

# FOCUS JANUARY 2026



## PRACTICING RESISTANCE

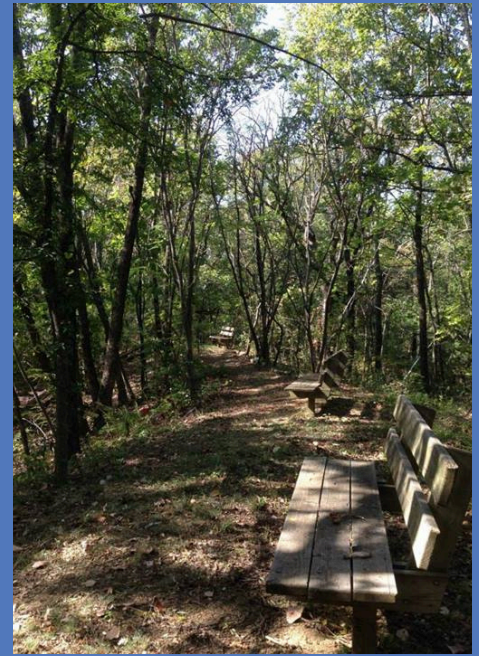


# JANUARY AT HOPE

January at Hope Unitarian Church offers a full calendar of opportunities for connection, service, and shared time together. One of the upcoming gatherings is Breakfast on the Hill on Sunday, January 25 at 10 a.m. This informal meal creates space for conversation and connection before the day's activities and is open to anyone who would like to attend. The focus is simply on being together and starting the morning in community.

Later in the month, the Chili Cook-Off on Saturday, January 31 provides another opportunity to gather, mixed with a bit of competition. Members are encouraged to consider entering a chili, regardless of experience level. A wide range of entries helps make the event successful, and participation can be as simple as bringing a favorite recipe to share. Those who prefer not to cook are still encouraged to attend, taste, and take part in the evening's conversation and fellowship.

In addition to these gatherings, January includes the continuation of Hope's regular meetings, service opportunities, and social events throughout the month. Together, these activities reflect the many ways people contribute their time and energy to sustain connection and community at Hope as the new year begins.



## IN THIS ISSUE

REFLECTIONS FROM  
THE MINISTER

GENEROSITY RECIPIENT

JANUARY EVENTS

ABOUT HOPE CHURCH





## **SOME THOUGHTS ON RESISTANCE BY REV JUSTIN M. MCCREARY**

I attend an interfaith vigil monthly at rotating churches in the Tulsa Area. We gather in prayer and share our faith together in support of the many immigrant families in this city that are now afraid to leave their homes in fear that they will be detained by immigration enforcement. I can't imagine what it is like in the affected homes. Can you imagine staying locked in your home because of fear? Yet this is the truth that many people are facing in the United States of America. It makes me realize how privileged I am to have been born in this country, and how important it is that those of us with that privilege use it to speak out for others.

We begin each vigil with the same poem by Martin Niemoller.

First they came for the Communists  
And I did not speak out  
Because I was not a Communist  
Then they came for the Socialists  
And I did not speak out  
Because I was not a Socialist  
Then they came for the trade unionists  
And I did not speak out  
Because I was not a trade unionist  
Then they came for the Jews  
And I did not speak out  
Because I was not a Jew  
Then they came for me  
And there was no one left  
To speak out for me

