



FOCUS

JANUARY 2024

LIBERATING LOVE

 *Hope*
UNITARIAN CHURCH
TULSA, OK



January at Hope

As we step into the new year, Hope Unitarian Church is excited to kick off 2024 with engaging events and a community initiative that calls for your participation and support.

Bid farewell to the holiday season and join us in the Taking Down the Greens. Let's come together on Saturday, January 6th, at 10:00 AM to dismantle our festive decorations.

Mark your calendar for a communal feast! Stone Soup Sunday will be taking place on January 14th, following Sunday Service. We invite everyone to share good food, great company, and the warmth of our community.

Looking ahead, the Membership Committee has an exciting project on the horizon for January 2024 - the establishment of our very own lending library. We're calling upon the congregation to play a crucial role in this initiative.

Check your shelves, and consider donating books that align with UU topics, social justice issues, and spirituality. Look for books that have inspired you, deepened your understanding, or sparked conversations.

As always, your engagement and contributions are what make our community thrive. We extend our gratitude for your ongoing support and look forward to collectively creating a vibrant and enriching space for all in 2024.



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Liberated Love

by Christy Stalcup

This alliterative phrase seems clear and vague at the same time. Initial thoughts lead to Romeo and Juliet's forbidden love and how had they only been able to liberate their love, the story could've had a much less tragic ending. I also think of the Loving vs. Virginia case and how changing laws that never should've existed, allowed people to marry their true love regardless of race. Or even more recently with the passing of marriage equality. My brain also turns to loving yourself. Giving your heart permission to love the imperfect you and not be beholden to outrageous self-inflicted demands: if I just get straight A's, if I just find my soulmate, if I just make this income, if I just lose x amount of weight, etc. then I'd be worthy of love.

But as with most things in my life, the clearest explanation I can find is in art and specifically music. If you discover a song you like, that song remains the same. You might hear a different version played as a cover, or by a high school orchestra, or by your 2 year old niece who really isn't a great singer. The performance might not be the greatest, that one time, but it doesn't diminish the beauty that is in the song. The essence of the piece remains no matter how inadequately it is produced. People are messy and we make mistakes. The only way to avoid a catatonic state is to continue to allow yourself to make mistakes and forgive yourself and others as best you can.

Wagner wrote some gorgeous operas, but he was a Nazi sympathizer. Some of Woody Allen's movies are brilliant, but he has some skeletons in his closet. Van Gogh is regarded as one of the greatest artists of all time, but he terrorized his ex through stalking and unwanted "gifts." It doesn't make the work less amazing because of where it came from. The same with people. Lenin's great great great niece should not be discarded as unworthy because of lineage. I should not be discarded if I have a bad day, week, month, or year.

I struggle with this issue all the time. How many chances do you give yourself or others? I would argue that you should grant yourself an indefinite amount, but with others you need some level of boundary. It is that tightrope we walk that is our life. Liberated love can only exist when we afford ourselves and others the grace to fail.

