

DECEMBER 2025

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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Email: mthopeuccpastor@gmail.com

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

Andrew Beach - Music Director



Sunday for Worship
at 10:00 am

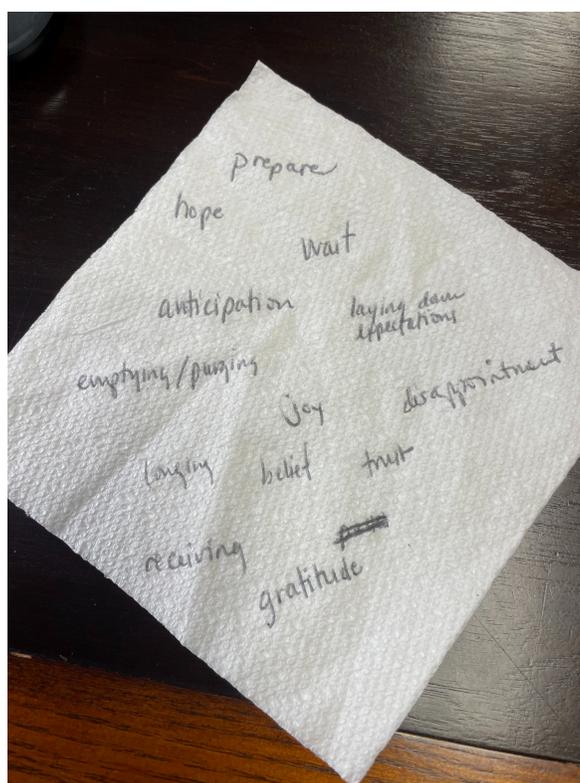


Pastor's Note

Jesus

Waiting isn't so easy. It sounds easy at first, but I learned it takes more diligence and attention than I originally thought. I learned this in the airport. My flight was delayed and so I was in the airport way ahead of my flight's departure. With hours to go, I settled in with a bit of food my favorite book and my earbuds firmly in my ears piping in my travel playlist. Soon, my belly was satisfied and my eyes grew heavy from reading, so I rested my head on the wall, looked at my watch to see that I still had lots of time before my plane would start to board, and fell asleep. I was awaked to a phone call interrupting my good string of music. It was the airline desk attendant letting me know that my flight had already boarded and this was my final call. I grabbed my few belongings and rushed to the gate, disheveled to say the least and she said, "Where have you been." "I was waiting right over there," I said, as I pointed to the corner on the far side of the wall from her call station. We have been paging you overhead for 20 minutes. I took my licks from her distain and boarded the plane. On my way home, I made a mental note that waiting is an active assignment not a passive one. Waiting is to be done with eyes wide open, not closed. Waiting is to be done with hearts wide open, not asleep. Waiting happens when hopes are cast wide. Because I settled in to comfort a little too deep, because my senses went to sleep, I almost missed the thing I was longing for...my home, my people, my own bed after long days of travel.

As we prepare for the Christ-child to be born in us this Advent season what does it take to wait? If waiting doesn't look like sleeping, then what does it look like? Below you will find my initial notes on the best paper I could find as I was waiting (a napkin). How will you wait for the coming of the Christ to be born, a light unto our darkness this year? Advent is the state of expectation, a "hoping for." If we hope to see Jesus, then shouldn't the way we live our lives prepare us for such an encounter? We don't know when this divine encounter will take place, so how do we stay prepared? Always on the watch. Waiting wide awake! What are you hoping for?





FRIENDS & NEIGHBORS



Next Friends n Neighbors will be held at the church , New Fellowship hall, Dec 16. 10:30 am. Bryson Caviness will be singing and playing guitar of Older country, worship, hymns, Christmas songs. All are welcome. Free. Afterwards going out to lunch at King n Queen on Rt 70 . Either ride the bus or drive yourself.

Cindy Hyle

Thank You

Dear church family,
From the bottom of my heart, I would like to thank each of you for the love, support, prayers and friendship you have given to me and Cindy through the years of her sickness and to me in her death and my sorrow. I underestimated how lost and sad one could feel at a time like this, but I know I couldn't have done it without God's help and your support and friendship. Thank you to each of you, to the church bereavement team and all who continue to prayer for me. I hope I can return the favor someday. I love you all, Bob and Family

Women's Fellowship



An Invitation from Women's Fellowship for our Christmas Meeting and Potluck Luncheon December 9 at 11 am. If you've never attended Women's Fellowship, this is an opportunity to enjoy our fellowship. Come at 11 am and see how Cheryl Royal has decorated the tables for us and if you come, please bring a dish that will go with the Ham that Cheryl is supplying. Cheryl has a real knack in creating festive environment for our special gatherings. Please let Marcia know if you are planning to come. We'd love to have you join our fun and fellowship.

