

FOCUS

The monthly newsletter from Hope Unitarian Church



Seeking Hope, Love, and Justice—Together in Community

VOL. 26, NO. 12 | DECEMBER 2020



SING NOEL!

Hope
and
Peace

DEC. 13, 2020

This month at Hope will be different from previous Decembers, but we continue some of our favorite traditions... and start new ones too! **Women of Hope** kicks off the month with a virtual Christmas party on **Dec. 3**. **Rev. Greg** will deliver some inspiring holiday sermons. Our wonderful Hope musicians are working on a truly special experience for this year's online **Sing Noel!** service on **Dec. 13**. On the **24th** we have a new **Christmas Eve Social Hour** on Zoom, followed by our usual **Christmas Eve service** in your own home (be extra careful with those candles!). And on **Dec. 27** we'll end 2020 as we do every year, with our annual **Burning Bowl** ritual. We hope you'll join us this December.

SUNDAY MORNINGS ON ZOOM

SOCIAL HOUR: 8:45

ADULT FORUM: 10:00

SERVICE: 11:00

See [p. 7](#) for Zoom links, Meeting IDs, and Passcodes

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**.

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.**



GOOD RIDDANCE 2020?

Let's face it: this has been a year like no other. That's actually putting in nicely. It's been a terrible, unconceivable, difficult, devastating, isolating, mask-wearing, job-losing, home schooling, baffling, unhealthy, depressing, and anxious year, and I'm only getting started! In less than a month, 2020 may be one for the history books, but it's not one I want to remember.

Let's face it: the year 2020 has not been good for the Church writ large or for Hope Church in particular. Hope's worship life

has been disrupted and our social life suffers from lack of participation. Zoom and Facebook are no substitutes for the miracles of human touch. The choir can't sing and Outreach can no longer serve the meals they make. The laughter of children has been replaced by the silence of not knowing what's next.

As an optimist, I'm tempted to find the silver lining in this pandemic, for we have learned lessons about ourselves and our world that, if taken seriously, could result in a better way of life and a peace that passes our understanding. Certainly we value each other in ways we couldn't have imagined prior to the pandemic. I don't know about you, but I will never again take the transformative power of the local church for granted. Church is no longer an option for me; rather, it's a lifeline.

Looking forward to the new opportunities of a new year keeps me from giving up. The racial crisis of our time motivates me to press on for justice. The current political climate reminds me that democracy must be fought for, a fight that doesn't end January 20. The mystery and wonder of worship draws me into community with those who believe differently than I do, a prerequisite for spiritual growth. The cry of hungry children beckons me to service.

Merry Christmas to those of you who celebrate it. Happy holidays to those who don't. As Unitarian Universalists, we are called to live our religion in ways not predicated on time and space, whether it's the best of times or the worst. I stand in awe of those at Hope who refuse to let circumstances decide their fate or their faith. You're probably one of them. A new year awaits the imprint of your hands and feet.

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.

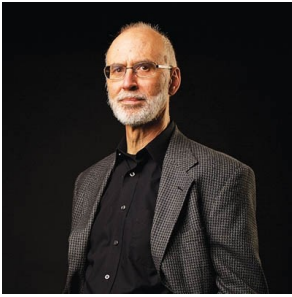
Sacred Day Off: Monday

On Call: For pastoral emergencies, 24/7

Appointments: Call Rev. Greg at (918)800-4803 to schedule

Social Times (on Zoom):
Thursday Cocktail Hour, 4:00–5:00 p.m.

Class Offered: Black Writers Book Group, second Tuesdays, 5:30 p.m. on Zoom



Music News

By Dr. Joseph Rivers, Music Director

Hope's traditional seasonal service, "Sing Noel," will take place on December 13, but in a nontraditional way. Yes, like most other activities, while we wait for the pandemic to abate, it will be virtual. There will be readings, hymns or carols, and choir anthems, but these will be prepared and produced ahead of time.

