

Issue 20 November 2025



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

Join Us in Worship - Sundays at 10:15



Veterans Day Remembrance

During Sunday worship on November 9, Hope UMC will honor our members and friends who have served, or are currently serving, in the U.S. Armed Services. The names of veterans and active military personnel will be read, those present will be recognized, and a prayer of gratitude for their service will be offered for all. Please stop by the Welcome Center or the church office for a form to help us honor your veteran before November 9.

Thanksgiving Dinner

Come join us for Thanksgiving Dinner on Sunday, November 23, immediately following worship. There will be lots of delicious food, as everyone is asked to bring a dish to share. If you plan on attending, you may RSVP by November 19 on the sign-up sheet in the narthex or by calling the church office. You can also sign up to help in various ways. Lots of help is needed! More information to follow.





Thanksgiving Eve Service

Christ Lutheran Church will host the Thanksgiving Eve Service on Wednesday, November 26, at 7:00 pm. Christ Lutheran is located at 7051 Indianapolis Blvd. Hammond, IN



Thoughts from Pastor Jim

Now What?

"I hereby command you: Be strong and courageous; do not be frightened or dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go." Joshua 1:9 NRSV

In the book of Joshua, we read about the Israelites crossing the Jordan River and taking up residence in Canaan, the Promised Land. After forty hard years in the wilderness, they finally reached their destination. Can you relate? Our journey to become Hope UMC was also a difficult trek. Not just through the merger exploration process, but also through the years of decline and struggle that both First and Woodmar experienced, leading to the difficult decision to let go of what had been and to embrace something new.

But, now that we have crossed our Jordan River and officially become Hope United Methodist Church, we stand in this new reality and are faced with the question, "now what?" The Israelites had to take and possess the land. They had to destroy cities and do battle with the Canaanites to establish themselves in that land (yes, I find that troubling!). We too will have our battles as we seek to live into the "now what?" of our new reality.

I hope and pray that we do not battle with one another, but we will need to battle with our resistance to change, with the inertia of the familiar, with the fear of risking new things and with forming a new identity. Just as the Israelites lead to the opportunity to live into the Promised Land, we have been given the same opportunity.

In the fourth chapter of Joshua, we read that they took twelve stones from the Jordan and made a shrine at Gilgal to commemorate the crossing and to remind them of God's leading them into the Promised Land. But they did not remain at Gilgal, they moved on into all of the land. In this time, yes, let us commemorate the past and what God has done with us, but let us also move on into our future, the new church, Hope UMC.

We will need to be strong and courageous as we continue to form our new identity, but we can be assured that this strength is not ours alone. It is the strength of God that sustains us and moves us forward. We are not alone, God is with us, just as God was with Joshua and the Israelites. They faltered at times and we will as well but "do not be frightened or dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go."

I am excited to see what God has planned for us, and I am excited to see how God is leading us. Praise God!

Blessings, Jim

Discipleship and Spiritual Vitality

Opportunities to Grow Our Faith



Messy Church Changes Meeting Days Due to Holidays Due to the holidays, Messy Church will meet on

Due to the holidays, Messy Church will meet on the 3rd Tuesday of November and December. Join this interactive and intergenerational worship experience on November 18 and December 16, at 6:00 pm.



Confirmation Class

Confirmation classes begin on November 9, following worship. Confirmation is an important step in a child's faith development where they learn about the Christian faith, our United Methodist heritage and beliefs, and are nurtured toward embracing or "confirming" the faith as their own. Confirmation Sunday will be May 3, 2026. Youth ages 11 and up are encouraged to enroll in this six-month journey. Please pray for and encourage our youth throughout this journey.

