. in the Conference Room.



12/5 - youth (TBD)

12/12 - church Christmas play and caroling

12/19 - youth (TBD)

No youth after 12/19 until January

Christmas Card Exchange

Our youth group is collecting and distributing Christmas cards for members who wish to send to other members this year (postage free). Drop your cards by the church office and Santa's helpers will take care of them.

**Also youth are continuing the Happy Home flavorings fundraiser. Everyone stock up on their flavorings they need for cooking and baking.



Poinsettia Fund

As we do each year, we will be collecting money for the Poinsettia Fund. This year, the money will be split between Urban Ministry and the Mt. Hope Steeple Repair Fund. You may give money in honor or memory of your loved ones. Please turn in your donations to the church office by Wednesday, December 22, 2021 with your name and list of loved ones. Thank you, in advance, for your generosity.

Welcome to
December



8:00 am, Yoga with Sonia
Friday, December 24 – Christmas Eve
Saturday, December 25 – Christmas Day
Sunday, December 26

10:30 am, Worship
 11:30 am, Gather, Learn Grow

**Please have your newsletter articles in by
 January 26.**

Wednesday, December 1

6:00 pm, Bible Study
 7:30 pm, Choir Practice

Thursday, December 2

8:00 am, Yoga with Sonia

Sunday, December 5

10:30 am, Worship
 11:30 am, Gather, Learn Grow
 5:00 pm, Youth Meeting

Monday, December 6

6:00 pm, Yoga with Sonia

Wednesday, December 8

6:00 pm, Bible Study
 7:30 pm, Choir Practice

Thursday, December 9

8:00 am, Yoga with Sonia
 6 pm, Consistory Meeting

Sunday, December 12

10:30 am, Worship
 11:30 am, Gather, Learn Grow
 11:30 am, Christmas Pageant
 2:00 pm, Caroling

Monday, December 13

6:00 pm, Yoga with Sonia

Tuesday, December 14

6:30 pm, Women's Meeting

Wednesday, December 15

6:00 pm, Bible Study
 7:30 pm, Choir Practice

Thursday, December 16

8:00 am, Yoga with Sonia
 2:00 pm, Music & Worship Meeting

Sunday, December 19

10:30 am, Worship
 11:30 am, Gather, Learn Grow

Monday, December 20

6:00 pm, Yoga with Sonia

Wednesday, December 22

6:00 pm, Bible Study
 7:30 pm, Choir Practice

Thursday, December 23



2nd Cindy Hughes
 3rd Linda Miller
 4th Chelsey Cox
 5th Bennie Gerner
 6th Linda Baker
 7th Carolyn Simpson
 8th Lauren Moser
 12th Emily Neal
 13th Ken Cham, Dallas Belvin, Megan Underwood, Cory Underwood
 15th Jonathan Vaughn
 16th Jason Hughes, Tanner Greeson
 20th Elizabeth Craft
 22nd Zoey Lashley, Sophia Levens
 23rd Brenda Currie, Debbie Underwood, Jerry Greeson, Todd Chapmon
 24th Tracy Brady
 25th Don Kirkman
 28th Cathy Gossett
 29th J.R. Shoffner Jr., Abby Strouth



Prayer Requests

Health Care Center

Alamance Health Care Center	Teresa Oakley (#83)
Alamance House	R. Denny Ingold (#112)
Clapp's Nursing Center	Robert Ingold (#807)
Ralph Scott Homes	Betty Kim Settlemyre
Woodhaven (Albermarle)	Annie Lee Apple
Brookdale Burlington	Peggie Coble (#74)
Twin Lakes	Darlene Cherry
Clapp's Assisted Living	Jeanne Ingold (#315)
Guilford House	Blanche Greeson
Heritage Green	Helen Smith

Mt. Hope Military Connections

Scott Amick	Grant Harden
Kyle Gerner	Megan Moore Hughes
Michael Clapp	Josh Ellis

Michael Terraforte
Abigail Thompson

Members/Friends & Relatives

Betty & Richard Kime
Pat Levens
LuEller Ingold
J.R. Shoffner
Laurie Baker
Dean & Peggy Greeson
Adelita Swaim
Bill & Peggy Welker
Lloyd & Sylvia Gilliam
Sharon Nance
Wesley & Esther Clark
Chad Levens
Nancy Wimbish
Carmen Kriegsman
Jean Berry
Beth Branson
Dennis McGee
Trey Hilliard

Cole Yedlowski-healing
Nelson Ingram
William Tickle
Karen Mounce
Cheryl Clark
Robin Gerner
Family of Jim Wimbish
Kathy Welborn Harrison
Linda Neese
Carolyn Simpson
Gloria Apple
L.B. Friddle
The Family of Skip Neese
Brittany Clark
Christy Seymore
Cindy Hughes
Roger Neese
Pat Huizinga