

FOCUS



Seeking Hope, Love, and Justice—Together in Community

The (usually) monthly newsletter from Hope Unitarian Church

VOL. 26, NO. 7/8/9 | SEPTEMBER 2020



Homecoming Sunday

September 13, live on Zoom and Facebook

On Sunday, September 13, we will begin streaming our services live from our beloved Hope sanctuary. **Rev. Greg** will kick off our new church year with his sermon **Standing on the Edge of Hope**. We'll have live music and readings, too!

While this isn't the Homecoming Sunday we imagined we'd be having this year, we look forward to gathering together virtually to come home to Hope!

You can join us live here:

<https://zoom.us/j/92760373069?pwd=MkVFUjYwRGt1dkduc09EVldxajVRdz09>

Meeting ID: 927 6037 3069

Passcode: 963978

You can also view the service live on our Facebook page (www.facebook.com/HopeUnitarianChurch), or watch it later at www.hopeuu.org/Homecoming.

Watch your mail, your email, our website, and Facebook for updates.

SUNDAY MORNINGS ON ZOOM

SOCIAL HOUR: 9 :00

www.hopeuu.org/SocialHour

ADULT FORUM: 10 :00

www.hopeuu.org/AdultForum

SERVICE: 11:00

[www.hopeuu.org/](https://www.hopeuu.org/SundayService)

[SundayService](https://www.hopeuu.org/SundayService)

See p. 7 for Meeting IDs and Passcodes

All services are also streamed live to our Facebook page:

www.facebook.com/HopeUnitarianChurch

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All in-person services and programs are cancelled until further notice.

While we are closed, we're having virtual programming online! Our offerings include inspiring music from **Joseph** and **Chris**; thoughtful sermons from **Rev. Greg**; lively Zoom-based Adult Forum programs; and CYRE activities from **Tennille** and **Paige**. All summer we've had guest speakers and musicians to give us a new perspective. You can see most of our summer services at www.hopeuu.org/OnlineServices.

PLEASE NOTE: Hope's building remains closed and staff continue to work from home. Groups of fewer than 10 people may reserve the back patio to meet, but must observe social distancing. **They may not enter the church building.**



IT'S TIME TO COME HOME

*Sunday Services
go LIVE Sept. 13!*

As the wheel of the year turns to reveal a colorful fall, the church year beckons us homeward.

It's an annual homecoming that provides a warm hearth, the company of friends, and a mix of ritual and spontaneity. We welcome autumn, the abundance of harvest, the browning of formerly verdant hills and dales, and the crisp air that awakens the senses. Shorter days and longer nights ease us into winter's darkness, a womb of wonder and a place of peace.

If it's time to come home again, then what are we coming home to? In this age of COVID-19, social distancing and mask-wearing, how are we to truly know each other? During this era of racial upheaval and economic turndown, how do we create the future? In a world of confusion and chaos, how shall we then live? We all need something to come home to; here's my list:

We come home to community. The words "virtual" and "zoom" should not discourage the assembling of ourselves together. We just do it differently now. I hope all of you will tune into the live Homecoming Sunday service, Sept. 13 at 11:00 a.m. Meanwhile, committees and teams continue to meet, feeding the homeless remains

a priority, new opportunities for adult learning and socializing are in place, and we continue to check in on our most vulnerable members and friends.

We come home to mission. When it comes to "seeking hope, love and justice together in community," the needs of the least of these are only compounded by current events. Circumstances may change but our mission remains the same. Simply put, Unitarian Universalism is salvific, particularly for those who have been condemned or shunned by other "houses of worship." The doors of Hope Church are open (virtually) to all who seek good news.

Finally, we come home to hope. In September I kick off the Hope Series, sermons which take a critical look at the nature of hope, its efficacy, and its application. Some of you have told me of your hopelessness and the attendant depression that often follows. We'll take a look at hope head-on, and separate wishful thinking from tangible results. In my opinion, hope is what makes us human and is the key too unlocking our potential.

