

A vibrant photograph of a park playground. A large, leafy tree stands in the center, casting shadows on the grass. To the left, a wooden play structure features a green slide and a tunnel. In the middle, a swing set with two swings is visible. To the right, a colorful plastic play structure has a pink slide. The background shows more trees and a clear blue sky.

FOCUS APRIL 2026

**EMBRACING
POSSIBILITY**

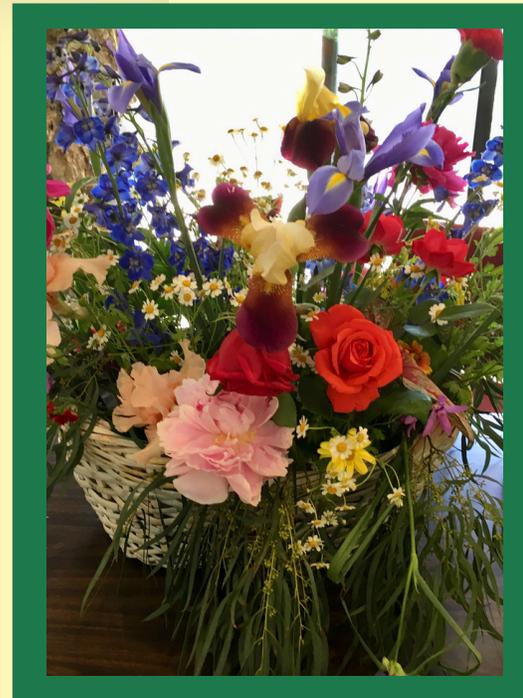


APRIL AT HOPE

Hope Unitarian Church will be offering several opportunities for connection, service, and seasonal celebration throughout the month. In addition to ongoing gatherings, April brings a number of special events that invite participation across the congregation. From hands-on service to social time and shared traditions, these moments highlight the many ways members and friends of Hope can come together in community.

The month begins with a focus on care for our shared space during Gardens & Grounds Cleanup Day on Saturday, April 4th at 9 AM, a chance to help prepare and refresh the church grounds for the season ahead. Later in the month, the spirit of togetherness continues with the Hootenanny on Sunday, April 12th following the service at 12 Noon, offering music, fellowship, and a festive atmosphere for all ages. These gatherings reflect the vibrant and welcoming nature of our community, where participation and shared effort help sustain both our physical environment and our connections with one another.

Earth Day will be marked on Wednesday, April 22nd at 10 AM with the planting of annuals, a meaningful way to honor our commitment to environmental stewardship and the beauty of the natural world surrounding our campus. Alongside these larger seasonal events, there are additional opportunities to engage through groups, meals, and meetings throughout the month. All are welcome to take part in the events listed, and members are encouraged to stay informed of any updates by checking the church calendar online, as schedules may change.



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ABOUT HOPE CHURCH



UNITED *in* HOPE

2026-2027 PLEDGE DRIVE



PLEDGE TODAY!





United in Hope

OUR FUTURE TOGETHER

Dear Hope Unitarian Church Family,

At Hope, we often speak about Investing in a Beloved Community. But what does that look like in practice?

To us, it looks like a puzzle. Each of us holds a unique piece—a different story, a specific talent, or a hand held out in a time of need. When we bring those pieces to the table, we don't just complete a picture; we create a narrative of love and justice that none of us could write alone.

As we look back on 2025 and move into 2026, we are profoundly grateful for the "piece" you have contributed. Whether you joined us for a quiet service or a rowdy Nerf party, you are what makes this church a home.

The Heartbeat of Hope: Our Children & Youth

Our children aren't just the "future" of our church—they are an essential part of our identity right now.

