

hope UNITED METHODIST CHURCH Newsletter

Issue 21

December 2025



Hope United Methodist Church, 7320 Northcote Avenue, Hammond, IN 46324

Join Us in Worship – Sundays at 10:15



Christmas Eve Worship

Thursday, December 24, 3:00 pm and 7:00 pm

Volunteers are needed as Advent readers and candlelighters on Christmas Eve, December 24, at 3:00 pm and 7:00 pm. Please contact the Hope UMC Church office at (219) 844-3030, ext. 301, or via email at office@woodmarumc.org, if you can volunteer.

Giving Tree Gifts Due December 7

Thank you for your generosity to this very special cause. Please have your unwrapped gifts, with the tag attached, back to the church by **December 7**.



Get Your Picture Taken for Our Directory Sundays, December 7 and 14, beginning at 9:30 in the library

We are putting together a picture directory for Hope UMC to help us to better connect names with faces! It will be done in-house, with photos being taken by Bob and Lynn Underwood, who have taken pictures for Woodmar directories in the past. Please take a few minutes before church to stop by the library and have your picture taken!

A huge thank you to Bob and Lynn for assisting with the pictures.

Thoughts from Pastor Jim



Advent

The one who testifies to these things says, "Surely I am coming soon."
Amen. Come, Lord Jesus! Revelation 22:20 NRSV

The word "advent" derives from the Latin word *adventus* meaning "coming" or "arrival." This is translated from the New Testament Greek word *parousia*, which refers to the second coming of Christ, his final "arrival." The season of Advent anticipates the coming of Christ to usher in his kingdom, initially with his coming as the human, Jesus, and fully at the end of the age. Advent is our time to prepare ourselves and our world for the coming Christ.

Christmas assures us that Jesus is with us even now. Our preparation is guided and sustained by the risen and present Christ and powered by the Holy Spirit whom Jesus sends to us. We can think of Christmas as the beginning of Christ's advent, even as we wait for the fullness of Christ's presence and the fulfillment of all of God's promises. We often think of waiting as a passive thing, just biding our time. But the waiting of advent is active. This waiting is a time of preparation as we prepare our hearts and our world for Jesus.

Now that we have had the advent (arrival) of Hope UMC, we have a holy opportunity. As God leads us in building this new faith community, we are doing the preparatory work of advent. We are forming a community of hope for our community. We are starting ministries and missions to shine Christ's light into people's lives. Our work of becoming Hope UMC is our way of saying "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel" and "Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus." We are showing our community that God is with us, that Jesus is not just a baby in a manger but a living presence here and now and coming in glory.

Let this season of Advent be the arrival of a time of growth, love, and hope as we live into Jesus' presence and promised coming. Let it be a time of generosity and sacrifice, of learning and growing, of letting go of the old and of embracing new ways in our new identity. Above all let us prepare for whatever God is doing with us.

I pray that we all experience the advent of hope, the advent of love, and the advent of new life in this season and all year long.

Blessings,
Jim

Opportunities to Grow Our Faith



Come JAM with us!

Justice and Mercy or JAM - Come jam with us! Join our new Justice and Mercy ministry here at Hope. Edmund Burke said, "The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing." Don't "do nothing!" Join us in our quest for justice and mercy for all. You're never too old, too busy, or too weak to fight against evil with God's help.

JAM currently meets on Zoom from 7-8 pm on the first, second, and fourth Thursdays of the month. Our immediate goals are to support efforts to feed the hungry, to provide information and aid to those unjustly arrested by ICE, and to support fair elections and districting in our state.

At each meeting, we begin with a meditation and prayer. We discuss injustices at the local, national, and international levels. We then focus on one or two and what we can do to prevent them. We don't represent one political party or organization, but try to follow what the Bible tells us is just.

Youth Invited to Confirmation Class

Confirmation Class 2025-2026 has begun! The next class date will be Sunday, December 7, from 11:30 am to 1:00 pm, with Pastor Jim in the Children's Sunday School Room. Classes are held every other Sunday from 11:30 am to 1:00 pm. Questions? Please feel free to reach out to Pastor Jim or the church office.



United Methodist Women in Faith

Due to snowy conditions, the United Women in Faith moved our annual Christmas Party from December 1 to Monday, December 8 at noon. Join us for coffee, cookies, fellowship and fun! You are encouraged to bring a plate of cookies to share and hats, gloves, and/or socks to share with those in need.

We now have two circles: Mary's Circle and Adam's Rib. Mary's Circle meets in the lounge and on Zoom on the first Monday of the month at noon. Adam's Rib will meet in the evenings at the church on a date and time to be determined. During our meetings, we often have short programs on topics of interest, inspiring devotions, and joyous laughter. All women of faith, whether or not they are church members, are invited to join our group.



