



Soul Matters

The Path of **Finding Our Center**



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About Online Permissions, Multi-Platform Support & Referencing Resources

Once again, we're supporting multi-platform worship by researching and noting material that is permissioned for online use. We will identify those online permissioned pieces with an asterisk by the title of the suggested resource, as well as with "permission notes" beneath the title information that document the source of that online permission.

A Reminder About Partial Texts and "Pointing not Publishing": To honor legal and relational standards, we do not include the full pieces of authors' works unless we've received explicit permission to do so. We want all subscribers to clearly understand that our worship packets are research packets not publications, which means we focus on "pointing" to where you can find fair use and publicly available pieces, rather than on "publishing" original writings and full resources. Our main service to you is theme-based *curation* and *research*, done in the service of saving professionals time.

A Note About Author Titles: Many of the authors we refer to are ministers. Some ministers prefer to be credited with their title "Rev.", others don't, and still others are fine either way. Our practice is to follow whatever practice was used in the source material we reference.

Calendar Connections

Click on the name on each event for more information or inspiration.

January 2023

Click on the name of each event for more information or inspiration.

Interfaith:

- [Twelfth Night](#) (Christian) - [Jan. 5](#)
- [Epiphany](#) (Christian) - Jan. 6
- [World Religion Day](#) (Baha'i) - Jan. 15, 2023 (more found [here](#) and [here](#))

Unitarian Universalist:

- Thirty Days of Love - Side with Love Campaign - Jan.15 - Feb.14 (Check out info on this year's campaign at <https://sidewithlove.org/30-days-of-love-2022>)
- [Millard Fillmore](#)'s Birthday - Jan. 7, 1800 (Unitarian President; on his contradictions [here](#) & [here](#))
- [Joseph Tuckerman](#)'s Birthday - Jan. 18 (1778) (more [here](#))

National & Cultural:

- [New Year's Day](#) - Jan.1
- The Emancipation Proclamation issued by President Abraham Lincoln - Jan. 1 (1863)
- Martin Luther King, Jr. Day - Jan. 16, 2023, third Monday of January (connections [here](#) and [here](#))
- [Rowe vs. Wade](#) Anniversary - Jan. 22 (more [here](#))
- International Holocaust ([Shoah](#)) [Remembrance Day](#) - Jan. 27 (more [here](#) and [here](#))

For Fun and On the Fringe:

- [National Hug Day](#) - Jan.21
- [I'm Not Going To Take it Anymore](#) Day - Jan. 7th
- Birthday of [Thomas Merton](#) - Jan. 31 (1915) (more [here](#) and [here](#))
- [Belly Laugh Day](#) - Jan. 24 (more [here](#) and [here](#))

Chalice Lightings & Opening Words

In touch with those unique lights of our own being...*

Rev. Jone Johnson Lewis

[Permission Secured by Soul Matters](#)

As we light our candles this week, we imagine the lights that shine within each of us. We each have intention, we each have experience, we each have thoughts, we each have feelings, and we each have wisdom. May these candles remind us to be in touch with those best and most unique lights of our own being, and to bring them into this room today and into all that we do in the world.

Risk to be safe...*

Rev. Joe Cherry

[Permission Secured by Soul Matters](#)

When I was a kid and we played tag, there was always something called The Safe Tree. If you were touching this temporarily magical tree (are any trees temporarily magical?) you could not be made “it,” or tagged out. The challenge was getting to the tree, because surely it was guarded by the current person who was “it,” and whose goal it was to tag you so you would be it and they would no longer be that.

To be close to the center, to the Safe Tree, meant you had to risk being vulnerable to the person who could tag you. You had to risk to be safe.

If we think of the Safe Tree as the center, the center of the game, the place of safety, we can come to realize that safety involves some risk, and like the tree, is only temporarily magical.

We light this chalice, a central symbol of our faith, knowing that while the flame of our chalice is only temporary, our faith in its meaning is endless.

This Essential Work of Justice and Liberation for All *

Rev. Rosemary Bray McNatt

Full piece at <https://www.uua.org/worship/words/affirmation/essential-work-justice-and-liberation-all>

even when "we have broken our vows a thousand times,"* we return to this essential work of justice and liberation for all. We do the work best when we remember what church is and what it is not. Church is not a place to hide...

The Promise and the Practice: Chalice Lighting #1 *

Rev. Rebekah Savage

Full piece found at <https://www.uua.org/worship/words/chalice-lighting/promise-and-practice-chalice-lighting-1>

[Permission Source](#)

We light our flaming chalice as a beloved people
united in love
and thirsting for restorative justice...

The Heart of Our Faith *

Rev. Monica Jacobson-Tennessen

Full piece at <https://www.uua.org/worship/words/opening/heart-our-faith>
[Permission Source](#)

What is it
That calls you here
That calls you onward
That calls you inward
That leads you homeward?...