- A Growing Family: Our CYRE program is flourishing, with 12 to 16 children regularly filling our rooms with energy and curiosity.**
- Growing Together: From the laughter at our Nerf Extravaganza and Fall Festival (which welcomed 25 families!) to the quiet pride of a child lighting the chalice, we are building a space where every generation belongs.**
- Faith in Action: Our youth are already leaders. Whether they are assembling cookie bags for our neighbors through "Feed the Homeless" outreach or serving at the Volunteer Luncheon, they are learning that at Hope, love is something we do.**

A Bold Voice for Our Neighbors

Our values don't stop at our front doors. This year, Hope continued to be a courageous presence for advocacy and human rights in Tulsa:

- HERstory & Advocacy: In its inaugural year, our Women's Issues Group hosted "HERstory" hours, tackling vital topics like reproductive healthcare and local democracy.**
- A Community Hub: Our sanctuary was proud to host Indivisible Tulsa County and celebrate Women's Equality Day alongside the City of Tulsa Women's Commission.**
- Organizing for Change: Through our partnership with ACTION, many of you stepped up to learn community organizing and stand in solidarity with our immigrant neighbors through the "Who is My Neighbor" series.**

The Framework of Our Future: Board & Care

While so much of our life happens in the sanctuary, our Board, Minister, Staff, and teams have been working "behind the scenes" to ensure our puzzle has a strong, sustainable frame:

- Strategic Planning: We are mapping priorities for facility renovations, renewing our Welcoming Congregation and Green Sanctuary designations, and updating policy language to ensure we remain good stewards of our planet and our people.**
- Protecting Our Sanctuary: In response to national concerns, the Board designated specific "Private Spaces" to ensure our "Hill" remains a safe haven for religious purposes and immigrant justice. We have also modernized our safety infrastructure, including a new AED, a repaired security system, and CPR/First Aid training for leaders.**
- Professional Growth: Our staff and lay leaders have committed to excellence, attending workshops and the General Assembly to bring fresh, professional insights back to our congregation.**

·A Circle of Care: The world can feel precarious, but you are not alone. Whether you are facing social, political, or personal pressures, our Care Team and Rev. Justin are here to walk with you. This year Rev. Justin, the care team, and many of you stepped up in a big way during the government shut down by contributing to a food drive and by providing direct support to people affected.

Stewardship of Our Sacred Space

We are floored by your generosity toward our physical home. Eighteen members contributed over \$13,175 for maintenance in our end of year fund drive—a massive leap that has allowed us to replace our front glass doors. It's a beautiful reminder that when we care for our space, we make room for more people to find their place here.

Your Piece of the Puzzle: The 2026 Pledge

To sustain this momentum, we must continue Investing in a Beloved Community. A puzzle is only complete when every piece is in place. Your financial pledge is the piece that supports our staff, maintains our "Hill," and funds the programs that turn UU values into reality.

As you consider your pledge for 2026, think of the joy we share—the meals, the music, the activists advocating for democracy, the child holding the flame for the first time, and our honored elders who are the backbone of all we do.

How will you help complete the picture of Hope this year? Please review your annual pledge and give at a level that reflects your commitment to our shared future. Your generosity keeps our beloved community United in Hope.

With deep gratitude and commitment,

**Vanessa Self, President - Stewardship Campaign Co-Chair
Jeff Dossett, President Elect- Stewardship Campaign Co-Chair
Rebecca Jones, VP Finance - Stewardship Campaign**

EMBRACING POSSIBILITY BY REV JUSTIN M. MCCREARY

Welcome to the month of Embracing Possibility.

It occurs to me that embracing possibility sounds a lot like hope, at least it is a part of hope, which drives me deeper into Unitarian Universalist theology, and as I consider our liberal theology in these troubling times, I feel pulled toward the works of James Luther Adams in that he speaks very adeptly within the milieu of authoritarianism.

See, Adams had the opportunity to practice living theology in Germany during the rise of authoritarianism. During that time Adams was living in Germany and attending many of the Confessing Churches, these were churches that opposed the rise of the third Reich, along with Confessing Seminaries that taught in opposition to it. During this time he became friends with the theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer, often traveling and working with people who were leading the way in theological opposition to Nazism.

One of Adam's main tenets, is that revelation is not sealed. In liberal theology as opposed to fundamentalist thought, this means that spiritual truth continues to unfold, it isn't fixed, or bound within the pages of an ancient (or modern) book. This concept is rooted in what Adams called ultimate optimism, or as we like to call it, hope. See, if we believe that truth is still being revealed to us whether through science, philosophy, or theology, then we can know that difficult times are temporary, I find peace in knowing that I do not know everything, and that there are smarter people out there who may not even be born yet that will take humanity to new levels.

