

From the Minister



Advent: Honoring the Art of Waiting

Waiting is not a valued resource these days. It is not seen as a virtue but as an obstacle to progress, to a good life, or even to survival. Yet, having to wait never goes away.

Depending on what is at stake, waiting can be tolerable or seem like an eternity. For example, waiting to get medical test results can be more challenging than the actual outcomes.

At five years old I could not wait for time to move faster so I could be six. I was impatient to open presents, eat my favorite meal, go outside, come inside. Hours dragged on in high school classes, especially in the spring. Even now, time is stretchy with some waits whizzing by and others interminably long.

Advent invites us to wait. Together we reclaim the spirit of Advent (Latin for "coming") since we are a community that celebrates and honors Christmas. We await the birth of a child. Really we get quite a break since Advent is only four weeks and not the typical nine months of a human baby. Yet, Advent cannot be rushed.

Holly W. Whitcomb, in her book *Seven Spiritual Gifts of Waiting*, sees this four-week period that ends on Christmas Eve as going against the cultural grain of the times. We don't like to wait for anything. We expect instant gratification, even in our emotional and spiritual lives. But life is not to be rushed. As Pierre Teilhard de Chardin advised, we need to trust in the slow work of the cosmos. (Chardin said God.) That is what the Israelites did during their long sojourn in the desert and what Christians do during Advent.



Whitcomb's seven topics inspired by waiting are patience, loss of control, living in the present, compassion, gratitude, humility, and trust in life's forces. "Waiting," she says, "is an important guest to honor in the guest house of our humanity." Let's wait together.

With joy,



Rev. Cathey Edwards
Cathey@hopeuu.org

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December
2017

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December Sunday Services

**Sunday Worship
11am - Sanctuary**

**Sunday, December 3
“Waiting on Faith”**

The Rev. Cathey Edwards

Advent is a time to pay attention to waiting. We will explore what it means to wait and how it is important spiritual work.

**Sunday, December 10
Sing Noel!**

Our annual lay-led service filled with music and special readings. It is a time our choir and musicians shine. This year’s theme is “Light in the Midst of Darkness”

**Sunday, December 17
“A Christmas Tale”**

The Rev. Cathey Edwards

We have a Christmas surprise this year as we tell a Christmas story for all.

**Sunday, December 24
at 6:00 pm**

Christmas Eve

Candlelighting Service

The Rev. Cathey Edwards

Our magic, annual evening service filled with carols, candles, readings and community.

**Sunday, December 31
“Burning Bowl:
New Year Celebration”**

The Rev. Cathey Edwards

We symbolically and physically release this ending 2017 with fire, music, and a chance to reflect together on what has been and what we aspire to in 2018.

December Monthly Theme

Faith ¹

Unitarian Universalism deeply values search, ongoing growth and the discovery of new ideas, thoughts and perspectives. Often, we find that our free and responsible search for truth and meaning requires us to leave behind what is familiar, inherited, or traditional. No less a prophet of this movement than William Ellery Channing expressed some of this sentiment when he wrote: “I call that mind free, which resists the bondage of habit, which does not mechanically repeat itself and copy the past, which does not live on old virtue, which does not enslave itself to precise rules, but forgets what is behind, listens for new and higher monitions of conscience, and rejoices to pour in fresh and higher exertions.”

These are brave words, ones that match the brave work of going out, of finding what is new and unfamiliar and of questing for the truth, wherever it may lead. There are times when leaving where we are, and letting go of what has been is necessary for growth, or for justice, or for peace, or for survival. Many of us have come to be Unitarian Universalists by coming out of some other religious tradition, and perhaps leaving it behind. Our faith urges us to seek so far and so wide for meaning that we reach beyond the bounds of what is known and familiar to us. This is the calling that founds new nations and religions, one cherished by Unitarian Universalists and our theological ancestors. But just as there is reason to celebrate letting go, there is also reason to honor holding fast: living with a persistent commitment to something larger than oneself.

Unitarian Universalism is a faith of joiners. If it were not for the more than half of us who have come in by choice made later in life, rather than entering by birth or upbringing, we could not be what we are. But it is not only the bravery to join that sustains this or any other religion: it is also the courage to stay. In our congregations, and amongst ourselves, it is somewhat common to exchange tales of the faith that we left behind in order to become Unitarian Universalists. For some of us, this is an opportunity to reveal, and perhaps to heal wounds from our previous religious lives. What I wish for, and would one day hope to see, are spaces made for those Unitarian Universalists, both “joiners” and “lifers” who have had their hearts broken by this faith and who, despite those wounds, are still here.