For Five Thousand Years, Or More *

Rev. Matthew Johnson

Full piece found at <https://www.uua.org/worship/words/opening/for-five-thousand-years>
[Permission Source](#)

we gather this morning
to make sense of ourselves and this universe in which we live, as best we are able...
We forget that we are part of the whole of creation.
We forget that we are stardust.
We forget that we are capable of miracles, first among them, that we can love...

Before the world told us who it wanted us to be. *

Rev. Scott Tayler

[Permission Secured by Soul Matters](#)

May the light we now kindle
and the time we now share,
anchor us to that inner flame,
that sacred center,
which helps us remember who we were
before the world told us who it wanted us to be.
May our time together clear the way
for those memories
and voices,
and friends
that lead us back home.

Steadied By Each Other *

Rev. Scott Tayler

[Permission Secured by Soul Matters](#)

Pulled in many directions by the demands of our days,
we light this chalice to remind us of the still point deep inside.
Made unsteady by the winds of unpredictable paths,
we light this chalice to remember the shelter of each other.
Longing for lights that lead us back to our truest selves,
we kindle this chalice to illuminate the faces of friends and sacred companions,
recalling, once again, that we find our way
through the willingness
to take each other's hand.

Meditations, Prayers & Blessings

My High Resolve

Rev. Dr. Howard Thurman

To turn into a more effective meditation, we recommend you change the singular pronouns to plural.

“Keep fresh before me the moments of my high resolve. Despite the dullness and barrenness of the days that pass, if I search with due diligence, I can always find a deposit left by some former radiance. But I had forgotten. At the time it was full-orbed, glorious, and resplendent. I was sure that I would never forget. I had forgotten how easy it is to forget. There was no intent to betray what seemed so sure at the time. My response was whole, clean, authentic. But little by little, there crept into my life the dust and grit of the journey. Details, lower-level demands, all kinds of cross currents -- nothing momentous, nothing overwhelming, nothing flagrant -- just wear and tear. If there had been some direct challenge -- a clear-cut issue -- I would have fought it to the end, and beyond. In the quietness of this place, surrounded by the all-pervading Presence of God, my heart whispers: Keep fresh before me the moments of my High Resolve, that in fair weather or in foul, in good times or in tempests, in the days when the darkness and the foe are nameless or familiar, I may not forget that to which my life is committed.”

In Quietness

Maryell Clearly

Found in Rejoice Together (pg.50), a UUA worship resource & Soul Matters “Common Shelf” Book

“Knowing that we do not always live up to our best expectations of ourselves, let us in quietness seek the good Within...”

Let the center hold *

Rev. Joe Cherry

[Permission Secured by Soul Matters](#)

This is my prayer: please let the center hold.
The center is what holds our faith together.
The strength of the center is what allows us to stretch farther into the future,
To the unknown,
the untried
the uncertain
the unnerving
the places where growth happens.

Let the center be strong.
And let the center of this living tradition move with the times.
Let the center of our living tradition LEAD the times.
May the strength of the center strengthen us as we seek,
As we embody compassion
Work for equity
Demand justice for all.

Let OUR center hold
Strong as an old Oak Tree,
Flexible as the Willow Tree
Life giving as an Orange Tree,
Ever green as the Pine tree and
As beautiful as the Almond tree in blossom.

Listening for Our Song *

Rev. David S Blanchard

[Permission Source](#)

Full piece at <https://www.uua.org/worship/words/meditation/listening-to-our-song>

“Our songs sing back to us something of our essence, something of our truth, something of our uniqueness. When our songs are sung back to us, it is not about approval, but about recognizing our being and our belonging in the human family...”

Don't Feed the Fears *

Rev. Emilie Boggis

[Permission Secured by Soul Matters](#)

Do fears eat Dave's Killer toast?
Bears love marmalade, but fears...
Do they prefer butter? Almond or peanut? Smooth or crunchy?
What do you feed yours?

I am trying to keep my fears well-fed,
mostly on carbs,
maybe with a slather of protein,
so they won't come a-howling
as I'm attempting something I've never done before,
as I'm taking seriously what appears to be a crazy idea,
as I'm risking removing another piece of armor from my heart.

For too long, I've fed them my dreams:
Ripped edges of colorful paper,
jotted down words in moments of clarity,
messages sent from a source beyond time,
to the shores of my fear-fed life:
THIS is possible.

So, it's time for a new diet.
Dave's Killer toast it is.

May the Spirit of Courage fill our beings
so that when the fears come a-howling
we will not feed them our dreams.
Amen.

Sunset Meditation: Labyrinth *

Rev. Emilie Boggis

[Permission Secured by Soul Matters](#)

Full piece and spoken version found at <https://loveprophet.substack.com/p/sunset-meditation-labyrinth>

“With each step through the labyrinth, silently affirm: “Be still and know that I am Love...”

Like pendulums we swing *

Don W Vaughn-Foerster

[Permission Source](#)

Full piece found at <http://www.uua.org/worship/words/meditation/5497.shtml>

...life pulls us and we swing from Truth to truths, from cosmos to self, from mystery to clarity, from out to in. It is our state to swing and to be drawn ever into another swing...