Worship Committee Update

The Worship Committee has been busy discussing ways to make our worship experience even more meaningful and welcoming for everyone. Here are some of the highlights from our recent meeting: Making Worship More Welcoming

- Prayer Cards: We're giving our prayer cards a little makeover to provide more room for writing. Sarah is working with Pastor Jim and the prayer team to include any additional information that would be helpful.
- Attendance Pads: Our current pads are showing their age! New ones are on the way, and we'll also be adding an online attendance option for those who prefer to register digitally.
- Name Tags: We all agree that name tags help build connection, but we also recognize that not everyone wears them. Our new branding is now finalized, so we'll be asking for your input on what type of name tag you prefer—magnet, clip, or lanyard—so stay tuned for a quick survey.

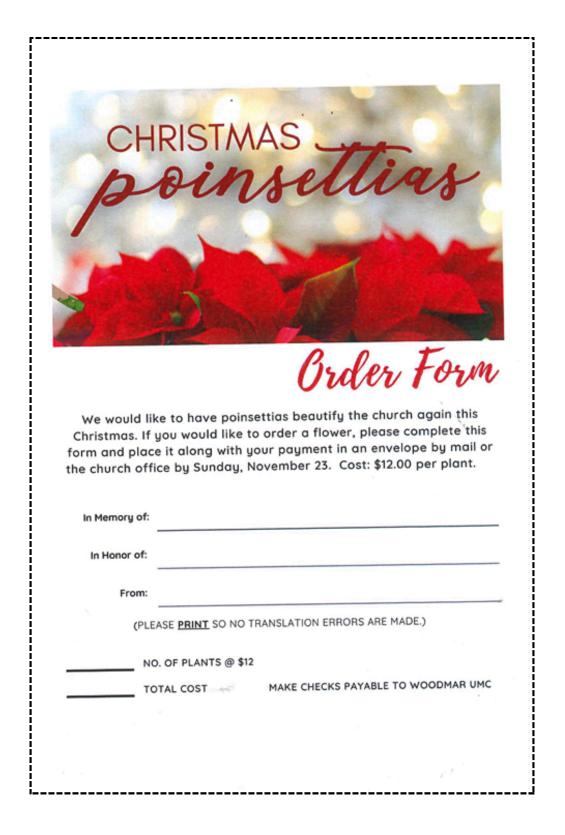
Building Community Connections

- Celebrating Birthdays: Nancy Jarmula will be working with Brenda to get a full list of birthdays. Please make sure the church office has your up-to-date information. We want to celebrate you!
- After-Worship Treats: Some folks would like to bring treats but not be responsible for setup. We're looking for ways to make that easier—watch for a note in the bulletin with details on how you can participate.
- Staying Connected: We're exploring QR codes to make it simpler to access things like the church directory and online giving. We'll offer a quick "how-to" for anyone who wants a little help using them. We're also looking into ways to share church news with the wider Hammond community through local apps and newsletters.

As we wrap up these projects, the committee is also turning its attention toward Advent planning—a wonderful season of preparation and joy ahead!

Order Your Poinsettia by November 23

We would like to have poinsettias beautify the church again this Christmas. If you would like to order a plant, please complete the form below and place it, along with your payment, in an envelope. Mail it or bring it to the church by Sunday, November 23. Cost is \$12 per plant. Please make checks payable to Woodmar United Methodist Church.



Reaching Out to Our Community

Evangelism and Outreach

Community Impact and Missions

November Mission Supports Mission Trip to Guatemala!

Mission Guatemala's philosophy is based on John Wesley's teaching to "Do all the good you can". We're excited that two of our church members are joining the group for this mission, Bellamy and her mother, Niki Avina.

As a United Methodist-related organization, Mission Guatemala believes that all people deserve to be respected and have their basic needs met and that Christians have a calling to help others where they are able. Therefore, Mission Guatemala collaborates with community members, international mission teams, and other non-profits to help meet the needs of underserved Guatemalans in the service areas of health, education, nutrition, and community development.

Program services are funded through generous donations and sponsorships, with the majority of this support provided by United Methodist Church congregations. Project execution relies on the many dedicated volunteer mission teams who come for week-long trips to work in the communities.

