

# New Hope

a progressive  
religious

Congregation

NOVEMBER 2009



## Minister Writes



New Hope- A Unitarian Universalist Congregation  
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*"Never deprive someone of hope...it may be all they have."*

Unknown

In the spring of 1845, Henry David Thoreau began building a cabin by Walden Pond, about two miles from Concord, Massachusetts, on property owned by Ralph Waldo Emerson. Thoreau moved in on July 4<sup>th</sup> and his intention was "to live deliberately, to front only the essential facts of life." This he endeavored to do for about two years.

I think that when times are as challenging as they are for many Americans right now, there is a piece of us that finds retreating into the wilderness rather appealing. We may fantasize that a "simpler" life exists somewhere other than where we are currently living. If only we could just pack up the necessities and forge a new trail into the tranquility of the woods, life would be better, safer, less stressful.

The reality is that while Thoreau did, indeed, live in self-imposed isolation for approximately two years – he was never really alone. And while he wrote a lovely book about his experiences, with inspirational passages for living a more meaningful life, historians have uncovered just how much support Thoreau had from outside sources during this period of time. It is fairly well documented that his family would even do his laundry for him from time to time. So as romantic as it may seem to be completely independent and entirely self-sufficient, the truth of life is that people need one another.

And, perhaps, never more than now. These are daunting economic times. And in Thoreau's words "the mass of men (and women) are leading lives of quiet desperation."

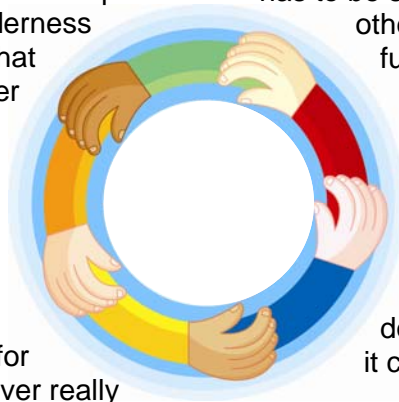
Every day we are all seeing the faces of despair. Millions of desperate people have lost their jobs, their health insurance, their homes, their savings – and worst of all, their hope.

President Obama campaigned on bringing hope to those struggling, and while a few things feel a bit more hopeful, overall not much has significantly changed. There has, indeed, been a shortage of hope for lots of folks.

Short of being able to fix the economy, pass health care reform, lend money or create new jobs, there has to be something we all can do to help one another. Perhaps during this month of thankfulness and gratitude, we can help one another regain a sense of hopefulness. What a great gift that would be. The gift of hope - not in a Pollyanna insipid kind of way, but in an optimistic and positive kind of way. Historically things do always get better. While we can never know for sure exactly how long the downturn will last, we can be confident that it cannot and does not last forever.

Random acts of kindness are always appreciated. Small gifts, like a batch of home made cookies or a hand knit hat, boost the spirits greatly of someone going through challenging times. Or an invitation to share your Thanksgiving dinner with a family that can't afford to travel to be with their own family. There are countless ways we can give the gift of hope to another. Let's make the effort to do so this holiday season.

In love & peace,  
Rev. Suzanne



*Sunday Celebration of Life Schedule  
for November 2009*

Religious Education for Children and Child Care  
available for Pre-schoolers  
Kathy Silver, Director of Religious Education

**SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 1, 2009 10:30 AM**  
**REV. SUZANNE PAUL**

***“Day Of Remembrance”***

This service will honor the memory of our loved ones. In addition, we will explore the feast of All Souls Day and the Mexican tradition of “Day of the Dead.” Please join us.



**SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 8, 2009 10:30 AM**  
**REV. SUZANNE PAUL**

***“Topics To Embrace Or Avoid: Religion & Politics”***

As surely as Fall turns into Winter, the topics of religion and politics can be hot button issues. Join us for a conversation about both.

**SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 15, 2009 10:30 AM**  
**REV. SUZANNE PAUL**

***“Dancing As Fast As We Can”***

Has time become your enemy? Are the days going too fast? Join us for a spiritual perspective on “time.”



**SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 22, 2009 10:30 AM**  
**REV. SUZANNE PAUL**

***“Thanksgiving”***

Now, more than ever, we need to find our gratitude. In challenging times, thankfulness, gratitude and appreciation are what is needed most. Join us for our Thanksgiving service.

**SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 29, 2009 10:30 AM**  
**REV. SUZANNE PAUL**

***“Try A Little Tenderness”***

You won't regret it – people don't forget it – try a little tenderness. Join us for a discussion of how we can tenderly care for one another and change the world.

KATHY SILVER, DIRECTOR OF  
RELIGIOUS EDUCATION  
DEBBY TYLER, MUSIC/CHOIR DIRECTOR

\*Our Services are held on Sundays at 10:30 a.m. Services last until 11:30 a.m. All are welcome to attend regardless of faith, race, age and sexual orientation.

We hope that you'll stay for coffee and conversation after the Services.



*Joys & Sorrows* - November, 2009

November Birthday greetings to Todd Bruder, Frank Finken, Jan Smith and Arizona Edwards and Anniversary congratulations to Tonya & Bruce Gray and Cory Paul & Richard McElroy.

Congratulations to Joan & Frank Finken on the birth of their first grandchild. Gavin Skylar Schoenliber was born on September 29<sup>th</sup> – proud parents are Chrissy Finken and Mason Schoenliber.

Special thanks to everyone who participated in the South Lyon Pumpkin Fest this year. In spite of inclement weather, the following people set-up, “manned” our booth, and took down the booth: Deb & Brian Tyler, Tonya Gray, Judith Skiff, Kathy Silver, Stacey & Bill Strable, Elaine Dexter, Jan Smith, Shane Clary & Heather Laube, Todd Bruder & Renee Champagne,

Sue Myers, Ann McMahon, Dennis Strasser, Brian Tyler, Tonya Gray, and Joan & Frank Finken. New Hope is truly grateful to you all for your help in this event.

Special thanks to Tonya & Bruce Gray and everyone who contributed crafts, baked goods, sold tickets and attended the Gemini Concert at New Hope on October 17<sup>th</sup>. Again, so many people from New Hope worked so hard to make this day successful. Your efforts are appreciated.

May we continue to keep Jack Smith (husband of Sue Myers) in our thoughts and prayers.

*(Email Rev. Paul with any Joy or Sorrow you would like included on this page)*

# November 2009

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1 Service 10:30 AM	2 Board Meeting 7:00 pm	3	4	5	6	7 Fall Clean-up work party 9-12
8 Service 10:30 AM	9	10	11	12	13	14 Fundraiser Dinner Party at Silvers
15 Service 10:30 AM	16	17	18 Women of Hope 6:30pm	19	20	21
22 Service 10:30 AM	23	24	25	26 Thanksgiving	27	28
29 Service 10:30 AM	30					



## President's Message

New Hope has so many things to be proud of, but most of all can boast about the generosity of its members' and friends' time and assistance. This has been most evident this past September and October with all the activities we have participated in.

We can be proud at New Hope to have participated in South Lyon's Crop Walk, and South Lyon's Pumpkin Fest last month. Many thanks to the volunteers who made this happen: Mary McGrath coordinated the Crop Walk, and Tonya Gray directed our participation in the Pumpkin Fest. In addition, there are many New Hoppers to thank who walked in and/or contributed to the Crop Walk, and who helped "man" our booth at Pumpkin Fest.

We were honored to once again host Gemini in concert at New Hope in October. This event was coordinated by Tonya Gray. In addition, Jan Smith and Sue Myers helped us raise additional funds by running our craft sale, and Patricia MacArthur led the bake sale with the help of Stacy Strable. Thank you ladies!

We have one more very important event to plan for in December, and that is the annual Congregational Meeting on Sunday, Dec. 6, after service. This is the meeting where New Hope members dis-

cuss and vote on the next year's budget, elect members to the board of officers, and vote on any other church business on the agenda. This year, the congregation's members will be asked to vote on the proposed budget that has been carefully considered and prepared by the board of officers.

In addition, the offices of Vice-President, currently held by Mary McGrath, and of Secretary, held by Sue Myers, are open for election this year. Each New Hope member has received notice from this year's nominating committee advising that anyone who is interested could apply for consideration on this year's ballot. At this time, no one has expressed their intent to be considered for nomination. However, both Mary and Sue have indicated their willingness to stay on the board for another term should no one else step up.

