

**“Hope Grows in the Soil of Uncertainty”  
Dianne M. Daniels; UUCN, December 7, 2025**

**Sermon: “Hope Grows in the Soil of Uncertainty”  
by Rev. Dianne M. Daniels  
Remember to SLOW DOWN**

Good morning, beloveds. It is a joy to be with you again in this sacred space - to feel your energy, to see your faces, to be part of this living, breathing community, in person and online.

**WHAT — Naming the Ground We’re Standing On**

Uncertainty - that state of doubt about the future, or about what is the right thing to do in any given moment, has a way of making us feel small.

A medical diagnosis that comes out of nowhere.

A relationship that shifts beneath our feet.

A job that ends too soon, or a dream that takes too long.

A world that feels increasingly fragile and unpredictable.

When life feels uncertain, hope can feel like a luxury.

An indulgence. Something fragile enough to be knocked over by the first strong wind.

But here’s the truth: Hope doesn’t wither in uncertainty—hope **grows** because of it.

Hope is not naïve optimism.

Hope is not pretending everything is okay.

Hope is not a denial of reality.

Hope is the strength that rises precisely when reality is unclear.

Hope is a spiritual practice, a discipline.

Hope is a commitment to believe that more is possible than what we can see right now.

And hope is deeply aligned with our Unitarian Universalist values.

Love, the center of our shared values, asks us to widen our hearts even when circumstances narrow our vision.

Interdependence reminds us that we are never meant to walk alone through uncertainty.

Pluralism teaches that wisdom comes from many paths—our own, our ancestors', our communities', and traditions far beyond our own.

Justice calls us to hope not only for ourselves, but for a world where everyone can flourish.

Transformation reminds us that hope is the seed of change.

Even when situations feel hopeless, we are not without power. We are not without agency. We are not without possibility.

We can learn, we can choose, we can grow.

But before hope can bloom, we first must know the soil we're standing on. And sometimes—too often, recently, that soil feels like uncertainty, fear, grief, or exhaustion.

And yet...this is the soil where hope begins.

## **SO WHAT — Why Hope Matters, Especially Now**

Hope is more than an emotion.

Hope is spiritual power.

Hope plants a seed.

A seed is small, hidden, vulnerable.

But given time, attention, and the right conditions, a seed reshapes the landscape around it. Hope does the same.

### **Hope Requires Honesty**

Hope is not denial. Hope demands clarity.

We must be honest about what is broken, what is hurting, and what is not working in our lives. Only truth-telling gives hope something real to transform.

UU theology echoes this: we do not hide from truth; we partner with it. Transformation begins with honesty.

### **Hope Expands Our Imagination**

Hope cultivates imagination—the ability to envision a possibility we have not yet experienced.

Imagination is spiritual work.

When we imagine something new—new healing, new understanding, new courage—we participate in transformation.

Pluralism says there are many sources of wisdom, many ways hope can speak.

Nature can speak it. Community can speak it.

The quiet of our own spirit can speak it.

### **Hope Is Interdependent**

We don't generate hope alone.

Spend time with people who see optimism, possibility, brightness—even in the storm.

Every one of us has, at some point, survived a situation that once felt hopeless.

Every one of us has borrowed hope from someone else's vision when we could not see our own path.

Hope is communal and shared.

Hope is how we hold each other up. This is Interdependence in action.

### **Hope Is Courage in Motion**

Finding hope requires taking the first step—even when the ground feels unsteady, and the way is anything but clear.

Courage is not the absence of fear.

Courage is choosing movement despite fear.

In uncertain times, hope whispers:

“Try.”

“Take one step forward.”

“Do not abandon yourself.”

### **Hope Helps Us Live Without Regret**

Regret clouds our thinking and stands in the way of a happy future.

Hope disrupts regret, shifting our attention from what cannot be changed to what can still be shaped.

Hope asks us to act—now—on the things that matter.

Hope encourages us to treat others and ourselves with compassion and clarity.

Hope urges us to stop waiting for “someday” and step into the power we already have, today.

Living without regret is not an accident.

It is the fruit of hopeful living.

## **Hope Is a Catalyst for Justice**

Hope isn't just personal—it's communal and political.

Hope is the fuel for justice-making.

You cannot work for equity, compassion, liberation, or systemic change unless you believe something better is possible.

Hope is what allows marginalized voices to keep rising.

Hope is what keeps Unitarian Universalists saying, again and again, "We are not done yet." "We will not give up on each other."

## **NOW WHAT — How Do We Let Hope Grow in Our Lives?**

If hope grows in the soil of uncertainty, then our task is not to eliminate uncertainty—an impossible thing.

Our task is to prepare the soil. How do we do that?

### **1. Tell the truth about where you are.**

Acknowledge what is painful, unclear, or frightening.

Name your uncertainty, your longing.

Name your desire for something different.

Hope grows where truth is spoken.

### **2. Choose one small act of courage.**

Just one.

Reach out to someone.

Pick up a tool you set down.

Do the next right thing.

Start the conversation you've been avoiding.

Courage activates hope.

### **3. Borrow hope when you need to.**

Let someone else believe for you when you can't believe for yourself.

Let the community hold the light when your candle is dim.  
This is Interdependence.  
This is Love in action.

**4. Practice gratitude—not denial.**

Not the shallow, forced grin that pretends everything is fine.  
But the grounded gratitude that says:  
“There is still good in my life, even now.”  
“There is still something worth nurturing.”  
This practice stabilizes you, me, us.

**5. Imagine a future that feels meaningful and true.**

Not perfect, not certain.  
Just meaningful.  
Hope invites our imagination to collaborate with our spirit.

**6. Create a plan rooted in your values.**

Ask yourself:  
How can I live today in alignment with Love, Justice, Interdependence, Transformation, Equity, and Pluralism?  
Values make hope sustainable and offer us a compass when the path is unclear.

**7. Release regret.**

Regret ties us to the past; hope opens us to the future.  
You cannot walk forward if you’re clinging to what is behind you.  
Forgive yourself.  
Forgive others if you can.  
Not for the past, not for them, but for **your** future.

**8. Allow hope to be power.**

Hope is not fragile, small, or passive.  
Hope is power.  
Hope is energy.

Hope is spiritual resilience.

Possessing hope enables you to perform challenging acts and believe the unbelievable. And I say to you today:

Hope is how you transform your life.

Hope is how communities survive.

Hope is how justice is born.

Hope is how we refuse to shrink in the face of uncertainty.

## **Closing Moment — Hope and Living Without Regret**

When we commit to hope—real hope, grounded hope—we also commit to living without regret.

Because when we allow hope to guide our choices, we live intentionally.

- We speak truthfully.
- We act courageously.
- We love generously.
- We take responsibility for our part in shaping our future.
- We honor our relationships and ourselves.
- We refuse to be paralyzed by fear.
- We choose life—fully, bravely, authentically.

In the soil of uncertainty, hope grows. And when hope grows, we grow.

May we each cultivate hope.

May we each live with fewer regrets.

May we each trust that uncertainty is not a barren field, but holy ground—rich, fertile soil where transformation takes root.

May hope take root in you, grow through you,

and carry you forward into a future worthy of your courage.

Amen. Ashe. And blessed be.