

March 2023

## FOCUS

The Monthly Newsletter of Hope Unitarian Church in Tulsa, Oklahoma

According to the old saying, “March comes in like a lion and leaves like a lamb,” but it’s rarely that simple or predictable. Warm, sunny days that make us think “Spring has sprung!” are all too often followed by cold winds and rain. It’s hard to know how many layers to wear from day to day, let alone what activities to plan for the weekend, or for next week.

But there are some things you *can* be sure about. You’ll always find smiling faces and warm companionship at Hope, along with events that will allow you to expand your knowledge, challenge your views of the world (in a good way), and serve others.

Take a look inside for more sure-fire opportunities to engage with your fellow UUs and have some fun at the same time!

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March's Theme:  
***Vulnerability***

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

### Reflections from the Minister

While reflecting on this month's topic, vulnerability, I considered the words of Brené Brown: "Vulnerability is the birthplace of love, belonging, joy, courage, and creativity. It is the source of hope, empathy, accountability and authenticity."

I remember one afternoon crying after being accosted by a bully. My father made sure I was ok, but didn't comfort me. Instead he asked if I hit the boy back. I shook my head no, and watched my father hang his. I didn't tell him that I didn't hit the boy back because I was too afraid. I would not be surprised if I was the only guy in the world who grew up hearing that boys don't cry and being told once or twice by various adults to be a man.

I don't blame him. I don't blame him for instilling in me the ideals instilled in him by the adults in his life. See, my father wanted to make sure that I could manage a complicated world full of brutality. My father was honest, and because of his honesty I was allowed to choose my own path of vulnerability. In his core he understood then, and still understands now, that it is my responsibility to learn to live in this world, and I love him for that. He loved me enough to prepare me for the world he was not prepared for.

I will never forget the awkward exchange between my father and me, outside of a gas station in Parkersburg, West Virginia. I said, "I love you dad," He said, "I love you too." It was nice to hear, but was not necessary. My father had shown his love to me in a thousand other ways, and because of that I had the opportunity to learn a different path.

Vulnerability is not easy for many of us, but it is always worth it in the end.



## Meet Your Staff

*Rev. Justin asked Hope's staff members to share their thoughts on this month's topic of "vulnerability." Here's what Eve Bjornsgaard, Hope's Worship Tech Coordinator, and Elizabeth Obal, Church Accountant, had to say!*

I celebrated my 60th birthday this year! Each year for several years now, my body gives me a gift right around my birthday. Some of them have been aching knees when I turned 27, acid reflux when I turned 35, and psoriasis when I turned 55. There are more, but you get the idea, right?

This year, I got the gift of neural plasticity. Yes, that's right! It was a good gift! Brain plasticity is the ability of neural networks in the brain to change through growth and reorganization. This year my brain rewired a bit in a good way. I had a minor concussion a couple of years ago that left me with a deficit. I found myself grasping for words and speaking very slowly.

In 2022 I have been taking lessons in an online Spanish course. I also have been limiting my sugar to 20 grams or less in a day. My pauses and grasping for words have noticeably decreased. I am so grateful!

Aging research indicates that a healthy lifestyle can slow and even reverse cognitive and physical decline. I have been working at embracing my abilities linguistically and have been reducing my fears and vulnerabilities.

My goal is to have more birthdays with good gifts from my body.

*— Eve Bjornsgaard*



## Meet Your Staff, continued

I consider money to be imaginary numbers. Obviously, these numbers have concrete impacts. If we go below a certain amount, things get hard. Higher numbers make things easier. We worry less, and can live more expansively.

Accounting is a dance between these numbers, arcane rules, and human lives.

A lot of it is simple math. If a contract says  $x$  dollars a year, how much is that divided by 26 pay periods? I like math, I like the logic of it, that you can reproduce a result over and over, back and forth. Multiply and divide.

The math disguises the fact that this is a person's income. If I get it wrong, I'm creating vulnerability in someone's life. If I get it right, I'm upholding the agreements of the church with their employees and businesses in the community. I am creating some small part of our reputation. While my job is not life or death, paying people is important.

The rules are harder for me. What form do I need to use to report our payroll, again? What percentage is that kind of tax? Screw that up and I might get a slap on the wrist, but I still feel chagrined that I messed up.

I feel vulnerable when I open up to others. This includes my work. The summary of my work is on display every month as I release reports about our financial state. I've never been perfect, and have given up trying to be, but it still catches me in some small way to realize I've messed up and somebody saw.

Face to face, I have to ask people very personal questions: What is your bank account for your pledge? Do you prefer a credit card?

*(continued on next page)*





## Meet Your Staff, continued

How would a contractor like to be paid: check, PayPal, direct deposit? We disguise this vulnerability with routine. Here, have a form!

People don't like asking for things. I'm not sure if this is them avoiding vulnerability, exactly. I personally hate the idea that I might be a burden, that I'm annoying, or creating work for others. However, people manage to work through their own feelings to ask me about the church's money. Whether it's budgets for committees, or if we should even renew that one thing, money is a touchy subject. How much do we have in resources? Can we get more? How much can I, personally, offer the church?

We soothe our anxiety with trust. In being responsible for other's money, by accepting that trust, I catch glimpses of just how wrong it could go, and I worry. I feel vulnerable. Because I'm not perfect, and I will screw things up, and people will know I'm not perfect, and judge me, and judgment is the worst thing I can imagine, some days.

The most comforting thing I've found is commiseration. I'm not the only one who has made these mistakes before! And thankfully, they're fixable.

