

September 2023

## FOCUS

The Monthly Newsletter of Hope Unitarian Church in Tulsa, Oklahoma



At the time this edition of Focus was being finalized, the resurfacing of the road up Hope Hill was just getting ready to start. With any luck, the work is now complete and you're enjoying a smooth ride up a good-as-new road!

That should make it easier for you to join us on Sunday mornings, especially on September 10th, when Hope celebrates Homecoming Sunday. This is the time of year to celebrate returning to school, the return of cooler weather (at least, we really hope so!), and the start of a new congregational year.

Welcome home to Hope!

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September's Theme: ***Welcome***

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





Rev. Justin's 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: Reflecting on the Road

In the month of September, we will be focusing on the theme of Welcoming.

September is the traditional season in Unitarian Universalist Churches for in-gathering, coming together after summer. It is good for water communions and cook outs. It is also the time many of our congregations choose to begin their calendar year. We come together this September, a new board, a new president, and even a new road.

There is a lot of symbolism in the road. The road denotes a journey bring new people here and giving us the chance to travel out, because roads go both ways. But the road we build is not just asphalt and concrete. It's not just the smoothness of the ride or the simplicity of the drive, the road we build involves the connections we make in our community.

The road goes out into the highways and byways of our city and our state. The road carries not just people but the message of Unitarian Universalism, the message that every human being deserves to be treated with dignity, and that justice ought not simply flow from the high places, but back toward the seats of power. It is an important thing that the road carries us both ways,

and it is easy to forget that both directions are important.

Unitarian Universalism is not in itself evangelical, but it holds the spirit of the root word in Greek that means good news, good news that can be preached not through our words on Sunday morning but our deeds, our love, and our welcome. We will use our new road, not just to encourage others to travel up, not just so that we save the suspension systems of our cars, but also so we can go out, and we can meet our community with wondrous words of acceptance and welcome.





## The Board Reports

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

The Hope Board of Trustees held a one day retreat at Osage Forest of Peace on July 29. At the retreat, we talked, ate, meditated, and hiked together. We also created a new board covenant and set goals for the church year.

This year we'll be reviewing and revising Hope's bylaws. We'll also lead the process of revising our mission, vision, & values statements. We've already begun the process of reviewing the congregation's safety and security practices and procedures. We will

also begin a long term process of increasing the visibility & growing the membership of the congregation with the help of public relations professionals. Thanks to those of you who attended our Adult Forum presentation on August 13.

If you have comments, questions, or suggestions for the Board of Trustees, please contact me at

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





## From Hope's Care Team

vol-un-teer;

a person who freely offers to take part in an enterprise or undertake a task.

Hope Unitarian would not exist without volunteers. We want to acknowledge our members and the time they "freely offer" to make our congregation a joyous community. We'll begin this month with Julia Harris. The woman is a regular whirling dervish of volunteerism. Her love of planting, weeding, landscaping, brush and vine control place her on the church grounds fairly regularly. Julia leads crews of outdoor loving volunteers who are willing to "undertake a task" maintaining the many gardens and trails on Hope Hill. She has shared her musical talents by performing during Sunday services with her violin and dulcimer.

More about our multi-tasking volunteers next month.



Your future  
isn't bound  
by your past!

Cat Bowen



## The Many Kinds of Welcome

by Elizabeth Obal, Church Accountant

A Welcoming congregation and a congregation that is welcoming are different things. One is a yearly certification with specific goals that involve uplifting the LGBTQ+ community through education and outreach. The other is a continual process, with no certificate, our progress measured in tiny signals, and the gradual uptick of attendees as time goes by.

There's a lot of overlap between the two. Welcoming a person into a community is a multi-step process. It takes more than one Sunday service to decide to volunteer, or pledge, or keep coming back for years. It takes more than one show of acceptance to feel comfortable.

In 2014, my first time here, feeling the congregation welcome me started with a greeter at the door. It continued with the inclusion of taboo subjects (in conservative circles) in the sermon, and someone more experienced dragging me to meet the minister. Later, it was an invitation to walk the trails, and go to lunch, or supper club. It was crafting together and being asked to join activities.

It is, to this day, the ongoing expressions of support and interest in my life that I get from so many people.

Welcome is extending a hand of friendship, the process of making it easy to connect. It is clear communication of what's going on, and why, and how we do things here.

I'd expect now, in 2023, if I were coming from the outside, with no current ties, welcome would start with bumper stickers in the parking lot, and the hues of our rainbow sign above the welcome table. It would begin with the words of acceptance on the website and the order of services.

These are the first signs that our church might not hate. They are not the only things a person from a community under attack needs to feel safe here.

To truly engage as a Welcoming community, we the congregation must become comfortable with different identities. We must advance our own learning. Not just ask questions, but find the information we need, and engage at a higher level. The best a Welcoming congregation can give is openness, understanding, support, and celebration for the differences that make us unique.