Our current projects include:

- · Medical clinic, pharmacy, and on-site laboratory
- Nutritional programs for chronically malnourished children
- Community development projects
- Vocational training programs
- Scholarship program for middle and high school students





Foodbank Needs Our Help

The Vine foodbank has been a mission of First UMC for many years and is now, of course, a Hope UMC mission. It is still housed in the First UMC building, where it will be until the building is sold. We are looking into other options after that.

The Vine disperses almost 7,000 pounds a month to over 200 families, making a significant difference in our community. It receives most of its food from the USDA, with some donations of non-perishables from the congregation. The USDA has been providing much less food recently and is no longer providing any meat. With our government shut down, people who depend on SNAP may not receive any, or only partial, funds to help them provide food for their families. We expect that The Vine will have a difficult time meeting the needs of these desperate people.

We are expanding the Brown Bag program to every Sunday instead of just the first Sunday of the month. You can pick up a brown bag in the narthex and bring it back the next week filled with non-perishables. The Vine is also asking for monetary donations to purchase food. You can make your check out to Woodmar UMC and indicate that it's for the food bank.

Blessing Box -We also have a Blessing Box, located by the preschool parking lot. Though small, it is a simple way for everyone to lend a hand to those in need. Anyone can stop by at any time and take what they need. While doing your grocery shopping, consider picking up extra non-perishable items to contribute to the it. Some ideas: hearty soup, stew, chili, and canned spaghetti products. Pop-top lids are preferrable.

Building Relationships

Relational Vitality

Falling For Books

The November read for Hope UMC Book Club will be *If Cats Disappeared from the World* by Genki Kawamura. It is a story of loss and reconciliation, of one man's journey to discover what really matters in modern life. This beautiful tale is translated from the Japanese by Eric Selland. Please join us for an informal Zoom discussion on Monday, November 17, at 1:00 pm. You may call the church office for the Zoom link.



Spotlight on Technology

The Technology Team, led by Sarah Ward, has set some priorities for upgrading technology as we transition to Hope UMC. The first priority is setting up a new SharePoint site, which will serve as the central location for Hope's files and emails.

The second priority is the church website. They are currently reviewing the site for updates and writing new content. Pastor Jim and Sarah will be reaching out to recruit volunteers to assist with this work, including more specific details to help guests learn about our church and add current photos that reflect our community and ministries.

Next, the team is planning technology upgrades in the sanctuary. Pastor Jim will work with the Property Team to get a quote from SmartHome Solutions for new TVs in the sanctuary and narthex, as well as a sound system upgrade.

Another goal includes upgrading the office computer, and the long-term goal is to explore technology options for the Community Center.



Thank you to everyone who has been donating to our 'Change for Change' mission! Because of your generosity, we have collected over \$400 to send to various mission projects. The children have shared many wonderful ideas about where to give, and they'll be voting soon to decide which causes to support. We will share more next month.

We're also excited to share that a new Sunday School curriculum, designed to help our children grow in faith through engaging lessons and hands-on learning, will be starting soon! Thank you for continuing to support our youngest disciples as they learn to live out God's love in the world.

Staff Parish Relations Update

Now that Hope UMC has celebrated its official opening, we're excited to begin highlighting our dedicated staff members in upcoming newsletters. Each edition will feature a different member of our team, allowing you to get to know the individuals who help make Hope a welcoming and faith-filled community.

All staff and church business have moved fully to Hope UMC on Northcote. The office at the Hohman building is no longer staffed. The Hope UMC office is open Monday-Thursday 8:30-2:30. Updated staff policies have been completed and are currently awaiting approval from the Church Council.

We look forward to sharing more about the wonderful individuals who serve our congregation! Stay tuned for more details as we continue to grow in faith and service together.