Messy Church to Explore Christmas Carols

In what ways do Christmas carols help us feel closer to God and to others during the holiday season? Join Messy Church on Tuesday, December 16, from 6:00 pm to 7:30 pm in the Community Center.

We will actively explore how "carols become a powerful way to proclaim the Good News, as they carry the story of Christ's birth across generations, filling the Christmas season with worship, celebration, and the spirit of joy the angels first announced."

Reaching Out to Our Community

Evangelism
and Outreach

Community
Impact and
Missions



Christmas Music Opportunities

Christmas Cantata— Ridge UMC will be hosting a Christmas Cantata, “The Night of the Father’s Love,” on Sunday, December 7, at 3:00 pm. Come and enjoy good music and wonderful fellowship. Questions? Please reach out to Ridge UMC at (219) 838-4770.

2025 Sounds of the Season - Saturday, December 13 at 4:00 pm, Elmhurst Christian Reformed Church, 149 W. Brush Hill Road, Elmhurst, IL. The AGAPE RINGERS are a professional handbell choir, and our very own Sarah Ward has been a long-time member. You may purchase tickets online at www.AgapeRingers.org. For additional information about Sounds of the Season, please see Sarah Ward.

Community Preschool and Childcare Christmas Pageant at Hope UMC on Thursday, December 18, at 1:30 pm in the sanctuary. This beloved tradition is a heartwarming way for our community to come together and experience the true meaning of Christmas through our precious children.



December Mission is Bishop’s Christmas Offering for Children

Jesus loves children. We can read countless stories in the Bible of the special affinity Jesus had for little ones. Mark 10:14 tells us, “He took the children in His arms, placed His hands on them and blessed them.”

In December, we’re excited to share our mission offering: The Bishop’s Christmas Offering for Children! Each year, churches in Indiana come together to collect this offering. The goal is to help strengthen ministries worldwide by providing financial support for their work in reaching out and improving the lives of young people.



The Vine Food Pantry October 2025

Thank you for your generous Brown Bags for The Vine. Please keep them coming!

New Clients served.....75
Returning Clients served.....464
Total clients served.....539

New Households served.....24
Returning Households served.....232
Total households served.....256

8,408 total pounds distributed



DECEMBER

BIRTHDAYS

12/1 Ken Wheeler
12/2 Jacqueline Jerome
12/3 Georgia Brown
12/3 Allison DeBold
12/3 Judy Keckich
12/3 Barbara Luke
12/5 Kristin Kruse
12/5 Kendi Young
12/7 Diane Hein
12/8 Joe Ramirez
12/10 Hunter Malloy
12/13 Sarah Ward
12/16 Lisa Romero
12/17 Sue Mayberry
12/18 Vera Vestal
12/20 David Dean
12/20 Jackie Lewis
12/21 Cheri Gozdecki
12/21 Grace Kruse
12/21 James Wendell
12/21 Sue Yerkes
12/22 R.J. Heady
12/23 Cynthia Slaboski
12/24 Amanda
Hernandez
12/25 Donna Goodrich
12/26 Holly Strains
12/27 Sophie Dean
12/27 Barbara Iler
12/28 Angelina Garivay
12/28 Lauren Mosley
12/28 Rosalie Harrington
12/29 Fran Carpenter
12/30 Charity Valdez
12/31 Bob Brown
12/31 Katie Isaacs
12/31 Brian Smith
12/31 Richard Smith



Book Club to Discuss *Sense and Sensibility*

Enjoy a Cuppa ... while Hope UMC Book Club discusses Jane Austen's novel, *Sense and Sensibility*, on December 15 at 1:00 pm via Zoom. Our selection this month recognizes the 250th anniversary of Jane Austen's birth on December 16, 1775.

The novel is a story of the two Dashwood sisters who "learn that sense must mix with sensibility if they are to find personal happiness in a society where status and money govern the rules of love." We hope you join us with your tea or coffee and maybe a cookie or two. Please call the church office for a Zoom link for our informal discussion on Monday, December 15 at 1:00 pm.

Worship Committee Update

Although the committee will not meet until Sunday, December 7, we want to share a brief update on the work already underway. Pastor Jim, Cyndi, and Sarah will be meeting during the first week of December to finalize several communication plans and processes for Hope. This includes exploring ways to strengthen our volunteers for weekly worship and developing best practices for sharing updates and important information with the congregation.

Our updated prayer cards and bulletin layout are in their final stages of approval, and we hope to roll them out very soon.

A heartfelt thank you to everyone who participated in the Patriotic Hymn Sing on November 9 and in the Hanging of the Greens on November 23. Your enthusiasm, teamwork, and spirit of hope continue to be a true blessing to our church family.