Our board meets faithfully every month to conduct the "business" of New Hope, and to address actions required for our future. I would like to welcome all of you to attend a board meeting and see what and how decisions are being made. Our next meeting is on **Monday, November 2 at 7:00pm**, at New Hope. We welcome any suggestions and support that any of you might be able to offer. In the meantime, please feel free to contact me if you have any questions.

Respectfully,  
Brian Tyler

## Religious Education

“ \_\_\_\_\_ (God, Great Spirit, Mother Nature,  
Father of All, Spirit of Life, whatever is meaningful to you)

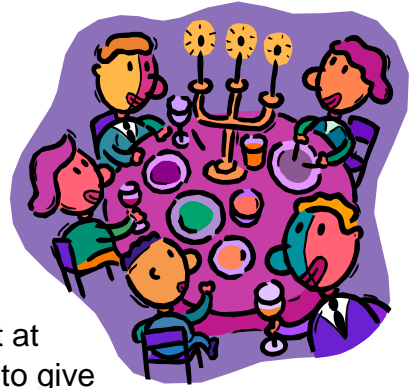
We thank you for this food,  
For rest and home and all things good,  
For wind and rain and sun above,  
But most of all, for those we love.”

Author unknown, from The Gift of Faith  
By Jeanne Harrison Nieuwejaar

As we enter into the season of the fall and winter holidays, I'm feeling that we at New Hope have much to be thankful for: the hard work of the members responsible for making our church so welcoming and beautiful, the people who so diligently prepare our hospitality tables each Sunday, the folks who keep us involved in community activities, and the leadership who moves us forward and keeps us on the right track.

Personally I am also grateful for the young families, which have chosen us as their religious home. Having young people in church adds vitality and humor to our gatherings. It reminds us that we are responsible for the future as well as the present. A multi-generational perspective keeps us well-rounded. It gives us hope that the love and care, which we bestow on our children, will help to make the world a better place.

I have just finished rereading “The Gift Of Faith, Tending the Spiritual Lives of Children” by UU minister and religious educator, Jeanne Nieuwejaar. Jeanne reminds us that parents are the primary religious educators of our children. If we are not intentional about teaching our children the religious principles and values that we treasure, then the popular culture and others with strong beliefs will fill in any gaps that we leave.



So I offer you the blessing at the beginning of this column. Try using it at your holiday meals to give everyone a chance to express their gratitude. Use it at your nightly family dinners to remind each person of the good things in your lives. Maybe a quick breakfast grace will start your day on a thankful note. Light a chalice or a candle so that all may feel the warmth of love and the glow of togetherness. Making religious expression a part of our daily lives teaches and reminds us all that our faith should permeate our lives every day, not just on Sunday.

Love, Kathy

## Women of Hope

*“Each friend represents a world in us, a world possibly not born until they arrive, and it is only by this meeting that a new world is born.” Anais Nin*

Women of Hope is an organization of women who attend New Hope. Women of Hope are dedicated to the well-being of ourselves, each other and our community. We meet to enjoy each other's company, to participate in discussions of mutual interest, and to contribute to our community. Our regular monthly meetings are held the 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of each month at 6:30 PM at New Hope. Announcements of up-coming events are sent monthly.