My Mt. Hope Church Family,

Thank you so much for welcoming me (and Dylan) in with open arms three and a half years ago. It's hard to believe it's only been that long, as it seems like this has been my church forever. I will hold close our laughs and jokes, tears and sorrows, and smiles and joys, as we practiced what it means to be the church together and be in community with one another. It has been an honor to grow and walk alongside you all in the journeys of our faith and our lives. My goal is to not be a stranger, but please do not be one either! You have been a forever blessing in our lives. As the song I sang for the choir on Wednesday night goes, "The part of you in me and the part of me in you, will keep us all together One in Love."

In peace and with love,

Julianna



To the Church FROM Women's Fellowship
Special Announcement.

Remember a quart of BEETS will accent your
Christmas Meal

AND

And be a special Christmas Present...

however, we don't recommend the jars as
stocking stuffers.

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



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

We will be cooking Boston Butts for Super Bowl weekend. They will be available to pick up on Saturday, February 7th just in time for Super Bowl Sunday - but you must pre-order. Watch for more information. Last year we had many who donated meat. If you are able to do this again, it will certainly help with this fundraiser.



youth

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!



UPCOMING YOUTH EVENTS

Please note whether it is a Saturday or Sunday!

DEC
7

CHRISTMAS PAGEANT

The youth will help serve the grilled cheese and tomato soup lunch.

DEC
21

CHRISTMAS PARTY

12pm in the youth room. Please bring a \$10-15 gift for a gift exchange!

DEC
14

CHRISTMAS CAROLING

Meet at the church in the afternoon. Time TBA.

DEC
28

NO MEETING

Happy Holidays!



Registration for Blowing Rock's Winter Youth Retreat is due December 17th. The weekend this year is January 16th-19th. Please let us know ASAP if you would like to register!



Kire Stenson-Mims is the new Youth and Children's Church Director, as well as a middle school math and science teacher at Southeast Middle School. She is married to Zeb Mims and recently welcomed their first child, their daughter Maeve, in October. In addition to being passionate about working with kids, Kire enjoys music, reading, and being with family. She is excited to bring energy and enthusiasm to the church's youth programs and to help nurture the next generation of faith.

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

CHRISTMAS CAROLING

Please join us for our annual Christmas Caroling for the shut-ins on Sunday, December 14th. We will meet in the church fellowship hall at 2pm and divide into groups in order to cover all of our shut-ins.

Afterwards, we will meet back at the church for refreshments! Please bring a "goodie" to share and leave them in the kitchen before caroling. Hope you can join us for an afternoon of fellowship and fun!



POINSETTIA FUND

As we do each year, we will be collecting money for the Poinsettia Fund. This year the money will be given to our food ministry here at Mt. Hope. It is becoming more and more evident of the great need in and around our community, especially during this time of year. Please turn in your donations to the church office by Wednesday, December 17th, 2025 with your name and list of loved ones on a completed form. These forms may be picked up at church at both entrances or the office. Thank you in advance for your generosity!



Please join us for our Christmas Pageant on December 7th immediately after worship! Our Christmas Pageant this year involves everyone in the congregation, so we would love to have your participation. Please feel free to bring a finger dessert (cookies, brownies, etc.) to share.



~ PLEASE JOIN US ~

DECEMBER 7TH - CHRISTMAS PLAY & LUNCH PROVIDED BY YOUTH

DECEMBER 14TH - CHRISTMAS CAROLING

DECEMBER 18TH - BLUE CHRISTMAS SERVICE @ 6:30 PM OFH

DECEMBER 24TH - CANDLELIGHT CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE 7:00 PM

WISE Moment

Merry Christmas from the WISE Team:

Our next question we will be discussing on Dec 30 at 6:30 PM is:

What can our community do to meet the needs of the elderly in our church?

All are welcome!





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

Mt. Hope UCC
Consistory Meeting Minutes
10-16-2025

Members Present:

Gloria Apple, Tracy Buff, Sylvia Belvin, Don Kirkman, Tammy Holt
Dora Moore, Cindy McGee, Cheryl Royal, Lisa Sinclair

Opening of the Meeting:

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

Lighting of the Christ Candle

A devotional on GOD & the beauty of fall & prayer was provided by Cindy McGee.

