**2014 Annual Report – Pastor Mary Beth Hartenstein**

There is a saying, “A picture is worth a thousand words.” This refers to the notion that a complex idea can be conveyed with just a single still image or the idea that through visualization it is possible to absorb a large amount of data quickly. I cannot take a single picture of what it has been like for Hope United Church of Christ in 2014. Yet, I hope that through these snippets of the past twelve months, there will be a glimpse into all the wonderful, exciting, fun and special events that happened throughout this past year.

**January 2014**

* Unity Sunday event with ecumenical group, January 19, held at St. Andrew’s Lutheran Church
* Annual Meeting
* 50th Anniversary Celebration Kick-off Sunday (“Peter, Paul and Mary” group)
* By the Fireside Book Club (meeting in January, February and March)

**February 2014**

* Ohio State-Iowa Basketball game challenge (nets $600 for general fund)
* Chapel of Love – part of 50th Anniversary celebration (renewal of wedding vows)
* Snowbird Sunday (wearing sandals, shorts, and more)
* Clergy Night Out (six clergy couples gathered for food and fellowship)
* Mike Slagenweit-Coffman is ordained through the Minnesota Conference
* David Carter, friend of Greg Sohl, provides special music

**March 2014**

* Mardi Gras Sunday
* Wyatt Dagit is ordained at Hope UCC
* BINGO night hosted by Mission Committee
* Recognition of active Charter Members
* Small group conversation as part of worship service
* One Great Hour of Sharing Offering (increase in dollar amount and number of giving units from 2013)

**April 2014**

* The Reverend Chuck West returns to Hope UCC, April 6
* Announcement about mortgage on the building being paid (This was done through faithful giving and a generous gift from a donor that came in March.)
* Easter Egg Hunt
* Camp Sunday
* Spring Boutique (Raising more than $3500)
* Good Friday service with First Congregational UCC, hosted by Hope UCC
* One year of The Lunch Bunch Fellowship group meeting

**May 2014**

* Women’s Fellowship hosts successful Cinco de Mayo event.

(First Congregational UCC and Central City UCC represented)

* The Reverend Fritz Mellburg returns to Hope UCC, May 18
* Rededication of our church building, Sunday, May 25
* Participation in Cedar Rapids Pride Event, May 31

**June 2014**

* The Reverend Lyle Kuehl (Judy) returns to Hope UCC, June 1
* Acknowledged The Reverend Glenn Hunt (44 years) and The Reverend Mark Buck (40 years) ordination, Sunday, June 1
* High School Graduates Honored, June 1
* Kernels Baseball Game, June 13
* Hog Wild Days (including float in the parade), food concessions raised $3600

Pastor Mary Beth was interviewed on Channel 9 about this event

* Council approves having Raven Rowe become our seminary intern for 2014-2015
* Spirituality Camp at Little Eagle Reservation

**July 2014**

* Christmas in July Event hosted by Mission Committee and Stewardship Committee

(Raised $315.50 for mission and $94.46 for general fund)

* Great Lakes Regional Youth Event (July 10-13); Zayna Evans, Mya Gersema, Kate Nus and Laura Nus attended
* Vacation Bible School, 25 children attended; raised $375.48 for Cedar Valley Habitat for Humanity
* The Reverend Lyle Greiner (Trudy) returned to preach

**August 2014**

* Mandy Denny, piano instructor, and two of her students (Carrie and Connor Cummins) played during worship
* Kernels Baseball Game, August 15
* Clergy Night Out, August 18 (15 persons attend)
* Garage Sale (nearly 30 people help over the week); money raised helped pay for parking lot being resealed
* 50th Anniversary Celebration Team treats Hiawatha Elementary School staff to bottles of water
* Hosted an Eastern Iowa Association Continuing Education Event, August 25
* Pastor Mary Beth’s second anniversary of being at Hope UCC, August 27

**September 2014**

* Opening day for Sunday school program has nearly 40 children in attendance
* Raven Rowe, student at Chicago Theological Seminary, begins her contextual education experience here
* Celebration of Mary Nus (2) and Regan Bloomquist (1) work anniversaries
* Presentation of VBS/congregation gift to Habitat for Humanity Cedar Rapids, $375.48
* The Reverend Dr. Rich Pleva, Iowa Conference Minister, preaches, and Heather Woodin, Director of Ministries for Children, Youth and Families at First Congregational UCC, CR, is a guest speaker about Neighbors in Need Offering
* Sunday, September 28 Eastern Iowa Association Meeting – DeWitt – Sunday, September 28; eight representatives attended: Lois Bennett, The Reverend Mark Buck, Jane Buck, Betty Hohensee, Vivian Martin, Mike Slagenweit-Coffman, Raven Rowe, and Pastor Mary Beth.