For me, a Welcoming congregation looks like bathroom signs that say you can use it no matter your gender identity. It's people, adult and children alike, wearing the clothing that makes them feel best without fear. It is seeing others speak truth, create art, and make music without restrictive guidelines.

Welcome cannot be assumed; it must be stated clearly, in many ways, over and over. Welcome is a continual process of outreach, of trying to tell people who we are, and what we want to become. It is showing people that they have a place here.

Welcoming all identities takes effort. It involves putting ourselves in the shoes of a person is here for the first time. It is proving ourselves to be safe and worthy people to be in community with. It is how we grow as a church.

So, welcome the next person you see. It'll be worth it.



The August 6th Sunday service included Hope's first  
New Member Recognition ceremony since late 2019!

*Photos courtesy of Rebecca Jones.*











## September 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: 6:00 PM, Tuesday, September 19th
- Safety and Security Team: 7:00 PM, Tuesday, September 19th
- Board of Trustees: 7:00 PM, Tuesday, September 26th

### 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, September 7th, 6:00 PM: Women of Hope. Social time starts at 6:30 PM and the potluck dinner is at 6:30.
- Saturday, September 9th, 9:00 AM: Spruce Up the Hill Day. Have fun together as we prepare for Homecoming Sunday. Anyone old enough to use scissors or pick up trash can help, so families are welcomed. Bring scissors and hand pruners if you have them. Wear sensible shoes for uneven ground. In case of rain, we will spruce up the building indoors. The Garden Team will be on hand to coach beginners. Come for all or any part of that time.
- Sunday, September 10th: Homecoming Sunday!



### September Birthdays

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

Angela Hart - September 2

Laura Prather Reiman - September 11

Kim Rauh - September 13

Robert Billings - September 15

Joseph Rivers - September 17

Jacob Hart - September 18

Angelica Anrig - September 20

Bruce Luria - September 23



### UU Common Read 2023

When we do a UU Common Read together, we share in reflection, learning, and action. A UU Common Read can take us on a powerful journey into what it means to be human and accountable in a world filled with both pain and joy.

This year's common read book is **On Repentance & Repair: Making Amends in an Unapologetic World** by Danya Ruttenberg. We will discuss it at our October 22 Adult Forum. Copies of the book will be available for purchase at the church for \$26 each beginning on September 10.

### September Adult Forum Topics

- **September 3rd:** Generosity Recipient RG Foods Mobile Grocer
- **September 10th:** The Annual Hope Program Fair
- **September 17th:** Emilee Bounds from ACTION (Allied Communities of Tulsa Inspiring Our Neighborhoods)
- **September 24th:** The Hope Unitarian Church Foundation, Inc will give its annual presentation to the congregation





## 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, September 10th; between 10:00 AM and noon on Friday, September 15th; or from 2:00 to 4:00 PM on Saturday, September 16th.



## Log Cabin Rentals

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

- Sundays, 2:00-3:00 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

## Generosity Recipients

September's Generosity recipient is:



**[RG Foods Mobile Grocer](#):** The R&G Family Grocers program targets food deserts in our community with a 44-foot-long mobile grocery store that carries grocery staples, including fresh produce, quality meats, dairy, frozen and canned foods, and other household goods. By bringing fresh foods to their customers via their mobile store and micro store models, many mobility bound and senior customers are better able to shop for themselves. In 2021, the mobile store made 11 location stops each week, serving over 20,000 customers, with 65% of their sales from the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), and 31% of their sales in fresh produce.

Previous Generosity recipients:

- **August:** Boy Scout Troop 970
- **July:** [Take Control Initiative](#)
- **June:** [BeHeard Movement](#)
- **May:** [South Tulsa Community House](#)
- **April:** [The Pencil Box](#)
- **March:** [Tulsa SPCA](#)



### 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
- Eve Bjornsgaard, Worship Tech Coordinator
- Elizabeth Obal, Church Accountant

### 2023-2024 Board of Trustees

- James Donovan, President
- David Tracy, President-Elect
- Rebecca Jones, Past President
- Richard Eagleton, Vice President, Finance & Planning
- Mary Baird, Vice President, Programs
- Gail Hawk, Secretary
- Cynthia Heifner, Treasurer
- Bruce Luria, Trustee
- Vanessa Self, Trustee

### Visit us:

8432 South Sheridan Road  
Tulsa, OK 74133

### Sundays

Children's Church and Youth: 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. If you wish to visit the church in person, please call ahead to check staff availability. (For security reasons, external doors are kept locked unless an event is in progress.) We respond to email and voicemail messages from 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM Tuesdays through Fridays.

### Call us:

918-481-0999

### Mail us:

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

### 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)