¹ Excerpts from “Holding Fast” by Rev. Kelly Weisman Asprooth-Jackson

About Our Monthly Themes

Our monthly themes express Hope Church’s openness to theological exploration. They are not an endorsement of any particular creed or belief. Instead, they provide a monthly opportunity to examine in common a religious doctrine or idea.

Hope Church is a questioning community. It is a safe place to bring doubt and new ideas.



Children and Youth Programs

Susan Spooner, Director, susan@hopeuu.org

CYP Committee Members: Laura Reiman (Chair), Paula Haight, Kerri Vandiver, Ann Lee, Lee Ann Tolle

Childcare is available during all church events, committee meetings and Board meetings. If you need childcare during a church activity, please email childcare@hopeuu.org at least 2 business days before the event.

Religious Education for Children and Youth

Sundays 10:00 am—12:00 pm

Religious education is focused on the theme of the month as well as curriculum designed to help Hope's young ones discover answers to life's big questions. The curriculum includes chapel, religious education about Unitarian Universalism and other faiths, art, nature and outdoor experiences. Parents are always welcome to join their children in our religious exploration.

Coming of Age

A significant event in the life of a Unitarian Universalist (UU) congregation and that of its youth (seventh through twelfth grades) is the Coming of Age program. In the Coming of Age curriculum youth, with the guidance of trusted adults, explore not only what it means to be UU, but what it means to be *who the youth is as in individual person of faith becoming a member of the congregation*. Over the next seven months, youth gather for fun workshops, retreats, and justice projects. With mentors and guides, participants explore what they believe, what they find meaningful, and how to build a spiritual "toolkit" to help them as they face the joys, sorrows, wonders, and challenges of being human. Coming of Age culminates with a rite of passage where youth shares a Credo, a statement of their beliefs and values. Our program will also include a UU pilgrimage to Boston to learn about the origins of our faith as well as a visit to learn more about Unitarian Universalism today. Due to the present size of our youth group, we plan to provide this program every four years, so that every youth will have at least one opportunity to participate during their high school years.

If you are an interested youth, parent, guardian or support a youth, in this endeavor, please come to learn about the curriculum, requirements and cost at 12:30 pm on Sunday, December 3, in the Children & Youth Religious Education wing. Lunch and childcare (for children sixth grade and younger) will be provided. Please RSVP or send questions to susan@hopeuu.org

Congratulations to Matthew!

Congratulations to **Matthew Grove** who has now obtained the rank of Eagle Scout . Matthew was responsible for the building of our outside chapel and labyrinth.

Susan Spooner

Director of Children & Youth Programs

susan@hopeuu.org

Music Notes



“As we enter into the 2017 winter holiday season, Hope’s music program will present our annual “Sing Noel!” service on December 10.

The theme of “Sing Noel!” this year is “Light in the Midst of Darkness!” This service will help center us

during this season through readings, choral anthems, hymns, and special music. We will sing songs that take us from the darkness around us into the light from within, which will then shine brightly to illuminate our world. We can feel inspired to take in the real meaning of this season and to continue to work for love, peace, and justice in our own families and in our communities. The service always ends with the traditional “Peace, Peace/Silent Night,” which after such a musical and reflective journey never fails to touch our hearts.

Our seasonal celebratory journey will continue with our traditional Christmas Eve service on December 24. In spite of a world filled with violence, conflict and uncertainty, we can rest assured of this, according to a famous rabbi: “The world stands upon three things: Upon truth/Upon peace/Upon justice” (Rabban Ben Gamliel). With the light shining from within us, all else will melt away.

Joseph Rivers, Director of Music
joseph.rivers@hopeuu.org

Usher Update

We’ve had some recent usher changes. First, **Gil Saurer** has decided to step down. Thank you for your service, Gil, due to needing some walking assistance. He will be having surgery in the spring. **Wade Ezell** will return in January to rejoin our team. We’re pleased to advise that **Lynn Rivers** and **Michael Simpson** have joined our ushering team, and will begin those duties in January. Therefore, our current list of ushers is as follows:

James Donovan
Wade Ezell
JoAnn Howse
Lynn Rivers
Michael Simpson
Jay Stewart
Brian Tolle

If you see an area during our service where ushers might offer more assistance, please let me know.

