



# South Fraser Unitarians



*What does it mean to be a  
People of Hope?*

SFUC Thematic Packet  
November and December 2019

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## What Does It Mean To Be A People of Hope

*Faith, wherever it develops into hope, causes not rest but unrest, not patience but impatience. It does not calm the unquiet heart, but is itself this unquiet heart in [all of us]. Those who hope...can no longer put up with reality as it is, but begin to suffer under it, to contradict it. [True hope] means conflict with the world, for the good of the promised future stabs inexorably into the flesh of every unfulfilled present." Jürgen Moltmann, Theologian*

It's not always easy to hear well this time of year, especially when it comes to hope. The dominant messages are about hope offering us calm: "The light will come." "A new day is on its way." "Justice and joy are growing in the womb and will soon be born." Hope, from this point of view, is a voice that reassures. It's a welcomed whisper that says, "Yes, the sky may be dark now. Yes, the road you're on at this moment may be hard. But trust me, just over that horizon, there's a new world waiting for us all."

This soothing message comes to us as a gift. During dark days, we all get tired. The fruits of our efforts are hard to see. We feel alone. The promise that things will change offers us relief. We are released from the burden of believing that "it is all up to me" or that it all must be solved now.

It's a beautiful and needed message. But, as Moltmann and others remind us, it's also only half of what hope is trying to say. Hope doesn't just whisper "It *will* be different," it also shouts "It *should* be different" and "It *can* be different." Yes, it speaks soothing words about trusting and waiting, but it also takes the form of a holy impatience that declares, "Enough is enough. The time is now!" As Moltmann puts it, hope is not just that which calms the unquiet heart; it also *is* the unquiet heart.

In other words, hope doesn't just promise us that change will come in the future; it also changes who we are in the present. When we believe that a new day is dawning, we don't just sit down and wait. We get up and go out to meet the light. When hope convinces us that there are unseen forces working for the good, we begin to look around more closely, and in doing so we notice that darkness and pain are not all that is there. When hope's holy impatience gets into our bones, we start acting as if we deserve that new day now. Which in turn changes others by convincing them that we all have waited long enough.

Bottom line: listening fully to hope, makes you dangerous, not just soothed! It doesn't relieve us of duty as much as it reminds us that wind is at our back and unseen reinforcements are at our side. Yes, hope reassures, but it also emboldens. It doesn't just offer us a promise; it gives us a push.

But all of this only happens if we listen fully. So maybe the most important question this month is: "Are we listening to everything hope has to say?"

# Our Spiritual Exercise

## Spreading Our Stories of Hope

Instead of options this month, we are all invited to do one single exercise together:

**Spend some time remembering how you've been saved by hope.  
And then bring that story of hope to your group to share.**

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. Hearing tales of others finding their way through the dark helps us trust that light is waiting at the end our tunnels as well. Listening to others talk about their sources of hope helps us notice the many resources available to us. 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.

So this month, let's give each other the gift of hope by sharing the gift of our stories. We all have them. Some of us will talk about that 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. In the end, the details of the stories are less important than the act of bringing them all into the room. Surrounded by each other's stories, the circle can't help but become lit up.

Besides bringing a personal story of hope to your group, consider also bringing in a symbol/token that represents the essence of your story. You might also want to keep that symbol/token close to you during the weeks before your meeting, as a way of both helping you remember the details and offering gratitude.

During your group session, after everyone has shared their story, be sure to leave time for everyone to talk about what happened as the many stories of others washed over them.

### **"Extra Credit" Exercise: A Week's Worth of Hopeful Words**

If you have the time for and interest in an *additional* spiritual practice this month, consider weaving the following poems into your daily meditation, journaling or walking practice. Focus on a different one each day. Consider the practice of reading through the poem 2-3 times, choosing a different focus question for each reading. For instance, when reading through it the first time, simply ask yourself, "What line or phrase pops out for me?" On your second reading, ask yourself, "Who or what am I in the poem?" Other focus questions might be: "What is the poem asking me to do today?" or "Who is the poem asking me to engage in a new way?"

