LET LOVE SHINE THROUGH:
A campaign to widen our welcome
Dear People of Hope,

In the song we sing with our children, This Little Light of Mine, there’s a line, “Hide it under a bushel? No! I’m gonna let it shine!” We nurture and teach our kids that God blesses each of us with light and love. We need to share that light with each other, not hide it in fear or shame. It is true for us as individuals and for us as a church community. As a church, God has called us to a vision of Welcome, Nurture, Share, and we need to let it shine!

And we do let it shine! I so often marvel at the energy that radiates from our congregation to the world. Just look through this beautiful brochure to see how our love has shined since our founding. But, there are also times when it feels like our building and our facilities are not adequate for the ministry to which God is calling us. They act like a “bushel,” hiding the light of our hospitality, worship, fellowship and work for justice.

Our congregation has been on a path of listening to God’s call and of strategic planning in order to discern the best ways to bring our facility into alignment with our ministry. We have searched for ways small and large to let our light shine. It’s time now for a big step in that process. Let Love Shine Through: A Campaign to Widen our Welcome will help ensure that our facilities aren’t hiding the love in our congregation. This campaign will let our light shine to future generations, and we can’t do it without you. Will you help us shine beyond our bushel? Thank you for your prayerful consideration of how you can Let Love Shine Through!

Sincerely,

Rev. Amber Henry Neuroth
Pastor

Dear Members and Friends of Hope UCC,

Let Love Shine Through: A Campaign to Widen our Welcome is the theme for our capital campaign. This campaign reflects our intention to make our church building more welcoming and better able to support our programs and ministries. Ours is a vibrant and growing congregation, striving to heed God’s call to Welcome and Nurture all people, Sharing God’s love in all we do.

Our Master Plan looks out into the future, but this campaign will provide immediate, near-term improvements. We need more space, especially for classrooms for our children and youth. It’s long past time for us to provide a private office for our pastor. Additionally, by moving the office functions downstairs, we will create usable space upstairs that supports activities and gatherings that aren’t possible today.

As we plan for the future, we also need to take care of what exists today. This campaign will set aside money for necessary repairs and improvements that cannot be delayed.

Please take time to review this brochure as well as the other materials that we will provide you during this campaign. Prayerfully consider our ministry and outreach activities as we strive to be the church that God is calling us to be. We look forward to meeting and working with you as we join together to Let Love Shine Through each of us. May God bless you and us each and every day! Thank you.

Sincerely,

Rob Simmons
Campaign Chair
God began planting the seeds of Hope in 1960 with a mission church that met at Rose Hill Elementary School in Alexandria under the leadership of Rev. Wallace Anderson. Three years later, the new congregation was officially chartered and became Hope United Church of Christ. In 1964, Hope UCC followed their vision to plan and construct a permanent church building. Just before Christmas that year, the worship committee laid out a vision for Hope’s sanctuary: “A table centrally located near the people signifies the heart as well as gives a sense of the presence of God in the midst of the congregation. The communion table should be the focal point of the worshipping congregation with the cross, the symbol of the risen Christ, being given its rightful place.”

Our founders’ vision for our building and for our ministry shines through to us today each time we worship in our sanctuary. Our founders planned for the expansion of our current building, so as we prepare to expand and improve our facilities, we are blessed by their love and ministry for us. We are ensuring that their love will shine through to generations to come.

Over the years, Hope UCC experienced a few crisis moments, but the members and friends rose to those challenges. We experienced our pastor suddenly resigning, something many people worried could devastate the church, but this community came together and not only survived, but thrived. This experience made our community stronger and more capable to handle any situation that might arise. This confidence and faith gave us the courage to suspend our church governance and go through a year of visioning that resulted in a new constitution, bylaws and leadership structure.

Nearly three years ago we were suddenly forced to vacate our building due to major structural problems with our foundation walls. We had to relocate for several months while our building underwent major construction to repair the walls. Throughout all of these crises, God’s love was shining through into our community, strengthening us and making us able to envision this future building, which will allow us to shine more of God’s love into the world.