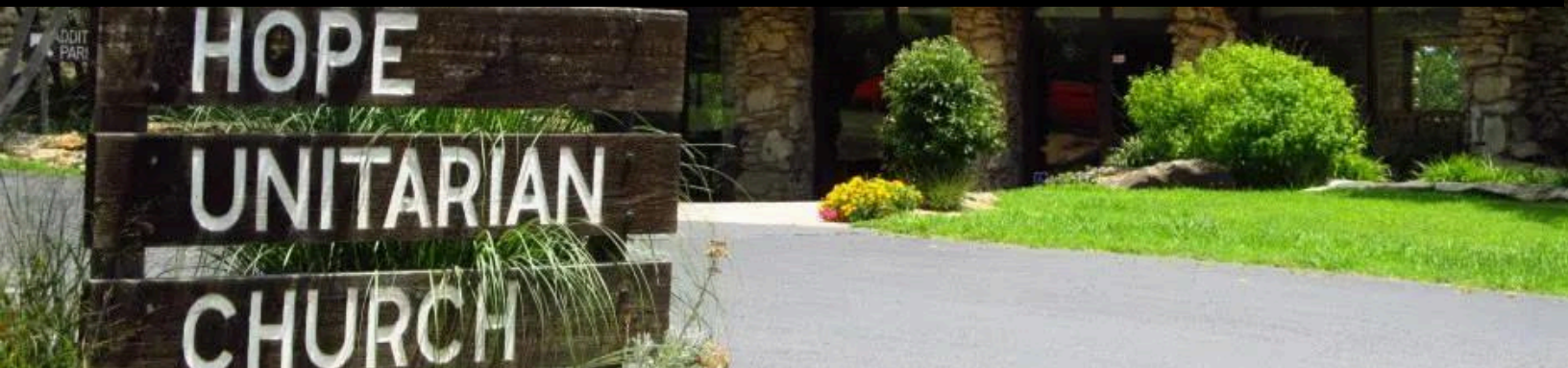
This poem is a reminder that even though we are separate we live interdependent lives. What we say and do affects others in different ways. The fact that we are not alone can provide both comfort and encouragement to use our privilege to speak out, not just because it is right but because we are connected, and what can happen to one can always happen to another.



**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.**





# Practicing Resistance: A Unitarian Universalist Call to Courage and Care by Nia Darrington-Stokes

When thinking about practicing, resistance I am reminded it is woven into my faith, carried forward by myself and those who refused to accept injustice as inevitable and who believed deeply in the inherent worth and dignity of every person. To practice resistance, as UU's, is to live one's values aloud in a world that often pressures us into silence.

Resistance begins with conscience. The first principle calls us to affirm the inherent worth and dignity of all people, yet we live in a time when that worth is regularly denied through policy, through systems, and through everyday interactions. Practicing resistance means noticing where dignity is being eroded and choosing to respond with courage rather than comfort.

For me, resistance is not abstract. It is personal.

As an African American woman, I practice resistance every day simply by showing up as my full self. I resist when I speak clearly and confidently in spaces where my voice is questioned or minimized. I resist when I set boundaries in a culture that expects Black women to carry more, give more, and endure more without rest or recognition. I resist when I choose softness and care in a world that too often demands toughness as proof of worth.

There are moments quiet ones when resistance looks like pausing before responding to a microaggression, weighing the cost of speaking up against the cost of staying silent. Both require courage. There are days when resistance is advocating for my child, my family, or my community, knowing that stereotypes may shape how my concern is received. In these moments, resistance becomes an act of faith: faith that truth matters, that justice is possible, and that love is stronger than fear.

The UU commitment to justice, equity, and compassion in human relations calls us to this kind of resistance not rooted in rage alone but grounded in care.

We resist not because we are hardened, but because we are deeply tender. We resist because we love our communities too much to allow harm to go unnamed.

Practicing resistance also means refusing isolation. Our sixth principle reminds us that the goal of world community requires peace, liberty, and justice for all. Resistance flourishes in relationship. When we stand together across race, identity, ability, and experience we disrupt systems that depend on division. Community becomes both refuge and fuel.

For African American women especially, resistance must include rest. Audre Lorde reminded us that caring for ourselves is not self-indulgence; it is self-preservation. In today's climate, choosing rest, joy, and healing is itself an act of resistance. It is a refusal to be consumed by the very forces we are working to dismantle.

As UUs, we draw strength not from creed, but from covenant. We promise one another that we will show up with honesty, compassion, and accountability. Practicing resistance means renewing that covenant repeatedly especially when it is uncomfortable.

In this moment in history, courage alone is not enough. We must pair it with care. Care for our bodies. Care for our spirits. Care for one another. Resistance practiced without care becomes brittle; care practiced without resistance becomes complacent. Together, they form a faithful response to a hurting world.