Hope was made for such a time as this!

The joy continues,

Interact with the Interim Minister

Rev. Greg is Here for You!

Office Hours (virtual or by appointment): Tuesday through Saturday, 8:30 a.m.–4:30 p.m.

Sacred Day Off: Monday

On Call: For pastoral emergencies, 24/7

Appointments: Call Rev. Greg at (918)800-8403 to schedule

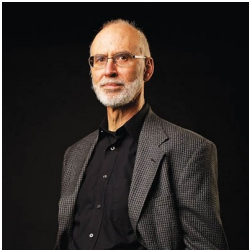
Social Times (on Zoom):

Sunday morning social hour, 9:00–10:00 a.m.

Tuesday Coffee Hour, 9:00–10:00 a.m.

Thursday Cocktail Hour, 4:00–5:00 p.m.

Class Offered: Black Writers Book Group, 3rd Thursdays, 7:00–8:15 p.m.



Music News

By Dr. Joseph Rivers, Music Director

In 1936 Charlie Chaplin released his film, *Modern*

Times. It was to be the last appearance of the Tramp and Chaplin's final bow to the silent film era. The film was a comedic but serious depiction of the hard times created by the Great Depression. Chaplin also composed the music for his film, which was arranged and orchestrated by Edward Powell and David Raksin. (Raksin later went on to score such classic films as *Laura* and *The Bad and the Beautiful*.) In four of the episodes in the film we hear a new musical theme composed by Chaplin. This tune was given lyrics and made into a song 18 years later by John Turner and Geoffrey Parsons, which was first recorded by Nat King Cole in 1954. That song is "Smile." The lyrics of the song were extracted from the story, lines, and pantomime of the

two main characters, the Tramp and the Gamin. The film and the music are a reminder that this is not the only time that our country has faced challenges and hardship, and that maybe we can learn something from the fortitude and courage of past generations.

The comic mishaps that the Tramp and the Gamin face in *Modern Times* magnify the human traits of imperfection, despair, love, and hope. And what bubbles up from hope in the midst of despair is a song. Singing a song or playing an instrumental piece is an expression of hope. And it is that personal touch, even in virtual or masked performance laced with generous Zoom glitches, that connects our music making holistically with our community. For it is our gift and privilege to be the bringers and sharers of hope through the miracle of music.

New Staff!

Please welcome our new Technology Assistant, **Eve Bjornsgaard**. Many of you already know her, as she has been active at Hope with her wife **Joan** for a couple of years now. Eve will be the technology lead for our new online services, and will also provide support to the congregation for Zoom and other kinds of technology we might introduce. Some of you have already experienced her calm and reassuring style of tech support, and we know you'll enthusiastically agree that she is a great addition to our staff! You can email Eve for help (or just to say "Welcome!") at eve@hopeuu.org, but she'd prefer that you text her at **918.361.8444**.

Care Team Corner

By Deborah Whittaker

Dear Church Family,

During this stressful time, the Mental Health Association of Oklahoma is offering a variety of online support groups in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, including closed groups for first responders and frontline workers and groups for parents and those with a history of trauma.

How to join

New members can sign up through the Mental Health Assistance Center at 918.585.1213 or mhaok.org/mental-health-assistance-center.

Please make use of these services if needed, and share with family and friends who might benefit, as well. You are not alone.