Thank you to the Thanksgiving Dinner Crew for coordinating, preparing, and serving a delicious meal. Over 100 were served!

Finance and Administrative



Finance Committee Update

In the 8th verse of Chapter 1 in the Book of Romans, Paul says, “I thank my God through Jesus Christ for all of you.” On behalf of the Finance Committee, I want you to know how much you are appreciated. Without your support, Hope UMC could not support the many ministry missions that we presently support. Yes, we continue to lose money each month, but I firmly believe we are making decisions today that will help secure Hope UMC's future for many generations.

The merger of First United Methodist with Woodmar UMC has identified both problems and opportunities. First, we simply are not supporting the church with our offerings. The Finance Committee will work with Pastor Jim to identify a stewardship program that will help us address this problem. Until then, as Finance Chair, I ask you to simply review your level of giving and ask yourself what more can I do for my Church.

Secondly, we are working with Staff Parish to identify key staffing issues that need to be filled in order for Hope UMC to become a stronger presence in this community. These positions will have to be supported by funds previously held in the Foundation of First UMC and the endowment of Woodmar UMC. There are currently restrictions on how these funds can be accessed that the Guiding Council will address in the coming months.

As your Finance Chair, I am excited about our recognition that the future will require us to make changes, and I know that if we are doing this for God, nothing can stop us. Praise be to God.
Blessings, Pastor Pete



Remember SCRIP - Boost your gift shopping with SCRIP Cards for the person who has everything and is hard to shop for. We have plenty of cards, and if you don't see one that we have available, we can special order one for you. Please visit the Narthex after worship.

Board of Trustee's Update

Trustees coordinated the move of selected tables, chairs, furniture and children's toys from Hohman Avenue to Hope. Most of the large items identified for transfer have now been moved. The Art & Décor Committee is still assessing additional items to be transferred, and the Trustees will make decisions on additional items that would be beneficial for Hope UMC. The goal is to have everything transferred by the end of December.

It has been suggested that we open specified areas of the building, probably on a Saturday in early January, to former FUMC members and let them take anything left that they would like to have. Ultimately, everything that should be removed from the building, in preparation for its sale, will be completed by the end of January 2026.

Hope United Methodist Church
7320 Northcote Ave, Hammond, IN 46324
Phone (219) 844-3030
Office Hours: Monday-Thursday 8:30-2:30

Web: INhopeumc.org
[Facebook.com/INHopeUMC](https://www.facebook.com/INHopeUMC)
Brenda's email: church@inhopeumc.org
Pastor's email: james.denton@inumc.org

Pastoral care needs may keep Pastor Jim out of the office during office hours. It is always advisable to call to schedule a time to meet with him. Please do not hesitate to reach out to Pastor Jim or Brenda.



December 2025



Woodlark UMC Hammond Hope UMC Events

Dec 2025 (Central Time - Chicago)