Members of Hope UCC now serving on association teams include:

The Reverend Mark Buck – Committee on Ministry

Pastor Mary Beth – Committee on Ministry

Jane Buck – Advisory Council Member at Large

**October 2014**

* Prayer Partners were assigned to each student in the Confirmation program.
* Celebration of my tenth anniversary of ordination. Celebration of Mark and my 30th wedding anniversary (Sunday, October 5).
* World Communion Sunday (October 5) with shared bread from the ecumenical group of clergy that meet from the northeast side of Cedar Rapids.
* 50th Anniversary Celebration Team served lunch to approximately 15 individuals from the Hiawatha police and fire departments (Saturday, October 11).
* Friendship Committee organized a trip to The Old Creamery Theater to see *A Mighty Fortress Is Our Basement*.
* Raven Rowe, student from Chicago Theological Seminary, lead worship

(Sunday, October 12).

* Celebration of 50th Anniversary with The Reverend Jonna Jensen, Associate Conference Minister, Iowa Conference. Dinner followed worship with more than 100 adults in attendance (Sunday, October 19).
* K9 handler, Erik Naaktgeboren and his partner, Reso, from the Hiawatha Police Department shared what their responsibilities are in the community and demonstrated Reso’s special talents and skills as part of the Sunday School unit on Community Superheroes (Sunday, October 19).
* Trunk-or-Treat Event held with fifteen vehicles in the parking lot, approximately 100 goody bags given away.

**November 2014**

* Stewardship Campaign includes a phone, email, text-athon to encourage individuals and families to make a pledge to our mission and ministry and programs in 2015. First week of campaign had 47 pledge cards returned, totally $96,102.00; $10,158.00 more than the first week of the drive for 2014 (12% increase). Week two had an additional five cards returned, totally an additional $6500.00 pledged.

Pledges received totaled 57 in number (up 5 from 2014) and totaled $109,282; an increase of $14,054 (approximately an increase of 13% from 2014).

* Fall Beef Dinner (November 2) served more than 200 meals and netted approximately $1200. Lots of compliments on food and service of the event.
* New Members Outing had thirteen individuals attending, including two members of the Membership Enrichment Committee. Thirteen new members and three children were welcomed on Sunday, November 16.
* Friendship Committee hosted a potluck luncheon on Sunday, November 9; Bob and Ann Bromley presented slides and information about their recent trip to Africa.
* Lois Gibson, former Illinois South Conference Christian Education Coordinator, came and presented a workshop on the process of becoming Open and Affirming.
* Once Again Christmas event was held on Saturday, November 15, with more than $3200 in proceeds.
* Clergy Night Out had seven clergy and their spouses (fourteen total) enjoying food and fellowship at the Lighthouse Restaurant.

**December 2014**

* Annual financial meeting and the receiving of nominations for leadership positions was held on Sunday, December 7, following worship.
* First Congregational United Church of Christ and Hope United Church of Christ worked together to provide the holiday party for Westover Manor residents; approximately persons were served.
* Sunday School Children’s Christmas program was held during worship on Sunday, December 14. Approximately 33 children took part in the program, titled, *Star of Wonder*, which was directed by Mary Nus (Christian Education Coordinator), and assisted by Denise Gruwell and Janelle Solberg.

Attendance for worship was approximately 107-180 adults that morning. Santa (Roger Gruwell) and an elf (Allison Gruwell) greeted children and passed out approximately 46 bags of treats.

* Sunday, December 21, the Cantata Choir, directed by Greg Sohl, accompanied by Deb Strunk and Grace Neumann (flute), shared four pieces of music that morning. The choir consisted of approximately sixteen members (some who normally do not sing in the choir).
* Leadership instituted a new way for the congregation to give a gift to staff during the holiday season, which was done through envelopes and given to the financial secretary. Giving totaled more than $1100, with money/SCRIP going to: Regan Bloomquist, Tsega Habte, Mindy Hatcher, Mary Nus, Raven Rowe, Greg Sohl, Deb Strunk, and Pastor Mary Beth.
* Christmas Eve was celebrated with two services, 5:00 and 7:00 p.m. The 5:00 p.m. service focused on the story, *The Sparkle Box*, and featured special music by Anna Neumann and the group of: Mitch Bloomquist, Leon Bohn, Melia Bohn, Doug Neumann, Greg Solh, and Janelle Solberg (with Andrew Buck on drums). The 7:00 p.m. service was a traditional one with candlelight. Julie Anderson, Wyatt Dagit and Greg Sohl provided special music. Attendance was approximately 80 for the 5:00 p.m. service (including 12-15 children) and 130+ for 7:00 p.m.