Jane Brumley, Head Usher

Adult Forum

Sundays, 10:00 am, in the Sanctuary

December 3 Generosity Sunday

Our guest speaker will be **Marc Bloomingdale**, Meals on Wheels Executive VP and Chief Operating Officer, speaking about the **Veterans Home Repair Project**, our generosity recipient for December

December 10 (In the Log Cabin)

Our guest speaker will be **Tammy Westcott** –from the **Tulsa Courts Programs**, offering rehabilitative alternatives to incarceration.

December 17

Presentation by the **Hope Unitarian Church Foundation**. Come hear more about what the Foundation does and how you can be a part. Some policies have changed. There will be a presentation on planned giving.

December 24

No Adult Forum as no morning service.

December 31—TBA

Please contact **Chris Anrig**, Adult Religious Education Chair, at cmnrig@hotmail.com for additional information.

From the Intern Minister



Hello Hope,

I wish you well this month as you brave the holidays. I will be in Ethiopia for the month, and back at Hope on January 2.

Whether you are traveling, staying home, hosting guests, or going solo for the winter break, I propose we all make short poems or haikus again. Hopefully you gave it a whirl a few months ago. This time, let's try to bring them into the intensity or stress we may feel while waiting in a long line at a store or trying to maneuver tough conversations. Mindfulness is just a moment of awareness away.

Roses are red, violets are blue. Is that more pie?! Yes, I'd love to share it with you!
Lights are everywhere/ Chestnuts, merriment, and kindness/ This is beautiful

Yadenee

Yadene Hailu
Intern Minister

Poinsettias

If you ordered poinsettias, they will be at the church on **Saturday, December 2 and Sunday, December 3.**

You may pick them up on Saturday while we are **Hanging the Greens** in the morning or after Sunday service in Fellowship Hall.



Walking Meditation through the Seasons



December 31, 9:00 am—9:30 am
And last Sunday of each month.

Meet on the deck of Hope Log Cabin
Wear shoes and clothing to match the weather.

For all ages.

Grounding ourselves in our bodies and woods.

Hope Outreach

Generosity Offering

Each Sunday, we give away ALL of the undesignated funds from our Offering. The Outreach Committee chooses organizations that support the mission of Hope Unitarian Church out in our community.

**In November we raised:
\$2,094 for UUA Disaster Relief
Thank you for your generosity.**

Below are the totals raised in previous months:

Month	Organization	\$ Amount
October	Alzheimer's Association	\$1,186.78
September	Street Cats	\$905.00
August	A New Leaf	\$1,036.87

December Generosity Recipient

**Veterans Home
Repair Project
(Meals on Wheels)**



Per a national contract, Tulsa Meals on Wheels partners with the Home Depot Foundation to transform the homes of homebound veterans who are also Meals on Wheels recipients.

In order to help as many clients as possible, Tulsa Meals on Wheels has focused on low-cost safety and security improvements. Safety examples might include installing railings, ramps, or safety bars.

While providing these improvements, Meals on Wheels advises the recipients of a PSO program for families with annual income under \$45,000. PSO will do a review of the home's energy efficiency, and install attic insulation, caulking of windows and doors, and other energy-saving improvements, all at no charge.

To add further significant comfort and cost savings improvements to homes of client veterans, Hope and All Souls Churches have agreed to jointly donate earmarked Generosity funding to enlarge energy-saving scope of this program.

Feed the Homeless Program

Volunteers from Hope prepare and serve a meal for clients at the **Tulsa Day Center for the Homeless** the third Saturday of every month.

Thanks to the following people who helped in **November**.

- Shopper: **Keith Hamilton**
- Friday cooking: **Mary Newman**
- Meal prep and cooking with Team Leader, **Maggie Scott: Eddie Humphreys, Rich Jackson, Lana Larkin, Coe McGinley**
- Serving at the Day Center with team leader, **Anita Ward: Debby Baker, Mary & Matt Baird, Judy & Guy Sims, Janet Nobles.**

We served 103 plates.

**Next Feed the Homeless date is:
Saturday, December 16, 2017
Volunteers Needed!**

2:30 pm at Hope to help cook and prepare food.
5:00 pm at the Tulsa Day Center for the Homeless to help serve the meal.

