



# December 2022

## FOCUS

The Monthly Newsletter of Hope Unitarian Church in Tulsa, Oklahoma

December is a special month for most of us, but it's *extra*-special at Hope!

From the Hanging of the Greens on Saturday, December 3rd, to Breakfast on the Hill on Sunday, December 4th (returning after a long absence), to Hope's beloved "Sing Noel" service on Sunday, December 11th, to the moving Christmas Eve candlelight service on Saturday, December 24th, there's enough going on to warm everybody's heart through the coldest winter month. (And even through the not-so-cold winter months; who knows what the weather in Oklahoma will be tomorrow, let alone weeks from now!)

Peek inside this issue of Focus for a preview of the many wonderful things coming your way!

### Also in this issue:

Reflections from the Minister  
[Page 3](#)

The YOU in UU: Why We Join  
[Page 4](#)

Meet Your Staff  
[Page 6](#)

Trunk or Treat!  
[Page 7](#)

December Events  
[Page 8](#)

Generosity Recipients  
[Page 10](#)

About Hope Church  
[Page 11](#)

# December's Theme: WONDER

Sunday Service via Zoom:  
[www.hopeuu.org/SundayService](http://www.hopeuu.org/SundayService)





## Reflections from the Minister



Rev. Justin would love to meet with you to provide pastoral care or just to get to know you!

His usual office hours are Tuesdays through Thursdays, 10 AM through 3 PM. Please email him at [revjustin@hopeuu.org](mailto:revjustin@hopeuu.org) to schedule an appointment to meet in person or via Zoom.

If your need is urgent, call him at 918-481-0999, x2.

There hung in my parents' bedroom a picture of water crashing on the rocks. The sky, dark with pregnant clouds evoked a feeling of gloom, save for the ray of light that broke through.

I would sit in that room and stare at this painting. For some reason I needed to figure it out. Though it didn't seem difficult I felt like I was missing something. There was water, there were clouds, there was a storm, and there was a beam of light that represented hope. It was easy. What was I missing? In the years hence, I realized I wasn't trying to figure out the picture as much as I was trying to figure out myself.

It occurred to me one day, in Bible school when the teacher asked us how we imagined God, that I didn't think of God like the children around me. Most of them said they thought of an old man. I realized I didn't think about God that way. Immediately I thought of that picture. It was not of God, but God was in the picture. But I don't mean that God was the light, and the fact is I don't think God was the source of light.

It was more about the feeling that I had felt all those years ago.

What I began to understand in later years was the feeling of wonder, wonder in the face of unknown outcomes, wonder in the face of knowledge, and wonder in the heart that transcends our being. To this day, when I reflect on that picture, though I have forgotten much of it, I feel that wonder again, and I know that God is in that wonder.



## The YOU in UU: Why We Joined

I had given up on religion in my twenties. Then I tried the Catholic religion again, briefly, in my thirties. God still seemed like some sort of "entity," but he and all the saints I was taught about no longer possessed the power I had given them for so many years. I realized I had become an agnostic. In my early forties I found myself in Tulsa, OK listening to John Wolf speak of Unitarianism on a local thirty-minute TV program on Friday afternoons. What a concept! No orthodoxy, only orthopraxy.

I walked into Hope in September 1996 and joined in December of that year. The people that I met and came to know and love were why I joined the church. I'll never forget John Wolfe saying that the only reason to join a church was to financially support it.

There have been a number of members of the congregation at that time that have left the church. I know that doesn't sound inviting, but I realized over the years that what many of us search for can be difficult to find even in a group as diverse as Unitarian Universalists. And like any church, it's congregated by imperfect human beings who in their zeal and joy of finding such an open community are able to forget the varying and contrasted ideologies and attitudes of the humanists, spiritualists, Christians and unnamed others who make up our congregation. I feel that the common threads that connect me to other Unitarians are expressed in the Seven Principles. They are not doctrines. This religion and specifically our congregation is about respect for each other, action, social justice, and providing regularly for those in need in our community. These keep me connected to all the members who are here today.

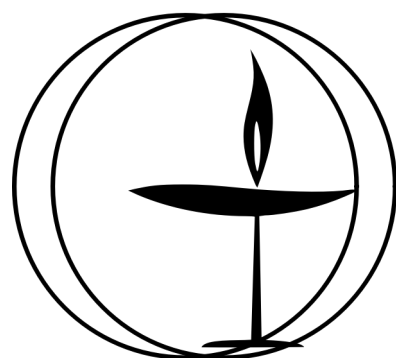
I've shared why I joined Hope Unitarian Church and a bit of why I've stayed. Again, it's the committed that have kept the church alive during a devastating pandemic. I'm grateful. We continue to support each other as we go through life's challenges with so much love. And so I came and stay.