The theme of Sing Noel this year is "Hope and Peace." Even during these times of chaos and disruption, we can courageously dare to hope. As Robert F. Kennedy once said: "Each time a person stands up for an ideal, or acts to improve the lot of others, or strikes out against injustice, he or she sends out a tiny ripple of hope. And crossing each other from a million different centers of energy and daring, those ripples build a current that can sweep down the mightiest walls of oppression and resistance."

Our readings and music will reinforce the hope that we still hold. And it will be a harbinger of good news—that next year at this time we will all be back on Hope Hill, celebrating Sing Noel with an extravaganza of readings and music that will be ample proof that hope survived once more.



Programs News

Spirituality Workshops

Spirit Of Life by Barbara Hamilton-Holway

begins December 13th and will run monthly on the 2nd Sunday.

When entering Zoom please mute.

Please note these ADULT FORUMS will start at 9:45 so we have an hour.

The song 'Spirit of Life' by Carolyn McDade could be considered a UU anthem of sorts.

There are 9 in this series.

#1: Spirit Of Life: Exploring Spirituality For UUs—Barb Witt and Christy Levine

#2: Sing In My Heart: Celebrations and Rituals.

#3: The Stirrings Of Compassion: Caring For One Another—Tara Saylor

#4: Blow In The Wind, Rise In The Sea: Nature and Spirit

#5: Move In The Hand: Living Our Spirituality In Our Day-to-Day Lives

#6: Giving Life the Shape of Justice: The Spirituality Of Working For Change

#7: Roots Hold Me Close: Tradition, Teachers, and Spiritual Formation

#8: Wings Set Me Free: Hopes, Dreams and Expanding Vision

#9: Come To Us: Closing and Continuing On.

Please join us! This will be positive and uplifting!

We could use a couple more volunteers.

Call, text or email me anytime!

I♥ Hope!

Barb Witt

CONTACT US

Pastoral Care

Rev. Greg:

greg@hopeuu.org

Care Team:

careteam@hopeuu.org

Religious Education

Tennille Wilson:

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Paige Clark:

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Childcare:

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Music

Dr. Joseph Rivers:

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Outreach

outreach@hopeuu.org

Board

boardpresident@hopeuu.org

Church Administration/Office

hopeuu@hopeuu.org

(918)481-0999

Technology Assistance

eve@hopeuu.org

(918)361-8444

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

December's Generosity Recipient

by Lynn Walters

Lindsey House

Hope's close connections to Lindsey House through our Star Tree and their current expansion of services to Tulsa area families led to them being selected as our Generosity Recipient for December. To be eligible for their program, a family headed by a woman must be facing situational homelessness and be ready to change her life. Lindsey House provides a furnished apartment for each family for up to 24 months and requires completion of a curriculum which includes financial literacy, life skills, and workplace proficiency. Women must find a job and the children must attend school while in the program. The goal is to help these families to be independent and financially stable when they leave Lindsey House. Our speaker on Sunday, December 6, during the Adult Forum at 10 am will be Jennifer Solis, who is the Program Services Coordinator for Lindsey House. Be sure to zoom in to learn more about this worthwhile program to help women and their families.

To donate online to our Generosity recipient, go to www.hopeuu.org/Generosity
You can also mail a check to
Hope Unitarian Church
8432 S. Sheridan Road
Tulsa, OK 74133
Please write "Generosity" in the memo line.

Cereal Days

This month's CEREAL DAYS will be **Friday, Dec. 18 from 10 a.m. to noon** and **Saturday, Dec. 19 from 2 to 4**. If you have cereal (no Cheerios, please) or other donations for the Tulsa Day Center for the Homeless, please bring them by at those times.

Our Cereal Days have been a huge success so far! Thank you for your generosity!

Outreach News

Monthly Meal for the Day Center

Thank you to all the volunteers who helped with our monthly meals for the Day Center in November!

Mary and Joe Newman stepped up to do the shopping, and **Maggie Scott** did the pre-cooking. **The Tracy family** did the cooking on Saturday, and **Mary and Joe** delivered the food to the Day Center.

Thanks to all those who brought cereal and donations, and to all our Feed the Homeless volunteers!



