

# FOCUS

2025

# JANUARY

# STORY





## JANUARY AT HOPE

As we welcome the new year, Hope Unitarian Church invites everyone to come together for moments of fellowship, learning, and community. On Saturday, January 4th, at 10:00 AM, we will gather for the annual Taking Down the Greens event. This is a time to pack away the holiday decorations and reflect on the joy they brought during the season.

Later in the month, don't miss the warmth and connection of Stone Soup Sunday on January 12th at 12:00 PM. This cherished tradition invites us to share a communal meal, where everyone contributes to create something nourishing and meaningful. It's a reminder of the abundance we can create together when each person adds their unique ingredient.

For those seeking to deepen their understanding of Unitarian Universalism, our Roots Class will meet on Thursdays, January 9th, 16th, and 23rd, at 7:00 PM. This three-part series is an opportunity to explore the history, values, and beliefs of our faith tradition while connecting with others on a similar journey. Whether you're new to Hope or looking to strengthen your connection, Roots Class offers a meaningful path to engage.

Finally, on Sunday, January 26th, at 10:00 AM, join us for Breakfast on the Hill. This gathering offers a delicious way to start the day with good food and great company. These events are just a few of the ways we celebrate community at Hope. We look forward to seeing you there!



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# REFLECTIONS FROM THE MINISTER

## A REFLECTION ON THE STORIES WE TELL

I think the stories we choose to tell are often a reflection of ourselves. Our human family has been telling these stories for as long as we've had cognition. Whether we were sitting around the fire relaying stories of the hunt or sitting over a table with a glass of tea relaying the story of a symphony. Of course, there is a wide range of venues in between, like the pub or the church. We tell stories that make us laugh, cry, and dream. Our stories are set to inspire us or help us face the sadness that often comes with life.

The theme for the month of July is *Story*, and I will be honest, I am not yet sure how to convert that theme into sermons. But if I consider my past story, I know that not knowing how the story will turn out is no reason to feel fear; it is simply part of the journey. What I know is that, over and over again, I have been able to convert the theme into a sermon—a sermon that tells the story of humanity, a reflection of our journey together. Because remember, the stories we choose to tell are often a reflection of ourselves.

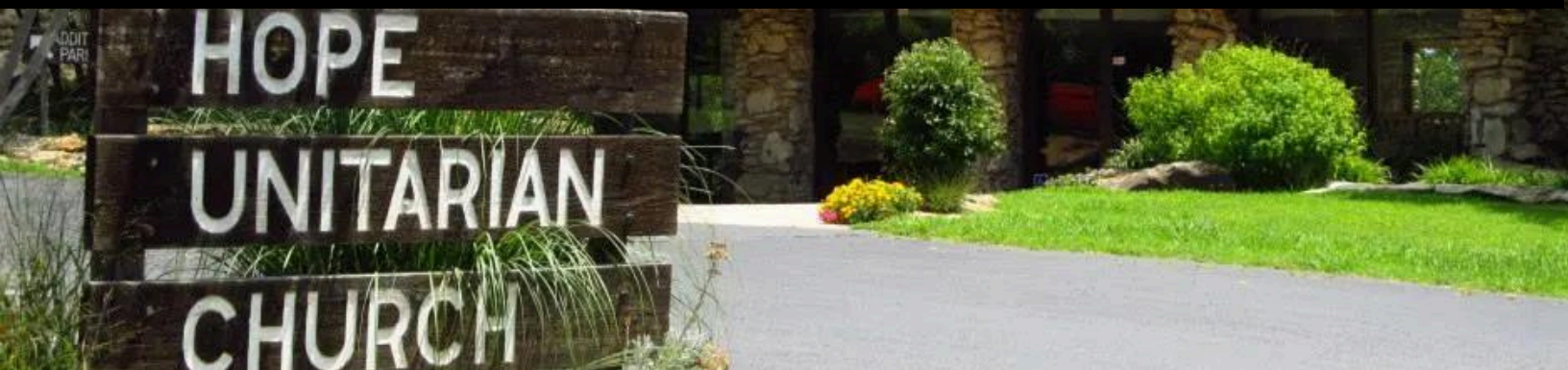
Our stories are a lesson in becoming and often a reason to hope. Because no matter the story, what we can learn from the story is that we have survived yet another day to come together in love for each other, ever relaying the lives we lead. As human beings, we will curate our stories until the final day when we are no more. And in telling our stories, even the sad ones, we can be reminded that we have reason to hope and a power greater than our most difficult days. Because humans are a race of survivors, and our stories are the proof.



**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.**





# MacArthur Elementary School

## JANUARY GENEROSITY RECIPIENT

This month, we are proud to support MacArthur Elementary School as our chosen charity, recognizing the incredible work they do to foster excellence and provide opportunities for their students.