CONTACT US

Pastoral Care

Rev. Greg: greg@hopeuu.org

Care Team:

careteam@hopeuu.org

Religious Education

Tennille Wilson:

tennille@hopeuu.org

Paige Clark:

youth@hopeuu.org

Childcare:

childcare@hopeuu.org

Music

Dr. Joseph Rivers:

joseph.rivers@hopeuu.org

Outreach

outreach@hopeuu.org

Board

boardpresident@hopeuu.org

Church Administration/ Office

hopeuu@hopeuu.org

918-481-0999

Building/Office Hours:

The building is currently CLOSED. If you have a church-related reason to get into the building, please contact the church office.

www.hopeuu.org

September's Generosity Recipient

by Rich Jackson

The September Generosity recipient will be the national organization that offers a way to forgive medical debt of low income or insolvent individuals, [RIP Medical Debt](https://tulsaworld.com/opinion/columnists/ginnie-graham-tulsans-find-a-way-to-forgive-medical-debt-for-struggling-patients/article_5312c0b9-2c2e-5b07-a82e-7b1f6983c67d.html). For every \$1 donated, that nonprofit can buy at least \$100 of medical debt. Tulsans **Mark and Mona Whitmire** have partnered with that organization and set a goal of eliminating all medical debt owed by qualifying individuals in Tulsa County before the end of this year.

This is such an ambitious and admirable goal that a Hope family has offered an up to \$1,000 match of September Generosity donations. **Mark Whitmire** will be the Zoom Adult RE speaker on **Sunday, September 6**.

You can read the article that inspired the Outreach Committee to choose this month's Generosity recipient in the *Tulsa World*:

https://tulsaworld.com/opinion/columnists/ginnie-graham-tulsans-find-a-way-to-forgive-medical-debt-for-struggling-patients/article_5312c0b9-2c2e-5b07-a82e-7b1f6983c67d.html

Summer Generosity Recipients

Over the summer we gave the following amounts to our Generosity recipients:

June, Tulsa Day Center for the Homeless: \$1,560.00

July, Community Food Bank of Eastern Oklahoma: \$3,425.00

August, Unitarian Universalist Service Committee: \$740.00

Thank you all for your generous contributions!

Outreach News by Anita Ward

Monthly Meal for the Day Center

Thank you to all the volunteers who have helped with our monthly meals for the Day Center under difficult and unusual circumstances.

August: Our monthly Feed the Homeless meal was Saturday, August 15. **Anita Ward** did the shopping and delivered the food to the church. **Maggie Scott** did the pre-cooking, and **Elaine Dodson** and her family did the Saturday cooking. **Mary Baird** delivered the meal to the Day Center.

July: **Anita Ward** did the shopping and also delivered the meal to the Day Center. **Maggie Scott** did the pre-cooking, and the **Tracy family** did the Saturday cooking.

June: We were scheduled to provide our usual monthly meal on June 20, but were advised by the Day Center that there was supposed to be a very large event downtown that day that would impede traffic. In consultation with their volunteer coordinator, **Co Edwards**, we switched up our plan.

On Thursday **Anita Ward** and **Janet Nobles** went shopping for cold prepared food, along with our usual fresh fruit, milk, and cereal. **Maggie Scott** brought along her usual coleslaw dressing. Then **Anita** and **Janet** delivered the meal to the Day Center, where it was stored until Saturday.

Thanks to all of our intrepid FTH crew for making sure we keep our commitment, through rain, heat, pandemics, and political rallies!

Housewarming Baskets

The Outreach Committee is pleased to report that our Hope community generously donated household items and cash to complete not two but THREE housewarming baskets for the Day Center for the Homeless. The Day Center list had items ranging from kitchen equipment and dishes to sheets and towels. When a homeless person is ready to move into an apartment provided by the Day Center, they are given a housewarming basket to help them get

started on a new life. Your support of this important endeavor is much appreciated as members of Hope Church also continue to prepare a meal the homeless each month. Our Hope Community is awesome!!

Update on ACTION's Actions

by Anita Mills

ACTION (Allied Communities of Tulsa Inspiring Our Neighborhoods) is ramping up efforts to assist people who are facing eviction. A wave of evictions is expected (and even now beginning) in the wake of lost jobs, reduced hours, and lost income.

THE ISSUE: Tenants who don't show up at their eviction hearings lose their cases. They cannot have an attorney appear in their stead (as landlords can); they are automatically connected to legal aid attorneys or encouraged to go for mediation; and the judge doesn't know if their eviction is prevented by the moratorium or not—they have to educate the judge.

