

WINTER
2013

Families

WEAVE A TAPESTRY OF FAITH

STORY FOR ALL AGES

Pandora's Jar

A long time ago, the gods gave Prometheus and Epimetheus the task of creating creatures to inhabit the beautiful earth.

The two brothers gave each creature a special quality from a jar in their workshop—wings for some, scales or webbed feet for others. Some animals received strength, or courage, or wisdom. When Epimetheus fashioned a human being, Prometheus was amazed. None of the qualities in the jar was a gift worthy of this new creature! So Prometheus decided to steal fire from the gods and give it to humans. And thus humans became more powerful than all the animals.

The gods were angry that humans had such power, so they made a plan. They fashioned a beautiful and intelligent woman named Pandora, and she became the wife of Epimetheus. Pandora was curious about everything on the earth. She explored the woods and the fields, watched the stars, and observed all the animals and plants.

With her strong sense of curiosity, Pandora could not resist a mystery. One day, when she came upon the jar in the workshop, she just had to lift the cover. A cloud of evils instantly poured forth: disease, anger, greed, jealousy, pain, violence, war, and more. She quickly covered the jar, but it was too late. These evils were now part of life on earth.

Epimetheus, dismayed, told Pandora she had released all the evils he had wanted to protect humans from. "Look," he said, opening the cover once again, "there is a gift still left inside, a quality that humans now need, because of all those evils." She looked and saw at the bottom of the jar something very beautiful and special, a gift that can help us all live fully, help one another, and feel joy, wonder, and love despite all the bad we may find in the world.

We call that gift HOPE.

A story from Ancient Greece, retold by Gail Forsyth-Vail.



HOPE

The Families pages are adapted from Tapestry of Faith lifespan faith development programs.

www.uua.org/tapestryoffaith

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The myth of Pandora seeks to explain how challenges like despair, hunger, frustration, violence, and grief came into our world. It also offers the gift of hope, the quality that allows us not only to cope with life's difficulties and disappointments, but also to take action to turn things around.



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Winter's Promise

Days begin to lengthen and nights become shorter at winter solstice, in late December. Many cultural and religious holidays at this time of year use candles and lights to symbolize faith and hope for the future.

Q: What UU symbol uses light to symbolize hope?

A: The flaming chalice, originally created for the Unitarian Service Committee during World War II to show European refugees the location of rescue and safety.

Let us celebrate all these holy stories – including our own – that remind us that the light we seek is the light we share with all people of many faiths. It is the warm and flickering light of hope.

– Rev. Terry Davis

Christmas



Diwali



Chanukah



Kwanzaa



Winter Solstice



Seeds of the Future

Planting seeds is an act of hope. You cannot enjoy a garden in its full-grown beauty immediately. You plant for the future and for the good of the environment. In wintertime (indoors, in a cold climate!) you can start herbs like basil and parsley and flowers such as marigolds and zinnia from seeds. If you hope to eat what you plant, start tomato, zucchini, or pepper seeds in containers and transplant seedlings in early spring. Is there a new child, a new project, or a new dream in your family? Plant a seed to symbolize your hopes for what has just begun.



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When News Isn't Good News

- ★ **Open** a newspaper or turn on a newscast. It won't take long to find a story that is devastating and seemingly hopeless.
- ★ **Share** one that disturbs you with a few family members.
- ★ **Challenge** yourselves to find something hopeful in the story.
- ★ **Talk** about the facts. **Look** at the photo.
- ★ **Understand** the situation.

- ★ What sources of hope can you find? Is there a way you could help? As UUs, we search for a source of hope, even in an apparently hopeless situation.
- ★ **What gives you hope about injustices in our world? What gives you hope when you face a personal challenge?**



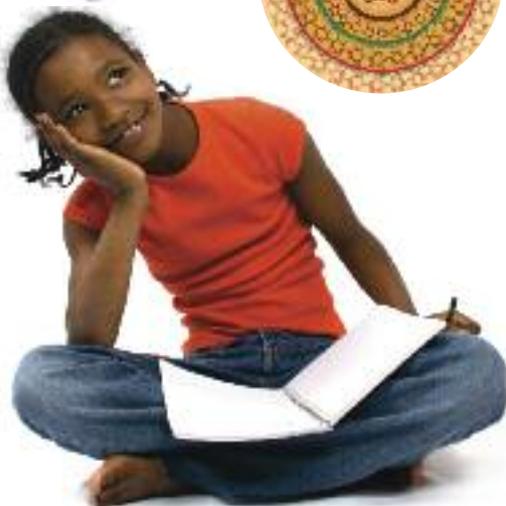
What Does Hope Look Like?

While we cannot literally touch or see hope, we can show it by our actions. One way is to volunteer for a helping organization. If you answer the phones at a homework hotline, you may give hope to students. A donation to a no-kill animal shelter gives hope for pets that need a home. Dress for Success is an organization that gives women hope while job hunting. When you support organizations like Habitat for Humanity, Partners for Health, and Kiva Microfunds you give hope for new beginnings all around the world.

