

Transcript 01/03/2021 "Our Hopes for 2021"

00:07

[Music]

00:20

sunday morning

00:22

i heard the preacher say

00:27

thou shalt not kill you

00:31

i don't wanna

00:34

hear nothing else

00:37

about killing and that it's god's will

00:45

[Music]

00:56

a history and do it differently

01:04

i hope for more love more

01:08

joy and love i hope

01:11

we'll have more than you'll ever need

01:15

i hope we'll have more

01:18

happy ever after i hope

01:22

we can all live more fearlessly

01:26

[Music]

01:38

rosie

01:44

that's all she can say

01:49

is he's a good man and he don't

01:53

him no harm he was just brought up that

01:58

away

02:01

but our children are watching

02:05

us they put their trust in us

02:08

they're gonna be like us

02:12

don't care for us to disagree

02:16

we can work it out

02:20

lovingly

02:24

i hope for more love more

02:27

joy and laughter i hope

02:31

you'll have more than you'll ever need

02:37

[Music]

02:45

and you can lose all your

02:53

[Music]

02:58

there must be a way

03:01

to change

03:05

[Music]

03:09

no i don't have all the answers

03:17

i hope for more love

03:20

more joy laughter i

03:23

hope you'll have more than your level

03:27

needs

03:28

i hope you'll have more happy ever after

03:33

i hope we can all live more

03:37

fearlessly and you can't lose all your

03:41

pain and

03:45

i misery i hope

03:48

and we can lose all the

03:52

pain and misery

04:10

good morning welcome to the unitarian

04:13

universalist church of utica

04:15

i'm paul tanerwicz and i'm the president

04:17

of the board of trustees

04:19

whether you're visiting here for the

04:20

first time or been a member

04:22

for many years you're welcome here

04:25

whatever faiths you have known if any

04:27

you are welcome here whoever you are and

04:30

whoever you love you are welcome here

04:32

we are invited to bring our whole selves

04:34

to the worship service
04:36
our doubts as well as our convictions
04:39
the pain
04:39
and the joy we have known are longing
04:42
for connection and understanding
04:44
every part of you is welcome here if
04:47
you're signing in
04:48
today for the first time we're glad that
04:51
you've joined us
04:52
we would like to learn more about you
04:54
and connect you with our newsletter
04:56
if you like there is a link in the chat
04:59
to a form that we hope our visitors
05:01
would fill out
05:02
and we hope you'll stay for informal
05:03
conversation and break out groups
05:05
after the service we have a couple
05:07
announcements today
05:09
first one is next sunday yuyu utica is
05:12
invited to join uu congregation of upper
05:14

valley

05:15

this means watch for a different zoom

05:17

link and be aware that the service will

05:19

be at 10 a.m

05:21

and our second announcement is that

05:23

reverend laurie stabbitz is starting

05:25

with us today

05:26

and will be part of the service and

05:29

please give a warm welcome to laurie

05:43

let us open our hearts and minds to the

05:45

experience of community and the wisdom

05:46

of love

05:58

[Music]

08:14

good morning everybody you know this

08:16

hour we come together to renew our faith

08:19

and

08:20

in the wholeness and the goodness and

08:22

the beauty of life and that is a

08:24

difficult task with some of the the bad

08:27

news that surrounds us

08:28

but let's come here together this

08:31

morning

08:32

to create a space where hope can

08:36

flourish

08:37

because it will we will need that hope

08:39

um

08:40

if we are going to move forward into

08:42

this new year together with

08:44

any kind of a future um that is joyful

08:48

and meaningful so come let us worship

08:50

together

08:51

and let's join in our opening hymn

08:54

number 108.

