

JANUARY 2026

MT HOPE MESSENGER

MT. HOPE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

OFFICE HOURS: M, W, & F (8AM - 3PM)



2400 Mt. Hope Church Road
Whitsett, NC 27377

Pastor - Rev. Kristin Gerner Vaughn
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Administrative Asst. & Newsletter
Lorie Arrington

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Kiré Mims

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Accompanist - Ekin Üstünel
Director of Digital Technology - Ekin
mthopeuccddt@gmail.com

Consistory President - Gloria Apple

Board of Christian Education
Susan Finley

Zeb Mims - Music Director
Email: mthopeuccmusic@gmail.com



**Sunday for Worship
at 10:00 am**

Pastor's Note



A Word from Your Pastor:

Ms. Shepherd sat in the open lobby of the cancer center, where I served as Chaplain for a number of years, every day waiting on her ride. She was usually cold, even in the heat of the summer. Treatments will do that to a body. Sometimes I would find her with her eyes closed and her head at rest catching her a little cat nap, but usually I found her alert and oriented, smiling at each person who came close to her wheelchair and saying, “Thank you, God” for even the tiniest of gestures. One day I noticed that she was dabbing at her dripping nose with the no-longer-warm blanket the radiation technician had given her to keep her warm while in our care. When I took her a few tissues and placed them in her hands, she looked up at me with her newly bald head and kind eyes, “Thank you,” directing her words to me and then, “Thank you, Jesus,” directing her words to the one who always kept her close and saw to it that all her needs were met.

If you asked Ms. Shepherd if she needed anything, she would tell you, “No.” Yet, through the months of getting to know her as her Chaplain and part of her Care Team, we learned that she didn’t have anything to speak of outside of the clothes on her back, the faith in her heart and the peace in her mind, but I never heard her ask for anything. She was much more content than most of our other patients. So, I asked her one day how her heart was so full of praise when she had so little. She looked into my eyes and said, “God is so good to me. How could I not praise his name?”

Scientists studied the resilience of sixteen societies worldwide, including the Yukon and the Australian Outback. They analyzed thousands of years of archaeological records, tracing the impact of famines, wars, and climate. One factor stood out from these 16 societies that made their resiliency sturdier than anyone else. The frequency of downturns. The more troubles the society had encountered together, the more resilient they had become. Societies that faced frequent hardships developed a resiliency—the ability to bounce back faster in the future. Habakkuk 3:17 speaks of pending hardship for God’s people: “Though the fig tree does not bud and there are no grapes on the vines, though the olive crop fails and the fields produce no food, yet I will rejoice in the Lord and I will be joyful in God my Savior. God is my strength.” The prophet’s joy wasn’t tied to earthly circumstances but anchored in God’s unchanging character and salvation. In the bleakest of seasons, the prophet chose joy and became more resilient.

As we wrap up the last year and begin anew, may we find resilience, using what has been to be our foothold into the future. May we use what has already been to help us fall forward into a year where all we can do, no matter what happens, is praise God and rejoice in God, our Savior.

May God be your strength. May you be a light.

Thank you, Ms. Shepherd, for the reminder that what we really have cannot be seen with the eye, but felt in the depths of our hearts. Praise be to God!

FRIENDS & NEIGHBORS

Friends n Neighbors will meet on January 20th, 2026 at 10:30am in Old Fellowship hall to watch a movie. Lunch will be potluck and we will celebrate all birthdays for 2026 and cake will be provided.

Cindy Hyle

*Friends
Are
Second
Family*

Thank You

Dear church family,

Thanks to all the carolers for their Christmas Cheers. Merry Christmas and New Year Blessings to all of Mt. Hope Church. God Bless all.

All our love,

Woody & Peggy Levens

Women's Fellowship

Women's Fellowship 2026 It's a New Year!!! Day Jan. 13 Time 11 am NFH



*Cartoon from 12/31/1995 The Last Calvin and Hobbes Strip



Women's Fellowship

**\$10 Contact Dee or
anyone from Women's
Fellowship**



Boston Butts for Sale!

Please support our fundraiser for Mt. Hope United Church of Christ, 2400 Mt. Hope Church Rd., Whitsett, NC.

For a cost of \$45, you can get a whole, fully cooked Boston Butt including a pint of Mt. Hope's Original BBQ Sauce. Orders must be received by January 30th. Pick up will be Saturday, February 7th from 1 pm to 2 pm in the church parking lot on Old Julian Road side.

Call or text Dee Greeson at 336-207-3079 or Judy Gerner at 336-339-3466 to place your order.

If you are able, please donate to this fundraiser either monetarily or by purchasing a Boston butt for us to cook.

Our Youth group consists of ages 6th - 12th grade and they meet on Sundays at 12 pm if you know of someone that would like to join! All are welcome!



January Youth Schedule:

Jan. 4th - Come help us make luminaries to light around the church!