Children's Ministries

Birthdays Children Miscellenous



- 11/4 Melinda Hawkins
- 11/6 Thomas Slaboski
- 11/7 Elizabeth Roman-Merced
- 11/7 Joseph Lovasko
- 11/7 Mary Jo Peters
- 11/9 Joe LaBresh
- 11/9 Jason Tapper
- 11/9 Jenna Tapper
- 11/11 Otie Anderson
- 11/12 Benjamin Baker
- 11/13 Francis McCabe
- 11/15 Fran Vukovich
- 11/16 Phil Keckich
- 11/17 Danielle Romero
- 11/17 Sandra Smith
- 11/18 Rocelia Lewis
- 11/21 Cheryle Seljan
- 11/22 Maggie Lerner
- 11/23 Emory Avina
- 11/24 Jason Lewis
- 11/25 Niki Avina
- 11/26 Anthony Bell, Jr.
- 11/26 Donna Benirschke
- 11/29 Julian Valdez

Happy Fall from CP&CC! 🍁

- Fall is here, and we are so excited! Our preschool wing has been full of laughter, learning, and lots of autumn fun.
- In October, we had a special visit from the Hammond Fire Department for Fire Prevention Week our little learners loved exploring the fire truck and learning all about fire safety!
- We also took a trip to Scheeringa Farm, carved pumpkins, and became little scientists during some fun experiments!
- The whole school showed off their costumes in our Halloween Parade what a treat!
- We're so proud to share that our Fall Fundraiser was a huge success raising \$1,000! Thank you to all our amazing families for your support!
- Now we're looking forward to a month filled with thankfulness. Each classroom will celebrate with their very own Friendsgiving feast yum!
- With our new church, Hope, officially here, we're also working with NAEYC and FSSA to ensure a smooth transition of all our paperwork. Exciting times ahead!







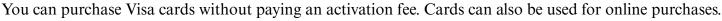
Trick or Treat Event – Shining the Light of Christ

Thank you to the Messy Church leaders and Community Preschool teachers for making this event such a joyful evening for families of our community. A sweet thank you to our congregation and preschool parents for the generous candy donations. 160 hot dogs were prepared thanks to very generous donations from Hammond Optimist Club and Van Til's.

Finance and Administrative

RAISE RIGHT (previously known as Scrip) Purchasing Raise Right cards is an easy way to financially

Purchasing Raise Right cards is an easy way to financially support Hope UMC without costing you anything beyond what you might ordinarily spend. Cards can be purchased for use at grocery stores, gas stations, drug stores, home improvement stores, Amazon, fast food restaurants, department stores, movie theaters, etc.



Hope UMC receives a rebate of 2% to 14% on each card purchased, with higher rates during bonus days. During the holiday season, many businesses offer bonus rebates over the normal rebate rate. Depending on the company, the value of a card can range from \$10 to \$100 or more. They are used just like cash. They can make great stocking stuffers (e.g., McDonald's, Dunkin', DQ, etc.) as well as great gifts in general. We keep a variety of cards on hand and can order many others. They are on sale before and after church services every Sunday. We also have a list of the cards available to purchase. Cash or checks are accepted as payment.



As of October 27, we have total revenue of \$17,587.62, of which \$16,170.96 is money collected in offerings used to pay operating expenses, including salaries. We have total expenses to date of \$21,783.53, resulting in a net loss of \$4,349.71.

During the month of October, we continued to work with the Indiana Conference, the IRS, and the Indiana Department of Revenue to ensure that all financial obligations incurred by First United Methodist Church are current. This will be an ongoing process until we can merge the checking accounts of both First Church and Woodmar into a single checking account for Hope UMC.

We will continue to transfer money from FUMC account at Old National as needed to pay expenses for the two churches. The plan is to continue maintaining these two accounts through 12/31/25 and to begin all transactions with the Hope UMC account at BMO on 1/01/26.

The Sunday morning offering is being counted on Monday mornings. We would like to develop a larger list of available counters to support a rotating schedule. If this is a ministry area you may be interested in, please let the church office know.

The next finance committee meeting is on November 13, when we will work on putting together a budget for Hope UMC for 2026. If you are involved in a committee seeking financial assistance for your ministry area, please prepare a budget proposal by November 7 and submit it to the office so we can review your requests as we develop the 2026 budget needs of Hope UMC. Respectfully, Pete Ward.



Remember: Make your checks out to Woodmar UMC until the end of the year.