MacArthur's mission is to cultivate lifelong learners who thrive both academically and socially, equipped with the critical thinking and problem-solving skills necessary for success. Their inclusive approach ensures that every student, regardless of their circumstances, is given the tools and encouragement to reach their full potential. One of MacArthur's standout programs is the 21st Century Continued Learning Club, made possible through a grant from Youth at Heart. This free after-school initiative offers homework help, tutoring, and engaging activities like gardening and bike club. Students also receive a light meal, ensuring their nutritional needs are met.

Through the Reading Partners program, community volunteers work one-on-one with children to strengthen literacy skills, and additional partnerships provide food baskets, backpacks, and other essentials to families in need. These efforts embody the school's commitment to not just academic success, but the well-being of their entire community. MacArthur is also a Positive Behavior Intervention Support school, where the focus is on recognizing and uplifting positive actions. Students are rewarded for good behavior and attendance with weekly "paychecks" they can spend on exciting incentives, such as store items and special privileges. Their educators work tirelessly to deliver a rigorous curriculum, supported by professional development that enhances their teaching methods and creates meaningful learning experiences for all students. By supporting MacArthur this month, we can help them continue their vital work and make a lasting difference in the lives of these young learners.







## Story by Rachel Hay

This month's theme is Story. It's a word that is in the front of my mind as we close the year with winter traditions and turn the page on the New Year.

Spending the fall season downstairs with the children brought back so many memories of my own story growing up UU. I remember scooting between all of the tall adults to get to the winter treats after church and thinking, "Who are all these old people that smile at me, and why do they all look the same?" Now I giggle to myself watching our youth weaving and waving on their way to cookies every Sunday morning.

I watched the children fidgeting and crafting at Sing Noel and remembered "going upstairs" in my childhood church and counting the minutes until I could go back down to play with my friends! Despite their impatience, I know that the littles were entranced with the Christmas tree and will carry the image of the decorations and sounds with them.

I remember growing into going upstairs, leading services with my peers in high school, and later founding a UU community at Oklahoma State. Now I come to church as a mother, seeing everything my UU communities have given me, and I want that for my own children.

All of these tiny moments string together to make the story of a life. When we make a story together, we see the humor and humanity in our community. The stories we share with each other each week, the traditions we keep, have woven a beautiful tapestry of memory that I treasure.

What a delight it is to guide our children in writing their own stories and growing their beautiful hearts.





# GET TO KNOW

## NIA DARRINGTON-STOKES

Our new Director of Religious Education, Nia Darrington-Stokes is a graduate of the University of Oklahoma, with her Master's Degree in Human Relations. She has advanced experience in working with children and their families in developing skills that assist them in learning appropriate conflict resolution skills and finding ways to work cooperatively to strengthen their relationship . Nia has work experience in many different settings , including Community Based Treatment . When working with all populations ,Nia uses a strength-based centered approach when interacting with others. using her experience as a Wellness and Life Coach to help others develop their goals while using the 8 dimensions of wellness.

Nia has a passion for helping others reach their full potential and believes everyone should have a safe and confidential place to work through life's difficulties. Nia uses varied approaches to help individuals meet their goals. She draws from both her educational background and lived experience to help others meet their goals and live up to their full potential. while helping them draw on their strengths .

Concentrating on the skills she has honed in child development, psychology and human relations, she is determined to help those she serves unlock their passion and live their life with purpose.



## MEET YOUR STAFF

- **What is your favorite color?** My favorite colors are different shades of green and maroon!
- **Do you have a favorite song, if so what is it?** We win!
- **What was your favorite childhood toy?**Curious George
- **Do you have any hobbies, if so what?** I like reading and spending time with my family !
- **What did you want to be when you grew up?** A teacher.
- **Star Sign/other horological sign you identify with?** Gemini
- **Favorite food/drink or dream meal?** Steak ,baked potato and salad or green beans
- **If you had an unlimited budget, what room would you put in your house/mansion?** Library
- **What clothing item have you kept the longest?** It's an accessory and it's a Coach handbag I got in highschool.
- **Best tree/bit of nature in your life?** Daylilly's brought from my inlaws yard in Michigan!







# 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: 6:00 PM, Tuesday, January 21st.
- Board of Trustees: 7:00 PM, Tuesday, January 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.

Women of Hope: Thursday, January 2nd, 6:00 PM.

Taking Down the Greens: Saturday, January 4th, 10:00 AM

Roots Class: Thursday January 9th, 16th, and 23rd, 7:00 PM

Stone Soup Sunday: Sunday, January 12th, 12:00 PM.

