



### JANUARY SERVICES

Services are held at 10:30 a.m. Sundays at 3870 Millville-Oxford Road, Oxford, Ohio and available on Zoom.

#### **January 4 – Neurospicy New Year or The Neurodivergent Guide to January**

The turning of the year is an invitation to ask: whose rhythms do we honor in our communal life? Neurodivergent ways of sensing and knowing can reveal possibilities for more accessible, compassionate, and imaginative churches. The Reverend Alix Klingenberg reflects on her own lived experience to explore how communities become more whole when we make space for different kinds of minds. Rev. Alix will join us from Boston for this all-Zoom service. You may stay home with your hot cocoa on a winter morning to join us online or if you don't Zoom, come to Hopedale where Zoom will run.

*Presenter: Rev. Alix Klingenberg*

*Service Leader: Patty Klingenberg*

#### **January 11 – Our Vision of the Future**

Join us for an intergenerational exploration of our hopes and dreams on National Vision Board Day! We will look at ways to explore our hopes and dreams using visual information, and everyone will leave with their own mini vision board for the coming year and beyond!

*Presenter: Diane Wright*

*Service Leader: Jennifer Blue*

*Intergenerational Service*

*Social Justice Second-Sunday Collection benefits the Oxford Free Clinic*

#### **January 18 – “Lift Every Voice and Sing”**

Today we reflect upon the official song of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. With words by poet and civil rights activist James Weldon Johnson and music by his brother, composer J. Rosamond Johnson, this enduring hymn has inspired many Americans in the ongoing struggle for justice, civil rights, equal opportunity and human freedom.

*Presenter & Service Leader: Curt Ellison*

*Monthly Potluck Follows Service*

#### **January 25 – Finding Hope in Choppy Waters**

The Reverend Dennis McCarty will return to our pulpit to explore ways to navigate difficult times. Anyone who engages the national news may feel as though religious liberals face more defeats than victories these days. But might it help to look at success and failure in a different way? Rev. Dennis will look at success, failure, and some lessons of history as we sort out these trying times.

*Presenter: Rev. Dennis McCarty*

*Service leader: Patty Klingenberg*

***See RE Connection for information about children's RE activities.***

## Happenings at Hopedale

### January

**January 14** – Wednesday Wine or Something Else, 5 p.m. at Cru in Oxford.

**January 15** – Social Justice Committee meeting via Zoom, 6 pm.

**January 18** – Potluck Dinner following Sunday service.

**January 20** – HUUC Board meeting via Zoom, 7 p.m.

**February 1** – Adult RE, *The Gnostic Gospels*, after Sunday service. See RE Connection.

## Notes From Board President Libby Earle

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The Opening Words for our Dec. 14 service spoke of this time of year as the season of endings and beginnings. Traditionally many of us review the past years and set new goals for the year ahead. Looking at how we lived our values would be a very UU way to review the year: justice, equity, transformation, pluralism, interdependence, generosity.

We are called to actively live our values. Hopedale members and friends have been engaged in many ways that defend democracy, supporting and advocating for justice and equity. When we attend meetings, write letters, make phone calls, and participate in rallies it may feel like giving the ocean a drop of water, but we understand that together we become the All that makes a difference.

We are generous with our financial resources supporting both Hopedale and community. The generosity of time given to do the actual work of sustaining Hopedale is really beyond measure.

Hopedale embraces pluralism. This community makes space for the many ways we express and experience our spiritual and ethical selves.

We express our understanding of interdependence through our environmental work but also through our collaboration with the greater community.

We grow and change ... that's what transformation is all about. It is a joy to see our youth, and they are proof that Unitarian Universalism is relevant.

I am excited about Hopedale's engagement with the greater Oxford community. Offering our facility to organizations is a tangible way to support shared values. One new beginning you will see is Institute for Learning in Retirement (ILR) classes being held at Hopedale next spring. Rob Schorman will be facilitating. Scheduled classes will be posted in the calendar.