## View from the Bleachers

### Thanks a lot ...

- ✓ to the people who taught Debby Tyler to play the piano and, while I'm at it ...
- ✓ to Debby for working so hard on her musical skills
- ✓ to all the doctors, nurses and other health providers who have helped our New Hopers this past year rid themselves of cancer, get new shoulders, and generally improve the quality of our lives
- ✓ to everyone who made financial contributions of any sort as we build a stronger congregation
- ✓ to members and friends who contributed gallons of sweat equity to improve our *kerb appeal*, with special thanks to Brian's neighbor who loaned us his bobcat just days after replacing its tires and wheels which had been stolen. No bobcat = no new front walkway
- ✓ to the people who kept the front and backyards mowed all summer
- ✓ to the previous tenants of our building who left us a nice big, solid sign we were able to convert at minimum expense into our own
- ✓ to Blaine Smith, our landlord, who has supported our efforts from the very beginning by keeping our rent low, contributing funds towards improving the building, and generally cooperating with just about anything we want to do
- ✓ to the *South Lyon Herald*, our struggling local newspaper, which continues to provide us with publicity that attracts community attention
- ✓ to the choir which makes up in enthusiasm what they lack in size
- ✓ to the parents of our RE kids who struggle with schedules, conflicts and temperaments to get the kids to New Hope as often as possible
- ✓ to Elaine Dexter who very quietly produces this newsletter each month using her own creative and technical skills
- ✓ to Paul Klein who maintains our website from afar, perhaps the most important communications vehicle we have to attract new members and friends
- ✓ to everyone who brings goodies each Sunday morning in order to make the post-service gathering very special, as well as ...
- ✓ to those who set up and clean up before and after services
- ✓ to the hosts of the fund raising dinner parties who go out of their way to make every event special, different and welcoming
- ✓ to the board of trustees who do a most admirable job of conducting the *business* of New Hope in a cooperative, productive, dedicated fashion usually over a table full of carry-out Chinese
- ✓ to the libraries, book stores and personal collections Kathy Silver taps regularly so she can read the kids a story each Sunday which teaches them, and us!, a moral lesson
- ✓ to the UUA for finally doing the right thing and giving us a Charter membership
- ✓ to all the technology engineers who created computers, printers, the Internet and so much more that allows us to communicate with each other at a very high level of sophistication, at a very low expense
- ✓ to the Reverends Ken Phifer and John Corrado who provided their mentoring, professional support, and personal strengths while we built our congregation
- ✓ to the Detroit Tigers who gave us a whale of a summer right up to the last out in the 11<sup>th</sup> inning of a one-game playoff against the Minnesota Twinkies who went on to be humiliated ... better them than us ... by the dreaded Yankees
- ✓ to Rev. Suzanne for being Rev. Suzanne, and
- ✓ to all of us individually and collectively who are New Hope

C.R.P.

## On Gratitude

“Hey, be thankful for what you’ve got!”

Well, sure. I can do that. I think. I’m very lucky (to put it in secular terms, providing one doesn’t anthropomorphize “Lady Luck”). I’m grateful to the universe that I have pretty good health, especially at my age. I’m grateful that I have Judith, who showers me with the benefits of compatible matrimony—and then some. I’m grateful that my children love me in spite of all my shortcomings as a parent. I’m thankful for the security I have in my old age, mostly free of anxiety about tomorrow’s rent or dinner. Those are probably the important ones, right?

I’m also thankful that this computer I’m writing this on continues to be pretty reliable. A cranky computer can ruin one’s day and make one forget to be thankful for even living.

Life is good to me. I don’t know why. Because of that uncertainty, it behooves me to say it often, to appreciate my good fortune. But I don’t know why that is true, either.

This reminds me of the old Judaic ritual a man is supposed to repeat every morning. “Blessed are you for not making me a woman. Blessed are you for not having made me a gentile. Blessed are you for not having made me a slave.” The rationale

is said to be that a man, being less than perfect, has the opportunity to do the mizvah (blessings) and get closer to his maker. (Women, gentiles and slaves, presumably, are either already closer or don’t have the opportunity. Much discussion on the Internet revolves around why in particular women get to phrase it differently. Little is said about gentiles or slaves.)

In this country, we celebrate a day of Thanksgiving every year with a nod to some of the early immigrants who were grateful for having made it through a bad winter and a good harvest, thus giving them hope that the coming winter wouldn’t be so bad. I’ve even attended a small number of Thanksgiving feasts in which the participants took turns expressing their thanks for whatever good things they had in life. Mostly, I grew up in a family that put together a whole lot of great food for that day, and called it good. (When the Lord finally completed his six days of creation and called it “good,” was He being grateful?)

At least, Thanksgiving, with all its decorations of pumpkins and cornstalks, sweet potatoes, cranberries and turkey, reminds us how good we have it. Especially compared to the turkeys. To be grateful—really, sincerely grateful—is a virtue, no doubt. Just counting the ways one is better off than some or most other people, reminds us of that other virtue—compassion—that can make us better humans.

It may be easier if one is religious. If one can attribute one’s good for-

tune to *Something*, it seems more real to offer thanks. Personally, I have trouble visualizing *Fate*, or *Fortune*, or *Lady Luck*. I can thank Judith and my children (and by extension, their mothers) and the members and friends of New Hope U-U Congregation, as well as certain friends and neighbors who have treated me kindly. If it were possible to gather all those folks together for a big dinner, I could thank them personally and collectively.