Game Night: Thursday, January 16th, 6:00 PM

Feed the Homeless: Saturday, January 18th, 5:00 PM

Breakfast on the Hill: Sunday, January 26th, 2025 10:00 AM.

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](http://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, or Tuesday thru Friday from 9AM-3PM.

This Month's Cereal Sunday will be on January 12th





# JANUARY EVENTS

## Happy Birthday!

### January Birthdays

Noel Scott - 1  
Ben Hay - 3  
William Saylor - 4  
Megan Dennison - 4  
Pat McGinley - 8  
Lenny Hope - 11  
Larry Vandiver - 12  
Elke Goodman - 14  
Victoria Clark - 15  
Candy Sipes - 23  
Jay D. Stewart - 25  
Rebecca Jones - 26  
Barbara Witt - 26  
James Donovan - 26  
Cynthia Heifner - 28



## AUTHENTIC SELVES

Celebrating Trans and Nonbinary  
People and Their Families



### UU Common Read 2024-2025

When we do a UU Common read together, we share in reflection, learning, and action. This year's common read book is "Authentic Selves: Celebrating Trans and Nonbinary People and Their Families" edited by Peggie Gillespie

### January Adult Forum Topics

Jan 5: Generosity Recipient - MacArthur Elementary  
Jan 12: Share favorite tips of the trade—and learn some new ones.  
January is a great time to share our favorite tips of the trade and also to learn some new ones. Tips of the trade are the shortcuts or other quick, effective ways of doing tasks that make important differences. During this Adult Forum, we'll share tips that can make huge differences in managing our time, space, and relationships. Please bring your favorite tips and also areas where you'd like the tasks to be easier. Led by Cathy Sleezer  
Jan 19: Rev. James Reeb & Violet Liuzzo, Unitarian Universalist Civil Rights Activists  
Jan 26: Breakfast on the Hill





# HOPE BANNED & CHALLENGED BOOK CLUB

Hope Banned & Challenged Book Club where we explore  
and discuss literature that has faced censorship and controversy.

Together,

we delve into the themes, societal impacts, and reasons behind the  
challenges to these important works. You are welcome to join the  
discussions even if you haven't read the books.

Step 1: Purchase the book from a bookseller or borrow it from a  
library.

Step 2: Read and think about the book.

Step 3: Discuss the book at Hope on a Sunday morning at 10am.

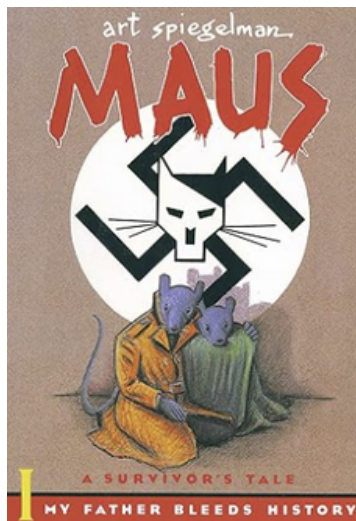
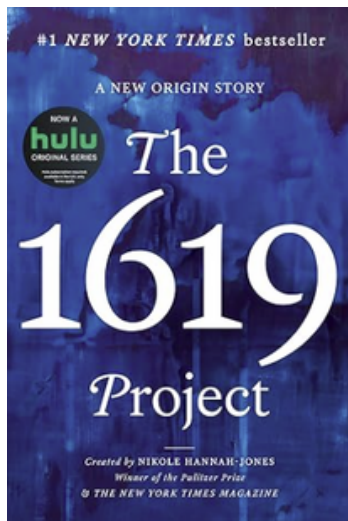
## Upcoming Book Discussions

February 9, 2025: The 1619 Project: A New Origin Story by  
Nikole Hannah-Jones (Black History Month)

April 13, 2025: Maus by Art Spiegelman

June 8, 2025: Are You There, God? It's Me, Margaret  
by Judy Blume

For more information, contact James Donovan at  
[tulsauus@yahoo.com](mailto:tulsauus@yahoo.com)











## 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](mailto: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

**Justin McCreary**

Minister

**Nia Darrington-Stokes**

Director of Religious Education

**Morgen Fields**

Church Administrator

**Rachel Hay**

Interim Lead Teacher

**Elizabeth Obal**

Church Accountant

**Christy Stalcup**

Music Director

### CONTACT US

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

### 2024-2025 BOARD OF TRUSTEES

**David Tracy**, President

**Vanessa Self**, President Elect

**James Donovan**, Past-President

**Jeff Dossett**, Vice President of Finance and Planning

**Mary Baird**, Vice President of Programs

**Christy Chesnut Levine**, Secretary

**Cynthia Heifner**, Treasurer

**Rick Eagleton**, Trustee

**Carol Young**, Trustee