We Celebrate our Past:

Approval of Minutes:

A motion was made by Tracy Buff & seconded by Tammy Holt to approve the minutes from the September 2025 consistory meeting.
Motion carried.

Treasure Report:

September Consolidated Fund Activity Report showed an ending balance of \$176,412.38 with total receipts of \$22,562.65 & disbursements of \$19,177.36.

The general fund had a beginning balance of \$7,424.03 and receipts of \$16,003.64 and disbursements of \$14,335.03 and an ending balance of \$9,092.64.

A motion was made by Tracy Buff to accept the treasurer's report as presented and Cheryl Royal. Motion carried.

Pastors Report:

World Communion was Sunday October 5th and 18 people outside of the church were delivered communion.

November 1st. will be trunk or treat in parking lot from 2-4p.m.

Discussions were made about Out of the Garden Project. This will require 6-10 volunteers, and church could make monthly financial contributions. The food ministry task force wants to make a commitment for 12 months.

Committee Reports:

Maintenance:

Upkeep of boiler; local HVAC to provide estimates.

Mission & Outreach:

Food Ministry Taskforce continues to meet & plan

Wise Team

November 2nd Grief Speaker

Prayer of Intercession:

Pastor Kristin offered prayers for those in the church in need. Those dealing with illness and sickness, as well as babies of our church family, both on the way and recently arrived.

Old Business:

Projects that continue to need attention include water issues in the basement, repair of the columns, window replacement and roof repair. Work on obtaining quotes and seeking resources continues.

Arrangements have been made for mowers for the church property.

New Business:

2025 Congregational Meeting will be held on Sunday November 9th. Dora Moore presented the proposed budget from the finance committee to the consistory for Approval.

Concerns were expressed on our church's wider mission (OCWM) & presenting to the congregation an outline for the budget; to introduce the following change for the 10% tithes as follows:

National UCC 10%

Southern Conference 10%

WNCA 20%

Church World Services 10%

Local Agencies 10%

Community Food Ministry 40%

Our proposed local agency for 2026 is Mustard Seed Clinic and the Community Food Ministry for 2026 is Out of the Garden Project will be presented to the Congregation.

Our proposed change to the constitution from 12 Consistory Members to 10 will also be presented to the Congregation.

The need for new members for next year's Consistory and Trustees was discussed. Sharon Mims will rotate off Consistory and Sylvia Belvin declined to seek re-election. Gloria Apple, Tracy Buff, Cindy McGee and Cheryl Royal are all up for re-election. Stan Buff will also rotate off as Trustee.

Charge and Benediction

Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted, Tracy Buff

Mt. Hope United Church of Christ

Congregational Meeting 11/9/25

An announced congregational meeting was held on Sunday November 9, 2025 for the purpose of presenting a proposed change to the Constitution, proposed slate of new deacons and trustees nominated for the upcoming year, and the proposal for the upcoming year's budget including a revised allocation for Our Church's Wider Mission giving (OCWM). Gloria Apple, Consistory President called the meeting to order, and a quorum was established. Information had been provided on previous Sundays regarding the budget and proposed OCWM allocation. Additionally, individuals nominated for positions of deacons had been presented on Sunday November 2, 2025, and the floor opened for nominations from the congregation. With no additional nominations received, Brenda Currie made the motion to close the nominations and Dora Moore seconded. Motion carried.

A proposal revision to the church Constitution was presented from the Consistory. Currently, the Consistory consists of twelve elected members. The proposal was to reduce this number to ten elected members to address the complexity of finding enough members willing to serve. Motion to accept was made by Cole Levens and seconded by Stan Buff. Motion carried.

Dona Branson and Dallas Belvin were nominated for open positions on the Consistory due to the completion of four years of service by Sharon Mims who will be leaving Consistory, and the decision of Sylvia Belvin to not seek a second term. Gloria Apple, Tracy Buff, and Cheryl Royal were also nominated for a second term of two years. Cindy McGee who completed the unexpired term previously held by Bob Hamlet, was nominated for a new two-year term. Mike Johnson was nominated to fill the vacancy on Trustees left by Stan Buff's rotation off due to completion of six years. Brenda Currie made the motion to accept the nominated individuals for these positions and it was seconded by Lorie Arrington. The motion carried.