With gratitude, thanks to you all who make Hopedale feel like love.

## Congregational Life

By Linda Amspaugh, VP

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**Events:** Thanks go to Jennifer Blue, Jay Murdock, and Angus for hosting the annual Hillary Rodham Clinton Cookie Exchange. All who attended sampled delicious cookies and had great conversations.

We were reminded that planning needs to be done for the annual chocolate chip (or another cookie variety) competition to be held in January or February – where Hopedale children are the judges. Details will be coming soon.

**Hospitality:** Russ Vie Brooks will be recruiting volunteers who will help with providing refreshments and clean-up duties for the after-service social hour. Also, if you would like to be a greeter before the service, please see Russ to do so.

## Religious Education Connection

**RE Committee:** Adriane Ruther (VP, Religious Services); Celia Ellison, Holly Wilson

**RE Coordinator:** Krystal McKinney

**Adriane** [ruthercrew@gmail.com](mailto:ruthercrew@gmail.com); **Krystal** [ksmckinney25@gmail.com](mailto:ksmckinney25@gmail.com)

Our **Children's RE** (grades K-6) theme for the month will focus on the UU principles of justice, equality and compassion. If you're interested in helping with Children's RE this month, there will be a sign-up on the bulletin board or you can reach out to our RE committee members listed above. You can prepare your own craft or lesson around this theme, or the committee is more than happy to help prepare something for you to lead. Your presence and participation make a meaningful difference in our children's growth.

**Youth Group** (grades 7-12) meets with Jessica Drew during the service Jan. 18.

### Adult RE

**Sunday, February 1** – after the service. Book discussion of *The Gnostic Gospels* by Elaine Pagels, led by Patty Klingenberg. Early Christian controversies were known only by way of those who sought to suppress them until eleven second-century documents were found buried in Egypt in 1945. These reveal in detail a wholly different interpretation of the life and teachings of Jesus.

**Sunday, February 22** – after the service. “In Defense of Separation of Church & State: Vital in 1787 – Critical Now.” An offering from Congregation Beth Adam's Social Justice Committee presented to us (*via Zoom*) by former Hopedale member Rebecca Luzadis.

## Notes from the Social Justice Committee

Liz Woedl, (Acting Chair), Libby Earle, Peggy Branstrator, Russ Vie Brooks,  
Linda Amspauagh, Kevin Rose, Jessica Drew

**The Oxford community's annual Martin Luther King, Jr. Day Celebration** will be at 10:30 a.m., Monday, Jan. 19, 2026, at the Oxford Community Arts Center. The theme is "Through the Eyes of the Generations: Where is Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s Dream Today?" The annual Dr. King Art Exhibition will open at 10 a.m., featuring artwork from members of the community, with award recipients being announced during the celebration. This will be a family-friendly event.

**Women's Health and Ohio Classrooms:** The Ohio House and Senate passed a bill that would require Ohio public schools to show a video produced by an anti-abortion group about fetal development to students in grades 5-12. Critics of the video say it is not medically accurate, shows gestational age two weeks earlier than starts, and shows fetal development more advanced than it is. The bill would require schools to show either the "Baby Olivia" video or a similar one to students every year beginning with the 2026-2027 school year. Parents can request that their children opt out. As soon as you read this, please call Governor DeWine at 614-644-4357 and ask him not to sign Ohio House Bill 485.

**Immigration Justice:** One hundred and forty-two people (including several from Hopedale) attended the Human Rights Day vigil at St. Julie Billiart in Hamilton on Dec. 10. It was a powerful interdenominational service to support immigrants. Oxford program participants included the Rev. Lawrence Bartel, the Rev. Vanessa Cummings, Dr. Edna Southard, and Warren Waldron leading the singing of "America the Beautiful."

Members of Butler County Immigrant Justice continue to speak truth to power at the Commissioners' meetings on Tuesday mornings. Activities will resume in the New Year.