HOW YOU CAN HELP: VOLUNTEERS are being recruited to (1) assist with tenant education, like addressing postcards that inform them of their rights; and/or (2) attend a training (virtual) on tenant rights. Contact Christy.Action@cox.net to find out more and get involved. This is something you can do while home-bound!

In addition, ACTION is working with Restore Hope Ministries to connect landlords and tenants with rental relief funds. AND ... the ACTION Evictions and Tenant Rights team is researching Tenant Associations in other cities and what it would take to form one in Tulsa. Currently laws favor landlords, with few or any regard for tenants.

ACTION recently hosted Accountability Sessions for City Council candidates as well as the mayoral candidates. Over 200 people attended one or both of the sessions to become informed before the election on August 25. VOTE, and make your voice heard!

Children and Youth

By Tennille Wilson and Paige Clark

Hello Hope CYRE* Friends and Family! We have missed all of you! This month is Homecoming! Welcome back to our 2020–2021 church year!!

Beginning September 13th we will be sharing weekly pre-recorded Spiritual Expression sessions taught by Tennille Wilson, Director of Religious Education. You can access the sessions on our website at your convenience. *Note: This area of the website is not quite ready yet, but when it is, it will be at www.hopeuu.org/CYRE.*

Children from preschool through 5th grade meet via Zoom Sundays at 4 p.m. for fun and fellowship taught by **Michelle Styve** and **Susan Michael**. Please contact me if you have any questions: tennille@hopeuu.org.

On Homecoming Sunday, the youth will kick off the church year and restart their regular Sunday morning programming virtually on Zoom. Paige and Lenny will lead check-ins, activities, and discussions starting at 10 a.m. Please email Paige at youth@hopeuu.org for an invitation to youth programming.

*Children's and Youth Religious Education

Garden and Grounds

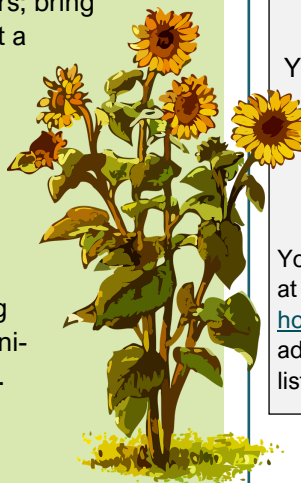
By Julia Harris

Many thanks to the Watering Team who have faithfully kept our Hill plantings thriving through the summer: **Anita Ward, Mary Newman, Maggie Scott, Keith Hamilton, Alice van Wormer, Gail Hawk, Elizabeth Obal, Coe McGinley, and Julia Harris.**

Saturday, September 19: All hands on deck return for a Garden Team/All Hope Work Party on the Hill. All Hope members and friends are invited to join in. A variety of tasks to fit experience and skill levels are available. Our experienced gardeners are welcoming and patient if you are a beginner and want to join in and learn something new. Our 10 acres

afford sociable distancing.

Cheerleaders and friends are welcome. Official start is 9 a.m. Come when you can and stay as long as you want. Explore the trails with children (or without); explore for fall wildflowers; bring a picnic; try your hand at a job large or small. We welcome company, respect sociable distancing, and recommend you keep a mask handy just in case you want to work closely with someone. The church building will not be open for amenities, so plan accordingly.



September Birthdays

Jakob Levine	10
Laura Prather	
Reiman	11
Kim Rauh	13
Robert Billings	15
Sue Forney	15
Joseph Rivers	17
Angelica Anrig	20
Meredith Miller	26
Leon Scott	26
Carrie Muzika	28

Are you receiving our email communications?

If you aren't receiving *Highlights, Focus*, or churchwide announcements by email, you might be missing out!

