

January 2023

FOCUS

The Monthly Newsletter of Hope Unitarian Church in Tulsa, Oklahoma

The new year brings new challenges and new opportunities. Hope Church is here to support you during the difficult times and celebrate with you during the joyous ones!

We'll start the month off with the annual "Burning Bowl" service on Sunday, January 1st. Women of Hope will meet the evening of Thursday, January 5th for wine, a potluck meal, and conversation...and guys are welcome, too! Taking Down the Greens will happen on Saturday, January 7th. Check the [January Events](#) page of this newsletter, as well as Hope's public calendar at www.hopeuu.org/calendar, for more events.

If you made a New Year's resolution, we wish you the best of luck in sticking to that, and we hope that 2023 will be the best one yet for Hope Church and its congregation!

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January's Theme:
Finding Our Center

Sunday Service via Zoom:
www.hopeuu.org/SundayService





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 to schedule an appointment to meet in person or via Zoom.

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

Reflections from the Minister: Getting Stuck in Binary

Human beings are complicated, nature is complicated. As Unitarian Universalists, we affirm that we live in an interdependent web of existence. When I reflect on this principle, I think of John Donne who proclaimed that “no one is an island unto themselves.” We affect and are affected by strangers we will never meet and many that are long gone. One could even expand that ideal to affirm that we are affected by a world that exists largely out of our control. The human brain, as H. P. Lovecraft once said, is unable to correlate all its contents. Yet we must live in this world even if we never really understand it. Because of this, we correlate the abstract into a wanting sense of the concrete through assumptions that must exist in a matrix of either/or.

Put simply, we are unable to grasp the entirety of the world around us. Which means that we also struggle to understand our place within it, and in doing so find ourselves on an endless search for self. So we make overwhelmingly negative assumptions about ourselves based on how we feel at any given time. One of these common assumptions is that we are either wholly good or wholly bad. It is easy to assume we are the mistakes we make instead of human beings that make mistakes.

It is also easy to conflate our identity with our career or lack thereof. I am a minister. I am also a parent, a nerd, and a son. I struggle with depression, my weight, and my ADHD, but I am also a gifted public speaker, poet, and a decent cook. Some have even called me eccentric. I like to read, and I like to play video games, and I really do enjoy the outdoors. I like to move to music, and love to preach, but these things are not my identity, though they may be part.

I am not all one thing, and I don’t have to be. Each day I am something new.

It is easy for me to magnify my negative traits, to assume that I am a failure, but as a human being, I am just more complicated than that, and I suspect you are too.

Finding our center is not about identifying who we are, it is about understanding that we are always in a state of re-creation, we are not one thing or another, in fact we are indescribable.



The Board Reports

This month's contribution is from James Donovan, President-Elect of Hope's Board of Trustees.

When some of us are told to "find our center," we probably get some paper, our protractors, and try to recall what we were taught in our high school geometry classes. Some folks think of meditation, mindfulness, deep breathing, listening to music and other ways to relax and clear our minds of clutter. I imagine a slow walk in the woods, sort of a walking meditation.

Rev. Erik Walker Wikstrom, a UU minister and author of [Serving with Grace: Lay Leadership as a Spiritual Practice](#), suggests another way to find one's center: Serving as a leader of their congregation. Rev. Erik suggests that lay leadership, like other spiritual practices and ways of "centering" oneself, can result in a deeper sense of self-awareness, a clearer understanding of one's self. For me, having a leadership role at Hope has helped me understand my values, and how each of us must participate in helping our beloved Hope community survive and prosper.

I encourage you to become a leader, so that we can find our "center" together.





Religious Education Corner

By Tennille Wilson, Hope's Director of Religious Education

I like to find my center through volunteer work. Some of the most memorable moments that I have experienced teaching were centered on Civil Rights and Martin Luther King, Jr. Day. One of my favorite videos to screen for children and families near the time of MLK, is the animated movie "[Our Friend, Martin](#)." Please take the time to share this movie as you are able.

The movie came out in 1999, which would have been MLK's 70th birthday. In the movie we see time-traveling scenes that are excerpts from the life of MLK. We learn

that children were not allowed to play together. This is always a heart-wrenching moment, but in 2011 after watching the movie at Bixby Public Schools, a young girl yelled out, "Can we sing Happy Birthday to MLK?" She led the whole class in singing with an enormous smile on her face. To see her emotional journey throughout the movie end in joyful celebration of the life of MLK made me feel that we can all be centered in the truth.

May we dare to live from
the center of our being.
May we make our own choices
before others' choices make us
May the fire that burns in our
belly, light our way.
And may the courageous
commitment to our own
inner lights, make
the world shine anew.

Rev. Kaaren Anderson

2022 Auction

The auction in November was a great success! Many thanks to everybody who participated. Whether you donated items or services, helped with the prep and setup, or supported Hope with your purchases and donations, your contribution is greatly appreciated!