I know that this is not as easy to glance at as a picture or snap shot might be, but what a year we had as we celebrated our 50th anniversary of being Hope United Church of Christ, as we participated in missions and programs, and as we tried new events and took on new opportunities.

May 2015 hold even more excitement for us as we continue to grow into the church that God would have us be as we are *The Good News of Jesus in Hiawatha and Beyond*.

**Hope United Church of Christ**

**50th Anniversary Celebration Committee Report for 2014**

**“Building Hope for 50 Years and Into the Future”**

**Submitted by Charlotte Butikofer**

The 50th Anniversary Celebration Committee was formed in November 2013 to plan and carryout the celebration for the 50th anniversary of signing the charter for Hope United Church of Christ, which occurred in March 1964. Pastor Mary Beth Hartenstein, Shelly Hatfield, Jane Buck, Cindi Ohrt, Gwen Klima, Marlene Hunt, and Marlene Simon volunteered to serve on the committee.

The committee determined that rather than hold one major event the celebration would occur throughout the year with at least one monthly activity. It was the goal to engage the congregation and have members participate in the many planned events. Our theme “Building Hope for 50 Years and Into the Future” was chosen after Mark Buck provided a drawing of children’s blocks spelling ‘HOPE’. Mitch Bloomquist then modified the drawing and it was used on t-shirts, banners, and items throughout the year.

* January 26, 2014 “1964 Sunday”. Congregation members were invited to dress as members would have in 1964 and provide a jello salad for the noon luncheon. Our own “Peter, Paul, & Mary” (Greg Sohl, Wyatt Dagit, & Mindy Hatcher) provided special music and got the congregation clapping and singing along with them.
* February 9, 2014 “Chapel of Love”. We honored those couples who had been married at Hope, but all couples were invited to participate in renewal of vows and bring their wedding photos. A wedding reception was held with delicious wedding cake (made by Faye Cieslek) and mints (made by Julie Ludovissy and Donna Hines). The ‘Love Bug’ greeted members as they entered the church courtesy of the John Nus Family.
* March 16, 2014 – “Charter Sunday”. We honored Zane & Delores Sharp, Dick & Lois Gladson, Sally Davis, and Gilbert & Norma Thoren, the charter members who are still active at Hope with a small gift and fellowship reception.
* April 6, 2014 – Rev. Charles West, who served from 1979 to 1992, provided the sermon message and reflections of his time at Hope. It was during his pastorate that the sanctuary was built. Church Council Chairman, Doug Neumann, announced that through the generous donation of a member, the mortgage was paid off.
* May 11, 2014 – We honored the women of Hope with our special guests from the East, Carnac (Adrian Evans) and Doc Severinsen (Andrew Buck).
* May 18, 2014 – Rev. Fritz Mellberg, who served Hope from 1993-2011, provided the sermon message. A time of fellowship followed worship.
* June 1, 2014 – Rev. Lyle Kuehl who served Hope from 1965 to 1976 joined our worship service and shared an entertaining sermon. A time of fellowship followed worship.
* June 15, 2014 – A Jeopardy game was played during worship service that celebrated the men of Hope.
* June 21, 2014 – Hope participated in the Hog Wild Days parade with a 50th Anniversary Cake Float. Members of Hope walked the parade route or rode the float. Information was distributed regarding our worship service times and coupons for a free bottle of water if a sandwich was purchased at our food stand in the park.
* July 27, 2014 – Rev. Lyle Greiner who served Hope from 1976-1978 participated in our worship service and shared a sermon. A time of fellowship was enjoyed.
* August 17, 2014 – Hope UCC “Floating Along for 50 Years” was the theme of fellowship following worship. Root beer floats were served.
* August 26, 2014 – The committee prepared back to school treats for the staff at Hiawatha Elementary. We shared with the current staff that our worship services and Sunday School classes were held at the elementary in our early years.
* September 7, 2014 – Pastor Mary Beth created a worship service to celebrate the children of Hope during worship service as we started our new year of Sunday School.
* September 28, 2014 – Our Iowa Conference Minister, Rev. Rich Pleva, preached at our worship service. A time of fellowship followed.
* October 19, 2014 – We held our grand finale event with a worship service led by Iowa Conference Associate Conference Minister, Rev. Jonna Jensen, and special choir anthems. We then moved the celebration to the beautifully decorated Hiawatha Community Center. A catered dinner was served and we were entertained by Rev. Jensen.

The Anniversary Celebration Team wants to continue with some final goals into 2015.

* Complete and publish the history of Hope United Church of Christ. Charlotte Butikofer is writing the history, which is being edited by Jane Buck. Mitch Bloomquist has offered to assist with printing and pictures.
* Locate photographs of all of the pastors who have served at Hope UCC. The photos will be framed and displayed.
* Sort and label the many boxes of photographs.