Unitarian Universalism at its core is a very hopeful faith, because we can believe that humanity, whether we are gifted so or whether we evolved so is moving forward and that even though we may not be able to, as Theodore Parker put it, calculate the curve of the moral arc of the universe, that it does bend toward justice. In understanding that the sacred is not limited by our past we can then find in our humanity that our fortitude even in hindsight gives us a glimmer of that arc.

For we cannot know the future, but when we continue to embrace possibilities we can rest in the ultimate optimism that is our hope.



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.



Embracing Possibility Together: An Intergenerational Invitation

by Nia Darrington-Stokes, Director of Religious Education

In intergenerational spaces, possibility feels alive. When elders, adults, youth, and children gather, something sacred happens we remember that faith is not passed down in one direction but woven among us. As a religious educator, I have come to understand that embracing possibility is not only a spiritual posture it is a communal practice.

Intergenerational learning invites us to release the idea that wisdom belongs to one age group. Children bring imagination and honesty. Youth bring courage and questioning. Adults bring responsibility and discernment. Elders bring memory and perspective. When these gifts meet, faith becomes dynamic rather than static. Possibility appears not because we agree, but because we listen deeply across difference.

In these shared spaces, questions matter more than answers. A child may ask, *why do we welcome everyone?* An elder may respond with a story of struggle and hope. A youth may challenge the story, asking how welcome is practiced today. Together, we discover that faith is something we shape collectively, informed by lived experience and grounded in shared values.

Embracing possibility intergeneration-ally also means honoring how people learn differently. Some learn through movement and play. Others through reflection, storytelling, or silence. When we design spaces that invite multiple ways of engaging art, conversation, ritual, and service we affirm that everyone belongs. This approach teaches, without words, that difference is not a barrier to community; it is the foundation of it.

Intergenerational learning is especially powerful when we face difficult truths together. Conversations about justice, grief, identity, and hope are richer when held across generations. Elders can name where we have been. Adults can name where we are. Young people can imagine where we might go. Possibility lives in this tension between memory and vision.

As a religious educator, I see intergenerational learning as a spiritual practice of trust. Trust that children can hold complexity. Trust that adults can keep learning. Trust that elders still have room to grow. When we embrace possibility together, we model a faith that is alive, responsive, and rooted in relationship.

Intergenerational learning reminds us that we do not walk this journey alone. We carry one another's stories. We teach one another how to hope, and together, across age and experience, we practice believing that the world and we ourselves can be transformed.



TULSA NATURE CONSERVANCY



APRIL GENEROSITY RECIPIENT

The work of The Nature Conservancy in Oklahoma reflects a long-standing commitment to protecting the state's diverse landscapes, from tallgrass prairies to wooded crosstimbers and rolling canyonlands. Through land acquisition, habitat restoration, and collaborative partnerships, the organization works to conserve natural communities that support native plants, wildlife, and clean water. In the Tulsa area and beyond, this mission is carried out through a network of preserves and conservation initiatives that aim to balance ecological preservation with public awareness and engagement.

Across Oklahoma, preserves such as Pearl Jackson Crosstimbers Preserve and Joseph H. Williams Tallgrass Prairie Preserve showcase the beauty and ecological importance of native ecosystems, offering spaces where conservation efforts can be seen in action. Additional sites like Four Canyon Preserve and the newly acquired Sand Creek Ranch further expand the reach of conservation work, protecting thousands of acres that support biodiversity and environmental resilience. These areas also serve as living laboratories for research, education, and stewardship, helping illustrate the importance of protecting land for future generations.

Beyond land management, The Nature Conservancy engages the community through events, educational opportunities, and donor involvement, inviting individuals to connect with the natural world in meaningful ways. By fostering public understanding and encouraging participation, the organization strengthens its conservation impact while building a broader network of support. Together, these efforts highlight a shared responsibility to care for Oklahoma's natural heritage, ensuring that its landscapes continue to thrive and inspire well into the future.