08:55

um my life flows on an endless song and

08:58

everyone will be muted but i

09:00

i know that you many of you know this

09:03

this is a very dear hymn for us

09:05

and a great way to start the new year

09:08

so please sing out as loud as she can

09:11

even though we will be muted

09:22

[Music]

09:34

is

09:38

[Music]

09:44

[Laughter]

09:46

[Music]

09:58

how can i keep from

10:08

i know the truth

10:18

[Music]

10:30

i'm

10:35

heaven and earth

10:47

[Music]

10:56

how can i keep them

11:01

[Music]

11:25

make sure you see the chalice

11:37

the chalice

11:41

in the soft light of this flame may our

11:43

lives

11:44

shimmer anew may we notice new

11:46

possibility in those relationships that

11:48

seem lost

11:50

may the turning of year give birth to a
11:53
dream
11:54
may the emerging light pull a new story
11:56
into view
11:58
may what is give way to what might be
12:01
may we believe again in the world we
12:04
imagine
12:06
no one needs to tell you what a terrible
12:08
year 2020 was
12:10
but i'm going to anyway very briefly
12:13
a pandemic claimed 2 million lives
12:16
worldwide
12:17
tens of millions of americans lost their
12:19
jobs and livelihoods
12:21
in the largest protests in u.s history
12:24
people of all colors filled american
12:25
streets to demand racial justice
12:28
a bitter presidential election drove
12:30
even deeper wedges between us
12:33
in fact 2020 was so monumentally bad
12:36

that the only that the the third

12:38

presidential impeachment in u.s history

12:40

ranks about the 10th biggest story of

12:42

the year

12:43

but now 2020 is hindsight a new year has

12:47

dawned

12:48

and it looks a little bit like the old

12:49

year but give it time

12:51

we are on the cusp of a brighter year

12:53

many years we hope

12:55

already we have ministered millions of

12:58

doses of vaccine that hold the promise

13:00

of controlling this pandemic the economy

13:03

is slowly rebounding

13:04

and will get better as the virus recedes

13:07

we have shined a brighter spotlight on

13:09

racial and economic inequities

13:12

and we will hopefully see those gaps

13:13

narrowed

13:15

in a few minutes during community

13:17

candles we're going to open the virtual
13:19
floor for all of you
13:20
to offer your hopes for 2021 and beyond
13:23
but let me prime the pump first by
13:25
telling you one of mine
13:28
as a science journalist i have devoted
13:29
my life to the belief that finding and
13:32
broadcasting truth
13:34
are noble and necessary pursuits in the
13:37
past few years i have been dismayed by
13:39
the declining respect for science
13:41
and the continued attacks on a free
13:43
press
13:44
but i am optimistic that new national
13:46
leadership in a new year
13:48
will begin to restore our trust in
13:49
science i hope that saying someone
13:52
listens to the scientists becomes not an
13:54
insult but a compliment
13:57
i hope the journalists are no longer
13:58