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-Hope UCC vision document, 1960
Welcome
Extravagant welcome is central to our ministry. That welcome usually begins in worship and flows throughout our whole community. We come together offering an inclusive, unconditional, and loving environment where those who are hurting, frustrated, and confused can find guidance and encouragement as we travel our shared spiritual path. We hope that our hospitable culture allows people of all ages, genders, races, sexual orientations, abilities, backgrounds to feel welcome.

Nurture
Hope is a rainbow of people from all walks of life. We experience a depth and breadth of community that is rare and precious. We take each member’s spiritual journey seriously, from a small child looking for smiles to an older adult with end-of-life questions. We are there for each other in times of celebration and crisis. We live out God’s love for us by nurturing one another.

Share
Jesus calls us to move beyond the four walls of our church to share the good news of God’s love, healing and acceptance. We encourage each other to put our faith into action through service and justice advocacy.

“Let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your God in heaven.”
-Matthew 5:16
Love Shines Through To the Community

Hope is a community that feels called to shine our love beyond the walls of our building. We became an Open and Affirming Church in 1998 fully including the LGBTQ community into the full life of our church ministry. In the 1960s, Hope was actively involved in the Civil Rights Movement and we continue this racial justice work today. We engaged in Sacred Conversations on Race and continue to work for equity, a journey which has taken us to the airports to protest the Muslim Ban and to Charlottesville to protest white supremacy. We have recently added a Refugee Care Team to walk alongside refugee immigrants to our community, an effort which fully embodies our vision to Welcome, Nurture, Share.

Social Justice Milestones:

- **Late 1960s**: Hope joins newly formed Koinonia Foundation to provide hunger relief to the local area
- **1968**: Hope begins ministering to juveniles in detention
- **1978**: Hope forms relationship with Hawaiian community
- **1998**: Hope becomes an Open and Affirming Church
- **2015**: Hope develops and delivers its Sacred Conversations on Race program to over 60 participants
- **2017**: Mission & Justice Team members attend A12 witness in Charlottesville, VA
- **2017**: Hope establishes Refugee Care Team

In 2014, Hope redesigned its Mission & Social Justice program, selecting a theme to guide the church’s efforts for each year. In 2015 the M&SJ team led the church in Sacred Conversations on Race, which included small group discussion sessions in members’ homes. Building from materials provided by the UCC, the team developed a curriculum to guide over 60 participants in exploring issues of racial justice. As our justice ministries continue to grow, Hope needs flexible space to plan and execute our vision for a just world.
At Hope we have a vibrant ministry to children and youth. As these ministries have grown, the number of activities occurring in the building has far exceeded the existing floor space. Currently, the office area serves as a pastor’s office, admin office, youth group meeting room, elevator entrance, storage area, library, and more. In addition, the downstairs classrooms and social hall are only able to accommodate 3 separate Sunday school classes simultaneously, while we ideally would like 5 individual classrooms for all of our different age groups (Nursery, Pre-K, Young Elementary, Tweens, and Youth). To provide our kids and our staff with more space for ministry an annex building will be added which will include at least 2 classrooms, an office space, and a bathroom. Having more dedicated classroom space will allow us to continue to nurture and grow our Christian education program, and eliminate the need to make scheduling compromises or utilize non-classroom space.

In addition to adding the annex building for increased floor space, significant portions of the lower level of our existing building will be repurposed to more efficiently use our existing space. The current flexible classroom space in the social hall downstairs will be converted into two permanent office spaces: one to serve as a pastor’s office and the other to be a general admin office. A dedicated office will provide Pastor Amber with a much better environment to provide pastoral care, and a separate admin office will give our staff the space and organization that they need to continue to grow our ministries at Hope.