May the great gravity of life which pulls us along an unknown, holy axis never let the pendulums we are cease swinging until the Truth we seek and the truths we are, are one.

To Savor the World or Save It *

Rev. Richard S. Gilbert

[Permission Source](#)

Full piece found at <http://www.uua.org/worship/words/meditation/savor-world-or-save-it>

I rise in the morning torn between the desire...

To save the world or to savor it—to serve life or to enjoy it...

God of justice... What is that you say?...

The one will not stand without the other?

Even This Is Enough *

Rev. Vanessa Southern

Full prayer at <https://www.uua.org/worship/words/prayer/even-enough>

[Permission Source](#)

The world won't stop spinning on her axis if you don't rise to all occasions today...

Rest, if you must, then, like the swimmer lying on her back who floats...

Perhaps then you will feel in your bones,

in your weary heart,

the aching, healing sense that

this is enough—

even this.

That we are enough.

You are enough.

Finding Your Center *

Rev. Jone Johnson Lewis

Full meditation at <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1hfckCmkKi-pSb6wzLj9VFKAJXD-uTGpl/edit?usp=sharing&oid=101245613595157190644&rtpof=true&sd=true>

[Permission Secured by Soul Matters](#)

A guided meditation exploring the thread from the present moment to your future.

A Calm, Clear Place

Jezibell Anat

Found in [Falling into the Sky](#), UUA worship resource & Soul Matters "[Common Shelf](#)" Book

All the you need lies within you

Rev. Angela Herrera

Found at <https://www.facebook.com/skinner.house/photos/a.358111530959702/5032578430179632/?type=3>
and in [Reaching for the Sun](#), UUA meditation manual & Soul Matters “[Common Shelf](#)” Book

Peace: A Meditation Through the Chakras

Marcia Tucker

Full piece found in [To Wake, To Rise](#), UUA meditation manual & Soul Matters “[Common Shelf](#)” Book

How Good To Center Down!

Howard Thurman

Full piece at <https://backfromtheborderlands.blog/2016/02/09/how-good-to-center-down-by-howard-thurman/>

How good it is to center down!...

something deep within hungers and thirsts for the still moment...

A direction, a strong sure purpose that will structure our confusion
and bring meaning in our chaos...

As we listen, floating up through all the jangling echoes of our turbulence,
there is a sound of another kind –

A deeper note...

Our questions are answered...

Our spirits refreshed...

Oriented Times Three

Rev. Karen Hering

Found in [With or Without Candlelight](#), UUA meditation manual & Soul Matters “[Common Shelf](#)” Book

Video reading/meditation: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DltrejEwlu8>

Music

Soul Matters Music Resources

In addition to the suggestions below, be sure to tap into our other sources of support for music leaders:

- 1. Monthly online musicians' brainstorming group:** We meet on the first Tuesday of each month at 6pm eastern time. To join the call use this Zoom link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/5857099120>. No pre-registration necessary. Just come as you are able.
- 2. Soul Matters Music Support Facebook Page:** This support page is for on-going sharing among Soul Matters musicians. Here's the link: <https://www.facebook.com/search/top?q=soul%20matters%20musicians%20support>
- 3. Recordings of all of our monthly music brainstorming calls** are available at <https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1pHuVaUqAnNPIW9dis3Tz31B4eGxdxebl?usp=sharing>
- 4. NEW! An additional Resource Guide** containing suggestions for public domain sources, free music sources, sheet music purchase sites, etc. This is a living doc and will be updated monthly. Any additional helpful suggestions/resources can be submitted to: [Soul Matters Music](#)
- 5. Soul Matters Music Playlists:** We create two different playlists each month: one in Spotify and another in YouTube. This is intended to provide inspiration for our small group participants but might be useful to musicians. Click [here](#) for links to the Spotify playlists for each month. Click [here](#) to check out the YouTube playlists.
- 6. AUUMM (Association for UU Musicians Ministries) Online Database:** The wonderful leadership of the AUUMM have added our monthly themes to the AUUMM music database. It's a great way to get music suggestions from UUs all around the country. Access the AUUMM Music Database [here](#).

Suggestions For January 2023 - Finding Our Center

from Soul Matters Music Resources Coordinator, [Molly J. Webster](#)

Hymns: Singing the Living Tradition - permissioned

All of the hymns listed below have permissions for in-person performance, live streaming and online recording/archiving, assuming you have legally obtained copies of the UU hymnals and unless otherwise noted. ([Permission Source](#))

- 4 - I Brought My Spirit to the Sea
- 14 - The Sun at High Noon
- 15 - The Lone, Wild Bird
- 16 - 'Tis a Gift to Be Simple
- 46 - Now the Day is Over
- 83 - Winds Be Still
- 87 - Nearer My God to Thee
- 88 - Calm Soul of All Things
- 126 - Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing (vs 2 & 3 permissioned)
- 335 - Once When My Heart Was Passion Free
- 345 - With Joy We Claim the Growing Light
- 351 - A Long, Long Way the Sea-Winds Blow
- 352 - Find a Stillness
- 389 - Gathered Here
- 391 - Voice Still and Small (permission granted: must sing "dark and rain" instead of "storm and rain")
- 398 - To See the World

Hymns: Singing the Journey - permissioned

All of the hymns listed below have permissions for in-person performance, live streaming and online recording/archiving, assuming you have legally obtained copies of the UU hymnals and unless otherwise noted. ([Permission Source](#))

1003 - Where Do We Come From?