You can also sign up for the months ahead. Sign up sheet is in the folder on Administrator's desk.



We will be bagging cookies in December! See next page.

CANucopia for Tulsa Day Center for the Homeless

Thanks to everyone who donated food for our canucopia on Sunday the 19th. Mary Newman delivered them to the Day Center last week and they were very gratefully received.

Cereal Sunday Sunday, December 10

Please bring cereal for the homeless. This cereal, along with several gallons of milk, is taken to the **Tulsa Day Center for the Homeless** every month when we prepare their meal. The collection basket is in Fellowship Hall.

Outreach News

Star Tree

Members of the Outreach Committee have put up Hope's Star Tree in the Fellowship Hall. This year we are supporting **Lindsey House**, a nonprofit agency that provides long term shelter and supportive services to single women caring for children. There are 13 women and 17 children currently residing at Lindsey House. Our Star Tree is full of gift items they have requested.

Please take a star or stars from the tree and purchase the gift. Return it by Sunday, December 10' **with the star securely attached to the gift** and place in our gift box. If you wish you may wrap the gift.

If you prefer to make a cash donation, we can shop for any stars left on the tree after the deadline.

The deadline for bringing in the gifts is Sunday, December 10.



Calling all Hope Bakers

On December 15, when we prepare our monthly meal for the Tulsa Day Center for the Homeless, we will provide a bag of assorted, homemade cookies to each client we serve that day.



Please help us with this tradition by baking cookies for us. You can bake them ahead of time and put them in the freezer (be sure to mark them FTH so they are not confused with the Sunday cookies) or bring them fresh on **Saturday, December 15 at 2:30 pm.**

MacArthur Elementary School

At the end of October, The Outreach Committee was able to purchase snacks for our partner in education, MacArthur Elementary School.

The school gives the snacks to the students who participate in after school clubs. The school had used up most of the snacks they had so the donation was much appreciated. The snacks are very helpful, as many of the children have few resources at home.

Upcoming Special Services for Christmas and New Year



**Sunday, December 10,
at 11:00 am**

Sing Noel!

“Light in the Midst of Darkness!”

Our annual lay led service filled with music and special readings. It is a time our choir and musicians shine. This year’s theme is “Light in the Midst of Darkness”.

**Please note there will be
No morning service on
Sunday, December 24**

**Sunday, December 24, at 6:00 pm
Christmas Eve
Candlelighting Service**

Our magic, annual evening is service filled with carols, candles, readings



and community.

**Sunday, December 31,
at 11:00 am**

**“Burning Bowl:
New Year Celebration”**

We symbolically and physically release this ending 2017 with fire, music, and a chance



Hope Events

Childcare is available by rsvp at least two business days before most events. Please email childcare@hopeuu.org to make a reservation.

Brown Bag Lunch

Meets every Thursday at 11:30 am in the RE Wing
Bring your lunch and join us for lively discussions on current topics. December 7 we meet for discussion with Rev. Cathey This year we are watching short TEDx talks and discussing. We will meet in the sanctuary to view "Can Art Amend History" with Titus Kaphar. See you there!

Claudia Vandiver cvgardnr@sbcglobal.com

Threads of Hope

2nd and 4th Tuesdays, 11:30 am in the log cabin

Come and find out what we are working on for Hope or bring your own personal projects. We'll begin at 11:30, so bring a sack lunch and we'll stay till about 1:30. You're welcome to just drop in anytime.

Carrie Muzika

proenviomom@cox.net

Deborah Whittaker

debsharmony@yahoo.com

Hope Book Club

1st Monday in the month

Next meeting is **December 4**. Discussing "*Suddenly Last Summer*" by Tennessee Williams.

For questions contact **Chris Anrig**

cmanrig@hotmail.com



Hanging of the Greens

**Saturday, December 2,
at 10:00 am**

Join us for our annual family
Hanging of the Greens
festivities. Pizza will be
served when we are done.

Breakfast

on the Hill

Sunday December 3

Our chefs this month are **Claudia Vandiver** and other Finance Committee members.



\$5 per person Children eat free.

Women of Hope

Thursday, December 7

Social time 6:00 • Potluck 6:30 • Program 7:00

Women of Hope meets at Hope on the first Thursday of the month. This month's activity will be a party! Please bring an unwrapped children's gift for donation and a dish to share for the potluck (and a \$2 donation if you would like wine).