called the enemy but as the watchdogs we

14:01

are

14:02

holding the powerful accountable and

14:04

amplifying the voices of those who have

14:06

been shunted

14:07

to society's back corners in a few

14:10

minutes carol will give

14:11

her hopes for 2021 and when it's time to

14:14

hear community candles

14:16

we'd like you to offer yours but first

14:19

melissa will bring us a message of hope

14:20

and inspiration

14:24

so i am here to talk to our young and

14:27

young at heart wherever you might fall

14:30

on that spectrum

14:31

about something that's really really

14:34

powerful

14:35

and that's hope but first i want you to

14:38

think about

14:40

have you ever hoped for something

14:44

and did that thing you hoped for

14:48

happen was the last time you

14:52

hoped something would happen did it

14:54

happen

14:55

did it not happen so now you've got that

14:58

in your mind

15:00

i want to think about hope

15:03

a little bit like these

15:08

so imagine that that many of you

15:11

recognize

15:12

these you see them on the ground around

15:14

you

15:15

in the fall if you're anywhere in

15:18

anywhere near my part of south utica the

15:20

streets are aligned with them

15:22

somewhat literally these are acorns

15:27

so what do you think this acorn

15:31

hopes to be someday have you ever

15:33

thought of an acorn having hope

15:36

well acorns we know grow up typically to

15:39

be

15:40

oak trees so we could say acorn hopes to

15:42

be an oak tree

15:43

but now here's why acorns remind me

15:47

of hope what if i just take the acorns

15:50

and i put them right here on a table and

15:54

i just left it

15:54

i walked away from it would it have any

15:57

hope of becoming an

15:58

oak tree from the bottom of my from the

16:01

top of my table

16:04

now i know we don't have a lot of our

16:06

young folks on here

16:08

but think about it and you can shake

16:10

your head at me what do you think do you

16:11

think an

16:11

oak an acorn can become an oak tree from

16:13

a table

16:15

oh i don't think so either corns aren't

16:17

becoming an oak tree from a table

16:18

so acorns need more things than that

16:21

they can hope to become an oak tree

16:23

but we got to give it some place to live

16:26

it's got to have a good

16:28

grassy soil to find its place into

16:32

when it starts to grow it's gonna need

16:36

rain water to help it start to

16:39

pick up and have the nutrients

16:43

that it needs we need to make sure it

16:47

has

16:47

plenty of sunshine to give it energy

16:52

and then once it gets all of those

16:55

things

16:58

then it gets to become an oak tree

17:01

and like acorns our hope needs other

17:03

things to come to life

17:05

we start with our imaginations which

17:07

what we're doing today we are

17:08

imagining the things that we're hoping

17:11

for

17:12

so we're going to ask you to shoot

17:14

people to share their hopes later take a

17:15

moment

17:16

maybe even close your eyes and imagine

17:19

something

17:21

you'd hope for think about what it looks

17:24

like

17:24

and what it would be and what it would

17:27

take

17:28

and your hopes are just like acorns they

17:31

need a little work

17:32

and care and action and help and luck

17:36

to really become to life

17:40

but with all of those things an acorn

17:43

can become an oak tree and your hopes

17:47

can become what you imagine them to be

17:50

and of course could you ever have an oak

17:52

tree

17:53

without first having the acorn no

17:56

of course not and so in the same way if

17:59

we want things to happen to be done

18:02

everything starts with hope with our

18:05

imagination of what we think things can

18:08

be

18:09

and then our actions to help it grow to

18:12

life

18:13

and become a great big tree and that

18:16

is the power of hope

18:26

thank you melissa that's just a very um

18:29

apropos subject for us today as we start

18:33

the new year

18:34

um no matter how old we are the messages

18:37

for all ages is is an important part of

18:40

the service it is for me anyway so thank

18:42

you for that

18:46

so in these times i think it's easy to

18:49

believe in scarcity

18:51

um that there isn't enough there's not

18:53

enough to go around

18:55

and whatever resources we do have

18:58

we need to hold tight um perhaps

19:02

put them in reserve not only for

19:04

ourselves but maybe some family members

19:07

and that may be very true for your

19:10

family

19:10

but i do believe that we have a great

19:13

deal more

19:15

um to to give than we may we may think

19:19

and so

19:20

um i think it is precisely

19:23

in the times that are the toughest

19:26

that um giving provides a way

19:29

to strengthen community and to provide a

19:32

path

19:33

forward um for healing for restoration

19:36

and for renewal

19:38

and so with that we will now receive our

19:41

morning offering

19:44

i have so many hopes for 2021 it's hard

19:46

to know

19:47

where to begin i have hopes for myself
19:51
my sons and their friends for our
19:53
congregation
19:55
for utica and the surrounding community
19:57
for our country
19:58
for our world and on and on
20:02
where to begin let me offer that i
20:07
hope we don't go back to normal i hope
20:10
that this year has taught us that we
20:11
need to pay attention to policies and
20:14
politics
20:15
science the earth and its inhabitants
20:19
and that we need to speak up for justice
20:21
kindness
20:23
children future generations immigrants
20:25
species that are disappearing from our
20:27
planet
20:29
i hope we don't become cynical from all
20:31
the injustices we've observed
20:33
especially this most most outrageous one
20:37

that we've seen this past year and we'll
20:39
likely see in the week ahead
20:41
i hope we begin to create a community a
20:44
country
20:45
a world that is based on uu principles
20:47
such as inherent worth and dignity
20:49
each person justice equity and
20:52
compassion in all human relations
20:55
peace a respect for the interdependent
20:57
web of existence
21:00
i hope that i find the energy and the
21:02
commitment to do this work
21:04
and that you will too that is what i
21:07
hope
21:09
after some music we will practice
21:11
community candles which is an
21:12
opportunity for the congregation to be
21:14
with one another as we mark notable
21:16
things happening in our lives
21:18
and as part of this new year service we
21:20

also want to invite you to share your

21:22

hopes for the year

21:24

think about what you're hopeful for as

21:26

this music plays and if you like you can

21:28

put your hopes in the chat

21:30

when the music has ended you can choose

21:32

to unmute and speak your hopes out loud

22:15

[Music]