1008 - When Our Heart is in a Holy Place

1009 - Meditation on Breathing

1013 - Open My Heart (permission granted: please [email](#) if using)

1028 - The Fire of Commitment (permission granted, must own hymnal)

1031 - Filled with Loving Kindness

1051 - We Are...

Hymns: Singing the Living Tradition - permissions needed

The following permissions are needed if using in streaming/hybrid/online recorded services

36 - When In Our Music (words: Hope Publishing Co., One License)

43 - The Morning, Noiseless (music: Henmar Press, CCS)

55 - Dark of Winter (donate to [Heritage UU Church in Cincinnati](#) choir or children's music program)

86 - Blessed Spirit of My Life (donate to [Heritage UU Church in Cincinnati](#) choir or children's music program)

Hymns: Singing the Journey - permissions needed

The following permissions are needed if using in streaming/hybrid/online recorded services

1048 - Ubi Caritas (if showing printed music: G.I.A Publications, One License)

1052 - The Oneness of Everything (make a donation to [Jim's website](#))

Contemporary Suggestions - permissions needed

*If you are streaming your services/are hybrid, please note that all copyright permissions are your responsibility to obtain***

- *This Feeling* - Alabama Shakes
- *Unwritten* - Natasha Bedingfield
- *A Maker of My Time* - Paper Kites
- *Finding Home* - Mindy Glendhill
- *Born This Way* - Lady Gaga
- *A Place in this World* - Taylor Swift
- *Sound of Silence* - Simon & Garfunkel
- *Take Me Home Country Roads* - John Denver
- *Return Again*
 - covered by Neshama Carlebach: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aDnGOpRYhwo>
 - Cover by Green Pastures Baptist Church: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9qrQQ-ZX3BA>

Many of the above songs can be found on JWPepper, MusicNotes.com and the Chords/Tabs for most of the above can be found here:

[Ultimate Guitar](#)

[Ukulele Chords/Tabs - Free to Transpose](#)

[Chordify](#)

Choral/Vocal

All listed music can be found on JWPepper and can be located by following the link or searching by title.

- [Come and Find the Quiet Center - SAB](#)
- [Come and Find the Quiet Center - SATB with Handbells \(3 - 5va\)](#)
- [Love Will Find the Way Out - SATB, SSA - Rickard](#)
- [Home Is - SATB Divisi - Barnett](#)
- [Home - SATB, SSAB, SAB, SSA, 2 part - Main](#)
- [Love Will Find a Way - SATB - Rosephanye Powell](#)
- [The Little Creek - SATB, SAB - Carlson](#)
- [Silentium - SATB - Maunu](#)
- [Where We Find Ourselves - SATB - Michael Bussewitz-Quar](#)
- [Where Do We Find Joy - SSA - Paupolis](#)
- [May It Be - SATB, SAB, SSA - Enya, Arr. Brymer](#)
- [The Sounds, the Silence - SATB - Lantz](#)
- [The Middle - SATB, SAB, Ssa - Zedd, Arr. Huff](#)
- [Stars I Shall Find - SATB, TTBB - Dickau](#) [Stars I Shall Find - SATB, SAB, SSA, 3pt, 2pt - Johnson](#)
- [There Will Be Rest - SATB Divisi, TTBB Divisi - Frank Ticheli](#)
- [Dona Nobis Pacem, Music by Mark Miller, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gZ41dj5x4MA>](#)

Instrumental/Handbell

- [Finding My Voice - piano](#)
- [The Quiet Center - piano](#)
- [Abide with Me - 3 - 5va Handbells - opt. flute](#)
- [Finding My Way - trumpet solo & piano](#)
- [In the Silence - horn in F & piano](#)

Music for Online Worship from UUA

The following videos may be used in online and recorded worship services by Unitarian Universalist congregations. The music that follows does not require additional permission for online use (see sidebar). However, be sure to provide full attribution to the composers and lyricists on your screens, not just verbally, for each piece that you incorporate into worship.

These videos are intended to lighten the burdens imposed by online worship. They should not be used to justify decreasing the wages or positions of professional music staff. ([Permission Source](#))

- ["Filled with Loving Kindness," \(Vimeo\)](#) a version of the Buddhist Metta
- (lovingkindness) prayer, as taught, sung, and accompanied by Mark David Buckles. "May I (*you, we, all) be filled with loving kindness; may I* be well. May I* be peaceful and at ease; and may I* be happy."
- ["I've Got Peace Like a River" \(Vimeo\)](#) (by Marvin V. Frey; #100 in *Singing the Living Tradition*) led and accompanied on guitar by Mark David Buckles
- ["Abide with Me" \(Vimeo\)](#) (#101 in *Singing the Living Tradition*; music by William Henry Monk, verses 1-2 by Henry Francis Lyre, verse 3 by Rev. Erika Hewitt). Guitar and singing by [Lea Morris](#). [Pay-what-you-can to Lea](#).