The anniversary team has enjoyed the fellowship and planning of these many events in 2014. May all members be challenged to remember our past as we go forward and build into the future!

**2014 Building & Grounds Maintenance Annual Report**

**December 20, 2014**

The Building and Property Committee is charged with the maintenance and renovations of the building and property of Hope UCC. The most significant parts of this task are the weekly cleaning of the building, mowing of the lawn, clearing snow from the parking lot and sidewalks in the winter, and keeping the heating, cooling, phone, and computer systems operational for the church functions. Dan Evers, Roger Frederick, Gary Toomsen, Fran Henderson, and myself with the occasional help from Robert Cieslek support the B&G Committee. The 2013/2014 Snow removal was contracted by Greg’s Lawn & Landscaping effective November 21, 2013 for two years through November 21, 2015. The B&G committee plus Bill Thompson, Mark Buck, John Nus, Zane Sharp, Jim Wooldridge, Bob Simon, Mark Hartenstein, Alex Evans and Andrew Buck provided the Lawn care this year.

A grounds Spring cleanup work day was cancelled again this year due to weather. The B&G Committee did perform various task throughout the spring and summer which included trimming some trees, clearing landscaping, spraying weeds, and picking up and hauling away leaves. Published a new schedule for lawn mowing. Had a yard waste dumpster brought in by ABC Waste Disposal to dispose of grass clippings, branches, leaves from April through November. Thanks to Mary Nus for planting and caring for the front flower gardens and potted containers. A better method for mounting air conditioners in the classrooms was developed. Controlling the ants in the classroom and Kitchen areas continued to be troublesome. A new oven was installed in the Kitchen. Pate Asphalt completed filling cracks sealing the parking lot as part of a contract signed in 2013. We took delivery of a purchased new zero turn radius Gravely Pro Turn 160 mower with a 25 hp Kawasaki engine and a power grass catcher. Conducted a performance review with our janitor, Tsaga Habte, on December 6th, 2014. Women’s Fellowship purchased a rebuilt Royal vacuum to replace the worn out old one. The stall divider panels were repainted in the Pre-School boys bathroom. Replaced lighting tubes in several sanctuary ceiling fixtures. The rear walls of the sanctuary and Narthex wall were painted. Many other minor maintenance issues and purchasing of maintenance supplies where addressed and completed this year.

B&G Committee Tasks scheduled for 2015 include: Prepare a new schedule of volunteers for lawn mowing; add shelving and banner hangers in the storage area behind the organ; For April through November 2015, have ABC Waste Disposal bring in another dumpster for yard waste disposal; Organize volunteers to plant and maintain various sections of church flower gardens and landscaping; Complete painting of the rear walls in the sanctuary; clean out the storage area above the Narthex; Schedule and conduct grounds spring and fall cleanup efforts; Continue the effort to move/replace the church sign; Continue performing building and grounds maintenance tasks as required; Continue to nurse and maintain the aging furnaces and air conditioners; Improve cabinet storage in Classrooms; Set up a new snow removal contract for November 2015/2017.

Melvin G. Krause

B & G Committee Chairman

**2014 Council Chair Report**

**Submitted by Doug Neumann**

Fifty years.

Many of the events, memories and accomplishments of 2014 revolved around our theme for the year of celebrating 50 years of Hope United Church of Christ. Those reflections and reunions were a lot of fun, and probably my biggest memory of 2014. But a whole lot of other great stuff got done, too.

The work and activities of the committees are elsewhere in this Annual Report, and I hope not to duplicate information submitted by others. But I wanted to take a moment to reflect on some of the issues I had the honor to work on during this past year as chair of the Church Council.

First, a tip of the cap to my council colleagues. You made council meetings fun and worthwhile, and you provided strong leadership on a number of the committees. Thank you to the crew from 2014: Melana Urbanowski, Christian Ed; Betty Hohensee, Friendship; Wyatt Dagit, Mission; Andrew Buck, Worship & Music; Gwen Klima, Stewardship; Mel Krause, Building & Property; Nancy Lehman, Membership; Cathy Evers, Treasurer; and Ruth Vial, Secretary.

One of the most significant decisions made by the Council in 2014 was to discontinue doing Hog Wild Days as a fundraiser. Consideration of this had started a year earlier, and in all, this decision took months of discussion and deliberation. We challenged ourselves to think about the purpose of our involvement in Hog Wild Days – revenue, fellowship, membership recruitment, community support. And we talked to many, many of the volunteers and congregation members. People had very fond memories of past events, but things had changed in recent years. As a festival, Hog Wild Days has diminished, and as a church, we weren’t getting much value out of the experience anymore. It became clear it was time to move on to the next thing.