I do my very best to make sure the numbers are right; real, imaginary, or somewhere in between. I admit mistakes, and accept corrections. I try to empathize with others as they struggle to ask the questions I have the answers to.

Unfortunately, there's no cure, because vulnerability isn't a disease. It's the cost of living.

To open ourselves up is to allow others in. To create space to learn, and to grow. So I'll keep doing the math on these imaginary numbers. I hope you will too.

— *Elizabeth Obal*

Women of Hope held their Chocolate Auction on February 5th!  
*Photos courtesy of Robert Billings.*







## March Events

### Board and Committee Meetings

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

- Leadership Council: 7:00 PM, Tuesday, March 7th (continuation of the quarterly meeting held in February)
- Finance Committee: 7:00 PM, Tuesday, March 14th
- Board of Trustees: 7:00 PM, Tuesday, March 28th

### 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.

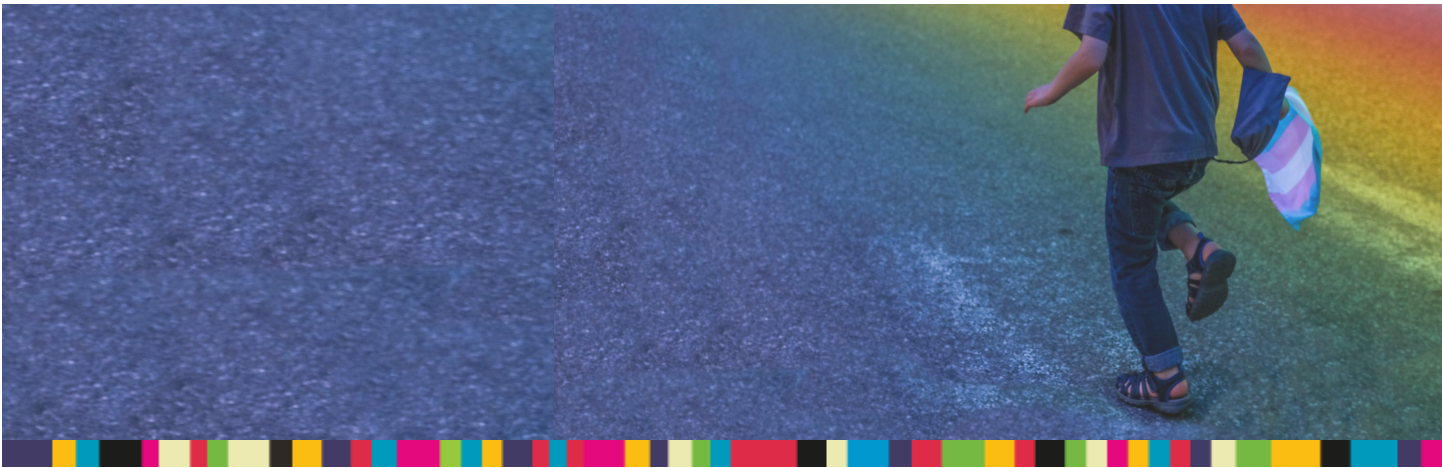
- Sundays: Children and Youth Religious Education: 9:45 AM, Adult Forum: 10:00 AM, Sunday Service: 11:00 AM
- Thursday, March 2nd, 6:00 PM: Women of Hope. Social time starts at 6:00 PM and the potluck dinner is at 6:30.
- Friday, March 17th: Family Movie Night returns! Doors open at 6:30 PM; the movie starts at 7:00 PM. Call 918-481-0999, x4 or email [hopeuu@hopeuu.org](mailto:hopeuu@hopeuu.org) for the movie title.
- Sunday, March 19th: Hope's annual Pledge Drive kicks off with a cookout after the Sunday Service!

### The [SouthWest UU Women's Conference](#)

will be held March 3rd-5th, 2023 at the First Unitarian Church of Dallas. The keynote speaker is Rev. Deneen Robinson, and entertainment will be provided by [The Satin Dolls Band](#).

Contact Diane Dudley at 918-850-2204 or [dudleyok1@gmail.com](mailto:dudleyok1@gmail.com) if you plan to go!





### March Birthdays

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

Warren Cox - March 1st  
Stan Young - March 3rd  
Lora Marschall - March 5th  
Marge Carrison - March 7th  
Siannan Dunn - March 7th  
Judy Sims - March 10th  
Christy Levine - March 16th  
Guy Sims - March 18th  
Diane Dudley - March 19th  
Norma Eagleton - March 19th



### Save the Date!

Rev. Justin's installation will be held on Sunday, April 30th at 4:00 PM, and all are welcome! Please join us to formally recognize and celebrate Rev. Justin as Hope's Minister.

### 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, 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>



### 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, March 12th; between 10:00 AM and noon on Friday, March 17th; or from 2:00 to 4:00 PM on Saturday, March 18th.



### 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](http://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

March's Generosity recipient is:



The [SPCA](#) values animals and believes that they deserve love, safety, and humane care. They provide safe, transitional shelter and medical care to animals. The community plays a vital role in organizational sustainability through financial support, rescue and adoption efforts. The SPCA manages and allocates resources to remain steadfast to their mission, achieve the greatest good, and ensure their future.

Previous Generosity recipients include:

- **February:** [The Surayya Anne Foundation](#)
- **January:** [Oklahoma People First](#)
- **December:** [Unitarian Universalist Service Committee \(UUSC\)](#)
- **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](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
- Christy Stalcup, Music Director
- 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
- Cynthia Heifner, 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](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)