Hope's Virtual Star Tree for 2020

Our Hope giving spirit is strong and we want to continue our Star Tree tradition. The families at Lindsey House will be the recipients of our gifts this year. The virtual Star Tree process will be different in many ways. This year we have more families, but each person is listing just one gift, which reduces the total number of gifts to purchase. Their wish lists are organized on a signup sheet where you can select the person and gift.

This link will take you to a list where you can see the gift recipients' names and wishes.

<http://www.hopeuu.org/StarTree>

When you choose one you would like to fulfill, please click the checkbox so we know someone is taking care of that gift. Add your email if you would like to get a reminder, or leave it off if you'd rather remain anonymous.

You may select one or more items to purchase and even "adopt" a whole family. Gifts should not cost more than \$35 to \$40. Wrapped and clearly labeled gifts should be dropped off at Hope on December 7, 9, or 11 between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. A representative of the Outreach Committee will be present during these open times.

We hope that you will enjoy shopping for these deserving Moms and children. If you are not a shopper, you may send a check to the church. Be sure to designate Star Tree in the memo line. Just as a reminder, here is our new post office box address:

Hope Unitarian Church
PO Box 35284
Tulsa, OK 74153

The holidays may be different this year, but the joy in giving is always present.



Garden and Grounds *by Julia Harris*

Winter is a special time for walking in the woods, especially on our Hill. Have you been down to the pond lately, or have you taken the Rock Trail now that it is finished all the way down to the road? Trails are open down to dusk.

On the Dogwood Trail



Janet Williamson brought her granddaughters, Logan and Devin, out to enjoy the trails on a beautiful fall day.

Children and Youth *By Tennille Wilson and Paige Clark*

The youth are still meeting virtually every Sunday at 1 p.m. We've partnered with the All Souls youth group to do joint programming, and both groups meet together each week. Our programming features an ongoing anti-racism workshop based on the book *This Book is Anti-Racist* by Tiffany Jewell, as well as a course on the bible. The bible course is taught by Riley Kern, who breaks down the text in its historical and linguistic contexts to help us better understand a valuable text that our youth often wish they had more knowledge of. We also have regular presentations from guest speakers, most recently from Youth Services of Tulsa. Don't forget the opportunities for fellowship and fun! The youth also meet periodically in person, outdoors, and socially distanced with masks. Email **Paige Clark** at youth@hopeuu.org for more information.

After the holidays, **Tennille** will be launching a virtual book group for parents and others. The first book on the list is Brené Brown's *The Gifts of Imperfection: Let Go of Who You Think You're Supposed to Be and Embrace Who You Are*. Contact Tennille (tennille@hopeuu.org) for more information!

Care Team Corner *By Deborah Whittaker*



All Souls presents
FAMILIES AND POLITICS: How to Talk with Loved Ones on the Other Side
A Braver Angels Workshop

Sunday, December 6 | 3 to 5 p.m.

Family relationships are becoming casualties of our toxic political environment. Family members are having nasty political arguments, avoiding each other, or even cutting off lifetime relationships. If you want to preserve important family bonds while still being true to your values and political beliefs, this workshop will offer you:

- Insight into why family differences over politics are uniquely challenging
- Recognition of common roles that family members play in political conversations (for example, the Gladiator, the Defender, and the Sniper).
- Strategies and skills for handling family political differences in a constructive way

Find out more and register [here](#).

December Birthdays

Lisa Dunn	5
Maggie Scott	9
Cate Potter	10
Susan Swatek	13
Eric Reiman	19
Jacci Hamilton	22
Sherrill Womeldorff	22
Anita Ward	22
Brandy Morgan	22
Mary Newman	31

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/>



December Events



Women of Hope

Thursday, Dec. 3, 7:00 p.m. on Zoom

Happy Holidays!

Our December Women of Hope is a Christmas Party. Assuming that most of us have done some form of Zoom partying in the last nine months, let's gather Thursday, December 3rd at 7:00pm for a Zoom Christmas Party! Have your beverage of choice and share with us a favorite Christmas tradition.

Zoom link: www.hopeuu.org/WomenOfHope (Meeting ID: 913 8568 9368; Passcode: 576764)



Christmas Eve Social Hour

Wednesday, Dec. 24, 4:30 p.m. on Zoom

Come share good tidings with your friends on Zoom before the Christmas Eve service.