We renewed our working agreement with the day-care operation, improving the relationship with good communication over some issues around sharing building space. We renewed our non-profit status with the State of Iowa. We learned about the process of becoming an Open & Affirming Church, and took the first steps in that journey.

We spent part of every single Council meeting talking about the financial health of the church, and – with the help of the generosity of the congregation – we have made great strides toward a healthier, more stable financial picture. We are debt-free for the first time in many, many years, and in a good position to talk about potential future investments in renovation and/or expansion of the church facilities.

And to dream about the next 50 years.

**Christian Education Annual Report 2014**

**Submitted by Mary Nus, Christian Education Coordinator**

There is never a quiet time throughout a year in the Christian Education Department. Here is what happened in 2014 at Hope United Church of Christ.

**-January:** Students began 2014 with a unit called “The Boy’s Lunch”, the PowerXpress curriculum unit was used to teach students the story about Jesus feeding the 5,000. As a mission project throughout the month of January, students brought in non-perishable seafood items to feed the hungry in our community.

A Valentine Creation Station Night was held in late January for Sunday School families. Everyone enjoyed supper together and then created Valentine cards and crafts for their annual charity Valentine sale.

**-February:** Students studied PowerXpress units on the Last Supper, paying special attention to the meaning of communion, and “Prayer” giving special emphasis to “The Lord’s Prayer”.

Hope students and families raised over $400 through their Valentine goody and card sale. The children divided the money raised to the Eastern Iowa Autism Association and Hope middle and high school students’ UCC Regional Youth Event trip to Sheboygan, Wisconsin. Hope Youth raised over $300 doing the Super Bowl Sunday Sub Sandwich fundraiser. This money was earmarked for the Regional Youth Event as well.

-**March:** Pastor Mary Beth lead instruction during an “Agape Meal” in early March. This event was presented during Sunday School time to Hope students and their families as a culmination to “The Last Supper” and “Prayer” units of study. The goal of the event was to familiarize families with UCC communion practices, as well as begin conversations with students and adults about the meaning of communion.

During the month of March, students studied Jesus’ parables of the The Lost Coin, The Lost Sheep and The Lost Son.

-**April:** In early April, students learned about Jesus coming into Jerusalem and the events of Holy Week. Students were given a Holy Week Advent Calendar depicting artwork and information about each day of Holy Week.

Hope UCC hosted a second annual Easter Celebration on April 12. The event included craft time, Easter snacks and an egg hunt for more than 30 children from the congregation and the community. No Sunday school was held on Easter Sunday, April 13.

Jane Meyer from Pilgrim Heights Camp and Retreat Center visited again on April 27 to lead us in “Camp Sunday”. Jane’s visit helps to promote attendance to summer camps at Pilgrim Heights by giving Hope students a taste of camp activities. The morning included crafts, a campfire and s’mores! As a mission project, Sunday School families brought camp supplies for Pilgrim Heights campers to use in summer 2014 camps.

**-May:** The last four Sundays of the school year were filled with exciting activities for students including a review of the Sunday School year, a Sunday dedicated to Hope’s History, and a Sunday dedicated to Hope’s future. Sunday School concluded for the school year on May 18, with a 50th birthday party for Hope.

Art Nights returned for middle and high school students at Hope on May 20th. Six Youth met for supper and then worked together to paint mural dividers.

-**June:** Sunday School teachers and helpers met at the Butcher Block on June 2, to celebrate a successful Sunday School year. Hope Kids’ summer mission project of collecting “Box Tops for Education” began.

-**July:** Four middle/high school students traveled with Pastor Mary Beth to attend the UCC Regional Youth Event in Sheboygan, Wisconsin July 10-13.

The entire church was transformed into a **Workshop of Wonder** in July!Twenty-nine students attended **Workshop of Wonders** VBS, which was held July 17-20. Thirty-eight teachers and helpers provided instruction for students aged 3-years-old through 5th grade.

With a theme of “Imagine and Build with God”, VBS children supported the Cedar Valley Habitat for Humanity as their mission project. VBS began with the goal of raising $100 dollars to purchase a window for a Habitat home. In the end, VBS students, families and the Hope congregation raised almost $300 to go toward the purchase of windows for a Habitat Home. Joe Hennegar from the Cedar Rapids Restore came to VBS to inspire students to take care of people in our community.

Thanks to numerous volunteers and support from other area churches, **Workshop of Wonders** was a great success!

-**September:** Fall classes for Sunday School began on September 7, with 40 students registered! Over 400 **Box Tops for Education** were turned in by students. The Box Tops were given to Harrison and Hiawatha Elementary schools.