- ["My Life Flows On in Endless Song" \(Vimeo\)](#) (#108 in *Singing the Living Tradition*; Quaker text paired with melody written by American Baptist minister Robert Wadsworth Lowry). Piano and melodica by Michael Frye-Hunt; vocals by Dorothy Frye-Hunt.
- ["Spirit of Life" \(GoogleDrive\)](#) (#123 in *Singing the Living Tradition*; music and words by Carolyn McDade, harmony by Grace Lewis-McLaren.) Choral arrangement by Nylea L. Butler-Moore. Video by the UU Virtual Singers of the Unitarian Church of Los Alamos, NM; Nylea Butler-Moore, Music Director; Rick Bolton, AV Engineer. If you use this video, please email Nylea at nyleab@uulosalamos.org. [Pay-what-you-can to the Unitarian Church of Los Alamos](#).
- ["Open My Heart" \(YouTube\)](#) (words & music by Henry S. Flurry; #1013 in *Singing the Journey*). Performed by Susan T. Mashiyama. If you use this song, [please share that info with Henry Flurry](#) as a form of connection and affirmation
- ["We Are" by Dr. Ysaÿe Barnwell \(Vimeo\)](#), performed by Dr. Ysaÿe Barnwell and the UUA General Assembly 2020 virtual choir. Produced and Directed by Benjie Messer. Video Editing and Motion Graphics by Izzy Hyman. Audio Editing by Sam Plattner. Photos by Clint McKoy, Christopher L. Walton, Paul Becker, Janine Gelsinger, and contributed by members of the choir. All audio and videos was captured by musicians in their own homes. Dr. Barnwell notes that if you've purchased scores for each of your singers, there is nothing else required. However, if you wish to use this piece in worship, please send a one-time fee of \$30 to Barnwells Notes, Inc., 2442 Tunlaw Rd North West, Washington, D.C. 20007.
- ["We Are Gathered" \(YouTube\)](#), whose text (to a familiar hymn) was written specifically for virtual worship by Amanda Udis-Kessler. Video by video by Jane Clabaugh. Please make a donation to [The Movement for Black Lives](#) or [Color of Change](#).
- Adam and Matt Podd's arrangement of ["My Life Flows on in Endless Song" \("How Can I Keep From Singing"\) \(YouTube\)](#), featuring musicians and singers from Grace Chorale of Brooklyn, First Unitarian Congregational Society in Brooklyn, and First Presbyterian Church of Brooklyn. (Quaker text; melody by American Baptist minister Robert Wadsworth Lowry; #108 in *Singing the Living Tradition*). Adam's PayPal ID: adampodd@gmail.com/Venmo: @adampodd
- ["Meditation \(YouTube\)"](#), written and arranged by Darrell Courtley and performed by Darrell and his wife, Mary Courtley. This would be appropriate for a time of quiet reflection. If you use this video, please notify Darrell at atdcourtley@gmail.com. [Pay-what-you-can to the Morristown UU Fellowship](#).

But Wait, There's (a bit) More...

Please see individual citation preferences/donation opportunities.

Please visit [Sharon Scholl's website](#) for many more compositions and arrangements! She would love to hear back from you about any music you download and use. Please contact [Amanda Udis-Kessler](#) to reach Sharon. Amanda will pass along your messages and contact information. [Center](#)

Extra, Extra!!!

Read All About: [The challenges faced by music-schools founded on western classical models.](#)

"The world of music—a practice and an art form believed to be universal among cultures and societies and with ancient roots—is vast. Yet the doorway into schools of music in the United States has been narrow. Despite the rich musical traditions indigenous to this country—Mississippi Delta blues, bluegrass and Appalachian folk, the music of Native Americans, jazz—university-level American schools of music proliferated around the turn of the last century to teach and disseminate Western classical music. And to do so was considered a means of cultural elevation.

That historical legacy places a unique burden on schools of music, including Eastman, striving to cultivate a more inclusive learning environment. Although Eastman and its elite peers have long since begun to diversify faculty and curricula, the remnants of that exclusionary past remain entrenched."

Stories For All Ages

The Me I Chose To Be by Natasha Anastasia Tarpley (Author), Regis and Kahran Bethencourt (Artist)

"This story is about all of the beautiful choices we can make in our lives. It is a "call for self-love that highlights the inherent beauty of all black and brown children." - Amazon. We can see the beautiful ways that we can find our multicultural center when we decenter whiteness.