Meet Your Staff

- **What is your favorite color?** Red, all varieties.
- **Do you have a favorite song, if so what is it?** “Big Country,” by Big Country.
- **What was your favorite childhood toy?** A lamb named “baby baa-baa.”
- **Do you have any hobbies, if so what?** Music.
- **What did you want to be when you grew up?** Clara Barton or Florence Nightingale.
- **Star Sign/other horological sign you identify with? Could also be a fun fact about your birthday.** Leo, Fire Sign. My birthday is July 28th (ultra Leo).
- **Fun fact/unknown thing about you?** Before I studied Art and Education, I studied Music.
- **Favorite food/drink or dream meal?** Crab is my favorite special dinner. Pancakes are my favorite breakfast. Quiche is my favorite lunch. It must all be vegan and gluten free.
- **If you had an unlimited budget, what room would you put in your house/mansion?** My house would need a room for making art, a room for making and recording music, a library, a conservatory, a huge attic space, a spectacular kitchen, sky lights everywhere, carved wooden details, solar panels, a massive garden, my very own bathroom, and all made out of cob and bamboo or other sustainable materials.
- **What clothing item have you kept the longest?** I have a personalized raglan t-shirt with my name in rainbow iron-on letters on the back, and a pencil drawing hearts on the front. It was a gift from my next door neighbor for my 6th birthday. I also have a dress that my grandmother made for me about that time.
- **Best tree/bit of nature in your life?** Fortunately, my life has been full of nature in my living surroundings. I have more than one favorite tree. First, there is the mulberry tree that was in my backyard in Broken Arrow as a child. It had a tire swing and I spent so much time in that tree. We moved to Stone Bluff. I spent more time in the acre pond than I did in trees. My favorite tree out of the thousands there, was a willow tree that hung over the edge of the pond.

Rev. Justin asked staff members to share some interesting, fun, or just plain silly facts about themselves. Here's what Tennille Wilson, Hope's Director of Religious Education, had to say!





January 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, January 10th
- Board of Trustees: 7:00 PM, Tuesday, January 24th

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 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 annual "Burning Bowl" service will replace the regular Sunday service on January 1st.

- Thursday, January 5th, 6:00 PM: Women of Hope. Social time starts at 6:00 PM and the potluck dinner is at 6:30.
- Sunday, January 8th, after the service: Stone Soup Sunday returns! We will have homemade soups, bread, and desserts following the service. You may sign up to bring something at the church on Sundays, or contact James Donovan at tulsauus@yahoo.com.



Taking Down the Greens: January 7th

The decorations in Fellowship Hall will be taken down at 10:00 AM on Saturday, January 7th.



Save the Date!

Women of Hope's Chocolate Auction will be on February 5th.



Hope's Chili Cook Off returns on Friday, February 24th.





January Birthdays

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

Bettina Larsen - January 2nd
Keith Hamilton - January 3rd
William Saylor - January 4th
Pat McGinley - January 8th
Lenny Hope - January 11th
Larry Vandiver - January 12th
Elke Goodman - January 14th
Jay D. Stewart - January 25th
Rebecca Jones - January 26th
Barbara Witt - January 26th
James Donovan - January 26th
Joan Bjornsgaard - January 27th
Cynthia Heifner - January 28th



Hope Zoom Book Club

Hope's book club meets monthly on Sunday afternoons via Zoom. Those who haven't read the books are welcome to join in the discussion!

The following books are scheduled for upcoming months:

- **Sunday, January 8th, 5:00-6:00 PM:** Under the Skin: The Hidden Toll of Racism on American Lives and the Health of Our Nation by Linda Villarosa
- **Sunday, February 5th, 5:00-6:00 PM:** The Color of Law: A Forgotten History of How Our Government Segregated America by Richard Rothstein
- **Sunday, March 5th, 5:00-6:00 PM:** Blunt Instruments: Recognizing Racist Cultural Infrastructure in Memorials, Museums, and Patriotic Practices by Kristin Ann Hass
- **Sunday, April 2nd, 5:00-6:00 PM:** Mistakes and Miracles: Congregations on the Road to Multiculturalism (the 2022-2023 UUA Common Read) by Nancy Palmer Jones and Karen Lin
- **Sunday, May 7th, 5:00-6:00 PM:** Black Wall Street 100: An American City Grapples With Its Historical Racial Trauma by Hannibal B. Johnson

Check online booksellers (including [inSpirit](#), [the UUA bookstore](#)) or your local library (such as the [Tulsa City-County Library](#)) for books.

The Zoom link is <https://zoom.us/j/97347494203?pwd=Sk1CeXRpdmZZSEhETHpOQnBIWVNOQT09>

Save the Date for the Southwest Unitarian Universalists Women's Conference!

The [SouthWest UU Women's Conference](#) will be held March 3rd-5th, 2023 at the First Unitarian Church of Dallas. Early Bird Registration is available for \$160 through February 17th. The keynote speaker is Rev. Deneen Robinson, and entertainment will be provided by [The Satin Dolls Band](#).

Hope would like to form a group to attend the conference together. Contact Diane Dudley at 918-850-2204 or dudleyok1@gmail.com if you plan to go!



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, January 15th; between 10:00 AM and noon on Friday, January 20th; or from 2:00 to 4:00 PM on Saturday, January 21st.



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 PM: [Codependents Anonymous](#) (CoDA)
- Usually the 3rd Saturday of each month, 4:00-6:00 PM: [Victims' Voices](#) (victim impact panel). Check their website or www.hopeuu.org/calendar for specific dates.

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

Generosity Recipients

January's Generosity recipient is:



[Oklahoma People First](#) is a nonprofit, statewide self-advocacy organization run by and for individuals with developmental disabilities. The group's mission is to promote equality, to assist members to speak for themselves, and to educate communities. The group's members believe that people should be able to live as independently as possible, to make their own meaningful decisions, to stand up for their rights without fear of being abused, and to have equal opportunity to access their communities and all services, including medical care. People with developmental disabilities can do many things if just given the chance!

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. The Roy Clark PTA bought nine coats for students using our generous donation!
- **September:** [Tulsa Dream Center](#); Hope raised \$1,502.00 for them.



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 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

Hope's general office hours are 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM Tuesdays through Thursdays. The doors may be locked during staff breaks and private meetings; calling ahead to check staff availability is recommended. We respond to email and voicemail messages from 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM Tuesdays through Fridays.

Mail us:

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

Call us:

918-481-0999

Email us:

hopeuu@hopeuu.org

Visit our website:

www.hopeuu.org

Visit our Facebook page:

facebook.com/HopeUnitarianChurch