Zoom link: www.hopeuu.org/ChristmasEveSocialHour

(Meeting ID: 955 2275 9403; Passcode: 554612)

GIVING TUESDAY

Giving Tuesday is **Tuesday, Dec. 1**. As you know, 2020 has been a rough year for everyone. We at Hope have had to cancel several of our favorite events that provide us with not only the social contact we're all craving, but also much of our income for the year.

Several members, knowing how carefully Hope manages its finances and how important it is to keep hope alive during this time of pandemic, have offered matching funds for up to \$15,000 for pledges made before the end of the year. These people seriously love Hope. We know you do, too. Please consider giving to Hope this Giving Tuesday.

You can mail a check to: **Hope Unitarian Church, PO Box 35284, Tulsa, OK 74153**. You can donate online here: <https://www.hopeuu.org/Donate>. Either way, we appreciate your generosity on Giving Tuesday and throughout the year!

Cocktail Hour with Rev. Greg

4:00 p.m. every Thursday on Zoom

Join Rev. Greg and your Hope friends for a lively talk before you start your evening. Bring along your favorite libation and meet us on Zoom!

Zoom link: www.hopeuu.org/CoffeeHour

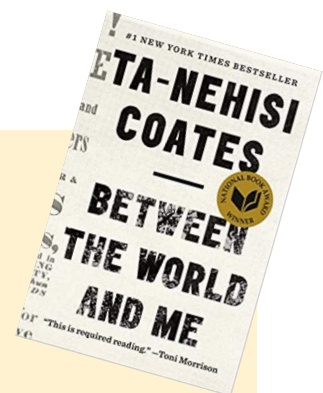
(Meeting ID: 952 2971 4477; Passcode: 159899)

Black Writers Reading Group

Tuesday, Dec. 8, 5:30 p.m. on Zoom

Rev. Greg's Black Writers Reading Group continues in December with *Between the World and Me*, by Ta-Nehisi Coates.

This new group is off to a great start, and you can still join! Note that the time and day have changed (it's now on Tuesdays at 5:30). Contact Molly (molly@hopeuu.org) if you'd like to be involved.



Services This Month at Hope

Theme: Holidays and Holy Days

12/6 – “Hope is Yours”

Rev. Greg Stewart

It's one of those old conundrums: we must lose hope in order to find it. What will it take to be the embodiment of hope, of being hope itself? I'll offer three ways of doing so, regardless of your circumstances or beliefs. This is the final installment of the Hope Series.

Adult Forum: Lindsey House (Generosity Recipient)

12/13 – Sing Noel!

Adult Forum (9:45): Spirituality Workshop #1: Spirit Of Life: Exploring Spirituality For UUs—Barb Witt and Christy Levine

12/20 – “A Jesus We Can Live With ”

Rev. Greg Stewart

What's a good Unitarian Universalist to do in a season like this? I boldly suggest that we all find a Jesus we can live with. It starts by distinguishing the religion of Jesus from the religion about Jesus. Our guides on this expedition of discovery are Thomas Jefferson and Arthur Blessit. Bring a friend; this is one sermon you won't likely hear elsewhere.

Adult Forum: Open! Social Hour from 8:45 to 10:45 (Use the link for Social Hour)

12/24 – “A Candlelight Festival of Lessons & Carols”

Rev. Greg Stewart

Through story and song, candles and rituals, and sounds and silence, we will celebrate the birth of Jesus and consider its meaning in today's world. There's a certain magic on Christmas Eve, particularly when we view the world through the eyes of a baby in a manger. Bring your friends and neighbors to this beautiful, wondrous time of joy and renewal.

Adult Forum: Rev. Greg

12/27 – Burning Bowl

James Donovan

Adult Forum: Open! Social Hour from 8:45 to 10:45 (Use the link for Social Hour)

Having technical difficulties?

