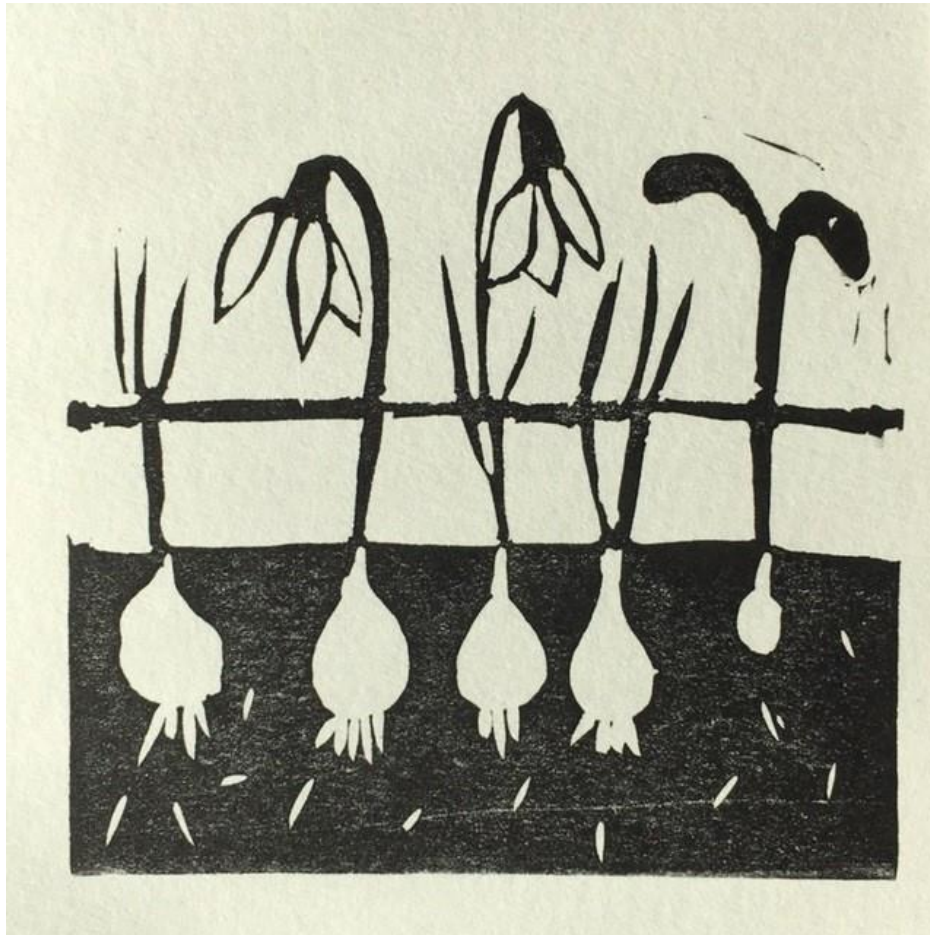
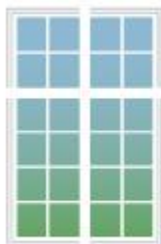


LENTEN DEVOTIONAL 2022 – HOPE

MARCH 18 - MARCH 20



Hope by Terry Wise



FIRST CONGREGATIONAL
CHURCH UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Stockbridge, Massachusetts

LENTEN DEVOTIONAL 2022 – HOPE

March 2022

Friends,

The project of gathering stories to form *Forty Stories of Hope: A Lenten Devotional* has been a joy thus far! I'm grateful to the Board of Christian Education for endorsing the project, and to the contributors who share these memorable moments of hope. Special thanks to Pastor Brent for his wisdom and generosity; to Will Garrison for his patience, creativity, and demanding work; and deep appreciation to Terry Wise for her artistry in making the cover with its hopeful snow drops emerging from the icy cold earth.

Each week we will be “releasing” new devotions for the week. We hope that you will be inspired as you read the daily devotions, and that you will consider contributing to the collection with a devotion of your own. We don't yet have the requisite 46 devotions, so please do keep them coming in by email to either elizvyoung@hotmail.com or office@stockbridgeucc.org!

With love and thanks,

Elizabeth Young



LENTEN DEVOTIONAL 2022 – HOPE

FRIDAY MARCH 18

Hoping and Praying

By the time I was 36 I had suffered three miscarriages and feared that I would never be able to become a mom. Since no medical intervention seemed to help me, I started praying to God, whom I had ignored for 15 years.

I was so frustrated and desperate about wanting to have a child that I decided to approach the Creator of the Universe to see if God could and would help me out.

God led me to a church and provided me with a community of worshippers and pastors who helped me deepen my faith as I grew closer to Jesus. A few months after I joined that church in Connecticut, I had the joy of watching my son get baptized.

Prayer: God, thank you for hearing my prayers, deepening my faith, and fulfilling my hope.

Linda Russell



Baptismal font at First Congregational Church, Stockbridge

LENTEN DEVOTIONAL 2022 – HOPE

SATURDAY MARCH 19

Me and My Shadow

“Hope” seems to be a word for looking at the future...and wondering how things are going to turn out. Just wishing does not guarantee anything. Commitment and effort must be components of achieving the future you want. This story is how hope affected me while I was waiting for my third service dog.

When I first saw Shadow, my heart soared. This confident, beautiful creation of God was about to be mine. I had hoped for such an outcome while I was waiting for him. For my hope to become a reality, I had to prove myself worthy to his trainers. My work ethic, determination, and pride took over my being. Shadow and I learned how to work together: we became a team.

I know that I must maintain this attitude to keep on with this success. I know there will always be challenges but I’ve learned to work for the outcome that’s the most positive. I may not be successful, but I try with all my heart. With such a wonderful critter at my side, what else can I do?

Working together, Shadow and I are filled with hope.



Pat Sheely

LENTEN DEVOTIONAL 2022 – HOPE
SUNDAY MARCH 20

Hope Springs

I do not waste my time hoping for spring, for spring is God’s promise to us. I know spring will come, and I will welcome Her with open arms. I also know that as spring progresses and turns to summer and then to fall, that the weather will either be too hot or too cold; too wet or too dry. What I retain my hope for is that I can use God’s gifts of sun and rain; of heat and coolness, to bring beauty to my little corner of the world.

Prayer: God, help me take your promise of spring and coax it into even more beauty. Amen.



Cathy Clark