November 2025



			6pm - Brianna's Hope @ Hope UMX			
		12:30pm - Knit & Crochet @ Hope	1pm - Pastor's Office Open @ Hope		6:30pm - Operations Team @ Hope	11:30am - Invitation to the New
		11am - CPCC Board Meeting @	10:30am - Book/Bible Study @	5:30pm - Narthex/Lobby- Legal	10am - The Vine Food Pantry @	11:30am - Adult Bible
		10am - The Vine Food Pantry @	10am - The Vine Food Pantry @	10:30am - Sonrise Seniors @ Hope	10am - Pastor's Office Open @	10:15am - Sunday Worship @
2		10am - Pastor's Office Open @	10am - Quilters	10am - Pastor's Office Open @	10am - Lounge - Crochet	9am - Choir Rehearsal
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			6pm - Brianna's Hope @ Hope UMX			11:45am - Confirmation Class
			1pm - Pastor's Office Open @ Hopx			11:30am - Invitation to the New
		12:30pm - Knit & Crochet @ Hope	10:30am - Book/Bible Study @		10am - The Vine Food Pantry @	11:30am - Adult Bible
		10am - The Vine Food Pantry @	10am - The Vine Food Pantry @	10:30am - Sonrise Seniors @ Hope	10am - Pastor's Office Open @	10:15am - Sunday Worship @
		10am - Pastor's Office Open @	10am - Quilters	10am - Pastor's Office Open @	10am - Knitting and quilting for	9am - Choir Rehearsal
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		6pm - Guiding Council @ Hope	1pm - Pastor's Office Open @ Hope		1pm - Book Club	11:30am - Invitation to the New
		12:30pm - Knit & Crochet @ Hope	10:30am - Book/Bible Study @	6pm - Messy Church @ Hope UMC	10am - The Vine Food Pantry @	11:30am - Adult Bible
		10am - The Vine Food Pantry @	10am - The Vine Food Pantry @	10:30am - Sonrise Seniors @ Hope	10am - Pastor's Office Open @	10:15am - Sunday Worship @
		10am - Pastor's Office Open @	10am - Quilters	10am - Pastor's Office Open ®	10am - Lounge - Crochet	9am - Choir Rehearsal
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21 22		20	19	18	17	16
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		6:30pm - Narthex -Girl Scout	1pm - Pastor's Office Open @ Hope			11:30am - Invitation to the New
		12:30pm - Knit & Crochet @ Hope	10:30am - Book/Bible Study @		10am - The Vine Food Pantry @	11:30am - Adult Bible
		10am - The Vine Food Pantry @	10am - The Vine Food Pantry @	10:30am - Sonrise Seniors @ Hope	10am - Pastor's Office Open @	10:15am - Sunday Worship @
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		12:30pm - Knit & Crochet @ Hope	1pm - Pastor's Office Open @ Hope		6:30pm - Operations Team @ Hope	11:30am - Adult Bible
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		10am - The Vine Food Pantry @	10am - The Vine Food Pantry @	10:30am - Sonrise Seniors ® Hope	10am - Pastor's Office Open @	10:15am - All-Saints Sunday
		10am - Pastor's Office Open @	10am - Quilters	10am - Pastor's Office Open ⊚	10am - Lounge - Crochet	9am - Choir Rehearsal
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Na San			6pm - Brianna's Hope @ Hope UM(5		11:30am - Invitation to the New
		5:30pm - CC-Trunk-or-Treat?	1pm - Pastor's Office Open @ Hope			11:30am - Adult Bible
		12:30pm - Knit & Crochet @ Hope	10:30am - Book/Bible Study @	6pm - Messy Church @ Woodmar	10am - The Vine Food Pantry @	10:15am - Hope United Methodist
		10am - The Vine Food Pantry @	10am - The Vine Food Pantry @	10:30am - Sorrise Seniors @ Hope	10am - Pastor's Office Open @	9am - Choir Rehearsal
		10am - Pastor's Office Open @	10am - Quilters	10am - Pastor's Office Open ⊚	10am - Knitting and quilting for	Deadline for Candy Donations
DMS		8:30am - Church Office Open @	8:30am - Church Office Open @	8:30am - Church Office Open @	8:30am - Church Office Open @	CDAS
31		30	29	28	27	26
Sa	Fri	Thu	Wed	Tue	Mon	Sun