Students began the year with a unit on “Love Your Neighbor”. Students were challenged to be “Secret Service” agents and perform kindly deeds for others.

Confirmation class began on September 7 as well, with seven students registered for the year.

-**October:** All Sunday School students and families were encouraged to attend the Especially for You Breast Cancer Awareness Walk in downtown Cedar Rapids on October 5th. Working with EFY staff, middle school students created a banner for the race that said, “FINISH STRONG”. The banner was displayed along the EFY race route.

As part of the “Community Heroes” unit of study, Officer Erik Naaktgeboren of the Hiawatha K9 unit came to visit Sunday School with his K9 partner Reso. In addition to sharing information about Reso’s training and the goals of the K9 unit, Officer Erik and Reso demonstrated search and rescue skills that amazed Hope UCC students and staff.

Hope hosted a third annual Trunk or Treat event for church members and Hope’s neighborhood on October 24. There were 16 wonderfully decorated trunks and nearly 200 happy and ghostly goblins (and one stick!) trick-or-treating.

-**November:** Students began the month with a unit of study on Isaiah, the prophet who foretold of Jesus’ birth. Sunday school children ages Since December of 2013, students had brought in $600 in offering! The offering money was used to shop for the adopted family of four. Kindergarten through 8th grade students went Christmas shopping for the family in need, while students in the 3/4-year-old class stayed back to enjoy a Thanksgiving feast.

-**December:** Sundays in December were used to learn about, and to prepare for the “Star of Wonder” Christmas program, which was performed during worship on December 14.

Thirty-four Sunday School students ages 3-years-old through 6th grade participated in the program doing a fantastic job with solos, duets and telling the nativity story from the perspective of the starry sky. Janelle Solberg and Denise Gruwell were assistant directors for the program. Hope UCC parents provided treats for fellowship after the program. Middle School students ushered during this special service and also served fellowship. The end of the year was celebrated with a Birthday Party for Jesus on December 21!

**2014 Sunday School Attendance**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Date | # of Students | Date | # of Students | Date | # of Students | Date | # of Students |
| Jan. 5 13 | | Mar. 2 17 | | May 11 17 | | Oct. 26 19 | |
| Jan. 12 29 | | Mar. 9 25 | | May18 20 | | Nov. 2 30 | |
| Jan. 17 21 | | Mar. 16 22 | | July –VBS 29 | | Nov. 9 29 | |
| Jan. 26 16 | | Mar. 23 13 | | Sep. 7 31 | | Nov. 16 32 | |
| Jan. 29-V-day Party 30 | | Mar. 30 20 | | Sep. 14 26 | | Nov. 23 NO SS | |
| Feb. 2 23 | | Apr. 6 17 | | Sep. 21 24 | | Nov. 30 27 | |
| Feb. 9 23 | | Apr. 13 19 | | Sep. 28 22 | | Dec. 7 31 | |
| Feb. 16 23 | | Apr. 20 NO SS | | Oct. 5 EFY Walk 14 | | Dec. 14 Xmas Prgm. 38 | |
| Feb. 23 21 | | Apr. 27 20 | | Oct. 12 24 | | Dec. 21 25 | |
|  | | May 4 20 | | Oct. 19 26 | | Dec. 28 NO SS | |

**2014 Sunday School Teachers**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Regan Bloomquist | Denise Gruwell | Kate Nus |
| Jennifer Bohn | Shelly Hatfield | Laura Ogreen |
| Jane Buck | Julie Ludovissy | Caitlin Pechman |
| Kayla Buck | Joan Meier | Becky Thompson |
| Vicki Brendes | Jodi Moretz | Melena Urbanowski |
| Amy Evans | John Nus | Betty Venis |
|  |  |  |

**Thank you friends and members of Hope United Church of Christ**

**for supporting Christian Education in 2014**

**Friendship Committee Annual Report, 2014**

**Submitted by Betty Hohensee**

The main purpose of the Friendship Committee is to provide

social activities for Hope Church.

Chairperson: Betty Hohensee, Committee: Faye and Bob Cieslek, Rhonda Kaczinski, Gary and Karen Classon, Nancy Kotalik, Vivian Martin and Laura Ogreen.

January: Chili Cook Off after church.

February: Celebrated Valentine’s with a spaghetti lunch after church.

March: No Activities

April: Had a planning meeting. Annual Easter Breakfast was served after Sunrise Service. Helped with the annual Spring Boutique.

May: Gave mementoes to women for Mother’s Day and served a special cake during Fellowship Hour.

June: 50th Anniversary Committee helped our committee to honor the graduates with a special cake served during Fellowship Hour. Father’s Day-mementoes were given to the men and cupcakes were served during Fellowship Hour.