In the Greek myth, Pandora saw “hope” at the bottom of a large jar. What do you suppose it looked like? Draw it, or shape it with clay. Ask family members to make their version. Keep your “hope” art around the house to remind you that your hands are needed to give hope a shape.



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A Healthy Attitude

More than a few doctors have written about the role of hope in physical healing. While hoping for a cure is not always useful, hoping for the love, strength, and peace with which to meet illness often can be. Dr. Jerome Groopman, known for researching cancer and HIV/AIDS, says that “true hope” acknowledges “real threats . . . and seeks to navigate the best path around them.”

To have true hope, you must believe that your actions matter and that you can create “a future different from the present.”

“When illness strikes, hope takes on new meaning,” writes Dr. Wendy Schlessel Harpham. She says, “You can cultivate genuine hope even when you are acutely aware that things are not going well and the likelihood of a good outcome is small. Hope is an ongoing choice.”



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**Listen to the mustn'ts, child. Listen to the don'ts.
Listen to the shouldn'ts, the impossibles, the won'ts.
Listen to the never haves, then listen close to me . . .
Anything can happen, child. Anything can be.**

— Shel Silverstein, *Where the Sidewalk Ends*

**“You can't eat hope,” the woman said. “You can't eat it,
but it sustains you,” the colonel replied.**

— Gabriel García Márquez, *El coronel no tiene quien le escriba*

Hopeful Haiku

Haiku is a Japanese form of poetry with this pattern:

Line 1: 5 syllables

Line 2: 7 syllables

Line 3: 5 syllables

Most haiku are about nature or everyday life. ✿ **Can you write one about hope?** Start by listing words that come to mind when you think about hope. Then arrange the words in three lines.

A haiku can tell a story:

Line 1: Set the scene.

Line 2: Express a feeling, make an observation, or describe an action.

Line 3: Conclude.

✿ **Write your haiku on a ribbon in permanent marker.**

Attach your hopeful haiku to a tree or a houseplant for the duration of winter. Or, wrap it around the stems of fresh, dried, or cut-out paper flowers and hang the bouquet upside down.

**The trees will soon bloom,
Birds will chirp in great delight.
Hopeful sounds abound.**

by Alicia LeBlanc

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Milma Lappala

by Gail Forsyth-Vail

Be still and hear the voice calling from the depths of your own heart—arise and be a co-worker with the ever-creative spirit and powers that are molding the human life and building the kingdom of Heaven upon the earth.

— Rev. Milma Lappala

Have you ever been to the Mesabi Range in Minnesota? It has vast iron mines and a forbidding climate. The Mesabi Range supplied much of the iron that moved the American heavy industry of the 20th century. Even today, the mines go on for miles, as far as the eye can see. If you close your eyes, you can imagine the conditions that existed there a century ago when Milma Lappala [LA-pe-la] and her husband, Risto, were called to the ministry among Finnish immigrant miners. They preached a Unitarian faith that invited free-thinking and was not at odds with the union activities of the miners, and they preached it in Finnish.

There was ample reason for both fear and despair among the miners at the turn of the 20th century and later during

the Great Depression, when the demand for iron ore dropped. Milma and Risto—and later Milma alone—offered a steady diet of hope and community in some of the worst economic times our country has ever seen. They served up hope with potlucks, Halloween parties, and fundraisers featuring Finnish treats. Milma, who raised four children by herself on a financial shoestring, did not give in or give up. She kept herself spiritually and emotionally whole, offering a faithful message of hope to those in her congregation and in the broader community who so desperately needed it. Hope for her was not a fragile or elusive thing, a fair weather thing, or a give-up-whenever-times-are-tough thing. It was the bedrock of her faith, her ministry, and her life.

- ☀ **Is your optimism stronger than your cynicism or despair?**
- ☀ **Where does your optimism come from?**
- ☀ **What feeds your sense of hope?**
- ☀ **How do you model hopefulness and teach it to your children?**

HOPE

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I belong, I am here, and I will be and do. I will breathe joy into a desolation, I will breathe peace into conflict, I will breathe life into destruction. I will be the earth I wish to see. I am growth, and hope, and glee.

— Rev. Tet Gallardo, UU Church of Bicutan, Philippines

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FAMILIES: WEAVE A TAPESTRY OF FAITH

Provided by the Resource Development Office of the Unitarian Universalist Association

Susan Dana Lawrence, Editor

Judith A. Frediani, Gail Forsyth-Vail, and Alicia LeBlanc, Contributors

Ann Casady, Graphic Design

FIND OUT MORE

■ **YES!** and *The Intelligent Optimist* are two periodicals with print and online coverage of people, communities, and ideas working to change the world for the better.

■ An extreme lack of hope can lead someone to self-harm. Know your local resources to help restore hope: your UU minister, a community member with pastoral skills, and suicide prevention hotlines. Gathering with one's faith community—socially or in service—can support someone who feels they have lost the capacity for hope.

■ This Families pages insert borrows from the UUA's online Worship Web and the Tapestry of Faith curriculum *A Place of Wholeness*. Use the online keyword search to find more "hope" in Tapestry of Faith.

www.uua.org/tapestryoffaith