— Deborah Whittaker



## The YOU in UU: Why We Joined (continued)

I joined this church more than 20 years ago. I moved to Tulsa from New Mexico where I felt I had friends with like thinking. Moving to the Bible Belt was difficult at first until I found this church on the hill that had intelligent, liberal thinkers. I feel that the church provides me with the feeling of family. I love what the church does and how I see people constantly stepping up to do services for the church and for the community. I thank you for being my family. Music is important to me, and I appreciate that we have music. I love the spiritual feeling I have when I am on the grounds and in the sanctuary.



— *Anita Ward*

## Gratitude and Generosity

Generosity is nothing new to Hope. During the Pandemic and remote connection, Hope members continued to give a generous amount every month to deserving community charities.

Now it is Hope's time.

Our annual budget depends on \$20,000 from our Year End donations. Knowing how carefully our church manages its finances, it is important for us to reach this goal. Our mail boxes are full of requests from deserving causes. This year we ask you to place Hope high on your list.

We are a vibrant community in an aging building. We now have an excellent new roof that will last us decades; on it are almost new heat and air units, neither of which are visible on a Sunday morning! Though we were granted a loan to make these improvements, we are now paying on that loan through our annual budget. It is important that we reach our goals for income to keep paying our expenses. We ask that you be as generous as you can.

— *Julia Harris*



## Meet Your Staff

- **What is your favorite color?** Green.
- **Do you have a favorite song, if so what is it?** “Morning Has Broken”
- **What was your favorite childhood toy?** Backyard swing my dad made for us.
- **Do you have any hobbies, if so what?** Dog Training, Reading, bonsai.
- **What did you want to be when you grew up?** Veterinarian or circus performer.
- **Star Sign/other horological sign you identify with?** Could also be fun fact about your birthday. Virgo. Earth sign.
- **Fun fact/unknown thing about you?** I ride a unicycle.
- **Favorite food/drink or Dream meal?** Steak with green beans and sweet potatoes with Menomi pino noir.
- **If you had an unlimited budget, what room would you put in your house/mansion?** Greenhouse.
- **What clothing item have you kept the longest?** Girl Scout sash.
- **Best tree/bit of nature in your life?** 5 year old Dwarf Pomegranate Tree

*Rev. Justin asked staff members to share some interesting, fun, or just plain silly facts about themselves. Here's what Eve Bjornsgaard, Hope's Worship Tech Coordinator, had to say!*



Thank you to everyone for a hugely successful **Trunk or Treat** event!

The trunks were amazing and the children had so much fun. The donations helped to ensure that we did not run out of candy. We had enough candy left over for donations to Youth Services of Tulsa and The Day Center for the Homeless. Special thanks to Diane Dudley for the Trunk or Treat sign!





## December Events

### Board and Committee Meetings

All Hope members are welcome to attend the following meetings, which are held at the church unless otherwise indicated:

- Finance Committee: 7:00 PM, Tuesday, December 13th
- Board of Trustees: 7:00 PM, Tuesday, December 27th

### Church Events

All are welcome to attend the events listed below. (This is not a complete list of events taking place at the church this month; other events may be private or limited to members of specific church groups.) Dates and times listed below may change! Please check the church's online calendar at [www.hopeuu.org/calendar](http://www.hopeuu.org/calendar) for the most current schedule of events.

- Sundays: Children's Religious Education: 9:45 AM, Adult Forum: 10:00 AM, Sunday Service: 11:00 AM

*Hope's special "Sing Noel" service will replace the regular Sunday service on December 11th.*

*The Christmas Eve Candlelight Service will take place at 6:00 PM on Saturday, December 24th.*

*Regular Sunday events are cancelled on Sunday, December 25th. Merry Christmas!*

- Wednesdays, 7:15-9:00 PM: Choir Rehearsal
- Thursday, December 1st, 6:00 PM: Women of Hope
- Saturday, December 24th, 6:00 PM: Christmas Eve Candlelight Service

### Hanging of the Greens: December 3rd

Hope's annual "Hanging of the Greens" event will start at 10:00 AM on Saturday, December 3rd!



### Breakfast on the Hill: December 4th

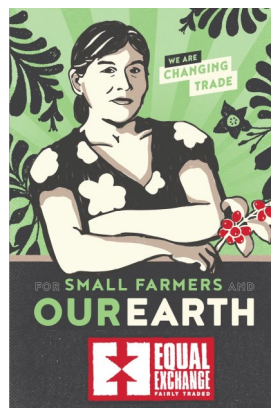
Thank you Anita Ward, Janet Nobles, and Deborah Whittaker for volunteering to host Breakfast on the Hill. Everyone is welcome and there's no need to bring anything. We hope you will join us for breakfast on Sunday, December 4th at 9:00 AM!



### December Birthdays

Our warmest wishes to all Hope members and friends who have birthdays this month!