Contact our Technology Assistant, **Eve Bjornsgaard**. She can help you get set up on Zoom, no matter what kind of device you're using! If you need to host a Zoom meeting for your committee or team, she'll show you how. Email her at eve@hopeuu.org, or even better: text her at **(918)361-8444**.

Online Services

The Zoom link for our Sunday services is

www.hopeuu.org/SundayService

NEW Meeting ID: 499751

Please note that the Meeting ID has changed. The Passcode is no longer required.

Services begin at 11 a.m.

You can visit past services at

www.hopeuu.org/OnlineServices

Social Hour: Now EVERY Sunday at 8:45!

www.hopeuu.org/SocialHour

Meeting ID: 925 1504 1841

Passcode: 739318

Adult Forum: 10 a.m. (9:45 on Dec. 13)

www.hopeuu.org/AdultForum

Meeting ID: 944 2766 5124

Passcode: 174446

Children's Church: 2:30 p.m.

www.hopeuu.org/ChildrensChurch

Meeting ID: 932 9801 6660

Passcode: 124851

Christmas Eve Service: Dec. 24 at 6:00 p.m.

www.hopeuu.org/ChristmasEveService

Meeting ID: 924 8440 2622

Passcode: 491549





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 Tulsa, OK 74133
 (918)481-0999
 hopeuu@hopeuu.org
 www.hopeuu.org

Seeking Hope, Love, and Justice—Together in Community

FOCUS v. 26, no. 12, December 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

8432 S. Sheridan Road
 Tulsa, OK 74133
 (918) 481-0999
 hopeuu@hopeuu.org
 www.hopeuu.org



December

2020

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1 GIVING TUESDAY	2 Hope Singers, 7pm	3 Cocktail Hour, 4pm Women of Hope, 7pm	4	5
6 Social Hour, 8:45am Adult Forum, 10am Service, 11am Children's Church, 2:30pm	7	8 Black Writers Reading Group, 5:30 p.m.	9 Hope Singers, 7pm	10 Cocktail Hour, 4pm	11	12
13 Social Hour, 8:45am Adult Forum, 9:45 am SING NOEL! 11am Children's Church, 2:30pm	14	15 Board of Trustees, 7pm	16 COVID Response Team, 5pm Hope Singers, 7pm	17 Cocktail Hour, 4pm	18 Cereal Days 10-noon	19 Cereal Days 2-4 Feed the Homeless
20 Social Hour, 8:45am Service, 11am Children's Church, 2:30pm	21	22	23 Hope Singers, 7pm	24 CHRISTMAS EVE Christmas Eve Social Hour, 4:30pm Christmas Eve Service, 6pm	25	26
27 Social Hour, 8:45am Service, 11am Children's Church, 2:30pm	28	29	30	31		

Zoom Links

Women of Hope: www.hopeuu.org/WomenOfHope (Meeting ID: 913 8568 9368; Passcode: 576764)

Social Hour: www.hopeuu.org/SocialHour (Meeting ID: 925 1504 184; Passcode: 739318)

Adult Forum: www.hopeuu.org/AdultForum (Meeting ID: 944 2766 5124; Passcode: 174446)

Sunday Service: www.hopeuu.org/SundayService (Meeting ID: 499751; no passcode required)

Children's Church: www.hopeuu.org/ChildrensChurch (Meeting ID: 932 9801 6660; Passcode: 124851)

Hope Singers: www.hopeuu.org/HopeSingers (Meeting ID: 349 768 514; Passcode: 003843)

Cocktail Hour: www.hopeuu.org/CocktailHour (Meeting ID: 980 3776 9619; Passcode: 307923)

Black Writers Reading Group: Contact Molly Brower, molly@hopeuu.org

Board of Trustees: www.hopeuu.org/BoardMeeting (Meeting ID: 913 5756 5440; Passcode: 367781)

COVID Response Team: www.hopeuu.org/COVIDResponseTeam (Meeting ID: 920 7967 1865; Passcode: 814780)

Christmas Eve Social Hour: www.hopeuu.org/ChristmasEveSocialHour (Meeting ID: 955 2275 9403; Passcode: 554612)

Christmas Eve Service: www.hopeuu.org/ChristmasEveService (Passcode: 491549)