Here's the list of poems we recommend, but of course alter as needed:

**Monday** - Hope, by Lisel Mueller

<https://writersalmanac.org/episodes/20170404/>

**Tuesday** - Sweet Darkness, by David Whyte

<https://wordsoftheyear.com/2014/04/17/sweet-darkness-by-david-whyte/>

**Wednesday** - The Winter of Listening, by David Whyte

<https://www.facebook.com/PoetDavidWhyte/photos/a.213444315348246.68208.213407562018588/844107495615255/?type=3&theater>

**Thursday** - Hope, An Owner's Manual, by Barbara Kingsolver

Found [here](#) and

<https://lifeacousticandamplified.wordpress.com/2014/03/19/hope-an-owners-manual-by-barbara-kingsolver/>

**Friday** - Still the Moon Increases, by Nancy Shaffer

<https://simplyblessed.heartsdeesire.com/2013/11/15/still-the-moon-increases/>

**Saturday** - What is Hope?, by Rubem A. Alves, Brazilian liberation theologian

<http://mpleroy-eng.blogspot.com/2004/10/rubem-alves-full-poem.html>

## Your Question

*As always, don't treat these questions like "homework" or a list that needs to be covered in its entirety. Instead, simply pick the one question that speaks to you most and let it lead you where you need to go. The goal of these questions is not to help you analyze what hope means in the abstract, but to figure out what being "a person of hope" means for you and your daily living. So, which question is calling to you? Which one contains "your work," and Life's invitation?*

1. What if your darkness is not the darkness of the tomb, but instead the darkness of the womb? What if this pain of yours is not about death and loss, but new life trying to be born? Could it be that Life - like any good midwife - is calling you to "breathe and push"?
2. Who is hope for you? Whose way of being in the world helps you believe that tomorrow will be better? What are you doing to ensure that their inspiration remains front-and-center rather than faded and far away?
3. What might it mean for you to "be hope"? It's one thing to believe in hope; it's quite another to become it.
4. Are you bringing more hope into the world than you realize? Are you sure that your everyday commitments and work can't be seen as "bringing hope into the world"? If you don't think of your work and commitments in that way, how might life look different if you did?
5. Are you hopeless? Or have you let someone *take away* your hope? Have you allowed someone's betrayal to convince you that the world is darker than it really is?

6. Are you sure hope abandoned you? Or did your *preferred* dream just not occur? What if hope is waiting for you in a new and unexpected form?
7. Why are you keeping your hopes so small? Are you really going to let that past disappointment dictate the size of your dreams?
8. Are you calling yourself a cynic, but really a disappointed idealist underneath? Is your cynicism making you feel sane or suffocated?
9. Is hope trying to sooth your heart or disturb it? Is there a holy impatience inside you that is tired of waiting? Is hope itself telling you, "Stop hoping; Start acting, demanding, doing!"
10. Are you clear about the responsibility we have for our grandchildren's' hopes?
11. What if hope doesn't swoop in and wipe away all the pain? What if hope is you standing squarely inside the pain and saying to it, "You are not the full story"?
12. What's your question? Your question may not be listed above. As always, if the above questions don't include what life is asking from you, spend the month listening to your days to hear it.

## Family Faith Formation

### Books/Readings of Sanctuary

**A Child's Garden: A Story of Hope** by Michael Foreman

<https://www.amazon.com/Childs-Garden-Story-Hope/dp/1406325880>

Master storyteller Michael Foreman has created a timely and moving story of a child creating a garden of hope in the midst of poverty and war. A boy's world is ruin and rubble, with a wire fence and soldiers separating him from the cool hills where his father used to take him as a small child. Can a tiny, green plant shoot give him hope in a bleak landscape?

### Family Activity – Holiday Lanterns

#### Materials

- Regular Mouth Pint 16 oz. Sharing Mason Jars with lids and bands, 4 count
- Regular Mouth Quart 32 oz. Glass Mason Jars, 12 count
- Regular Mouth Half-Pint 8 oz. Glass Mason Jars with lids and bands, 12 count
- heavy-duty yarn
- 3/4 inch or 1-inch circle stickers
- spray paint
- battery-powered LED string lights (not pictured)
- tree trimmings and floral wire (optional)



## Instructions

Start by adding stickers to the outside of the jars in any pattern you like. *Make sure they're smooth against the surface of the jar.* Then remove the lid and spray paint in a well-ventilated area. *I would recommend laying out layers of newspaper outside, turning the jars upside down, and giving all the jars one to two even coats of paint.*

Once dry, remove the stickers from the jar. If any of the stickers are difficult to remove, use a sharp blade. Then, add a couple of long pieces of yarn underneath the lid lip and triple knot them together after wrapping around the lip. Add battery-powered LED string lights inside and close the jar.