You can sign up for any of these on our website here:

<http://hopeuu.org/blog/newsletter/>

You can also call the church at **918.481.0999** or email us at hopeuu@hopeuu.org to be added to any of our email lists.

Are you following us on Facebook?

We post events and other church news there, as well as photos and even an occasional video! We'd love to connect with you.

<https://www.facebook.com/HopeUnitarianChurch/>



Got an hour?

Join Rev. Greg and your Hope friends for coffee or cocktails!

Coffee Hour

Tuesdays at 9 a.m.

www.hopeuu.org/CoffeeHour

Meeting ID: 952 2971 4477

Passcode: 159899

Cocktail Hour

Thursdays at 4 p.m.

www.hopeuu.org/CocktailHour

Meeting ID: 980 3776 9619

Passcode: 307923

September Events

Women of Hope

Thursday, September 3

7:00 p.m. on Zoom

Women of Hope is a social gathering on the first Thursday of every month. We have a potluck dinner with a program on a variety of topics. All are welcome.

As we continue in this time of pandemic isolation, we will meet over the Zoom 'waves' of teleconferencing. Many of you are familiar with it as the church has used this format for Adult Forums and Sermons over the past months. This month of September, we want each of you to be a part of the program to share some of your favorite memories. We have a few questions we'd like you to ponder and share the answers with the group. Select one or all for your response.

Do you have a favorite story about a pet?

Is there a fad you remember vividly from your youth?

Have you ever met any famous people?

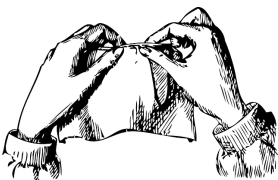
What's the best place you've traveled?

We'll meet at 7:00pm, Thursday, September 3 on Zoom. Please join us for the fun!

Zoom link: www.hopeuu.org/WomenOfHope

Meeting ID: 880 3078 0511

Passcode: 221643



Threads of Hope

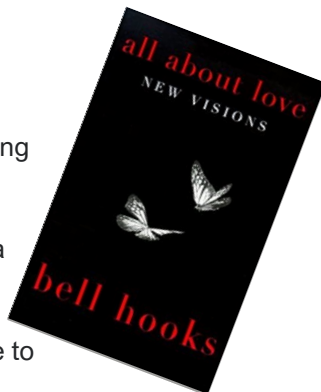
Can you believe the season of Autumn is upon us? Let's gather together with our 'threads of hope' on Tuesday, September 8 at 11:30 on Zoom. We'll continue to meet the second Tuesday of each month. We usually take a break during the summer. But with the isolation of the pandemic, we decided to keep in touch and met on Zoom with our yarn projects. We have lively conversations and would love to have you join us! If you haven't visited the group in the past, contact **Deborah Whittaker** to be added to the email list.

Black Writers Reading Group

Thursday, September 17

7:00 p.m. on Zoom

Rev. Greg's Black Writers Reading Group continues in September with *All About Love*, by **bell hooks**. This new group is off to a great start, and you can still join! Contact **Molly** (molly@hopeuu.org) if you'd like to be involved.



Calling Volunteers!

Online Worship Team

Attention all volunteer readers and greeters. Rev. Greg has been working to create a different, but more familiar church format to help us all get that "back to church feeling."

We are looking for **Worship Associates** to volunteer once every month or two to light the chalice, do one reading, and make announcements. This can be done live at the church on Sunday morning (with masks and social distancing, of course!) or it can be pre-recorded.

We are also looking for **virtual ushers/greeters** on Zoom to host our live online services, greet people as they come in, and admit them to the service.

Thank you to everyone who has already volunteered (and there are a lot of you!). We still need a few more of you, though, to make sure our volunteer crew is robust and prepared.

There will be training for all as we get new volunteers by our new Technology Assistant, **Eve Bjornsgaard**. Please let **Rev. Greg** know if you'd like to fill one of these important roles!

BE A HERO FOR HOPE

We are in need of an Adult Forum Team!

