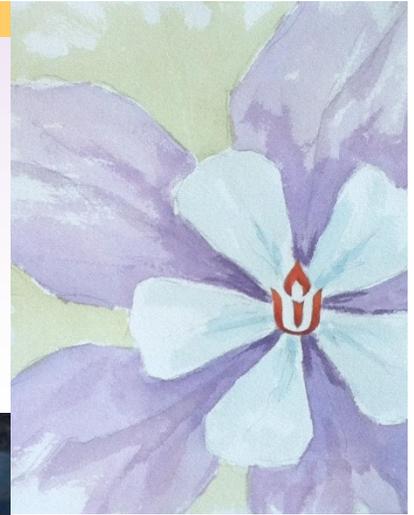


Columbine



HOPE

“Spend some time remembering how you’ve been saved by hope, and then bring that story of hope to someone else!”

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Worship for November

Monthly Theme: Hope

Dec 3rd, 10 am — “Incarnation: What if God is Within Us All?”

In the historical Christian faith story, “God becomes Man” in the singular person of Jesus. The theological term for that concept is “incarnation” — in other words, “in the body.” Where did this idea of a living being embodying a deity or spirit come from? And, what if this capacity lives within us all? Rev. Julia speaks.

Dec 10th, 10am — “Beyond Hope and Hopelessness”

In faith and hope, many find their salvation, the meaning that illuminates their lives. And yet, our hope can also stand as a barrier to doing; it can insulate us from our deep need to act with love in the world. Where do we balance on that thin edge between hope and the terrible fear that there is no inevitable positive bend to the arc of the moral universe? In this season of waiting and wonder, poised before the turning of the year, we ponder how hope and hopelessness might serve us in living faithful lives.

We welcome back **Elizabeth Mount**, ministerial intern at First Universalist Church of Denver as our **guest speaker**. Elizabeth is a life-long Unitarian Universalist whose work in education and community organizing led them ultimately into ministry. Elizabeth is committed to parish ministry and greatly enjoys bringing deeper understanding of our UU heritage and values to worshipping communities and helping to shape the future of our faith through denominational and local justice work.

Dec 17th, 10am — “Hitching a Hope”

Hope rarely descends or magically appears. Most often, it's passed on. It comes to us as a gift. We don't find it, as much as we receive it. And almost always, that gift comes in the form of a story. Listening to others talk about their sources of hope helps us notice what might be available to us as well. Simply put, hope can't spread without our stories. Light doesn't travel through the dark on its own. It hitchhikes on the tales we tell each other. Rev. Julia speaks.

Dec 20th, 7pm Winter Solstice Celebration: “Silence Speaks”

As we feel saturated with the negative national scene and try make sense of chaotic year, let us come together to take in the beauty of the Winter Solstice. Silence is the same in every church, synagogue, mosque, or temple. Come explore the inherent wisdom that exists at the very center of silence. This is Columbine UU Church's primary holiday service, so don't miss out! Friends and Family are welcome. **Please bring your favorite holiday cookies to share in fellowship after the service.** Hosted by Rev. Julia, Matt Frisk, and the Worship Team.

Dec 24th, 10am — Christmas Eve Morning: “Cuddleduds, Hot Chocolate, Lessons and Carols”

Christmas eve is on a Sunday this year! We will have an all-ages gathering of stories and carols in the morning that will be casual enough to even show up in your “cuddle-duds” (aka pajamas) if you would like! Come share the “present” of your presence with each other. Rev. Julia and the Worship Team welcome you and your family members.

Please note: We will NOT have an evening service on Christmas Eve so that you may spend time with your families. You are invited to attend worship at First Universalist and celebrate in their new sanctuary with them.

Dec 31, 10am — New Year's Eve Morning: Attend to Your Intention

Setting an intention is different than setting a resolution. Goals and resolutions “push us out” into future possibilities. Intentions “push us in” to listen to our inner wisdom which tells us who we truly are. Let's welcome in the New Year by setting our intentions together -- Rev. Julia will guide this special ritual service.

Please note: Periodically during the year, we intentionally invite children to join our adult service so they can experience the fullness of UU worship life. This does not mean that this service is geared toward the children as an all ages service, but we welcome them into our service to worship with their adults.



Rev. Julia McKay, MA, M.Div.

Dear Columbine Family,

The *I Ching*, a sacred Chinese text, uses the image of “heaven within the mountain.” (Hexagram 26)

In other words, there are hidden treasures in the center of each of our lives that make us strong and stable — like a mountain.

An ancient spiritual practice of people from many lands is that of seeking and studying the stories of others — especially the wise ones from the past — to strengthen and elevate our own character and resolve. We learn from the stories of others who have trodden the path before us, overcoming similar obstacles that we are facing now, and making crucial decisions at the same crossroads. We can gain inspiration and hope from seekers who mapped a course that we can follow when times get tough.