With the addition of the annex and migration of the office spaces to the lower level, the existing office space can be converted into an open plan gathering space for fellowship before and after service. This will provide a warm, comfortable space to socialize and welcome new guests to our church. During times other than Sunday morning, the area can be easily converted to serve as a meeting room or classroom, further increasing the utility of the space.

The new annex building would provide our growing children’s ministry with at least two dedicated classrooms, an office space, and a bathroom, freeing up lower-level space for pastoral care.
Table of Needed Gifts

All of us can give something to “Let Love Shine Through: A Campaign to Widen our Welcome.” Please continue your financial commitment to the Hope UCC operating budget. But the church needs additional financial help from you to expand our capacity to welcome, nurture and share. We will be collecting your campaign gifts over the course of three years. For example, a gift of $300 per month would be $3600 annually and $10,800 over the course of the campaign. Our campaign goal is $320,000. The following Table of Needed Gifts reflects this goal with a stretch goal of $350,000.

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In 2017 Hope kids participated in the Love Lives Here family protest – speaking out against white supremacy in Old Town Alexandria.
Ways to Plan a Gift

GIFTS OF CASH

One way to make a significant gift is to give a weekly or monthly amount. A three-year giving period is the most manageable for the majority of donors.

For example, a gift of $67 per week for 150 weeks equals a gift of $10,050. A gift of $25 per week for three years is a gift of $3,750.

GIFTS OF STOCK

Gifts of long-term appreciated stock offer two key advantages. First, donors may take a charitable income tax deduction for the full value of the gift up to an amount equal to 30% of adjusted gross income in the year of the gift. There is a carry-over provision for gifts that exceed the 30% limit. Second, donors of appreciated stock are exempted from paying the capital gains tax incurred if the stock were sold before making the gift. Donors who wish to make such gifts should contact Campaign Chair Rob Simmons for the specific steps for completing such gifts. Gifts of stock shares need to be transferred into an account in the name of Hope UCC, either with the donor’s broker or with Hope UCC’s brokerage firm, so that the donor does not realize a taxable gain.

Note: a donor who wishes to give depreciated stock, is better advised to sell the depreciated stock and give the proceeds. The donor may include the itemized depreciation as a loss on the income tax return for the year in which sale of the stock occurred.

GIFTS THROUGH IRAs

Donors at age 70-1/2 or older can contribute up to $100,000 of IRA assets directly to one or more charities, and have the gift count toward their annual required minimum distribution (RMD). The amount contributed is removed from their taxable income, thus reducing income tax liability.

A COMBINATION GIFT

Sometimes the donor’s gift plan will include a combination of a gift from investments or savings and a weekly or monthly gift over a period of three years. Such gifts are attractive to donors who wish to increase the size of their gift, but also conserve accumulated assets.

Changes in Deductibility of Charitable Gifts in New Federal Tax Law

The new federal income tax law doubles the standard deduction to $24,000 for a married couple filing jointly. The effect of this change will mean that for many more middle-income Americans, their charitable gifts will not be sufficient, along with other itemizations, to qualify for the former itemized deduction. For most individuals, the motive for giving to Hope UCC is the donor’s support for and belief in the church’s ministries which make a difference in the lives of individuals and advance justice and peace. We believe care for the neighbor and wider community is our motive for giving, rather than tax incentives.

Hope kids raise funds to benefit local food missions.
Capital Campaign:

Rev. Amber Henry Neuroth, Pastor
Rob Simmons, Chair
BJ Whetstine, Moderator
Rob Peters, Consultant
Sarah Crisman, David Pudleiner, Lisa Massa; Team Members

Task Group Chairs:

Shane Rivers, Witnessing Stewards
Sarah Crisman, Publicity
David Pudleiner, Admin Support
Marilyn O’Leary, Group Meetings and Hospitality
Robin Wilburn, Financial Secretary

Building Planning Committee:

Jen Mehler-Rardin, Team Lead
Doug James, Kathy Doxsee, Ellen Ebeling, Sarah Crisman; Team Members