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<p>30</p> <p>DNS</p> <p>9am - Choir Rehearsal</p> <p>10:15am - Sunday Worship @</p> <p>11:30am - Adult Bible</p> <p>11:30am - Bible Study @ Hope</p>	<p>1</p> <p>8:30am - Church Office Open @</p> <p>10am - Lounge - Crochet</p> <p>10am - Pastor's Office Open @</p> <p>10am - The Vine Food Pantry @</p> <p>6:30pm - Operations Team @ Hope</p>	<p>2</p> <p>8:30am - Church Office Open @</p> <p>10am - Pastor's Office Open @</p> <p>10:30am - Sunrise Seniors @ Hope</p> <p>5:30pm - Northlodge Lobby Legal</p>	<p>3</p> <p>8:30am - Church Office Open @</p> <p>10am - Quilters</p> <p>10am - The Vine Food Pantry @</p> <p>10:30am - Book/Bible Study @</p> <p>1pm - Pastor's Office Open @ Hope</p> <p>6pm - Brianna's Hope @ Hope UMC</p> <p>7pm - Praise Belts Rehearsal @</p>	<p>4</p> <p>8:30am - Church Office Open @</p> <p>10am - Pastor's Office Open @</p> <p>10am - The Vine Food Pantry @</p> <p>11am - CPCC Board Meeting @</p> <p>12:30pm - Knit & Crochet @ Hope</p>	<p>5</p> <p>DNS</p>	<p>6</p> <p>DNS</p>
<p>7</p> <p>DNS</p> <p>9am - Choir Rehearsal</p> <p>10:15am - Sunday Worship @</p> <p>11:30am - Adult Bible</p> <p>11:30am - Bible Study @ Hope</p> <p>11:45am - Confirmation Class</p> <p>3pm - Christmas Carnata @ Ridge</p>	<p>8</p> <p>8:30am - Church Office Open @</p> <p>10am - Knitting and quilting for</p> <p>10am - Pastor's Office Open @</p> <p>10am - The Vine Food Pantry @</p> <p>12pm - United Women in Faith &</p>	<p>9</p> <p>8:30am - Church Office Open @</p> <p>10am - Pastor's Office Open @</p> <p>10:30am - Sunrise Seniors @ Hope</p>	<p>10</p> <p>8:30am - Church Office Open @</p> <p>10am - Quilters</p> <p>10am - The Vine Food Pantry @</p> <p>10:30am - Book/Bible Study @</p> <p>1pm - Pastor's Office Open @ Hope</p> <p>6pm - Brianna's Hope @ Hope UMC</p> <p>7pm - Praise Belts Rehearsal @</p>	<p>11</p> <p>8:30am - Church Office Open @</p> <p>10am - Pastor's Office Open @</p> <p>10am - The Vine Food Pantry @</p> <p>12:30pm - Knit & Crochet @ Hope</p>	<p>12</p> <p>DNS</p>	<p>13</p> <p>DNS</p>
<p>14</p> <p>DNS</p> <p>9am - Choir Rehearsal</p> <p>10:15am - Sunday Worship @</p> <p>11:30am - Adult Bible</p>	<p>15</p> <p>8:30am - Church Office Open @</p> <p>10am - Lounge - Crochet</p> <p>10am - Pastor's Office Open @</p> <p>10am - The Vine Food Pantry @</p> <p>1pm - Book Club</p>	<p>16</p> <p>8:30am - Church Office Open @</p> <p>10am - Pastor's Office Open @</p> <p>10:30am - Sunrise Seniors @ Hope</p> <p>6pm - Messy Church @ Hope UMC</p>	<p>17</p> <p>8:30am - Church Office Open @</p> <p>10am - Quilters</p> <p>10am - The Vine Food Pantry @</p> <p>10:30am - Book/Bible Study @</p> <p>1pm - Pastor's Office Open @ Hope</p> <p>6pm - Brianna's Hope @ Hope UMC</p> <p>7pm - Praise Belts Rehearsal @</p>	<p>18</p> <p>8:30am - Church Office Open @</p> <p>10am - PSCC Christmas Pageant</p> <p>10am - Pastor's Office Open @</p> <p>10am - The Vine Food Pantry @</p> <p>12:30pm - Knit & Crochet @ Hope</p> <p>6pm - Guiding Council @ Hope</p>	<p>19</p> <p>DNS</p>	<p>20</p> <p>DNS</p>
<p>21</p> <p>DNS</p> <p>9am - Choir Rehearsal</p> <p>10:15am - Sunday Worship @</p> <p>11:30am - Adult Bible</p> <p>11:45am - Confirmation Class</p>	<p>22</p> <p>8:30am - Church Office Open @</p> <p>10am - Knitting and quilting for</p> <p>10am - Pastor's Office Open @</p> <p>10am - The Vine Food Pantry @</p>	<p>23</p> <p>8:30am - Church Office Open @</p> <p>10am - Pastor's Office Open @</p> <p>10:30am - Sunrise Seniors @ Hope</p>	<p>24</p> <p>8:30am - Church Office Open @</p> <p>10am - Quilters</p> <p>10am - The Vine Food Pantry @</p> <p>10:30am - Book/Bible Study @</p> <p>1pm - Pastor's Office Open @ Hope</p> <p>3pm - Christmas Eve Service</p> <p>7pm - Christmas Eve Service</p>	<p>25</p> <p>8:30am - Church Office Open @</p> <p>10am - PSCC Christmas Pageant</p> <p>10am - Pastor's Office Open @</p> <p>10am - The Vine Food Pantry @</p>	<p>26</p> <p>DNS</p>	<p>27</p> <p>DNS</p>
<p>28</p> <p>DNS</p> <p>9am - Choir Rehearsal</p> <p>10:15am - Sunday Worship @</p> <p>11:30am - Adult Bible</p>	<p>29</p> <p>8:30am - Church Office Open @</p> <p>10am - Lounge - Crochet</p> <p>10am - Pastor's Office Open @</p> <p>10am - The Vine Food Pantry @</p>	<p>30</p> <p>8:30am - Church Office Open @</p> <p>10am - Pastor's Office Open @</p> <p>10:30am - Sunrise Seniors @ Hope</p>	<p>31</p> <p>8:30am - Church Office Open @</p> <p>10am - Quilters</p> <p>10am - The Vine Food Pantry @</p> <p>10:30am - Book/Bible Study @</p> <p>1pm - Pastor's Office Open @ Hope</p> <p>6pm - Brianna's Hope @ Hope UMC</p> <p>7pm - Praise Belts Rehearsal @</p>	<p>1</p>	<p>2</p> <p>DNS</p>	<p>3</p> <p>DNS</p>