**Food Insecurity:** The best way to support our community is by following the lead of organizations who are first responders for that issue. In the case of Oxford food security that would be Talawanda Oxford Pantry & Social Services (TOPSS). At there is a lot of great information about the support they require, including donations, volunteers and neighborhood food drive organization.

**Housing Insecurity/Oxford Winter House:** The Oxford Winter House opened Dec. 12. It is temporarily housed at the Vineyard Church, hoping to move to the College Corner Pike location within the week. The Oxford Area Solutions for Housing (OASH) [website](#) is hosting a page with information and ways to support this effort.

How we can help:

- Sign up to donate supplies and equipment, make monetary donations or volunteer to provide and/or serve meals, spend time with the guests or stay overnight with the guests.

- As a community, Hopedale could coordinate to provide a meal or meals. There are plenty of open dinner opportunities in the new year.
  - Training is required for more hands-on volunteer roles, but not for food drop-off.
- The best way to offer breakfast and lunch to cold shelter guests is still being determined.

Diane Ruther-Vierling (Drew, Adriane, Flora and Sylvan Ruther's beloved mother, mother-in-law, and grandma) recently passed unexpectedly. She was a founding member of OASH and worked up until a few days before her death, training and mentoring Oxford Winter House staff. The operation of the shelter is being dedicated to her memory.

(Many thanks to Ann Fuehrer for much of this copy.)

*The next Social Justice ZOOM meeting is at 6 p.m., Thursday, January 15, 2026. For more info, please contact Liz Woedl at [LizWoedl@gmail.com](mailto:LizWoedl@gmail.com).*

**Wait! Special Survey! Are you reading this Newsletter? If yes, send a "yes" email to [knightcm@miamioh.edu](mailto:knightcm@miamioh.edu) or call or text her at 513-461-1204. Thanks!**

## **Environmental Corner (And Gardening News!)**

**By Peggy Branstrator**

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### **Garden**

Our garden is put to bed, and gardening news is discontinued for this winter.

### **Waste**

Environmental reminder – Hopedale is **ZERO WASTE**. Every Sunday we hear about the commitment Hopedale has made to try to live lightly on the Earth. For new members, and as a reminder to others, this includes a policy of trying to produce Zero Waste.

One of the ways we accomplish Zero Waste is to reduce to a bare minimum the use of disposable paper products like napkins, paper towels, paper cups, plates, and plastics. Instead we use washable plates, cups, glasses, utensils, napkins, and towels. We also encourage buying toilet paper made from recycled paper, and compostable plates and bowls as needed.

In the kitchen area you can find the small green bag for compost. Please put all leftover food there and scrape plates before putting them in the dishpan. Because we take that to the city's municipal compost facility, this includes, meat, bones, pits, grease, used paper towels and napkins etc. "If it grows; it goes!" Even greasy pizza boxes!

Under the coffee counter you will find containers for used cloth napkins and towels, office-type paper recycling, and Rumpke-type recycling (all cans and bottles, metal, glass

and #1 and #2 plastic bottles with necks). Hopedale also participates in the Hefty Orange bag recycling of “soft” plastics and #4, #5, #6 plastics. If you are not familiar with the Orange Bags, just ask.

Some things still go to trash. Rumpke uses an optical scanner to separate recycling, and they cannot recycle the plastic “clamshells” or large round plastic containers that often hold fruit, even if they are #1 or #2. They also do not accept aluminum foil or foil pans.

The bottom line is using the familiar white “wastebasket” as a “last resort,” because someone will have to sort that and then take the remainder home with them to put in their own trash. Hopedale has no commercial trash pick-up.

### **Aggregation Update**

Most of you recently received a letter from the City of Oxford about the electric aggregation program. Some people have (also) received a letter from Duke. Don’t worry, you do NOT need to do anything to remain on the Aggregation Program. The notification letter is required because the City is making some changes to the program. You may even get more letters in January.