Book: [HERE](#)

Read Aloud: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PzcnnVxX8WA>

Let the Children March by Monica Clark-Robinson (Author), Frank Morrison (Illustrator)

"In 1963 Birmingham, Alabama, thousands of African American children volunteered to march for their civil rights after hearing Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. speak. They protested the laws that kept black people separate from white people. Facing fear, hate, and danger, these children used their voices to change the world..."

Book: [HERE](#)

Read Aloud: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bnptqGnM4xQ>

Aaron Slater, Illustrator by Andrea Beaty (Author), David Roberts (Illustrator)

"Aaron Slater loves listening to stories and dreams of one day writing them himself. But when it comes to reading, the letters just look like squiggles to him, and it soon becomes clear he struggles more than his peers. ...Aaron can't get a single word down. He is sure his dream of being a storyteller is out of reach . . . until inspiration strikes, and Aaron finds a way to spin a tale in a way that is uniquely his. It's a story of a boy with dyslexia who discovers that his learning disability may inform who he is, but it does not define who he is, and that there are many ways to be a gifted communicator."

Book: [HERE](#)

Video Read Aloud: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JbNYk1IRtWM>

(Leader's Note: *The author's note is also included in the video and worth sharing - about Aaron Douglas, African American muralist on whom the story is based, and about dyslexia.)*

Potatoes, Eggs and Coffee Beans

"In life, things happen around us, and things happen to us. Life swirls around us. Finding our center during these experiences means understanding your choice about how you react to it and what you make of it. Learn, adapt and choose to make the best of each experience."

Online story: [HERE](#)

Video Telling: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UFHlxLWdeTQ>

Yo-Yo Maker: Pedro Flores by Paige V. Polinsky (Author)

Pedro Flores was born in the Philippines in 1896, when Spain still ruled his country. After the US took over, Pedro traveled to California, received an education, and looked for ways to go into business for himself. Then he remembered a toy from his childhood called the yo-yo, which means "come back" in Tagalog. He kept his balance, founded a company and found his center, which was to share his [delight of the Yo-Yo with children](#).

Book: [HERE](#)

(Another book about Pedro Flores is due to be released 2/23 [HERE](#))

Read Aloud videos of the book, produced in three parts:

Part I <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UJkGtRbOKqs> (6:54 min; best one to share)

Part II <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BEFXBUHUhMY> (6:30 min.)

Part III <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0riNZikA59w> (optional)

Introductory Video about Pedro Flores (1:58 min):

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

The Day You Begin by Jacqueline Woodson (Author), Rafael López (Illustrator)

Staying balanced with our differences to find our center.

Book: [HERE](#)

Video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KDs5d_qFbEs

The Marvelous Doctors for Magical Creatures by Jodie Lancel Grant

The unicorn tries to fit in, but her choices and center are different from others.

Book: [HERE](#)

Video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ddV7_FF7er0&t=1s (not great, but for story)

Perfectly Norman by Tom Percival

Norman chooses not to be perfect, and finds his center

Book: [HERE](#)

Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r30vfuO2jrs>

Wisdom Tales

In conversation with many of you, we've heard that wisdom tales are especially important to the faith formation of our children. They serve as companions for our journeys, communicating and helping us hold on to timeless morals as we navigate not only childhood but adulthood as well.

Congolese: [The Red and Blue Coat](#)

Buddhist: [The Monk Who Carried the Woman](#)

Christian: [Finding Our Way Home](#)

Jewish: [Zusya, why were you not more like Zusya?](#)

Brazilian: [The Fisherman and the Businessman](#)

Recommended Wisdom Tales from “[Doorways to the Soul](#)” by Elisa Davy Pearmain

(We've recommended this book as an addition to your library. Because of copyright issues, we can only share the story titles)

- Story #1 - The Monk and the Scorpion (each has a nature at their center)

Sermon Seeds

Angles, Ideas & Twists To Get Your Sermon Started!

Don't forget to explore the small group packet for additional sermon seeds. It contains quotes and poems to enhance your sermon, as well as numerous sermon angles in the questions and the spiritual exercises.

Permissions Notes: In addition to the pieces we've noted as permissioned for online use (marked with an asterisk*), you can use the fair use sized quotes and fair use sized portions of longer pieces in your sermons/services. Pay attention to the hyperlinks we include within titles and authors' names; these hyperlinks provide the source material and direction for you to hunt down permissions on your own.

Readings: We do not designate pieces that can be used as readings before your sermon, however we do make an intentional effort to include a significant number of sermon seeds that are longer and can be used as sermon readings.

On Listening to the Wisdom That Arises from our Center

Quote - [Valarie Kaur](#)

I believe that deep wisdom resides within each of us. Some call this voice by different sacred names—Spirit, God, Jesus, Allah, Om, Buddha-nature, Waheguru. Others think of this voice as the intuition one hears when in a calm state of mind... Whatever name we choose, listening to our deepest wisdom requires disciplined practice. The loudest voices in the world right now are ones running on the energy of fear, criticism, and cruelty... But I must not lose myself at the feet of others. My most vigilant spiritual practice is finding the seconds of solitude to get quiet enough to hear the Wise Woman in me.

