



**FOCUS
MARCH
2026**

**PAYING
ATTENTION**

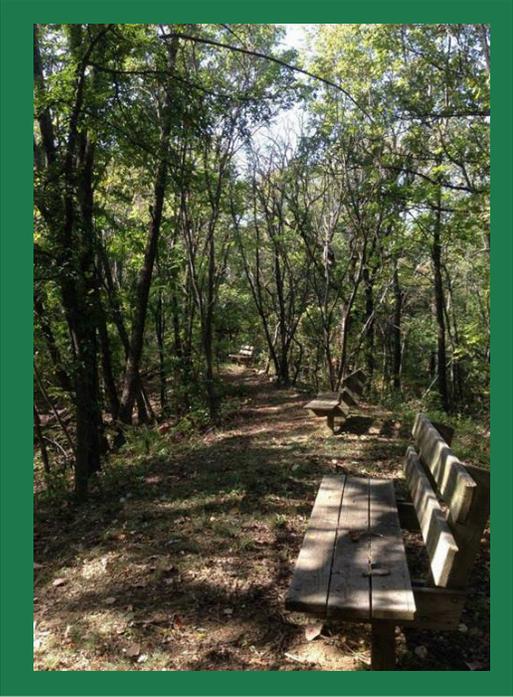


MARCH AT HOPE

March is full of connection, celebration, and shared purpose at Hope, and we invite you to be part of it all. We begin the month with our International Women’s Day Service on Sunday, March 8, honoring women’s voices, leadership, and resilience.

Community and fun take center stage mid-month with our Chili Cookoff & Bingo on Saturday, March 14 at 6 PM—a relaxed evening of good food, friendly competition, and laughter. The very next morning, Sunday, March 15, we launch our Pledge Drive, a moment to come together in gratitude and recommitment as we support the ministries and programs that sustain our shared values.

We continue celebrating Women’s History Month with a special service and luncheon on Sunday, March 22, followed by one more opportunity to gather in fellowship at Breakfast on the Hill with a Board led service on Sunday, March 29 at 10 AM. Whether you come to one event or all of them, March offers many ways to connect, contribute, and celebrate our community.



IN THIS ISSUE
REFLECTIONS FROM THE MINISTER
GENEROSITY RECIPIENT
FEBRUARY EVENTS
ABOUT HOPE CHURCH

UNITED *in* HOPE

2026-2027 PLEDGE DRIVE



SAVE THE DATES:

Sunday, March 15th - Pledge Drive Kickoff!

Sunday, March 29th - Board Led Service

Sunday, April 12th - Celebration Sunday
& Hootenanny

PAYING ATTENTION BY REV JUSTIN M. MCCREARY

Sometime in the first century BCE, Pliny the Elder, in his book *Natural History*, wrote regarding Ostriches that “They have the marvelous property of being able to digest every substance without distinction, but their stupidity is no less remarkable; for although the rest of their body is so large, they imagine, when they have thrust their head and neck into a bush, that the whole of the body is concealed.” In our modern world we know for a fact that this isn't the case; the Ostrich is not so stupid that it assumes they are invisible if they thrust their head and neck into a bush. However, this idea led to the common modern phrase, “To bury one’s head in the sand.” There is little doubt, dear readers, that I can assume at some point you have most likely heard this phrase. At least this phrase or an associated vulgar phrase involving another dark place where someone can put their head. But for anyone who doesn't yet know, “Bury ones head in the sand,” means to ignore what is obvious around us. It invokes a silly image that represents an unwillingness to engage with the world around us.

It can be tempting, when we consider the cultural landscape around us, to look for some dark place to bury our heads, no matter how silly it might look. In fact, the silliness might even encourage us to consider the opportunity, but as Unitarian Universalists we know that as comforting as it might be to ignore the geopolitical context in our country and in our world, our calling to justice and equity would penetrate any insulation encapsulating our ears no matter how dark a place we'd found to hide our head.

Over the last few months I've been reflecting on Timothy Snyder's Book *On Tyranny*. The book is organized as a set of lessons we can embrace as a justice-centered people working to protect our democracy. Many of the lessons can be broken down into active themes that provide a template for understanding the whole book. One theme that pops up over and over again is *Paying Attention*. He might tell us “Be reflective,” “believe in truth,” “investigate,” “make eye contact,” “learn from peers,” or to “listen for dangerous words.” The ideas all require us to pay attention. Attentiveness to our surroundings is an early step in preparing for difficult times. We might find out, when we pay attention, who we can trust with our heart and who we can *conspire* with as we engage in our work of justice.



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 to schedule an appointment to meet in person or via Zoom. If your need is urgent, call him at 918-481-0999, x2.



Paying Attention: A Sacred and Radical Practice

by Nia Darrington-Stokes, Director of Religious Education

In a world that constantly pulls at our focus, paying attention has become both a spiritual discipline and a quiet act of resistance. Notifications buzz, schedules crowd our calendars, and urgency masquerades as importance. Yet the simple, intentional act of paying attention to ourselves, to one another, and to the world around us has the power to transform how we live, love, and lead.

Paying attention begins with presence. It asks us to slow down long enough to notice what is happening, rather than what we fear might happen or what we think should be happening. When we pay attention, we listen not just with our ears, but with our whole bodies. We notice the tightening in our chest when something feels unjust, the spark of joy when a child laughs freely, the exhaustion that signals we have given more than we have received. Attention helps us tell the truth about our lives.