In the past the City negotiated directly with different electric suppliers to get the best rate for Oxford residents. Recently they joined a group of other cities to negotiate as a larger group, and are coordinating the start date of the new contract with them. This resulted in some short-term changes. You should not notice any change in service. Your bill will still come from Duke, and you should still call them with any problems or questions. There will be some rate increases, because all electric rates are increasing, but with the new negotiating group these increases will be lower than they would have been.

### **Short Summary of How Aggregation Works**

Think of Duke Energy like the UPS truck that delivers packages to you. It gets those packages from different manufacturers (think Walmart, Kroger, Target, etc.), depending on what you chose. Duke is your electricity delivery company. It gets electricity from a producer and sends it to your house on its wires. It can get that electricity from different electricity producers – you can choose which one in Ohio, because this is what the law says. With aggregation, you allow the City to choose the electric producer for you, and Duke sends it through its wires and bills you. This is cheaper because when you buy in bulk you can get a discounted price (think Costco). Thanks to Reena Murphy, City of Oxford Sustainability Coordinator, for this analogy.

## **Beyond Hopedale**



If you participated in *Guest at Your Table* send your check directly to UUSC. Make checks out to “UUSC” with “Guest” or “GAYT” in the memo field and send to: UUSC, PO Box 808, Newark, NJ 07101-0808.

## Supporting Hopedale

By Celia Ellison, Stewardship VP

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Numerous personal contributions by volunteers make Hopedale happen. We depend upon one another to sustain this tradition. Hopedale also needs your financial support. The congregation approves an annual operating budget and authorizes all capital improvements. We encourage you to support our commitments, and here are some ways you may do so.

### Let Kroger Donate \$\$\$ to Hopedale Connect your Kroger Plus Card to Hopedale through Kroger's *Community Rewards Program*

**On the web:** [www.kroger.com](http://www.kroger.com)

Upper-right-hand corner: “Sign In.” My Account – will ask you to verify your email by replying to an email from Kroger.

**Create an Account.** Once in your account: left-hand navigation: Choose “Community Rewards.” Organization code for Hopedale is: **HX533**. Enter that and finish up!

### Use the Kroger App

The “menu” is in the upper-right-hand corner: three stacked hyphens ☰

Select "Rewards" from the next list; then select "Community Rewards"

Hopedale's code is: **HX533**

### Your Annual Pledge

Your annual pledge payments are the only regular source of funding for our operating budget. Please make your pledge check to “Hopedale UU Community” and place it in the Sunday offering plate, or send it *via* U.S. Mail to Holly Wilson, HUUC Treasurer, 721 South College Ave., Oxford, Ohio 45056, or P. O. Box 625, Oxford, Ohio 45056.

### Hopedale Facilities Fund

This fund is used to improve capital facilities. Thanks to generous donors we renovated the lower level for Religious Education, corrected longstanding water issues of our building and grounds, installed accessible parking, repaired the sidewalk, rehabilitated gravel drives and parking areas, paved the north parking lot and main driveway, and installed outside lighting and handrails along the south and east walkways.

We want to continue sound stewardship of our property, and improve it for us *and* future generations. You can help. Your donation to this fund is dedicated to facilities improvement. Expenditures are reviewed and approved by the Board, following guidelines developed with the Congregation and in cooperation with donor wishes. If you wish, your contribution can memorialize or honor someone.

Your questions, comments and suggestions about ongoing facilities planning are welcome. Ready to help? Make donation checks to the “Hopedale Facilities Fund” and mail them to Holly Wilson or donate by one of the methods below.

### **How Do I Donate?**

Annual Pledges may be paid by check, cash, stock transfer, IRA distribution, or by any means resulting in operating funds. Donations to the Facilities Fund may be made in any of these ways or by naming Hopedale as beneficiary in your will, trust, or insurance program.

### **Financial Questions?**

Contact Stewardship VP Celia Ellison or Treasurer Holly Wilson. The Hopedale Spirit remains alive because of your devotion and generosity, and our entire Community benefits!