Quote - [Valarie Kaur](#)

Here's what I discovered about Wise Woman [within]: Her voice is quiet... I have to get really quiet in order to hear her. How do I know when I am hearing her voice? She is tender and truthful. She is not afraid of anything or anyone. She does not give me all the answers, but she does know what I need to do in this moment—to wonder, grieve, fight, rage, listen, reimagine, breathe, or push.

Poem - Calling, [Nancy Shaffer](#)

Full piece at <https://www.uua.org/worship/words/meditation/calling>

Where were you when you heard that ancient
voice, and did Yes get born right then
and did you weep? ...
and how, in that moment,
did you mark it?...
Tell us, please, all you can about that voice...

Reflection/Reading - If I called you out, Rev. Sean Parker Dennison

Full piece found in [Breaking and Blessing](#), UUA meditation manual & Soul Matters "[Common Shelf](#)" Book
"...I have been called out from fear
have found my voice and joined the calling.
If I call you out, will you come?"

Quote - Joseph Campbell, *said in the context of arguing for the benefits of following your bliss and seeing bliss as the north star that keeps you "on track."*

There is something inside you that knows when you're in the center—that knows when you're on the beam or off the beam.

Quote - Parker Palmer, A Hidden Wholeness

We all have an inner teacher whose guidance is more reliable than anything we can get from a doctrine, ideology, collective belief system, institution, or leader.

Quote - Parker Palmer, A Hidden Wholeness

If we want to support each other's inner lives, we must remember a simple truth: the human soul does not want to be fixed, it wants simply to be seen and heard. If we want to see and hear a person's soul, there is another truth we must remember: the soul is like a wild animal -- tough, resilient, and yet shy. When we go crashing through the woods shouting for it to come out so we can help it, the soul will stay in hiding. But if we are willing to sit quietly and wait for a while, the soul may show itself.

Reflection/Reading - Oriented Times Three, Karen Hering

Found in [With or Without Candlelight](#), UUA meditation manual & Soul Matters "[Common Shelf](#)" Book

Video reading/meditation: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DltrejEwlu8>

Book - Immortal Diamond, Richard Rohr

http://store.cac.org/Immortal-Diamond_p_23.html

"In this new book, Rohr likens the True Self to a diamond, buried deep within us, formed under the intense pressure of our lives, that must be searched for, uncovered, separated from all the debris of ego that surrounds it. In a sense the True Self must, like Jesus, be resurrected, and that process is not resuscitation but transformation..."

Reflection - Rev. Emilie Boggis, Inner Knowing: Do you trust your inner knowing? Enough to act upon it? *

Full piece found at <https://loveprophet.substack.com/p/inner-knowing>

Permission secured from Soul Matters

"At that moment, I heard a voice behind me whisper into my ear: "There's not much time left." I turned around to see who was talking to me. No one was there. I turned back around as an inner knowing overcame my body: "You've got ten years with him. Use it well."

At that time, I was not the type of person who paid attention to such inner knowing. I shrugged moments like this one away, discounted them and promptly forgot that the moment had even happened. After all, I was a rational being.

Not this time..."

On Finding Our Centers by Listening to Life

Quote - Parker Palmer, from Let Your Life Speak

[There are] moments when it is clear--if I have eyes to see—that the life I am living is not the same as the life that wants to live in me... Before you tell your life what you intend to do with it, listen for what it intends to do with you. Before you tell your life what truths and values you have decided to live up to, let your life tell you what truths you embody, what values you represent.

Podcast - On Being interview with Mary Oliver: "I got saved by the beauty of the world."

<https://onbeing.org/programs/mary-oliver-listening-to-the-world/>

Quote - Frederick Buechner, Beyond Words

Moments of hearing for the first time; you never know what may cause them. The sight of the Atlantic Ocean can do it, or a piece of music, or a face you've never seen before. A pair of somebody's old shoes can do it. You can never be sure. But of this you can be sure. Whenever you find tears in your eyes, especially unexpected tears, it is well to pay the closest attention. They are not only telling you something about the secret of who you are, but more often than not God is speaking to you through them of the mystery of where you have come from and is summoning you to where you should go next.

Reflection - We Are Called - Rev. Natalie Fenimore

Found in [Voices from the Margins](#), UUA meditation manual & Soul Matters "[Common Shelf](#)" Book

Reflection/Reading - The Redwood, Jeanne Foster

Found in [Falling into the Sky](#), UUA worship resource & Soul Matters "[Common Shelf](#)" Book

Reading - Pilgrimage, Rev. Maureen Killoran

Found in [The Spirit That Moves](#), UUA worship resource & Soul Matters "[Common Shelf](#)" Book

Quote - Malebo Sephodi

Oh Child
Look within
Find your ForeMothers
Find them
Find them

Song - Ancestors' Breaths - Sweet Honey In The Rock

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2oE4Qatypjs>

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

On Needing Others to Find Our Center

Quote - Parker Palmer, A Hidden Wholeness

I took comfort and strength from those few people who neither fled from me nor tried to save me but were simply present to me. Their willingness to be present revealed their faith that I had the inner resources to make this treacherous trek -- quietly bolstering my faltering faith.