To practice resistance today is to choose love as an action. It is to speak, to rest, to organize, to protect, and to hope. It is to believe against all evidence to the contrary that a more just and compassionate world is still possible, and that our lives, lived with intention, help bring it into being.





# Lend a Hand

## JANUARY GENEROSITY RECIPIENT

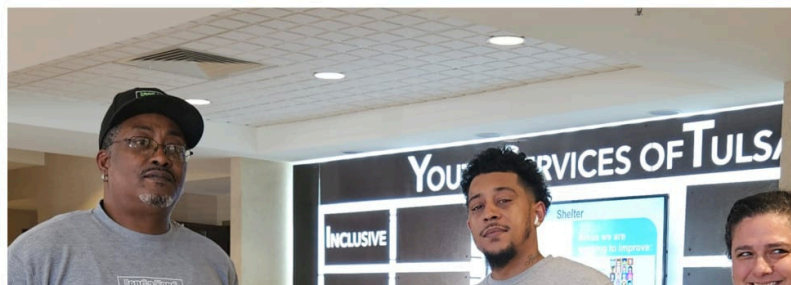
Lend A Hand Community Action Network Foundation is quietly addressing a critical but often overlooked need in Tulsa County: access to basic personal hygiene. Founded in 2021 as a registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit, the organization serves unhoused individuals, at-risk students, young adults, and senior citizens by providing essential supplies that help restore dignity and remove barriers to daily life. At its core, LendAHandCAN's work recognizes that something as simple as clean socks, soap, or a toothbrush can have a profound impact on health, confidence, and connection to community.

Through a set of thoughtfully designed programs, the foundation meets people where they are. The About That Action program distributes hygiene bags to unhoused neighbors, each filled with everyday necessities and a small gift card that helps provide access to restroom facilities. During the winter months, the I See You program expands that support with survival backpacks that include hygiene items alongside cold-weather gear intended to prevent hypothermia and other life-threatening conditions. These efforts are not just about supplies, but about acknowledging the humanity of people who are too often invisible.

LendAHandCAN also focuses on populations whose needs can be hidden in plain sight. The Suds for Success program provides hygiene resources to youth, students, and young adults ages 18 to 24, helping reduce obstacles that can interfere with education and access to services. In addition, the Senior Hygiene program supports older adults receiving Meals on Wheels and similar services, ensuring that seniors living on fixed incomes are not forced to choose between basic necessities. While much of the foundation's work centers on Tulsa County, its reach reflects a broader commitment to caring for vulnerable communities wherever help is needed.

Beyond the distribution of supplies, LendAHandCAN emphasizes personal connection and community presence. Through mobile outreach, volunteer engagement, and participation in community events, the organization builds relationships rooted in respect and compassion. Each interaction—whether handing someone a hygiene bag or speaking with supporters at a local event—reinforces the foundation's guiding belief: restoring dignity, one hand at a time, can strengthen the entire community.

## Donate





# ACTION AS INACTION AND RESISTANCE

## BY ELIZABETH OBAL

My eternal question, when confronted with a topic is “define that term for me?” What is resistance? I feel it has a kaleidoscoping depth of meanings.

Resistance to me is difficulty, friction, the pull against effort. I immediately think of physical effort, of trying to heave something, like a rope, and it being hard to do. The resistance can be from the size of the object, the weight of it, or the shape, or how it’s wedged in another thing.

But resistance, in modern parlance, is more political. It’s providing drag against authority, against laws, lawmakers, or enforcers of policies that we disagree with. There are many ways to do this: speaking up, openly watching the process, creating barriers, supporting fundraisers, showing up to the polls and voting for or voting against.

I love the more creative versions of this: Flooding report lines with bad information; putting on drag shows; breaking stupid rules that cannot be enforced, like teaching certain topics in schools.

You can mindlessly resist authority, but to do it effectively means knowing what the rules are in order to subvert them and use them to your own advantage. There’s a type of resistance that unions use called “working to rule”, where you do the minimum as described for your job and nothing more. Imagine how much harder it would be for parents if public school teachers worked to rule.