Rick Eagleton - December 4th  
 Lisa Dunn - December 5th  
 Maggie Scott - December 9th  
 Cate Potter - December 10th  
 Susan Swatek - December 13th  
 George Krumme - December 15th  
 Eric Reiman - December 19th  
 Jacci Hamilton - December 22nd  
 Sherrill Womeldorff - December 22nd  
 Anita Ward - December 22nd  
 Brandy Morgan - December 22nd  
 Mary Newman - December 31st



### Fair Trade Cart

The Outreach Fair Trade Cart is now stocked with a variety of delicious chocolate bars from Equal Exchange, an authentic Fair Trade organization. There is also coffee, cocoa, and chai tea for sale. When you buy goods from the Fair Trade cart, you are supporting small-scale farmers and the environment. Profits from the cart are also used to supplement the Generosity offering if it is under \$1000.

### Hope's Star Tree

The holidays have arrived, and Hope's Star Tree is decorated with stars representing the children served by the Tulsa Dream Center, Hope's September Generosity recipient. You can support these children by purchasing gifts for them (no toy guns or stuffed animals, please) and delivering the unwrapped gifts to the church by Sunday, December 11th.

You can view a list of suggested gifts available from Amazon at <https://a.co/63Hfvvj>.





### Cereal Days

Breakfast cereal (no Cheerios, please!) for the Tulsa Day Center for the Homeless can be dropped off at the church on Sunday morning, December 11th; between 10:00 AM and noon on Friday, December 16th; or from 2:00 to 4:00 PM on Saturday, December 17th.



### Log Cabin Rentals

The following support groups currently rent the Log Cabin on a weekly or monthly basis:

- Sundays, 3:30-4:30 PM.: [Gamblers Anonymous](#) (GA)
- Tuesdays, 6:30-7:30 PM: [SouthSide Recovery/Narcotics Anonymous](#) (SSR/NA)
- Wednesdays, 10:00 AM-noon: [Al-Anon](#)
- Wednesdays, 5:45-7:00 p.m.: [Codependents Anonymous](#) (CoDA)
- Usually the 3rd Saturday of each month, 4:00-6:00 PM: [Victims' Voices](#) (victim impact panel)

For more information about a group, please click their name on the list above to visit their website.

### Generosity Recipients

December's Generosity recipient is:



The [Unitarian Universalist Service Committee](#) (UUSC) is a nonprofit, nonsectarian organization advancing human rights together with an international community of grassroots partners and advocates. UUSC advances human rights and social justice around the world, partnering with those who confront unjust power structures and mobilizing to challenge oppressive policies. Their work is grounded in the belief that all people have inherent power and dignity.

Previous Generosity recipients and the amounts they received from Hope:

- **November:** [Eastern Oklahoma Donated Dental Services](#)
- **October:** [Roy Clark Elementary School](#); they received \$1,403.00 from Hope.
- **September:** [Tulsa Dream Center](#); Hope raised \$1,502.00 for them.
- **August:** [MacArthur Elementary School](#). Hope collected \$1,437.26 for the school, as well as several boxes of books!
- **July:** Hope sent \$1,382.00 to [Emergency Infant Services](#).



### Hope's Minister

#### Rev. Justin M. McCreary

Rev. Justin's usual office hours are Tuesdays through Thursdays, 10 AM through 3 PM.

Please email him in advance at [revjustin@hopeuu.org](mailto:revjustin@hopeuu.org) to schedule an appointment to meet in person or via Zoom. If your need is urgent, call him at 918-481-0999, x2.

### Hope's Staff

- Tennille Wilson, Director of Religious Education
- Amy Cottingham, Music Director and Pianist
- Kimberly Burdick, Church Administrator
- Eve Bjornsgaard, Worship Tech Coordinator
- Elizabeth Obal, Church Accountant

### 2022-2023 Board of Trustees

- Rebecca Jones, President
- James Donovan, President-Elect
- Richard Eagleton, Vice President, Finance & Planning
- Christy Levine, Vice President, Programs
- Gail Hawk, Secretary
- [TBD], Treasurer
- Anita Ward and Jean Coffey, Trustees

### Visit us:

8432 South Sheridan Road  
Tulsa, OK 74133

### Sundays

Children's Church: 9:45 AM  
Adult Forum: 10:00 a.m.  
Sunday Services: 11:00 a.m.

### Weekdays

The church office is closed on Mondays. We respond to calls and emails 9:00 a.m. through 3:00 p.m. Tuesdays through Fridays. Please contact the church office in advance if you wish to visit the church in person on a day other than Sunday.

### Mail us:

P.O. Box 35284  
Tulsa, OK 74153-0284

### Call us:

918-481-0999

### Email us:

[hopeuu@hopeuu.org](mailto:hopeuu@hopeuu.org)

### Visit our website:

[www.hopeuu.org](http://www.hopeuu.org)

### Visit our Facebook page:

[facebook.com/HopeUnitarianChurch](https://facebook.com/HopeUnitarianChurch)