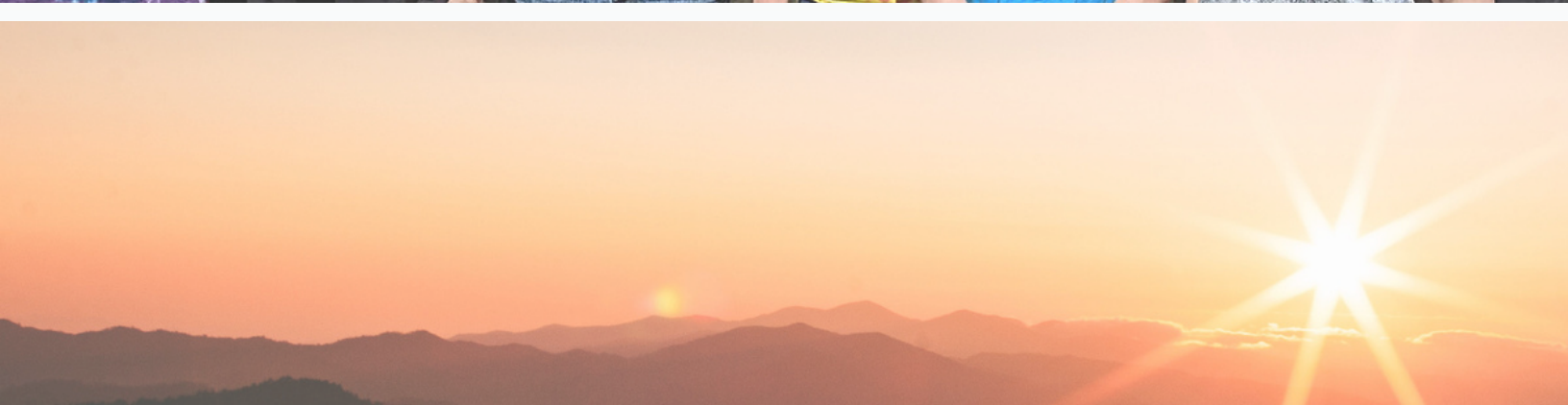


BOARD REPORTS

Submitted by James Donovan
President of the Hope Board of Trustees

As we begin the new year, the Board of Trustees is gearing up for a season of purposeful planning and community engagement. We'll undertake the crucial task of crafting the budget for the next fiscal year, ensuring thoughtful allocation of resources to support our mission and to enhance the spiritual experience for all members.

During the next several weeks, we'll launch a pledge drive. We'll also assist our nominating committee in identifying and nurturing new leaders who will contribute fresh perspectives and energy to our shared journey. The Board remains committed to growing our membership and will continue to work toward that goal and our other goals.



Religious Education Corner

By Tennille Wilson

Liberating love for children and teens means understanding and embracing love that promotes freedom, respect, and individual growth. It's about caring for others while allowing them the space to be themselves, fostering a supportive environment where everyone can thrive without feeling constrained. It encourages open communication, kindness, and acceptance, creating connections that empower rather than restrict. Embracing liberating love brings several benefits for children and teens.

It fosters healthy relationships by promoting:

1. ****Individual Growth:****

Allows each person to develop their unique qualities, skills, and interests without judgment or restriction.

2. ****Self-Expression:****

Encourages open communication, enabling individuals to express their thoughts, feelings, and aspirations freely.

3. ****Respect:**** Builds a foundation of mutual respect, where everyone's perspectives are valued, contributing to a positive and inclusive atmosphere.

4. ****Emotional Well-being:****

Enhances emotional intelligence and well-being by creating a supportive and understanding environment.

5. ****Empowerment:**** Fosters a sense of empowerment, as individuals feel secure in their relationships and are more likely to pursue personal and collective goals

6. ****Adaptability:****

Promotes adaptability and resilience, as individuals learn to navigate different aspects of life with a supportive network.

7. ****Stronger**

Connections:** Builds stronger and more meaningful connections, as trust and understanding form the basis of relationships.

8. ****Social Skills:****

Develops crucial social skills, such as empathy, active listening, and effective communication, which are vital for positive interactions.

Overall, liberating love lays the groundwork for healthy, fulfilling relationships and contributes to the overall well-being and development of children and teens.



Wild Heart Ranch

JANUARY GENEROSITY RECIPIENT

Nestled in Claremore, in Northeast Oklahoma, Wild Heart Ranch stands as a beacon of hope for wildlife in distress. This State and Federally licensed rehabilitation facility plays a vital role in providing orphan support, injury treatment, and disease recovery for all species of wildlife. At Wild Heart Ranch, individualized care is provided to the wildlife, tailored to each animal's needs and stress tendencies.

The facility is a stable and capable place where wild animals receive professional medical and supportive care until they can be released back into the wild. With the completion of their 100-acre facility in spring 2023, Wild Heart Ranch secured a debt-free future for its critical mission.

Their credo echoes a commitment to compassion and providing a haven for those in need. The completion of care is celebrated by the release of healthy animals back into the wild.

Join us in supporting Wild Heart Ranch this January, as they continue their mission to nurture and rehabilitate our native wildlife. Your involvement, whether through dropping off animals, supplies, donations, or volunteering, contributes to the success of this essential endeavor.

Thank you for being a part of our community's commitment to compassion and coexistence with the wildlife that shares our world.



Donate
Volunteer



MESSAGE FROM THE CARE TEAM

vol-un-teer; a person who freely offers to take part in an enterprise or undertake a task.