Please consider volunteering! We need YOU!

With the Team you would plan the hour before Church using UUA Adult Ed. Resources, Non-Profit Speakers, Committees within Hope, Or wherever your imagination takes you.

The first Sunday of each month is Reserved for the Generosity Recipient and that is planned by Outreach.

Help us fill this vital team, Be a Hero for Hope!

Call, text or email Barb Witt VP PROGRAMS

With questions, ideas or concerns. 918-812-3450

Sundays This Month at Hope

Theme for September: The Hope Series

9/1 – “T-Shirt Theology: You Are What You Wear”

Rev. Greg Stewart and Tennille Wilson

Do you have a T-shirt, cap, or other article of clothing with a message that you are passionate about? Please wear it to virtual church and tell us what it means to you. Our combined words will become the sermon and we'll also be inspired by musical offerings, an artist's sketch and moments of ritual. Don't miss this special holiday weekend service!

9/13 – “Standing on the Edge of Hope”

Rev. Greg Stewart

We begin this sermon series with a broad view of the nature of hope. I find that performing weddings is where I experience hope the most. What can newlyweds teach us about finding hope in a world that careens toward hopelessness? Be sure to bring a friend to church for what will be an exciting series.

9/20 – “Hope Is Chosen”

Rev. Greg Stewart

We make choices every day. Some are easy and others are challenging, even life-changing. Let's take a look at the life of Nelson Mandela and discover how, in his darkest hours, he found the light of hope.

9/27 – TBA



Online Services

The Zoom link for our Sunday services is

www.hopeuu.org/SundayService

Meeting ID: 927 6037 3069

Passcode: 963978

Starting on Sept. 6, services will begin at 11 a.m.

You can visit past services at

www.hopeuu.org/OnlineServices

Social Hour: 9 a.m.

www.hopeuu.org/SocialHour

Meeting ID: 948 2319 7706

Passcode: 190374

Adult Forum: 10 a.m.

www.hopeuu.org/AdultForum

Meeting ID: 944 2766 5124










Passcode: 174446

Children's Church is on Sundays at 4:00 p.m. If you'd like to attend, please contact **Tennille Wilson**, tennille@hopeuu.org.

Visit our website!

You can always visit our website to find information about events and services. If it's been a while since you visited, you might notice some changes.

Start at our front page, www.hopeuu.org. On the front page you will see:

-  A menu that will help you navigate the website.
-  An image carousel with pictures that change. The pictures link to things like past services, events, the current Generosity recipient, and other things. Or sometimes they're just pretty pictures.
-  Information about the *next* service.
-  A search bar where you can search our website.
-  A link to the *most recent* service.
-  Links to pages that introduce visitors to Hope.
-  A calendar of our events and services.
-  Links to our current news items.
-  Our most current Facebook posts.



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Seeking Hope, Love, and Justice—Together in Community

FOCUS v. 26, no. 7/8/9, September 2020 by Hope Unitarian Church
8432 S. Sheridan Road, Tulsa OK 74133-4137

TO:



Hope Unitarian Church is an inclusive, affirming congregation.

2020–2021 Board Members and Trustees

Lee Ann Cole, President
Anita Mills, President-Elect
David Lynn, VP of Finance and Planning
Barbara Witt, VP of Programs
Judy Sims, Secretary
Elizabeth Obal, Treasurer
James Donovan, Past President
Trustees: **Bettina Larsen**, **Brian Tolle**



Our Staff

The Rev. Gregory Stewart, Interim Minister
Tennille Wilson, Director of Religious Education
Paige Clark, Youth Director
Dr. Joseph Rivers, Director of Music
Molly Ives Brower, Church Administrator
Eve Bjornsgaard, Technology Assistant
Chris Powell, Pianist
Susan Michael, Michelle Steyve, Nora Potter,
Childcare
Rebecca Jones, Accountant (off-site)



HOPE UNITARIAN CHURCH

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