## Family Video - The Hope in Lights

### Winter Lights, Niagara Falls, ON

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aJqSawhKz14>

Why do we light lights during the winter holidays? They shine with beauty and remind us that even in the darkness there is hope.

## Movie of Hope

### Star Wars, A New Hope

<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0076759/>

As suggested by Lynn, Topeka, KS

Luke Skywalker joins forces with a Jedi Knight, a cocky pilot, a Wookiee and two droids to save the galaxy from the Empire's world-destroying battle station, while also attempting to rescue Princess Leia from the mysterious Darth Vader.

## Family Activity

### Make Clove Oranges - Orange fruits hold the seeds - for the Winter Solstice.

<https://www.thoughtco.com/yule-pomander-magic-2562946>

The smell of clove and oranges signals the solstice for many! Use a sharp pencil to pre-poke a small hole for the clove.

## Companion Pieces

***Recommended Resources for Exploration and Reflection*** - The below recommended resources are not "required reading." We will not analyze these pieces at our small group meeting. Instead they are here to companion you on your personal journey this month, get your thinking started, and open you to new ways of thinking about what it means to be part of a people of HOPE.

## Word Roots

From Old English/Frisian *hopa* meaning to wish for, to desire, to have confidence in the future. The word despair comes from the Latin root *de* - without, and *sper* - hope.



## Wise Words

### **Hope by Lisel Mueller**

Full poem found [here](#)

“...It is the singular gift  
we cannot destroy in ourselves,  
the argument that refutes death,  
the genius that invents the future,  
all we know of God.

It is the serum which makes us swear  
not to betray one another;  
it is in this poem, trying to speak.”

Hope begins in the dark, it's a stubborn hope that if you just show up and try to do the right thing, the dawn will come. You wait and watch *and work!* - *Anne Lamott*

Hope has to be seen to be believed. It has to be made visible. It has to be something we can feel and touch. We are called to be persons who embody hope for one another. We have to be each other's partners in hope. - *Paul Wadell, theologian*

Critical thinking without hope is cynicism. Hope without critical thinking is naïveté. - *Maria Popava*

Hope is the salve that keeps our broken hearts soft. - *Ann Voskamp*

Despair is anger with no place to go. Hope is the feeling we have that the feeling we have is not permanent. - *Mignon McLaughlin*

The Sun will rise and set regardless. What we choose to do with the light while it's here is up to us. Journey wisely. - *Alexandra Elle*

Hope also has something to do with presence -- not a future good outcome, but the immediate experience of being met, held in communion, by something intimately at hand. - *Cynthia Bourgeault*

There is something compelling about the fact that Christmas comes, no matter what. The celebration of the birth of Jesus comes, no matter the season of your heart. The Prince of Peace, the baby that would bring a message of universal equality, compassion, forgiveness, and love is reborn again and again and again, no matter our state-of-mind or being...indeed, in spite of it. Perhaps that is the real miracle of the season, that hope and possibility cannot be denied. - *Cynthia Frado*

You can cut all the flowers but you cannot keep Spring from coming. - *Pablo Neruda*

**Sweet Darkness** - *David Whyte* - Full poem found [here](#)

“When your eyes are tired



the world is tired also.  
When your vision has gone  
no part of the world can find you.  
Time to go into the dark  
where the night has eyes  
to recognize its own.  
There you can be sure  
you are not beyond love..."

**The Winter of Listening** - *David Whyte* - Full poem found [here](#)

"...What disturbs  
and then nourishes  
has everything  
we need..."