24:04

it's really lovely to be back here with

24:06

you again

24:07

i served briefly um last

24:10

march um for about three weeks and got

24:13

to know some of you

24:15

so um i just really feel honored and

24:18

uh and grateful that you've invited me

24:21

back

24:22

to to be with you during this very

24:24

important time

24:25

you know we've all come through the

24:26

portals of this new year

24:29

and many of us um as we have already

24:31

heard are

24:32

all too eager to leave uh 2020 behind

24:37

interestingly enough that the name for

24:40

this month

24:41

january comes from the roman god janus

24:44

and janice is two-faced um

24:48

not in the negative way but um janice's

24:51

one face looks to the past

24:54

and the other face looks to the future

24:57

um and the time-honored traditions that

25:00

we have around new year's with new

25:02

year's resolutions

25:04

is to look to the past to to assess

25:07

where we are um how we've done

25:10

um whether or not we you know

25:13

made it through our to-do list and then

25:17

to set it right to uh

25:20

to begin again and get committed

25:23

to making changes but psychologists will

25:27

tell us that
25:28
this kind of self-reflection
25:30
self-knowledge
25:32
has its limits that knowledge
25:35
um in is is insufficient alone
25:38
for any kind of real change which is
25:41
kind of an interesting thing we
25:43
usually believe that if we if we learn
25:45
about something and we know it and we
25:47
integrate it that
25:48
you know that is that is going to be
25:51
enough
25:52
but knowledge as expertise as
25:55
skill building or theoretical or
25:58
practical
25:58
understanding is really only one form of
26:02
knowing
26:04
it was out it was albert einstein
26:08
of all people who said imagination
26:12
is more important than knowledge
26:16

for knowledge defines our current
26:18
understanding
26:19
but imagination points to what we might
26:23
be what we might create
26:28
so this time of year
26:31
um as we've moved out of the
26:35
holiday season of christmas and hanukkah
26:39
the christian tradition of epiphany
26:42
continues
26:43
because the story the nativity story
26:45
continues
26:47
the wise ones the wise men the magi um
26:52
do not find chris the christ child
26:56
on christmas eve they actually find
26:59
um baby jesus in the manger um
27:02
many days months who knows maybe even
27:05
many years
27:06
later but they finally come upon baby
27:09
jesus
27:10
and um it marks a celebration
27:13

epiphany is the recognition
27:17
of the divine nature of that child
27:22
an awareness an aha moment that they
27:25
came away from
27:27
and departed and could never be the same
27:30
again the experience of epiphany has
27:34
broad implications
27:36
um it is defined by a sudden realization
27:40
a um some kind of the essence of meaning
27:44
coming from an event and this can be
27:48
it doesn't have to even be something
27:49
special it can be a mundane event
27:52
pouring a cup of coffee and and smelling
27:55
and having this great awareness about
27:58
something much larger than just that cup
28:00
of coffee
28:01
the aha moments are comprehension of
28:04
perception
28:05
of something that provides us with an
28:08
intuitive insight
28:09

and in a sense a profound meaning
28:14
you know many of us have had
28:17
something like an epiphany moments of
28:21
revelation
28:22
sudden realizations um but
28:26
the the thing that distinguishes
28:28
epiphany
28:30
from personal revelation or just um
28:34
personal insight is that it carries a
28:36
responsibility
28:38
to share epiphany
28:41
is meant to be shared
28:47
new orleans i learned a little bit more
28:49
about the celebrations and traditions
28:51
around
28:51
epiphany because after
28:55
um in new orleans um
28:58
this this epiphany is celebrated all the
29:01
way to mardi gras
29:03
by the baking of king cakes and so there
29:06