Simon Clark, Treasurer, presented the proposed 2026 budget and reviewed changes for the upcoming year. Included was the proposal to reallocate quarterly tithe payments made to OCWM. Historically, 100% of the payment has gone to the National UCC without input from the church on its use. In order to better meet the call for our church to address the needs of those around us and in the wider world, the proposal calls for the quarterly tithe payments to be allocated as follows: 10% National UCC, 10% Southern Conference, 20% Western NC Conference, 10% world missions, 10% local agencies, 40% community food ministries. Joe Hughes made the motion to accept the budget and proposal. Susan Finley seconded. The motion carried.

A proposal to use the quarterly tithe funds allocated for community food ministries to support Out of the Garden Project Mobile Market for the 2026 budget year was made. Bennie Gerner made the motion to accept the proposal and Ken Cham seconded. Motion passed. Additionally, a proposal to use the quarterly tithe funds allocated for support for local agencies go to Mustard Seed Community Health. Marcia Cham made the motion to accept the proposal and it was seconded by Melinda Kozak.

Ken Cham made the motion to dismiss and it was seconded by Joe Hughes. Motion carried and business was complete.

Submitted by
Sharon Mims, Secretary



HELLO DECEMBER



- 6th - Out of the Garden Mobile Market 10:30 am
- 7th - Worship @ 10 am - Gather Learn Grow @ 11:15
- 7th - Church -Wide play and lunch by the youth
- 9th - Women's Fellowship at 11:00 am
- 11th - Women's Fellowship @ 11 am in the NFH
- 14th - Worship @ 10 am - Gather Learn Grow @ 11:15
- 14th - Christmas Caroling at 2 pm, meet at the church
- 15th - Men of Valor @ 6:30 pm
- 16th - Friends & Neighbors @ 10:30 am in NFH w/Bryson Caviness singing.
- 18th - Blue Christmas Service @ 6:30 pm in the OFH
- 21st - Worship @ 10 am - Gather Learn Grow @ 11:15
- 21st - Youth Christmas party 12pm (Bring \$10-15 gift to exchange)
- 24th - Candlelight Christmas Eve Service @ 7 pm w/Communion
- 28th - Worship @ 10 am - Gather Learn Grow @ 11:15



- *Choir rehearsal December 3rd, 10th, 17th @ 7 pm
- *Handbells will start December 3rd, 10th, and 17th @ 6pm. All are welcome!
- *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!



- | | |
|----------------------|-----------------------|
| 2 - Cindy Hughes | 18 - Daniel Crumby |
| 3 - Heather Greeson | 20 - Elizabeth Craft |
| 4 - Chelsey Hanks | 22 - Zoey Lashley |
| 5 - Douglas Clapp | 22 - Sophia Levens |
| 5 - Bennie Gerner | 22 - Denny Ingold |
| 6 - Laurie Baker | 23 - Todd Chapmon |
| 7 - Carolyn Simpson | 23 - Debbie Underwood |
| 7 - Pamela Greeson | 23 - Brenda Currie |
| 8 - Lauren Parsons | 24 - Tracy Buff |
| 9 - Alonzo Smith | 25 - Don Kirkman |
| 11 - Brenda Caviness | 26 - Margie Staley |
| 12 - Emily Neal | 26 - Anne Welker |
| 13 - Dallas Belvin | 28 - Cathy Gossett |
| 13 - Megan Underwood | 29 - Abby Strouth |
| 13 - Cory Underwood | |
| 13 - Ken Cham | |
| 15 - Jonathan Vaughn | |
| 16 - Jason Hughes | |

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)



Mt. Hope Military Connections

Michael Terraforte

Solomon Price, Jr.

Kyle Gerner

Scott Amick

Wade Greeson

Jonathan Vaughn

Members, Friends, & Relatives

Joan May

Amanda Levens

Woody & Peggy Levens

Noral & Cindy Belvin

Krissy Coomer

Debra Prater

Peggy Greeson

Nikki Dobson

Betty Neese

Shirley Harris

Clifton Greeson

Chris Freeman

Barb Santa

Ralph O'Ferrell

Justin Engle

Becky Sutphin

Helen Johnson

Faye Newsome

Robert Proctor

Family of Cindy Hamlett

Beezer Levens

Dennis Owens

Alonzo Smith

Family of Steve Burns

Bennie Ellington

Jo Ann Gauldin

Kevin Holt

Terry Clapp

Dallas Amick

Judy Gerner

Shirley Kime

Rick Morgan

Mildred Strader