There are more silent ways to do things as well: insisting every “I” be dotted and “T” be crossed, as it were, if the opponent wants to engage bureaucracy. Playing dumb and doing a bad job when given bad orders, or nothing at all. Going on strike. I keep thinking of a toddler going limp, letting gravity provide the resistance, rather than their muscles. Sometimes doing nothing is resistance.

Resistance, personally, can be turning away from the maelstrom of information that social media presents, and actively working on your mental and physical health. Being stressed all the time is bad for the body and brain. Seeking joy and distraction rather than doomscrolling is resisting the despair that is offered every moment for us to consume.

Having a good life, when you’re a person that is systemically being hated and erased, is resistance. Resting when the system wants you overworked is resistance.

It might be a privilege unearned to be able to look away, but it’s also necessary. Resist how you can. I certainly am.







# 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:

Tuesday, January 20th - 7pm – Finance Committee Meeting

Tuesday, January 27<sup>th</sup> - 7 PM - Board of Trustees Meeting

## ● 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.

Tuesday, January 13<sup>th</sup> - 7 PM - Leadership Council Meeting

Thursday, January 15<sup>th</sup> - 6:30 PM - Game Night

Saturday January 17<sup>th</sup> - 2 PM Prep | 5 PM Serve - Feed the Homeless

Wednesday, January 21<sup>st</sup> - 11:30 AM - Lunch Bunch

Sunday, January 25<sup>th</sup> - 10 AM - Breakfast on the Hill

Saturday, January 31<sup>st</sup> - Chili Cook-Off

## ● Log Cabin Rentals

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

· 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 November 7th.



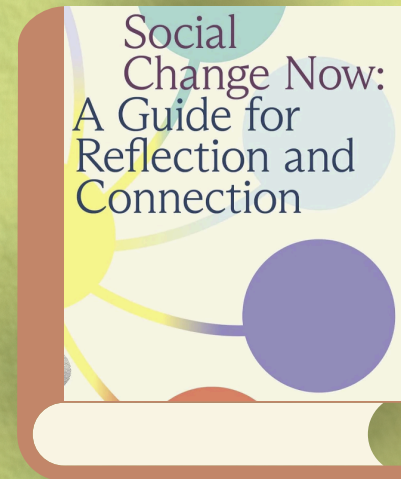


# JANUARY EVENTS

## Happy Birthday!

### January Birthdays

Ben Hay - 3  
Megan Dennison - 4  
Pat McGinley - 8  
Larry Vandiver - 12  
Elke Goodman - 14  
Rev. Justin McCreary - 18  
Jay Stewart - 25  
Rebecca Jones - 26  
Barbara Witt - 26  
James Donovan - 26  
Cynthia Heifner - 28



### UU Common Read 2025-2026

When we do a UU Common read together, we share in reflection, learning, and action. This year's common read book is "Social Change Now: A Guide for Reflection and Connection" by Deepa Iyer

### January Adult Forums

January 4th: Generosity Recipient - Lend a Hand

January 11<sup>th</sup>: Discussion Led by Cathy Sleezer

January 18<sup>th</sup>: UUs & the Civil Rights Movement led by James Donovan

January 25<sup>th</sup>: 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](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 Cavanah**

Church Administrator

**Rachel Hay**

Lead Teacher

**Elizabeth Obal**

Church Accountant

**Christy Stalcup**

Music Director

### CONTACT US

Hope Unitarian Church

8432 South Sheridan Road

Tulsa, OK 74133

Mailing address:

PO Box 35284 Tulsa, OK 74153-0284

918-481-0999

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

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

### 2025-2026 BOARD OF TRUSTEES

**Vanessa Self**, President

**Jeff Dossett**, President Elect

**David Tracy**, Past-President

**Rebecca Jones**, Vice President of Finance and Planning

**Gail Hawk**, Vice President of Programs

**Christy Chesnut Levine**, Secretary

Vacant Position Treasurer

**Carol Young**, Trustee

**Gail Nagengast**, Trustee