Hope UMC Guiding Council and Ministry Leaders Commissioned

The 2025-2026 elected leaders of Hope UMC were commissioned by District Superintendent Rev. Dr. Marti Lundy during the worship service on October 26. Preceding a catered celebratory Inaugural Luncheon in the Community Center, Associate District Superintendent Rev. Paul Arnold presided over a brief Church Conference during which eligible members voted by ballot to accept the church's Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws, which had been mailed electronically or by post to all professing members two weeks prior to the Church Conference. Results of the vote were 65 Yes, 1 No.

The church's Expanded Council is composed of members of the Guiding Council (with vote) and leaders of each ministry area (who have voice without vote), as elected by eligible members of former Hammond First UMC and Woodmar UMC following the vote on June 29 to adopt the agreement to merge the two congregations. The leadership slate was officially elected at the Northern Lakes District 2025 Charge Conference on October 4.

The Expanded Council convenes monthly on the third Thursday of the month at 6:00 pm. Interested members are welcome to attend Council meetings and may obtain the minutes of any meeting by request or may review an official copy of the minutes as filed in the church office.

2025-2026 Hope UMC Guiding Council

Council Chair Jane Harper-Alport

Council Vice Chair Donna Benirschke (voice without vote) Trustees Chair Chuck Anderson term ends 12/2028 Trustee (class 2) Ralph Smith term ends 12/2027 Trustee (class 3) Fran Vukovich term ends 12/2026 Finance Chair Pete Ward term ends 12/2028 Finance (class 2) Bob Brown term ends 12/2027 Finance (class 3) Mary Zaikis term ends 12/2026 Treasurer Debbie Mangerson (staff, non-voting)

Staff-Parish Relations Chair
Lay Leader/Lay Member
UWIF Representative
UMM Representative
Young Adult Representative (18-29)
Youth Representative (14-17)
Pat Mosley
Yvonne Jackson
John Schu
open

Recording Secretary Kathy Smith

Ministry Area Leaders (positions reporting to Council; voice without vote)

Endowment Fund - Pete Vukovich

Property Fund TBD

Worship - Sarah Ward

Missions - Marcos Pontes

Discipleship - Donna Beifuss

Congregational Care - Donna Beifuss

Fellowship/Events: Congregational Life Corps - Nancy Craig

Memorials - Jenna Province

Social Justice Ministry - Joe & Mary Jo Shea

Preschool Liaison - Cyndi Slaboski

Preschool Director - Karianne Padilla (staff)

Communications TBD

Continued on next page

The following leaders were also among those commissioned on October 26:

Staff-Parish Relations Committee

Class 3

Chair Niki Avina term ends 12/2028 Class 1 Bob Brown term ends 12/2028 Class 2 Carrie Ward term ends 12/2027 Yvonne Jackson term ends 12/2027

Irma Mora term ends 12/2026

Nancy Craig term ends 12/2026

Lay Leader Pat Mosley

Nominations and Lay Leadership Development Committee

Chair Pastor Jim Denton

Class 1 Nancy Craig term ends 12/2028 Cyndi Slaboski Class 2 term ends 12/2027 Class 3 Jackie Lewis term ends 12/2026

Lay Leader Pat Mosley

Council Chair Jane Harper-Alport



If you are interested in learning about or serving in any of these ministries, please reach out to that ministry's leader. To fulfill our vision for Hope UMC, everyone will have an active role in achieving the goals for our new church. As DS Marti encouraged us October 26, we each have a unique and vital "crayon" in the "jumbo crayon box" of Hope UMC. Be bold and commit to use your blessed "crayon" and color our future!

Submitted by Council Chair Jane Harper-Alport, (219) 718-8328



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

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.