July: No Activities

August: No Activities

September: Planning meeting for the balance of the year.

October: Group of 24 attended a play at the Old Creamery Theatre- “The Church Basement Ladies in a Mighty Fortress is Our Basement”. We then went to dinner at the Ox Yoke Inn at Amana.

November: Potluck after worship followed with Bob and Ann Bromley’s presentation of pictures taken on their trip to Africa. Silent Auction was set up. Helped with Once Again Christmas.

December: Silent Auction ended. The proceeds will be used to purchase candelabra for Hope. Committee filled bags of candies for Santa to give to Sunday School children after their Christmas Program.

**Hog Wild Days Report/Update**

**Submitted By Andrew Buck**

Thanks again for the 30-somethingish year in a row that Hope UCC has solicited volunteers to pull off another successful Hog Wild Days food stand.  The weather wasn't ideal again this year, and the crowds were somewhat light, but we did raise around $3700 for the general fund of the church.  Due to the amount of volunteers and time needed to successfully run the food stand, the Hope Church Council voted and decided to discontinue our participation with a food stand at Hog Wild Days for 2015.  However, on December 19, 2014, the Hiawatha Lions Club contacted the Hope HWD leadership and informed them that the Hiawatha Lions would no longer be holding Hog Wild Days in the future.  Therefore, we made the right decision at the right time.

It is very important to realize our history and participation in this event over how many years since the Farm Progress Show, and realize our accomplishments, team work, and community building.  Thanks simply isn't enough, but thanks to all.

**The Membership Enrichment Committee**

**2014 Annual Report**

The Membership Enrichment Committee had quiet year. Notes were sent to members of the congregation that the committee noticed had not been present in worship or had participated in any activities or programs.

We did have thirteen new members in November 2014 and that was a wonderful celebration. Betty Hohensee, chair of the Friendship Committee, and I talked to Pastor Mary Beth about combining the two committees as they share many of the same activities and responsibilities. The new committee would be known as The Gatherings Team. This proposal was accepted by the leadership of Hope United Church of Christ.

Thank you to Lois Bennett, Angie Lehman, Amy Pechman and Reta Saylor for being on this committee and Duane Willhite for helping when I asked.

Thank you for allowing me to be chair of the Membership Enrichment Committee.

Wishing you all a great New Year,

Nancy Lehman

**Mission Committee Annual Report 2014**

**Membership:** Wyatt Dagit, chair.  Jennifer Bohn, secretary.  Betty Hohensee, treasurer.  Deb Wooldridge, Harrison and Hiawatha school liaison, Tobey and Mike Slagenweit-Coffman, bulletin board.  Linda Richards, sponsored child.  Karla Grauberger, Crossroads Mission.  Denise Mineck, on sabbatical.

Though retired from the committee, Vayla Waddington still handles back-pack donations and Lois Bennett still does HACAP food donations and blankets for the Linus project.

**Financial:**

**Opening Account Balance:** 12-31-2013 was $918.98

**Ending Account Balance:** 12-31-2014 was $445.22.

**Activities supported by the Congregation:**

* Quilts: Lois reportedmore than 150 quilts were donated to Linus Project, Camp Courageous, and Way Point. Mission Committee provides $70 quarterly to the quilters for supplies, and this year gave a one-time sum of $250 for a new sewing machine.
* Food Bank: Approximately 1,000 pounds of food were donated this year.
* Open and Affirming: Mike taught a class at Hope to educate about LGBT issues. The Mission Committee had a booth at Cedar Rapids Pride Fest – there were 35 venders at the event and roughly 1,000 people in attendance. We received a lot of good feedback. Deb also arranged for the Sisters of the Shifting Sand to dance at the event.
* Spirit Camp – more than 40 children were served for one week at Standing Rock Reservation in South Dakota. They experienced fun, learning, and guaranteed 2 meals per day. The camp was supported by $350 in fundraisers and $400 out of the general mission fund.
* Santa for Senior: 18 participants this year.
* Harrison School: one family was supported this year with donations received during Christmas in July. A total of $417 worth of presents was given to the family, which included 4 children ranging in age from 2 months old to 12 years old (as well as the parents).
* Reynasul: We are in our 6th year of supporting our sponsor daughter in the Philippines. She is no 16 years old and is transferring to a Catholic School.
* Operation Back Pack – more than 22 lbs of single-serve donations were given.