But to thank *Nature*, or whatever, for my having been born (a woman or not a woman) escapes my ability to reason things out. Am I glad I’m alive? Sure.

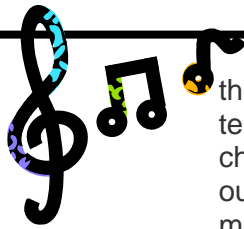
I’m also glad you’re all alive and part of my life. I don’t know who to thank for that, other than you.

Thank you.

Don Skiff



## Musically Speaking...



*"MUSIC SPEAKS LOUDER THAN WORDS"*  
Payne/Pease/Scarpello- Warner-Tamerlane  
& Crank Music

from the Peter, Paul and Mary album "Such Is Love"

*Music speaks louder than words  
It's the only thing that the whole world listens to.  
Music speaks louder than words,  
When you sing, people understand.*

*Sometimes the love that you feel inside  
Gets lost between your heart and your mind  
And the words don't really say the things you wanted them to.*

*But then you feel in someone's song  
What you'd been trying to say all along  
And somehow with the magic of music the message comes through.*

*The longer I live the more I find that people seldom take the time  
To really get to know a stranger and make him a friend.  
But the power of a simple song can make everybody feel they belong.  
Maybe singin' and playin' can bring us together again.  
Singin' and playin' can bring us together again.*

*That music speaks louder than words*

The "magic of music" and the "power of a simple song" are experiences that I'm sure each of us has had. The power of a simple song, such as "We Shall Overcome," can identify a social movement. The anthem of the disco era is "Stayin' Alive" by the Bee Gees. We can feel the "magic of music" when Abba's "Dancing Queen" compels us to dance on the spot. How about when a fussy baby is magically sung back to sleep, or when we tense up when we hear the theme to the movie "Psycho," or fight back tears when hearing "Yesterday" by the Beatles, or "Tears In Heaven" by Eric Clapton? I'm sure we could all come up with examples of the magic of music from our own experiences. What can take us to the last wedding we attended quicker than Pachelbel's Canon in D?

It is my wish that all of us at New Hope experience this magic and power of music throughout our lives, and especially during Sunday morning services. I hope to build on the enthusiasm that New Hope already has for music and bring new, exciting and meaningful musical experiences to us all. I also hope to learn more about each of your experiences with music - what music you love, listen to, and will pay money to attend concerts for.

Choir will continue to meet every Sunday morning before service, promptly at 9:45am. Our newest additions to the New Hope choir are Bill and Will Strable! You should see them and the rest of the choir when

they perform their current work "Wade in the Water" in November. If you have considered trying choir, this would be a good time to try it out. While our songs do have harmonies to learn, the newer members of choir are helped along by the older, more experienced members of choir so that it turns out to be a successful performance for everyone.

The children in RE are being taught new songs throughout the year that correlate with the UU principles they are learning. In October, they have learned the song "Sing and Rejoice", and have been able to sing it as a round! Be sure to ask your child to sing it for you at home.

At New Hope, all music - whether it be gospel, traditional, spiritual, contemporary - is integral to the celebration of life service we have each Sunday morning. In the hymns and special music that are chosen for each service, much thought is given to choosing those songs that support the sermon and the time of year - whether it is a holiday, a change of seasons, the start of school, or a presidential election. It is hoped that you "feel the thought" with the help of music at New Hope each Sunday morning.



I hope that any of you who have suggestions, ideas, or comments will feel free to share them with me. It's always so helpful to be given fresh ideas or perspectives!

In harmony,

Deb Tyler

## A Note from Deb

Remember that we still have Gemini CD's for sale. Check them out in the "snack" room. There's CD's for adults or children. His CD "**Give Light - The poetry of Rumi set to music**" is a popular choice for adults. The CD "**In the Same Sky: Eagle and Condor Flying Together**" is also a popular collection of music made in collaboration with Oscar Santillan of Ecuador, and features many of the indigenous instruments of the Andes. These CD's make wonderful gifts for birthdays, Mother's Day, graduations, etc. And half the \$15.00 cost of each CD has been generously allowed by Laz to go to New Hope!