these are sweet breads that are in a
29:08
ring
29:09
and they're baked and there's a little
29:12
plastic
29:13
baby jesus baked into the bread and then
29:17
the cake is decorated with uh purple
29:20
and green sprinkles and a little
29:22
frosting and
29:23
you were invited to a king cake
29:27
party it could be in a home it could be
29:29
in an office
29:31
um these things just go on it is
29:34
it's something that just goes on and on
29:36
and on so you could be eating king cake
29:39
basically right after christmas all the
29:42
way through to lent
29:45
the idea of this um
29:50
is that if you are the one who is lucky
29:53
enough
29:54
to get this baby jesus in your piece of
29:58

cake you become responsible

30:01

for hosting or hostessing the next king

30:04

cake party

30:05

and it should happen within a few days

30:08

or

30:09

within that week so the idea of epiphany

30:14

is is a bit of fun that speaks to the

30:16

elements of

30:17

both surprise and revelation and also

30:21

obligation of sharing what is revealed

30:27

epiphany is not confined to the

30:30

christian

30:31

tradition and story we know from the

30:34

story of buddhism

30:36

with the enlightenment moment siddhartha

30:38

gautama had

30:40

as he became the buddha under the tree

30:43

the bodhi tree with

30:45

with what is now called nirvana

30:48

is very similar to um what

30:52

people call an epiphany judaism
30:56
we have moses goes up to the mountain he
30:59
brings down the ten commandments and
31:02
while he's there he has
31:04
this moment of awe and wonder in
31:07
revelation
31:08
and we see that the prophet muhammad in
31:11
islam
31:12
same kind of thing this kind of
31:14
revelatory
31:16
moment where there's this reception he
31:18
goes on to write the quran
31:20
in each one of these experiences
31:24
these um religious leaders
31:27
are compelled to share what they
31:30
what they know the kind of knowing that
31:34
comes
31:34
from epiphany but you know we don't
31:38
really need
31:38
religious traditions or religious
31:42

observances to enter into these kinds of

31:46

awareness

31:46

in fact annie dillard uh is a nature

31:50

writer

31:51

and she points to these the special

31:54

moment of awareness

31:56

in her book pilgrim at tinker creek

32:00

and she starts out by telling us about a

32:03

a child who was born blind who had

32:06

operation to correct her vision

32:09

and she says this she says when the

32:12

doctor took the bandages off

32:14

and led her into the garden

32:18

the girl who was no longer blind

32:21

saw the trees with the lights in it

32:26

she saw not only the tree but every

32:28

varying

32:29

shade of green and the glimmer of light

32:32

that played upon

32:33

each leaf

32:37

annie dillard goes on to say this it was

32:40

for

32:40

this tree i searched through the peach

32:43

orchards of summer

32:46

in the forests of fall and down winter

32:48

and spring

32:49

for years

32:54

until one day i was walking along

32:58

tinker creek thinking of nothing

33:01

in particular at all when i saw

33:04

the tree with the lights in it

33:08

and it was less like seeing than being

33:12

seen for the first time and i was

33:15

not breathless by a powerful grace

33:26

most of us yearn to be knocked

33:28

breathless

33:29

by something so profoundly beautiful

33:34

barbara brown taylor wrote in the

33:36

christian century she said

33:37

when i resist the economy and despair

33:40

the dominant world
33:42
that we live in i resist from a minority
33:47
viewpoint that i learned in church there
33:52
are many kinds of evangelism i know
33:54
but here is one i can embrace in a
33:57
culture of fear
33:59
addicted to bad news to sin to death
34:04
to keep telling stories of human
34:06
kindness
34:08
and divine grace without commercials of
34:11
any kind
34:13
in a world like ours the church may be
34:17
the only corporate sponsor that it can
34:20
afford to deliver such good news for
34:22
free
34:24
and i do believe that's why we are here
34:27
together this morning
34:29
to keep that kind
34:32
of space alive
34:38
and perhaps you're showing up here this
34:40