Jan. 11 - Youth meeting @ 12

Jan. 18 - No Youth MLK weekend

Jan. 25 - Youth meeting @ 12

2026 Consistory Members

Gloria Apple – President
Dave Blakesley – Vice President
Lisa Sinclair – Secretary
Tracy Buff – Assistant Secretary
Simon Clark – Treasurer
Dora Moore – Assistant Treasurer
Tammy Holt – Assistant Treasurer
Dallas Belvin
Dona Branson
Don Kirkman
Cindy McGee
Cheryl Royal

2026 Trustees

Mike Johnson
Cole Levens
Phillip Strouth

Southern Conference - Calling All Middle and High School Students - Let's Talk!

by Rev. Belinda Sledge

Beginning April 13th, as a youth initiative originating at Union Chapel United Church of Christ and as a start to events leading up to the youth event for 2026, the Southern Conference invites all middle and high school students to join us via Zoom for an unconventional Bible study experience from 7:00 to 8:00 p.m. on the second and fourth Sundays of each month. The 2nd Sunday is devoted to studying a book from the Bible, and the 4th Sunday features a pre-planned topic of choice that impacts your daily life, with either a participant leading the discussion or an outside guest. If you are a young adult in the 20s age group, we also welcome you to participate on both Sundays to share the wisdom you have obtained during your younger years. The time together will be facilitated by Rev. Belinda Sledge, Coordinator for the Southern Conference 2024 Youth Event.

You will use the same Zoom link each Sunday:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/82852871663?pwd=iu6pSdNCSviKKiRFT7HTz052eVj54E.1>

Meeting ID: 828 5287 1663

Passcode: 506260

Dial In:

• +1 305 224 1968 US

Mt Hope United Church of Christ
Consistory Minutes November 13, 2025

Members Present: Gloria Apple, Dave Blakesley, Simon Clark, Tammy Holt, Sharon Mims, Sylvia Belvin, Cindy McGee, Don Kirkman, Cheryl Royal

The meeting was called to order by Gloria Apple, a quorum was established, and all were welcomed.

Lighting of the Christ Candle

A devotional was provided by Dave Blakesley sharing the role that meditation can have in our search to think about God and know him better.

We Celebrate our Past

Approval of Minutes:

A motion was made by Tammy Holt and seconded by Cheryl Royal and Cindy McGee to approve the minutes from the October 2025 consistory meeting and the November 9, 2025 congregational meeting. Motion carried.

Treasurer's Report:

October 2025 Consolidated Fund Activity Report showed an ending balance of \$174,277.49 with total receipts of \$20,550.80 and total disbursements of \$23,084.5 reported. The General Fund end balance was \$3,252.87 with receipts of \$19,990.45 and disbursements of \$23,229.03. A motion was made by Cheryl Royal and seconded by Cindy McGee to approve the report. Motion carried. Discussion was held regarding potential use of interest earned as needed, and follow-up on investment of leftover Steeple funds as planned.

Pastor's Report

There have been two deaths in the church this month, Linda Neese and Cindy Hamlett. There are also many pastoral care concerns at the present.

Congregational meeting was held during November and the conversation regarding the issues voted on was found helpful. A Thanksgiving Meal will once again be provided to residents of Alamance Plaza. Lisa Moser and the Board of Education are again coordinating this year's meal.

Upcoming events include the Church decorating on Monday November 24 at 6:00pm, the first Sunday of Advent on November 30, the Blue Christmas Service on December 18 at 6:30pm in the OFH, and the Candlelight Christmas Eve Service on December 24 at 7:00pm. Tammy Martin has agreed to lead the Board of Christian Education during Susan Finley's absence until the end of the year. The recent Trunk or Treat event sponsored by the Bd of Christian Education held at the church was a great success with families from the church and community attending.

Pastor Kristin reported that she will be working for a short time period as an Adjunct Professor at Catawba College. This will entail limited time of two Tuesdays a month and is part of an exchange for guest speaker time later on.

Committee Reports

Board of Christian Education

Trunk or Treat a success

Maintenance and Trustees

Oil was changed in the Generator

Food Ministry - 160 cases of mac&cheese and applesauce were donated and will be added to December's Food Distribution with Out of the Garden. Cheryl Royal reported that the Women's Fellowship has plans to donate \$100 per month toward the Food Ministry

Historical

Mission & Outreach

Music & Worship - Communion will be held on November 23rd, December 7th will be the Christmas Pageant, and December 14th will be caroling

Social Concerns

Communications

WISE Team - Meeting to focus on "what is God asking me to do? Will be held on the 25th. "We Care" bags for shut ins have been created.

Mental Health Speaker on Grief was a success this month

Fellowship Committee

Personnel - Due to Julianna Pierdominico's resignation, Andrew Beach will be covering the music portion of her duties until the end of the year. Kire' Stenson Mims will be working with youth on an interim basis beginning December 1st.

Prayer of Intercession

Prayers were offered by Pastor Kristin for those in hospice care, those in nursing home care, those who have recently suffered falls, those undergoing surgeries and hospitalizations, those dealing with newly discovered illnesses, and those who will be undergoing extreme challenges during the upcoming days.