[Donate](#)

[Volunteer](#)



On the Subject of Obituaries

FROM HOPE CARE TEAM

The Care Team wants to share with you some information and thoughts about Obituaries. Some families may choose not to write an Obituary about a person who has passed. This may be for several reasons, but the most common reason is newspapers charge a fee. For example, Obituaries in the Tulsa World generally start around \$175, with costs varying based on length, photo inclusion, and publication dates, often averaging \$200-\$500. We are including several online free Obituary Websites in this article. The Care Team hopes to present this information and other "End of Life" information in person at the church sometime in the future.

Obituaries can be important because. . . .

- It can pay tribute to the person who has died - acknowledging, honoring and celebrating their life.
- History- It acts as a permanent historical record for future generations. Many people have and will research their family history and want to find out about their ancestors long after they are gone. This has become more important in recent times because so many people are selecting cremation and not having a location or grave marker in a cemetery. Most cemetery markers are part of public information which is available on the internet. To ensure an obituary posted on a free website becomes part of the permanent historical record, post the obituary on websites designed for historical research such as; FamilySearch.org. WikiTree.com. web.archive.org. and FindAGrave.com.
- Writing an obituary can be part of the grieving process.
- Sharing your loss with the community.

When writing an obituary, avoid sensitive personal data for identity theft protection like full birth dates (just say month and year), addresses, SSNs, or mother's maiden names, overly negative or hurtful details, and excessive bragging; instead, focus on key life events, personality traits, and positive impact, while keeping any service details concise.

Here are free places to submit an obituary online. There are others online as well. Some of these require a death certificate or verification of death.

<https://theuswillregistry.org/obituaries-and-death-notices>

<https://beyondthedash.com> (Requires a death certificate)

<https://epilogg.com>

<https://remembered.com/create-a-free-online-obituary>







APRIL 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, April 21st - 7 PM – Finance Committee Meeting

Tuesday, April 28th - 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, April 2nd - 6 PM

Gardens & Grounds Cleanup Day - Saturday, April 4th 9 AM

CPR Testing - Saturday, April 4th - 2PM

Supper Club - Saturday, April 11th

Hootenanny - Sunday, April 12th - 12 Noon

Leadership Council Meeting - Tuesday, April 14th - 7 PM

Hope Lunch Bunch - Wednesday, April 15th - 11:30 AM

Game Night - Thursday, April 16th - 6:30 PM

Feed the Homeless - Saturday, April 18th

Earth Day - Plant Annuals - Wednesday, April 22nd - 10 AM

Hope Happy Hour - Thursday, April 23rd - 6 PM

Charades Party (For Auction Ticket Holders) Friday, April 24th

● 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 April 12th.



APRIL EVENTS

Happy Birthday!

April Birthdays

Eddie Humphreys - 1

Coe McGinley - 2

Carmen Kinsey - 3

Deborah Whittaker - 6

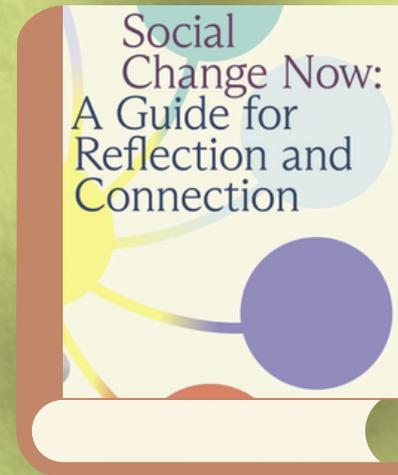
Lizzy Savage - 13

Barbara Delozier - 15

Ali Sheehan - 21

Ella Reiman - 26

John Robinson - 26



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

April Adult Forums

April 5 (Easter): Generosity Recipient, Tulsa Nature Conservancy

April 12: On Tyranny Discussion Part 3 with Rev. Justin*

April 19: Green Sanctuary & Climate Justice for Earth Day with David Tracy

April 26: The Church Budget with Rebecca Jones





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.

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

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.

CONTACT US

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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