This year has been a very tough one in our country. Sometimes the onslaught of hubris, abuse, and injustice has been dense enough to saturate our souls. We hear the stories of those who are suffering, or have suffered in the past, at the hands of other humans. We become hopeless.

“And, the danger of hopelessness,” my colleague Rev. Sean Parker Dennison says, *“is that we can lose each other. In times of hopelessness, it’s easy to get scared of everything and everyone. It’s easy to start believing that your neighbor is the problem and that hoarding is a better strategy than generosity. The problem is that when community starts to break down, we lose the most important source of hope we have: each other.”*

And so, my friends, the only thing to do to counteract any sense of hopelessness or

overwhelm in the larger culture and in our hearts, is to spend some time in the spiritual practice of remembering the stories of those wise ones who have come before us. It is also to spend some time remembering YOUR OWN stories about times that you have been saved by hope. And then, you share them! Share them with each other until the hope comes back.

What are the stories of your own lives that might bring a sense of hope this season?

We all have them. Some of us will talk about that one person whose belief-in-us enabled us to believe in ourselves. Others will talk about how we held on through depression for the sake of kids. More than one of us will name that moment when we realized that the darkness was not our enemy but actually contained a gift. At least one of us will likely talk about the magic of “faking it until we made it.” Still others may share their experience of stumbling upon one of those beautiful [“It Gets Better”](#) videos, or have a very real story of how they changed a system for the better.

In the end, the details of the stories are less important than the act of bringing them all into the room. We create sanctuary when we do this — holy space. Heaven within the mountain. Surrounded by each other’s stories, the community can’t help but light up, and be that beacon of hope we are all dreaming about in this season.

So, my friends — **Remember hope. Embody hope. Share hope. You are the hope.**

Happy holidays to you and yours,
Rev. J



Treasurer's Note

Pauline Hopkins

*I subscribe to **Stewardship for Us**, a blog with financial information for churches. I read this article by Bill Clontz and thought you might find it valuable. Enjoy reading and I'll see you in church!*

It's that time of year to think about yearend giving!

We are approaching the *Conundrum Season*. On the one hand, we are entering a period of thanksgiving and celebration of being together. On the other hand, we remember that as the New Year arrives, comes tax season. But in spite of that odd mix, there is good news here.

We can do some good in demonstrating for our Unitarian Universalist community while preparing for tax season. You will want to consult with a financial advisor before making tax or investment decisions. Some steps you may want to consider.

- **Charitable IRA Rollover:** This tax extender encourages older Americans to give out of their Individual Retirement Accounts. This allows IRA owners age 70 1/2 or older to exclude up to \$100,000 a year from income. The IRA funds are paid directly to certain public charities to accomplish this benefit. Otherwise, the IRA owner would have to pay tax on the IRA funds before claiming the deduction.

- o Congress allowed this option to expire in past years, but it now is standing law without a programmed expiration. Many retirees don't need the money that they must take from IRAs as a Required Minimum Distribution (RMD). Being able to donate these proceeds to their congregation can be a win-win.

- **Donate Appreciated Stock:** A gift of appreciated stock helps your congregation, while providing a significant tax break.

- o Talk to your broker about your specific situation. In general, you could take an immediate tax deduction for the full market value of the stock. In addition, you avoid the capital-gains tax that would be owed if cashing in the securities. It's a win-win situation. The congregation and/or the UUA get a welcome contribution, while donors write off the gift and avoid paying capital gains taxes.

- **Donor Advised Funds (DAFs):** This might be a useful time for some to consider setting up a *Donor Advised Fund (DAF)*, an increasingly popular way to give. Mark Ewert provided an excellent webinar about this time last year on DAFs. Your broker or financial advisor can also provide information about setting up a DAF.

- o Your DAF contribution is irrevocable and may be eligible for a tax deduction for the current year. You decide when to recommend grants. Get the benefit of a tax deduction right away on capital gains and decide later on the timing of contributions. While you decide, your contributions are invested with the potential to grow tax free, with a bigger impact.

- o **Get a Jump Start on Your Annual Pledge:** No matter when your church calendar year starts or when/how your stewardship drive is conducted, you know that sometime after the first of the year, you will be asked to consider your pledge for the coming church year.

Why not give that some personal reflection now, at year's end and while you are planning for your taxes, and make an initial judgment about an increase? Start setting aside that increase now. When the new pledge year begins, you are already at about the level you wish to be, and the increase, set aside for some months, can be contributed as a one-time gift – all potentially earning a tax dedication as well.



Bill Clontz is a stewardship consultant with the **Stewardship for Us** Team, supporting the UUA. Bill can be reached at bill@stewardshipforus.com, via UUA Congregational Life, (<http://www.uua.org/finance/fundraising>), or via regional



Photo: Bob Pinkham

Please attend our flagship holiday worship service

*Winter Solstice — “Silence Speaks”
December 20th at 7:00p.m.*

in the Columbine Sanctuary.