The day widened, pulled from both ends by the shrinking dark, as if darkness itself were a pair of hands and daylight a skein between them, a flexible membrane, and the hands that had pressed together all winter — praying, paralyzed with foreboding — now flung wide open. *Annie Dillard*

Hope is a touch of graceful humor, no matter what's occurring. The ability to laugh, the ability to see the ridiculous, the ability not to tense up too much, when things become impossible, just to face them anyhow. A touch of humor. Let's say laughter through the flame... That's hope: Humor, guts, and courage, no matter the odds. *Charles Bukowski*

Everyone has been hurt. Many people have been hurt so deeply that their scars are vivid reminders of visceral pain. Yet, not everyone walks around with a vocal and audacious negativity that can be harmful to others. What you're blaring to the world through a megaphone when you are openly and ceaselessly cynical is that you are fundamentally wounded; that you are so hurt, you still aren't capable of doing the work required to heal yourself. People don't naturally gravitate towards cynicism without some negative experience (or many) precipitating their response. So when you've been disappointed or hurt or let down, you use cynicism as a defense mechanism to protect yourself from being hurt again. The funny thing is, to anyone really listening, you're doing just that. *Serene Hitchcock, Cynicism Hides Hurt*

Scratch a cynic and you will find a disappointed idealist. *George Carlin*

For comfortably situated people, hopelessness means cynicism and letting oneself off the hook. If everything is doomed, then nothing is required. *Rebecca Solnit, [The Case for Hope](#)*

The danger of hopelessness 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. *Rev. Sean Parker Dennison*

Everything changes: there lies most of our hope and some of our fear.... If you take the long view, you'll see how startlingly, how unexpectedly but regularly things change. Not by magic, but by the incremental effect of countless acts of courage, love, and commitment, the small drops that wear away stones and carve new landscapes, and sometimes by torrents of popular will that change the

world suddenly. To say that is not to say that it will all come out fine in the end regardless. I'm just telling you that everything is in motion, and sometimes we are ourselves that movement. *Rebecca Solnit, [The Case for Hope](#)*

Despair is often premature: it's a form of impatience as well as certainty. My favorite comment about political change comes from Zhou En-Lai, the premier of the People's Republic of China under Chairman Mao. Asked in the early 1970s about his opinion of the French Revolution, he reportedly answered, "Too soon to tell." *Rebecca Solnit, [The Case for Hope](#)*

Faith, wherever it develops into hope, causes not rest but unrest, not patience but impatience. It does not calm the unquiet heart, but is itself this unquiet heart in [all of us]. Those who hope...can no longer put up with reality as it is, but begin to suffer under it, to contradict it. [True hope] means conflict with the world, for the goad of the promised future stabs inexorably into the flesh of every unfulfilled present." *Jürgen Moltmann, [Theology of Hope](#)*

The message of the Incarnation is not to behold an innocent baby resplendent in inertia, but rather to take sides with a God who agitates for reform and shatters the status quo. *Doris Donnelly*

Change and hope come from the margins. *Krista Tippett*

**What is Hope?** *Rubem A. Alves, Brazilian liberation theologian* Full poem found here: <http://mpleroy-eng.blogspot.com/2004/10/rubem-alves-full-poem.html>

"It is a presentiment that imagination is more real and reality less real than it looks.  
It is a hunch  
that the overwhelming brutality of facts  
that oppress and repress is not the last word.  
It is a suspicion  
that reality is more complex  
than realism wants us to believe  
and that the frontiers of the possible  
are not determined by the limits of the actual..."

Living hopefully is not devoid of pain. Living hopefully means residing squarely inside of pain, naming it as real and still saying to it "You're not the only story to tell." *Moral courage [video](#)*

To be hopeful in bad times is not just foolishly romantic. It is based on the fact that human history is a history not only of cruelty, but also of compassion, sacrifice, courage, kindness. What we choose to emphasize in this complex history will determine our lives. If we see only the worst, it destroys our capacity to do something. If we remember those times and places – and there are so many – where people have behaved magnificently, this gives us the energy to act and at least the possibility of sending this spinning top of a world in a different direction. And if we do act, in however small a way, we don't have to wait for some grand utopian future. The future is an infinite succession of presents, and to live now as we think human beings should live, in defiance of all that is bad around us, is itself a marvelous victory. *Howard Zinn*