morning

34:41

without much enthusiasm for that maybe

34:45

this past year has

34:47

in and even the year before has taken

34:50

so much from you that it's hard to even

34:52

muster

34:53

any sense of hope or any sense of

34:57

opening to wonder or to joy

35:01

and it's the faith community you have

35:03

had to say goodbye to

35:05

your new minister and all of the promise

35:09

and the hope that you invested in the

35:12

process

35:14

of coming together and then the grief of

35:17

that departure

35:19

but it's ministry that brings me here

35:22

with you in the time that we'll have

35:26

together

35:28

um the targeted ministry program

35:32

is new it's a way of just having a short

35:35

term relationship which targets
35:39
very specific elements of ministry
35:43
and relationship to the minister to
35:45
explore
35:46
and to see and to lift up
35:51
so i think that this idea of
35:55
of epiphany is very pertinent to
35:59
the kind of thing that we will be doing
36:01
together
36:03
seeing one another in this congregation
36:07
with the lights on
36:11
in addition to doing that kind of
36:13
ministry
36:14
i am also here to be your pastor i'm
36:18
here to stand with you walk with you
36:20
and be with you during joys and sorrows
36:24
during anxiety times of great questions
36:27
and i have posted my home phone
36:31
and my home email address and you can
36:34
certainly contact me through the church
36:36

website as well but i
36:39
want us to make this time
36:42
matter because i do think it matters i
36:46
think it matters
36:47
not only for right now it matters for
36:49
the future hope
36:51
for this congregation for your community
36:54
and you we really don't know but we do
36:58
know
36:58
that the impact of a small group of
37:01
people can have
37:02
impact upon the world
37:05
so let us lend our hope
37:08
and all the possibility that we can
37:14
to come together and and do that
37:17
kind of imagining
37:21
so unlike the god janice whose gaze
37:24
is only to the past to the future we
37:27
will be
37:28
taking a soulful look at right now
37:34

you know mores and the buddha and
37:36
muhammad and the three kings
37:38
were all transformed by their moments of
37:41
deep
37:42
insight and revelation
37:46
and so as we journey together into this
37:49
year
37:50
into target ministry together i hope
37:53
that we
37:54
are all transformed that we will never
37:57
be the same again and we can only do
38:00
that together
38:02
if we open ourselves to the possibility
38:05
and the imagination of
38:07
what we are and what we can be
38:11
to the end that each shall know
38:13
wholeness and all
38:15
shall live as one so may it be
38:19
please join in our closing hymn number
38:22
346
38:23

one of our most joyful hymns come sing a

38:26

song with me

38:35

come sing a song with me

38:38

come sing a song with me

38:42

come sing a song with me that

38:46

i might know your mind

38:49

and i'll bring you hope

38:53

when hope is hard to find

38:56

and i'll bring a song of

39:00

love and a rose in the wintertime

39:04

come dream a dream with me

39:08

come dream a dream with me

39:12

come dream a dream with me

39:15

that i might know your mind

39:19

and i'll bring you home

39:22

when hope is hard to find

39:26

and i'll

39:30

[Music]

39:37

come walk in rain with me

39:40

[Music]

39:52

when hope is hard to find and i'll
39:57
bring a song of love and arose in the
40:01
wintertime
40:03
come share a rose with me
40:07
come share a
40:11
[Music]
40:21
when hope is hard to find
40:25
and i'll bring a song of love
40:29
and a rose in the winter
40:38
we extinguish this flame but not the
40:40
light of truth
40:41
the warmth of community or the fire of
40:44
commitment
40:45
these we carry in our hearts until we
40:47
meet again
40:50
our closing words today come from the
40:53
words of michael schuler
40:55
we have reached the end of this time for
40:57
the gathering of memory
40:58
and for letting the imagination play
41:00

with future possibilities

41:02

we have enjoyed magic moments and

41:04

edified each other

41:06

shall it be concluded then or will this

41:09

adventure now commence

41:10

continue our separate paths converging

41:14

meeting merging in the unending quest

41:17

for love more perfect

41:19

the joyous struggle for meaning more

41:20

sufficient and life abundant

41:24

is this ending to be an ending or merely

41:26

a prelude to new

41:28

or glorious beginnings i pose the

41:31

question

41:32

in your heart lies the answer

41:36

[Music]

42:00

do

42:28

do

42:56

do

43:04

[Music]

43:47

you