Please bring your favorite plate of cookies or holiday treats to share!

Word has it that we will even have a bit of a drum circle around the fire outside afterward if that is your thing. Otherwise, warm cider and cookies for all!

**WAKE NOW
OUR VISION**
COLLABORATIVE CAMPAIGN

Legacy Challenge

Include Columbine Unitarian Universalist Church and the Unitarian Universalist Collaborative Campaign in your estate plans.

New legacy gift intentions need to be made between January 1, 2017 and June 30, 2020 to qualify for the matching program. Please go to the website for pledge forms and FAQs:

www.wakenowourvision.org

Adult Faith Development



MUUSIC is a jam session - a time to meet other people who sing, play instruments, enjoy music, are looking to form a group or who simply want to come and listen.

Come and check **MUUSIC** out on Monday afternoons from 4:15 to 5:45.

Anyone is welcome to participate.

Questions?

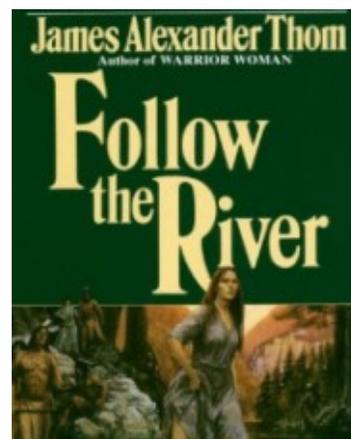
Contact Kathy Derrick: kthyderrick@gmail.com

Monthly Book Club

The Columbine UU Book Club meets on the 4th week of each month, 7:30 – 9:00 pm. The book chosen for the January 24th meeting is

Follow the River by James Alexander Thom
Mary Ingles was twenty-three in 1755, married, and pregnant, when Shawnee Indians invaded her peaceful Virginia settlement, killed the men and women, then took her captive. For months, she lived with them, unbroken, until she escaped, and followed a thousand mile trail to freedom — an extraordinary story of a pioneer woman who risked her life to return to her people.

Jan 24th



The Out-to-Lunch Bunch

Join a casual group that likes to go out to lunch!



First Sunday of the month. We invite everyone interested to join us for a lunch outing after church. **Families are welcome.** We are looking for inexpensive places. We think it's fun to get to know each other better over a meal. If you can, let us know ahead of time that you are interested. Contact Sue Dressel—suedressel@aol.com.

JustACT News

Integrated Family Community Services Christmas Adopt-A-Family

Congratulations! We only have two families (a family of six and a family of five) and one senior left to sponsor. If you would like to share one of these large families, contact Pauline Hopkins and she will match you with another person. Also, if you are unable (or don't want) to shop, someone will shop for you! **The deadline for bringing gifts to church is December 3rd, so don't wait!** Please see Pauline Hopkins or contact her at pauline7.ph@gmail.com.



CFCU Candlelight Vigil to Remember the Victims of Gun Violence

Come in remembrance of those killed five years ago at Sandy Hook Elementary School and to solemnly honor all victims of gun violence. Colorado Faith Communities United (CFCU) is a collaboration of diverse faith communities committed to turning our collective grief into shared hope and advocating to reduce death and injury caused by firearms. First Universalist and First Plymouth Congregational are hosting: **Mark Your Calendars for Wednesday, December 13th**. We'll gather from 4:30 to 5:30pm at these churches located on the SW and NE corners of S. Colorado and E. Hampden Ave. Bring light sources for you and your companions. Contact Tanya Coulter for information at john-coulter@comcast.net.



Columbine Minister's Discretionary Fund

We take care of the world at Columbine UU Church **and we take care of each other**. That is why our December Share the Plate recipient is a fund that provides for individuals and families in our own congregation. Our ministers at Columbine have always had some money available to give, at their discretion, to those who come to them seeking help. In the past we have taken this collection on Christmas Eve. This year we are not having a Christmas Eve Service so **we are asking the church to please support the Minister's Discretionary Fund as our Share the Plate Recipient on Sunday, December 17th**. Thank you to Columbine for being such a generous community.



♦If you are unable to attend the service on December 17th but would like to contribute, please mail or deliver your cash or a check with the notation, "STP" in the memo line. Pledge payments will not be shared.

Don't Forget Our Dreamers!

Call your representatives. Tell them our Dreamers are Here to Stay!

The Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program protects 800,000 immigrant youth from deportation and gives them freedom to work, go to school, join the military and live lives of purpose and fulfillment. March 5, 2018, is the deadline for Congress to take action and pass legislation. Our representatives in Congress need to decide which side of history they are on. We all have a role to play to fight back and keep them safe.



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