Old Business

-Work continues on getting quotes for projects needing attention at the church (Basement, columns, Windows and Roof repair)

New Business

- This year's Christmas Dinner for Consistory members and staff will be held Thursday 12/11 at 6:00pm at Ciao's restaurant.
- It was decided that the port-a-potty should be removed during the winter months.
- Next meeting will be held on Thursday January 8, 2026.

Charge and Benediction

Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,
Sharon Mims



WISE Moment



As we begin a New Year, we often reflect on our goals, our faith, and how we can grow, both individually and as a church family. We warmly invite you to join us for a special movie night on Jan 9th at 6:30 PM as we watch Facing the Giants, a powerful movie about faith, perseverance, teamwork and putting God first.

The movie reminds us that true success is not about winning, but about obedience to God and caring for one another. As we consider our New Year's resolutions this movie will challenge us to ask not only "What do I want to achieve?" but also "How can I serve?"

Our next WISE discussion will focus on an important question for the year ahead: How can we better meet the needs of the elderly in our congregation? Just as the football team in Facing the Giants learns to support one another and move forward together, we are called as a church family to walk alongside of our elderly members—honoring them, caring for them, and ensuring no one faces life's challenges alone.

Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ. Galatians 6:2 Happy New Year! Bring a snack to share on Jan 9th at 6:30 PM

**VOLUNTEERS
NEEDED**

Please join us on **Monday, January 5th at 6:00 p.m.** to take down our Christmas decorations! This never takes as long as putting them up, so please come and help! The more hands we have, the shorter time it will take!
Thank you for all you do!



**Next BCE Meeting January 11th
at Noon in Conference room.**

If you worship with us online or could not attend worship on December 28th for whatever reason, please let Pastor Kristin know if you would like to receive your "star word" for the year. You can email her or call the church office to request your star.

Thank you,
Kristin





MOUNT HOPE
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

MOBILE FOOD MARKET

Fresh food. Community support.
All are welcome.



Scan for:

- Volunteer sign up
- Mt. Hope UCC Fresh Mobile Market Dates
- More information



**Out of the
Garden Project**

**First Saturday of
Every Month @10:30am**

**Mt. Hope UCC
Parking Lot**

2400 Mt. Hope Church Rd.

FOR MORE INFORMATION : WWW.MTHOPEUCC.COM



JANUARY



- 3rd - Out of the Garden Mobile Market @ 10:30 am
- 4th - Worship @ 10 am - Gather Learn Grow @ 11:15 Youth @ 12pm
- 8th - Consistory @ 6pm
- 9th - WISE movie @ 6:30 pm
- 11th - Worship @ 10 am - Gather Learn Grow @ 11:15 Youth @ 12pm
- 11th - BCE Meeting @ 12 pm in Conf. Room
- 13th - Women's Fellowship at 11:00 am
- 18th - Worship @ 10 am - Gather Learn Grow @ 11:15 No Youth
- 19th - Men of Valor @ 6:30 pm in OFH
- 20th - Friends & Neighbors @ 10:30 am in NFH
- 25th - Worship @ 10 am - Gather Learn Grow @ 11:15 Youth @ 12pm
- 27th - Wise Gathering @ 6:30pm Wise Gathering Room



*Choir rehearsal January 7th, 14th, 21st, & 28th @ 7 pm

*Yoga on Monday and Thursday in the NFH at 5:30 pm each week.

*Please know every is welcome to attend any event. *We love to have you bring a friend!



Harden & Harriett Phipps
1-20-26

Jeff & Janet Welker
1-23-26



2 - David Prater
2 - Marie Linnens
4 - Peggy Greeson
7 - Roger Neese
7 - Bill Kotis
7 - Pat Branson
10 - Wade Greeson
11 - Lisa Moser
12 - Mary Catherine Moser
12 - Cathy Turner
13 - Addison Clark
14 - Rebecca Levens
14 - Kayla Oehling
24 - Lillie Honey
30 - Claire Smith

Prayer Concerns

Health Care Center

Clapp's Nursing Center - R. Denny Ingold - (#304)
Clapp's Nursing Center - Robert Ingold (#801)
Blumenthal Health & Rehab Center - Harold Reece, Jr.
Brookdale Clare Bridge - Mary Catherine Moser - (#68)
Whitestone - Jo Anne Gauldin - (#401)



Mt. Hope Military Connections

Michael Terraforte

Solomon Price, Jr.

Kyle Gerner

Scott Amick

Wade Greeson

Jonathan Vaughn

Members, Friends, & Relatives

Joan May
Krissy Coomer
Betty Neese
Helen Johnson
Bennie Ellington
Dallas Amick
Mildred Strader

Amanda Levens
Debra Prater
Shirley Harris
Faye Newsome
Dennis Owens
Tammy Chapmon
Shirley Kime

Woody & Peggy Levens
Peggy Greeson
Clifton Greeson
Justin Engle
Robert Proctor
Alonzo Smith
Kevin Holt

Cindy Belvin
Nikki Dobson
Chris Freeman
Becky Sutphin
Family of Cindy Hamlett
Family of Steve Burns
Terry Clapp
Rick Morgan