Look at the facts of the world. You see a continual and progressive triumph of the good. I do not pretend to understand the moral universe; the arc is a long one, my eye reaches but little ways; I cannot calculate the curve and complete the figure by the experience of sight; I can divine it by conscience. And from what I see I am sure it bends towards justice. *Theodore Parker*

Hope comes from looking back and knowing we are on that arc... *Hope comes from looking forward and knowing can we harness the collective power of [the community around us]...*  
Hope comes from looking [deeply] and knowing we can change, and grow. *Rev. Jay Wolin*

“We are not saints, we are not heroes. Our lives are lived in the quiet corners of the ordinary. We build tiny hearth fires, sometimes barely strong enough to give off warmth. But to the person lost in the darkness, our tiny flame may be the road to safety, the path to salvation. It is not given us to know who is lost in the darkness that surrounds us or even if our light is seen. We can only know that against even the smallest of lights, darkness cannot stand. A sailor lost at sea can be guided home by a single candle. A person lost in a wood can be led to safety by a flickering flame. It is not an issue of quality or intensity or purity. It is simply an issue of the presence of light.” *Kent Nerburn*

“Agent Smith: “Why, Mr. Anderson? Why do you do it? Why get up? Why keep fighting? Do you believe you're fighting for something? For more than your survival? Can you tell me what it is? Do you even know? Is it freedom? Or truth? Perhaps peace? Could it be for love? Illusions, Mr. Anderson. Vagaries of perception. The temporary constructs of a feeble human intellect trying desperately to justify an existence that is without meaning or purpose. And all of them as artificial as the Matrix itself. Although, only a human mind could invent something as insipid as love. You must be able to see it, Mr. Anderson. You must know it by now. You can't win. It's pointless to keep fighting. Why, Mr. Anderson, Why? Why do you persist? “

Neo (“Mr. Anderson”): “Because I choose to.” *From the movie, Matrix Revolutions*

Don't think that your hopes are too audacious. God's hopes for the world are even more audacious than you can imagine. Mary thought it audacious that God should choose her to carry God's hope for the world, but it was true. The same is true of us. *Steve Garnaas-Holmes, [unfolding light](#)*

Hope opens us to the future but releases us into the present. Advent draws our eyes toward the horizon as we watch and wait for the Christ who comes to us... Instead of luring us away from the present, however, Advent invites us more deeply into it, where the kingdom of God is at work even now. This is the nature of the hope that Advent cultivates in us. Rich with memory and infused with expectation, hope calls and enables us to work here and now, in company with the [Sacred that] is already about the work of heaven in our midst. *Jan Richardson, from Circle of Grace*

Advent is a season that seeks to build a world fit for the arrival of a child. *Rev. Dwight Welch*

The season of Advent means there is something on the horizon the likes of which we have never seen before... .What is possible is to not see it, to miss it, to turn just as it brushes past you. And you begin to grasp what it was you missed, like Moses in the cleft of the rock, watching God's [back] fade in the distance. So stay. Sit. Linger. Tarry. Ponder. Wait. Behold.

Wonder. There will be time enough for running. For rushing. For worrying. For pushing. For now, stay. Wait. Something is on the horizon. *Jan L. Richardson, Night Visions: Searching the Shadows of Advent and Christmas*

Advent: the time to listen for footsteps – you can't hear footsteps when you're running yourself.  
*Bill McKibben*

Advent is a time of anticipation and waiting... [but it] is not the silencing and oppressive, "Wait," told to the activist, but rather the internal preparation of holding stillness and building strength before action. If we need to wait, let it be the waiting of a farmer who knows that deep below the earth, her seeds are sprouting their roots. Let it be the waiting of a musician, who knows to count to just the right moment to strike the bell. Let it be the waiting of self-care, knowing that one's body and spirit needs times of activity, and times of rest, in order to be effective. *Rev. Christina Shu*

I still value hope, but I see it as only part of what's required, a starting point. Think of it as the match but not the tinder or the blaze. To matter, to change the world, you also need devotion and will and you need to act. Hope is only where it begins. *Rebecca Solnit, from [The Case for Hope](#)*