The Mission Committee has had a busy year. Hope UCC’s generous donations have supported many worthwhile projects, both in our community and beyond. We were proud to help get the ball rolling on the church’s Open and Affirming discussion, and a lot of time and resources were put into providing a good experience for the children who attended Deb’s Spirituality Camp on the reservation. Our congregation’s food donations were truly impressive again this year. As a committee we are being more deliberate about choosing the projects we undertake in an effort to ensure that they are supported by the congregation and fit with our larger theological mission. We are also trying to support projects at the local, regional, national, and global levels. These efforts will continue as we move into the next year.

Wyatt Dagit

Mission Chair, 2014-2015

**Stewardship 2014**

**Submitted by Gwen Klima**

Stewardship is the collection of time, talent and money. This has been full year in the life of Hope Church. We have had many people share their talents during Sunday services and during the numerous events we have held throughout the year. Whether it was singing in the choir, the float committee, the many who baked pies or cookies for the events we held, we have been a busy and talented congregation.

During the year we have had many financial events also. The new year brought us an opportunity we had not directly dealt with before. It was decided to establish a new fund called “Giving Hope” for families here at Hope that had an emergency financial need. The congregation can donate to this fund at any time and there have been guidelines set up for how to handle any request we may receive.

Mary Beth introduced the “52 week Challenge” to help secure a financial future for Hope. The challenge went out to the congregation to put aside money each week in addition to their pledges. The first week setting aside $1, the second week $2 and so on. We then were to bring money back the first week in January 2015. This would help us to start the year off right.

We had several “Special” collections during the year. They were ; One Great Hour of Sharing, Strengthen the Church, Neighbors in Need and The Christmas Fund, which helped us to think outside our congregation and look at the neighbors and the world around us.

July gave us an early Christmas. The Stewardship Committee in partnership with the Mission Committee sponsored Christmas in July. We hosted an Ugly Sweater Contest and had the Red Bucket Campaign. We served Christmas cookies and had the Giving Tree in the Narthex.This allowed us to collect money for the Christmas Families early so that we would have less on our plate in December.

We ended the year with a successful pledge campaign. This past year has given us one of the most financially secure years we have had in a long time but we need to build on this. The Congregation has increased their desire for an addition to Hope. This will take more than just a desire to complete. It will take everyone’s continuing their support of Hope United Church of Christ with their time, talent and money.

Women of Hope 2014

Annual Report

The Women of Hope continues to support the goals of Hope Church by helping wherever we are needed. We also meet to share fellowship and friendship. We meet eight time during 2014 to discuss how we can use our talents, time and funds to support the Church, to plan events and enjoy the fellowship over tastey treats and great conversations. We also have scheduled dinner meetings to discovered new restaurants and explore delicious menus.

The highlight of the Spring season was the Salad Supper. We invited womens' groups from three different churches to experience an Mexican Fiesta Supper featuring a trio of Latin musicians. Through-out the year we provided funeral lunches to grieving families, a brunch for a summer ecclesiastical meeting, and served a Christmas lunch for Westover Manor. We also ensured the kitchen and fellowship hall had the equipment and supplies needed for celebratory events and Sunday fellowship time.

Women of Hope sponsors two fund raising project, the Spring Boutique and Garden Sale in April and Once Again Christmas sale in November. The Spring Boutique was held on April 26th and we filled the Church with flowers and food. It was a lot of fun and a successful sale. The Once Again Christmas was held November 15th and was also a great success. The proceeds of these funds helped with various needs through-out the Church. This includes a new built in oven, six card tables, repairs for the furnace, and kitchen equipment and blinds for the educational rooms. We also contributed a major share towards a new riding lawn mower and help offset the costs of the 50th Anniversary dinner.

We would like to thank all that donated their time, talent and funds to make all our projects a success throughout the year. All Church women are invited to join our group, as 2015 will be filled with fellowship and fun.

Submitted by Nancy Kotalik, Secretary/Treasurer

Lois Bennett and Rhonda Kaczinski, Co-Chairs

**Worship and Music Committee Report 2014**

**Submitted By Andrew Buck, Chair**

The Worship and Music Committee met 10 times throughout 2014.  The main objectives of the committee including reviewing the worship process with the pastor, suggesting subtle changes, and assisting with worship planning throughout the year.  A few changes made include the addition of prayer cards during the service, as well as the condensing of the announcement time at the beginning of worship.

The usher, liturgist, and communion steward lists were maintained and updated by the committee throughout the year, as well as planning and preparation for special services.

The Committee thanks all of those who served as ushers, liturgists, and communion stewards during the year.  Without your volunteering, the worship experience at Hope would not be near as gratifying.

Also, thank you to those who have served and helped with worship and the music at Hope over the past year.  Your talents are greatly appreciated.

Committee Members:  Deb Strunk, Mindy Hatcher, Cindi Ohrt, Greg Sohl, Mitch Bloomquist, Julie Anderson, Pastor Mary Beth