We are also continuing to collect feminine hygiene products to donate to the Tulsa Day Center for the Homeless. Let's help our sisters out!

Movie Night

Tuesday, December 12 at 7:00 pm

This beloved holiday movie, *A Christmas Story*, follows the wintry exploits of youngster Ralphie Parker (Peter Billingsley), who spends most of his time dodging a bully (Zack Ward) and dreaming of his ideal Christmas gift, a "Red Ryder air rifle." Frequently at odds with his cranky dad (Darren McGavin) but comforted by his doting mother (Melinda Dillon), Ralphie struggles to make it to Christmas Day with his glasses and his hopes intact.

Please join us for laughs, popcorn, soft drinks and a good time.

Hope Lunch Bunch

Wednesday, December 20, at 11:30. am

For a festive holiday atmosphere, we have chosen **LaVie Restaurant at the Philbrook Art Museum**. This month I am making reservations ahead of time for 8 people. So be sure to let me know if you would like to join us since we only have room for the first 8 who respond.

Call **Lynn Walters** at 918-893-2655 or email to lfwalters@aol.com.

Staff out of office in December

Please note:

Maggie Scott, Church Administrator
will be out of the office December 4-11. The church office will be open from 9 am—12 pm with volunteers standing in.

Yadene Hailu, Intern Minister
will be out of the office December 4—January 2

Susan Spooner, Director of Children & Youth Programs
will be out of the office December 18-December 22



Members' Birthdays—December

Maggie Scott	9th
Cate Potter	10th
Susan Swatek	13th
George Krumme	15th
Eric Reiman	19th
Anita Ward	22nd
Jacci Hamilton	22nd
Sherrill Womeldorff	22nd
Mike Monroe	25th
Brian Marcum	28th
Mary Newman	31st

Key People

When no one is at the church, the building is locked and the security system is on. A committee of key people have keys and security clearance to open and close the building for church events. Each takes a one-week turn

Nov 27-Dec 3
Fred Pottorf
918-407-0924

Dec 4-10
Sherrill Womeldorff
918-638-7610

Dec 12-17
Jim Sleezer
918-853-5114

Dec 18-24
David Lynn
918-250-3677

Dec 25-31
Sherrill Womeldorff
918-638-7610

Policy for function organizers

1. First, determine if someone - attending your function can open the building.
2. Find out if church will be open/closed for another event at the same time as yours.
3. If no one is available and you need entry, contact above volunteer Key Person a few days in advance of the event.

**For Hope's December Calendar
see Hope's website
<http://hopeuu.org/blog/calendar/>**

Focus Deadline

Submissions for Focus should be sent to hopeuu@hopeuu.org with "Focus" in the subject line and are normally due **9 am the 4th Wednesday in the month**. Submissions are subject to editing for length and content.

The next Focus will be published January 3, 2017. Next Deadline: 9 am, Wednesday, December 27



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FOCUS Issue December 2017 by Hope Unitarian Church,
8432 S. Sheridan Road., Tulsa, OK 74133-4137.

TO:

Hope Unitarian Church is an inclusive, affirming congregation



Hope's Vision

Seeking Truth, Sharing Love
Within - Among - Beyond

Hope's Mission

Supporting the free and responsible search for truth and meaning;
Teaching the history and traditions of Unitarianism;
Promoting and defending freedom of thought;
Celebrating life's passages;
Serving the larger community with justice and compassion.

Hope's Values

Our Staff
The Rev. Cathey Edwards, Minister, cathey@hopeuu.org
Yadene Hailu, Intern Minister, yadenee@hopeuu.org
Maggie Scott, Administrator, maggie@hopeuu.org
Joseph Rivers, Director of Music, joseph.rivers@hopeuu.org
Susan Spooner, Director of Children and Youth Programs, susan@hopeuu.org
Rebecca Jones, Accountant (off site), rebtax@cox.net
Chris Powell, Pianist
Susan Michael, Drew Maher, Amy Jones, Nora Potter, Child Care

Our 2017/18 Board of Trustees
Ken Jones, President
Cate Potter, President Elect
Claudia Vandiver, VP of Finance
James Donovan, VP of Programs
Marcia Schaefer, Treasurer
Annie Simpson, Secretary
Anita Ward, Past President
Trustees: Ryan Saylor, Diana Cox, Paula Haight, Carrie Muzika

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Office Hours
Mon–Fri 9 am—3pm