## Songs and Music

**A Change Is Gonna Come** - *Sam Cooke*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wEBlaMOmKV4&index=2&list=RDRGSMxW4Ngtw>

**We Shall Overcome** - *Mahalia Jackson*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vTyKJjj2oC0>

**Tyrants Always Fall** - *The Nields*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y3MSLms3TAo>

**One Day** - *Matisyahu*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WRmBChQjZPs>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cXACMQtuuZI> (acoustic)

**Bird of Sorrow** - *Glen Hansard*

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?time\\_continue=229&v=QzgiTVPLZ00](https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=229&v=QzgiTVPLZ00)

"Even if a day feels too long,  
and you feel like you can't wait another one  
and you're slowly giving up on everything,  
love is gonna find you again  
Love is gonna find you, you'd better be ready then..."

**Hey World (Don't Give Up)** - *Michael Franti*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZMdQbLoKehE>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O-oETzPKRX8> (acoustic)

"Hey world, what you say  
Should I stick around for another day or two?  
Don't give up on me, I won't give up on you"

Just believe in me like I believe in you..."

**I Hope - Dixie Chicks**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Lm2TtsLHUYs>

**Here Comes the Sun - The Beatles**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bgiQD56eWDk>

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XANF\\_jUS3OI](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XANF_jUS3OI) (Nina Simone Cover)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=357gZV2Nfsk> (Richie Havens cover)

**Sunshine - Ryan Bingham**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=it2LJS6gSS8&feature=youtu.be>

**Dog Days Are Over - Florence + The Machine**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UwrfZ5hnhhc>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0HuYEOO2r1g> (offering the song as a gift)

"Happiness, hit her like a train on a track..."

The dog days are over

The dog days are done..."

## Seasonal Songs

**Within Our Darkest Night You Kindle A Fire that Never Dies Away Charles Pope - Taize**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EqQsZK57OX8>

**The Christians and the Pagans - Dar Williams**

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t\\_KiHRHwaAs](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t_KiHRHwaAs)

Interview about the song:

[http://www.slate.com/blogs/outward/2015/12/24/dar\\_williams\\_explains\\_how\\_the\\_christians\\_and\\_the\\_pagans\\_became\\_a\\_holiday.html](http://www.slate.com/blogs/outward/2015/12/24/dar_williams_explains_how_the_christians_and_the_pagans_became_a_holiday.html)

**Solstice Carole - Wyrld Sisters**

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3T0i4akX5a8&list=RDt\\_KiHRHwaAs&index=3](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3T0i4akX5a8&list=RDt_KiHRHwaAs&index=3)

**Solstice Night - S J Tucker**

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tNk-ZeDMQDU&list=RDt\\_KiHRHwaAs&index=31](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tNk-ZeDMQDU&list=RDt_KiHRHwaAs&index=31)

"Our hearts bring back the light as all the earth must do. May stars fill up our sight with wishes coming true..."

## Videos

**Whether You Believe You Can or Believe You Can't, You're Right! Kyle Maynard - Big Think**

<http://bigthink.com/videos/kyle-maynard-how-to-loosen-the-grip-of-fear-and-doubt>

"When you have hope, you start looking for all the evidence as to why you are going to succeed; when you lack hope, then you start looking for all the reason as to why you're going to fail."

**The Hopeful Darkness of the Womb - Valarie Kaur at Watch Night Service 2016**

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?time\\_continue=59&v=LCenwgheIBs](https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=59&v=LCenwgheIBs)

“The future is dark. But my faith dares me to ask: What if this darkness is not the darkness of the tomb, but the darkness of the womb?...”

**Beyond Hope** - *Derrick Jenson*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=58tWEaqZ-GM>

Reaching beyond hope to commitment

**I Believe in Hope!** (some explicit language) - *Joanna Hoffman*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qis1WwQ9miw>

“The truth is I pretend to be a cynic but I am really a dreamer who is terrified of wanting something she may never get...” Maybe hope is stupid

**What Is Advent Again?**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QSsMq6UXXwo&list=RDfwssGB1RZvo&index=28>

**The Hope for a More Simple & Meaningful Christmas**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jtyA5bKvCIU&index=27&list=RDfwssGB1RZvo>

## Podcasts

**A Time of Hope: Finding hope and beauty in Afghanistan** - *The Moth*

[http://player.themoth.org/#/?actionType=ADD\\_AND\\_PLAY&storyId=1602](http://player.themoth.org/#/?actionType=ADD_AND_PLAY&storyId=1602)

“No matter what they say, there is music!” A story about when the music began again.