As we begin a new calendar year, we want to spotlight Rebecca Jones along with her husband, Ken. They were married at Hope some years ago. They have been longtime members and given a great deal of their time to projects. Over the years, they led the O.W.L. (Our Whole Lives) program for our children, which taught age-appropriate sexual wellness education. Rebecca spent many years on the Finance Committee and as our Accountant. Ken grilled many hot dogs and hamburgers for church events through the years and continues to greet visitors and members for Sunday service along with ushering and donation collection duties.

Rebecca has most recently held the position of President of the Board of Trustees. She managed that position during the Covid-19 pandemic. She met so many challenges and she and the Board guided us through the crisis. Her leadership and communication skills greatly support our congregation. Ken has led the Stewardship Committee, also known as the Pledge Drive over the years and currently shares the task of opening the church for event access. We're grateful to Rebecca and Ken for making themselves available to support Hope church. Thank you both for all your contributions!





Clé et Cœur
Mixed Media on Watercolour Paper
9"X12"
Lenny Hope



HOLIDAY HAPPENINGS





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: 6:30PM, Tuesday, January 16th
- Board of Trustees: 7:00 PM, Tuesday, January 23rd

● 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.

- Women of Hope: 6:00 PM, Thursday, January 4th
- Taking Down the Greens: 10:00 AM, Saturday, January 6th
- Stone Soup Sunday: 12:00 PM, Sunday, January 14th
- Breakfast on the Hill: 12:00 PM, Sunday, January 28th
- Sundays: Children and Youth Religious Education: 9:45 AM, Adult Forum: 10:00 AM, Sunday Service: 11:00 AM

● 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 for specific dates.

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 14th; between 9:00 AM and 4:30 PM Tuesday - Friday, or from 2:00 to 4:00 PM on Saturday, January 20th.



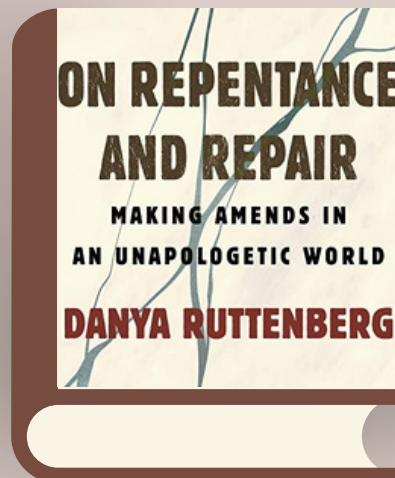
JANUARY EVENTS



HAPPY
BIRTHDAY

DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

Noel Scott - January 1st
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 Stewart - January 25th
Rebecca Jones - January 26th
Barbara Witt - January 26th
James Donovan - January 26th
Joan Bjornsgaard - January 27th
Cynthia Heifner - January 28th



UU Common Read 2024

When we do a UU Common read together, we share in reflection, learning, and action. This year's common read book is "On Repentance and Repair: Making Amends in an Unapologetic World" by Danya Ruttenberg.



January Adult Forum Topics

January 7th: A speaker from Wild Heart Ranch, our Generosity Recipient for January, will be visiting Hope.
January 14th: A presentation by ACTION.
January 21st: "Building the World We Dream About, Workshop 1," a Unitarian Universalist Association Tapestry of Faith curriculum led by Vanessa Self
January 28th: Breakfast on the Hill





ABOUT HOPE CHURCH

HOPE'S MINISTER

Rev. Justin M. McCreary

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

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. 918-481-0999, x2.

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-3:00 PM Tuesdays through Fridays. 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.

HOPE'S STAFF

Eve Bjornsgaard

Worship Tech Coordinator

Morgen Cavanah

Church Administrator

Lenny Hope

Assistant Director of Children and Youth Religious Education

Elizabeth Obal

Church Accountant

Christy Stalcup

Music Director

Tennille Wilson

Director of Religious Education

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2023-2024 BOARD OF TRUSTEES

James Donovan, President

David Tracy, President Elect

Rebecca Jones, Past-President

Richard Eagleton, Vice President of Finance and Planning

Mary Baird, Vice President of Programs

Gail Hawk, Secretary

Cynthia Heifner, Treasurer

Bruce Luria, Trustee

Vanessa Self, Trustee

