TRINITY UCC Epiphany Worship Series

**What Does HOPE Look Like in 2019 and Beyond?**

“It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, ...”

One might say that the opening line of Charles Dickens’ novel, *A Tale of Two Cities*, is as apt a description of our time in 2019 as it was for 1859 Europe. Many of the same worrisome economic, social, religious and political issues plague us today. And yet, for many other reasons, 2019 will be the best of times in which to live. How do we reconcile these two realities? It is our trust in a nurturing God, in an equipping and leading Jesus, and in the empowering presence of the Holy Spirit that enable us not only to relish the good times but to embrace the difficult times, which provide the opportunity to experience renewal, change, and the promise and power of HOPE.

Times of transition are also opportunities to experience the power of HOPE. Trinity United Church of Christ is in a time of transition that requires the hard work of introspection and envisioning the future. As we navigate this process, there are no “right answers” but there are “right questions.” Such questions as: How will Trinity UCC—a small, small-town, mainline protestant church—not only survive but actually thrive into the future? How will Trinity UCC reinvent itself to offer more for the community and for God? What will TUCC look like five years from now?

We invite you to reflect on these and other questions during our Epiphany Worship Series **What Does HOPE Look Like in 2019 and Beyond?** from January 20 – March 3. Together we’ll spend seven Sundays focusing on the broad theme of HOPE, reflecting on what ingredients are necessary to build a HOPEFUL church and a HOPE-FILLED people.

Trinity UCC leadership challenges you to invite at least one person to join us for this worship series. That person might be a member of our church who has not been active recently or a friend, co-worker or neighbor. Invite them to join us on this journey.

**Sermon Schedule**

**January 20** **Hope Keeps Us Alive**

Isaiah 62:1-5; 1 Corin 12:1-11; & John 2:1-11 (Wedding at Cana)

*Choosing Life Over Death: HOPE Brings New Life, New Energy*

**January 27 Hope Brings Us Together**

1 Corin 12:12-31a; & Luke 4:14-21 (Jesus rejected in Nazareth)

*Choosing Community Over Isolation: Stronger Together in Our Diversity*

**February 3 A Greater Act of Courage – Acting Boldly**

Jeremiah 1:4-10; & Luke 4:21-30 (Jesus preaching in the synagogue)

*Choosing Bold Over Mild: Jesus Always Did the Radical Thing*

**February 10 An Imagined Joy**

Isaiah 6:1-8; & Luke 5:1-11 (Jesus calls his first disciples)

*Choosing Joy Over the Mundane: “It’s Like a JOY Moving in Us”*

**February 17 Made Out of the Blessings of Our Lives**

Jeremiah 17:5-10; & Luke 6:17-26 (Blessings and Woes)

*Who is a Blessing to You? For Whom are you a Blessing of Hope?*

**February 24 Changing the Present “Facts on the Ground”**

Genesis 45: 3-11 & 15; & Luke 6:27-38 (Love your enemies)

*Choosing Now Rather Than Later: Not Kicking the Can Down the Road*

**March 3 Adventure in the Future**

Exodus 34: 29-35; & Luke 9:28-36 (Transfiguration)

*Choosing Frontier Over Fortress: Sanctuary and Safe Places Build HOPE*

**Trinity United Church of Christ**

**Rev. Dr. Gerry Hanberry, Interim Pastor**

**Visit us: www.triinityuccmanchester.org**

**If you are looking for warm people who will love you just as you are,** consider worshiping with us. Trinity United Church of Christ has been welcoming seekers for over 250 years, and we invite you to be part of our long tradition of welcoming! Worship at Trinity is participative, held in a beautiful traditional sanctuary with inspiring sermon series and a diverse musical offering from our choir and congregation.

**Our faith is 2,000 years old. Our thinking is not.** We believe in God’s continuing testament. This is why we are committed to hearing God’s ancient story anew and afresh in our lives and in the world today. We try to remain attentive to God’s creative movement in the world. Religion and science are not mutually exclusive, and your head and heart are both welcomed into our places of worship. We prepare our members and leaders to be engaged in ministry in the present and future church, and we embrace all kinds of communities and new modes of thinking. Why? Because God is still speaking.

**Beyond Our Walls.** Trinity is committed to the community beyond our walls in Manchester, or even in Carroll County. We are involved in a variety of outreach efforts in the name of Christ**. Food Bags for Backpacks:** Food items are collected monthly during the school year for Manchester Elementary School for students who receive Free/Reduced meals.  **The Little Free Library is a shared effort between the church, Manchester Elementary School, and the town of Manchester. This Library belongs to everyone! You, your neighbors, friends, and people who pass by. Anyone may use it! This Little Free Library offers a way to share good things to read in our community. Little Free Library is honored by The Library of Congress for creating communities of literacy.**

**What is a Little Free Library?**

**A Little Free Library is a “take a book, return a book” free book exchange. In its most basic form, it’s a wooden box of books where anyone may pick up a book or two, or bring a book to share. Little Free Library book exchanges have a unique, personal touch and there is an understanding that real people are sharing their favorite books with their community. These aren’t just any old books, this is a carefully curated collection. The Library itself is a piece of neighborhood art that acts like a mini-town square. A Little Free Library promotes community and a sense of caring for those living in the community.**

* **TAKE BOOKS – If you see something your child would like to read, take it. You can even take two!**
* **SHARE BOOKS – When you are finished reading, return the books to the Little Free Library or pass them on to a friend. If you can’t bear to part with them, keep them and bring back different children’s books to share with others.**
* **GIVE BOOKS – Do your part and keep the Little Free Library well stocked with high-quality children’s books – share your favorites. Pay it forward! To donate larger quantities of good condition children’s books, simply drop them off at the designated boxes inside Manchester Elementary School and inside Manchester Town Hall.**

**Why Is Trinity UCC Interested in Being Part of This Effort?**

**Our church is committed to community within and beyond our walls. We are expanding the directive “Feed my sheep” to “Read to My Sheep.” We believe that by providing books to those who might not otherwise have access to them, we are demonstrating our commitment to community and helping to shine God’s light of care in Manchester.**

**Cold Weather Shelter:** We cook for the residents of and staff the cold weather shelter in Westminster, MD. We began this effort in two years ago by working at the shelter one night and have expanded to working two nights during the winter months. **Prayer Shawls** are made and blessed monthly for those needing a spiritual touch.  **Carroll County opens an overnight shelter from mid-November to April 1. It is staffed by volunteers from the community. Our congregation helps staff and provides a warm meal for the 30-40 homeless people who depend on this facility during the cold weather months.**

**We have seen people with various chronic illnesses and people lacking warm clothing. So we also donate clothing and over the counter medicines to the shelter as well.**

**Caring Committee:** The caring committee responds to emergency requests from the community. We partner with Human Services Programs and NESAP to guide individuals to resources available in the community. Trinity United Church of Christ

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**Epiphany Worship Series**

**What Does**

**HOPE Look Like**

**in 2019 and Beyond?**

**Sundays at 10:45 a.m.**

**January 20 – March 3, 2019**

**Trinity United Church of Christ**

**Visit us: www.triinityuccmanchester.org**

Sundays at 10:30 a.m. in Room 100

**January 15 – February 26**