For those who work with children and youth, paying attention is an act of profound care. Children often communicate through behavior long before they have words for their feelings. Paying attention means asking, What is this child trying to tell me? rather than, How do I make this stop? It requires curiosity instead of judgment, compassion instead of control. When we truly pay attention, we begin to see children not as problems to be fixed, but as whole human beings navigating a complex world with the tools they have.

Paying attention is also essential to justice. Injustice thrives when suffering goes unnoticed or is intentionally ignored. When we pay attention, we notice who is missing from the table, whose voices are dismissed, and whose bodies carry the heaviest burdens. Attention opens our eyes to systems that harm and to the small, everyday choices that either reinforce or resist those systems.

It invites us to align our values with our actions.

There is, too, a tenderness in paying attention to ourselves. Many of us have learned to override our own needs in the name of productivity, faithfulness, or survival. Paying attention asks us to honor our limits, to recognize when we are grieving, and to celebrate when we are growing. It reminds us that rest is not a reward for finishing everything, but a necessary part of being human.

Ultimately, paying attention is an expression of love. To pay attention is to say, *You matter. This moment matters.* Whether we are listening to a child's story, noticing the beauty of an ordinary day, or becoming aware of a call to do better, attention roots us in what is real and invites us into deeper connection.

In choosing to pay attention, we choose to live awake, awake to wonder, awake to pain, and awake to possibility. And in that wakefulness, transformation becomes not only possible, but inevitable.

CYRE Survey

Hope's Children and Youth Religious Education Committee, CYRE Director, and staff would like your input! Please take this brief survey to indicate your interests and help us continue to co-create a program that is meaningful and supports Hope's Mission: To create a Welcoming Community that Celebrates Diversity Nurtures Spiritual Growth and works for Justice and Compassion in the World! Parents, Grandparents, Caregivers, Interested Persons, and YOUTH ages 13 and up are all encouraged to take this survey. Please note that this survey mentions the OWL ([Our Whole Lives Lifespan Sexuality Education](#)) and a [Coming of Age Program](#) - Please click the links for more information regarding these programs. [Survey Link](#)



Women in Recovery

MARCH GENEROSITY RECIPIENT

In Tulsa, hope is taking root through Women in Recovery, a program that offers women a different path—one focused on healing rather than incarceration. Operated by Family & Children's Services in partnership with the George Kaiser Family Foundation, this initiative supports women facing long prison sentences with research-based mental health care, substance use treatment, education, job training, and family reunification.

Women are the fastest-growing incarcerated population in the U.S., and Tulsa—like much of Oklahoma—has felt the impact. Women in Recovery addresses the root causes behind incarceration, including trauma, addiction, and poverty, through an intensive year-long outpatient program that builds emotional, social, and economic stability.

The results ripple outward. Mothers are reunited with their children, families are restored, and cycles of intergenerational incarceration are interrupted. The program has been widely recognized for its effectiveness and has contributed to a decline in female incarceration rates in Tulsa—an outcome that benefits the entire community.

At its heart, Women in Recovery is about second chances and shared responsibility. By investing in people and possibility, it reminds us that restoration is not only compassionate—it's transformative.

Donate





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:

Tuesday, March 17th - 7pm – Finance Committee Meeting

Tuesday, March 24th - 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 for the most current schedule of events.

Women of Hope: Thursday, March 5th - 6PM

International Women's Day Service - Sunday, March 8th

Chili Cookoff & Bingo - Saturday, March 14th 6PM

Pledge Drive Kick-off - Sunday, March 15th

Lunch Bunch: Wednesday, March 18th - 11:30 AM

Game Night: Thursday, March 19th - 6:30 PM

Feed the Homeless: Saturday, March 21st

Women's History Month Celebration & Luncheon - Sunday, March 22nd

Hope Happy Hour - Thursday, March 26th 5:30 PM

No King's Day Rally - Saturday, March 28th - 1-3 PM

Sunday, March 29th - Breakfast on the Hill - 10 AM

● 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 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 March 15th.

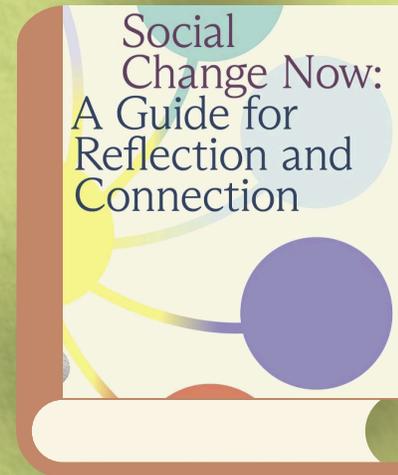


MARCH EVENTS

Happy Birthday!

March Birthdays

Warren Cox - 1
Lora Marschall - 5
Marge Carrison - 7
Austen Rozanski - 8
Jax Bonner - 8
Judy Sims - 10
Angela Reece - 15
Christy Levine - 16
Lavon Boeck - 18
Guy Sims - 18
Diane Dudley - 19
Teresa Keller - 23



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

March Adult Forums

- March 1st: Generosity Recipient, Women in Recovery
- March 8th: On Tyranny Part 2 with Rev. Justin McCreary
- March 15th: Pledge Drive Kickoff with Vanessa Self
- March 22nd: Women's History Month Celebration
- March 29th: 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

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

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