## Articles

**The Place Beyond Fear and Hope** - *Margaret Wheatley*

<http://berkana.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/09/BeyondHopeandFear.pdf>

“Rudolf Bahro, a prominent German activist and iconoclast, describes the first step: “When the forms of an old culture are dying, the new culture is created by a few people who are not afraid to be insecure.” ... I don’t know what Bahro meant by “insecure”; however, I’ve noted that those who endure, who have stamina for the long haul and become wiser in their actions over time, are those who are not attached to outcomes. They don’t seek security in plans or accomplishments. They exchange certainty for curiosity, fear for generosity. They plunge into the problem, treat their attempts as experiments, and learn as they go. This kind of insecurity is energizing...”

**Reflection: We’ve Hoped Our Way Into Our Current Crisis** - *Miguel Clark Mallet*

<https://onbeing.org/blog/miguel-clark-mallet-weve-hoped-our-way-into-our-current-crisis/>

“We’re urged to embrace hope as an antidote. Hope for a brighter day. Hope for justice. Hope for peace. Hope that compassion will win out. But speaking for myself, I’m giving up hope. Not that I don’t understand the impulse. It’s tempting to think that looking to the future will get me through hardship. But in my life’s struggles, hope hasn’t worked out that way. Too often hope has hardened into anticipation and expectation for specific outcomes...”



## Books

### **Hope in the Dark: Untold Histories, Wild Possibilities** - *Rebecca Solnit*

Essay from the book found [here](#)

### **Darkness Before Dawn: Redefining the Journey Through Depression** - *Tami Simon (Editor)*

Excerpt found [here](#) - interview with Parker Palmer:

### **The Warmth of Other Suns: The Epic Story of America's Great Migration** - *Isabel Wilkerson*

Review: <https://www.theguardian.com/books/booksblog/2016/sep/08/books-to-give-you-hope-the-warmth-of-other-suns-by-isabel-wilkerson>

### **The Handmaid's Tale** - *Margaret Atwood*

Review: <https://www.theguardian.com/books/booksblog/2016/aug/29/books-to-give-you-hope-the-handmaids-tale-by-margaret-atwood>

## Movies and Television

### **The Shawshank Redemption**

[https://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/shawshank\\_redemption](https://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/shawshank_redemption)

Andy says to Red, his friend and fellow prisoner, "You need it so you don't forget there are things in this world not carved out of gray stone. There is something inside that they can't get to - they can't touch - it's yours."

Red asks, "What are you talking about?"

Andy replies, "Hope."

### **Time to Choose**

[https://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/time\\_to\\_choose](https://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/time_to_choose)

"A hopeful and helpful look at the positive efforts all around the world to stop the progression of climate change."

### **Children of Men**

[https://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/children\\_of\\_men](https://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/children_of_men)

### **Places in the Heart**

[https://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/places\\_in\\_the\\_heart](https://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/places_in_the_heart)

### **Love Actually**

[https://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/love\\_actually](https://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/love_actually)

### **Hope Springs**

[https://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/hope\\_springs\\_2012](https://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/hope_springs_2012)



## Future Themes

Theme packets will be posted to our website, [surreyunitarians.ca](http://surreyunitarians.ca), on the Thursday prior to the theme starting. If you'd like to join a small group, please contact Rev. Samaya. Small groups typically meet:

- the third Monday evening of each month (except in November when the group will meet on the last Monday evening of the month); and
- the fourth Wednesday afternoon of each month.

Themes for the 2019-2020 year are:

September and October – What does it mean to be a people of sanctuary?

November and December – What does it mean to be a people of hope?

January and February– What does it mean to be a people of trust?

March and April– What does it mean to be a people of wholeness?

May and June– What does it mean to be a people of blessings?