Quote - Parker Palmer, A Hidden Wholeness

It's not about what you say. It's about creating a space where every person can hear, discover and listen to their own voice.

Reflection - My Misgivings About Advice - Parker Palmer

Full piece at <http://www.awakin.org/read/view.php?tid=2188>

Aye, there's the rub. Many of us "helper" types are as much or more concerned with being seen as good helpers as we are with serving the soul-deep needs of the person who needs help... We want to apply our "fix," then cut and run, figuring we've done the best we can to "save" the other person.

And yet, we have something better: our gift of self in the form of personal presence and attention, the kind that invites the other's soul to show up. As Mary Oliver has written, "This is the first, the wildest and the wisest thing I know: that the soul exists and is built entirely out of attentiveness."

Quote - Rachel Naomi Remen, My Grandfather's Blessings

It is often through the quality of our listening and not the wisdom of our words that we are able to effect the most profound changes in the people around us. When we listen, we offer with our attention an opportunity for wholeness. Our listening creates sanctuary for the homeless parts within the other person. That which has been denied, unloved, devalued by themselves and others. That which is hidden. In this culture the soul and the heart too often go homeless... When you listen generously to people, they can hear the truth in themselves, often for the first time. And in the silence of listening, you can know yourself in everyone. Eventually you may be able to hear, in everyone and beyond everyone, the unseen singing softly to itself and to you.

Quote - John Fox

When someone deeply listens to you,
the room where you stay
starts a new life
and the place where you wrote
your first poem
begins to glow in your mind's eye.
It is as if gold has been discovered!

Quote - John Fox

When someone deeply listens to you,
your bare feet are on the earth
and a beloved land that seemed distant
is now at home within you.

On the Temptation to Stray from Our Center

My High Resolve, Howard Thurman

To turn into a more effective meditation, we recommend you change the singular pronouns to plural.

"Keep fresh before me the moments of my high resolve. Despite the dullness and barrenness of the days that pass, if I search with due diligence, I can always find a deposit left by some former radiance. But I had forgotten. At the time it was full-orbed, glorious, and resplendent. I was sure that I would never forget. I had forgotten how easy it is to forget. There was no intent to betray what seemed so sure at the time. My response was whole, clean, authentic. But little by little, there crept into my life the dust and grit of the journey. Details, lower-level demands, all kinds of cross currents -- nothing momentous, nothing overwhelming, nothing flagrant -- just wear and tear. If there had been some direct challenge -- a clear-cut issue -- I would have fought it to the end, and beyond. In the quietness of this place, surrounded by the all-pervading Presence of God, my heart whispers: Keep fresh before me the moments of my High Resolve, that in fair weather or in foul, in good times or in tempests, in the days when the darkness and the foe are nameless or familiar, I may not forget that to which my life is committed."

Quote - [Christopher L. Heuertz](#)

We all find ourselves bouncing around three very human lies that we believe about our identity: I am what I have, I am what I do, and I am what other people say or think about me.

Quote - Alexander Solzhenitsyn

(People) waste themselves in senseless thrashing around for the sake of a handful of goods and die without realizing their spiritual wealth.

Quote - David Brooks, [from The Road to Character](#)

Related essay: <https://www.nytimes.com/2015/04/12/opinion/sunday/david-brooks-the-moral-bucket-list.html>

It occurred to me that there were two sets of virtues, the résumé virtues and the eulogy virtues. The résumé virtues are the skills you bring to the marketplace. The eulogy virtues are the ones that are talked about at your funeral — whether you were kind, brave, honest or faithful. Were you capable of deep love?

We all know that the eulogy virtues are more important than the résumé ones. But our culture and our educational systems spend more time teaching the skills and strategies you need for career success than the qualities you need to radiate that sort of inner light. Many of us are clearer on how to build an external career than on how to build inner character.

But if you live for external achievement, years pass and the deepest parts of you go unexplored and unstructured. You lack a moral vocabulary. It is easy to slip into a self-satisfied moral mediocrity. You grade yourself on a forgiving curve. You figure as long as you are not obviously hurting anybody and people seem to like you, you must be O.K. But you live with an unconscious boredom, separated from the deepest meaning of life and the highest moral joys. Gradually, a humiliating gap opens between your actual self and your desired self, between you and those incandescent souls you sometimes meet.

Article - The Art of Living With Integrity, Thai Nguyen

<https://www.huffpost.com/entry/the-art-of-living-with-in b 7710316?guccounter=1>

On Following Our Center, not the Crowd

Quote - Marion Milner, quoted in [A Life of One's Own](#)

I had at least begun to guess that my greatest need might be to let go and be free from the drive after achievement — if only I dared. I had also guessed that perhaps when I had let these go, then I might be free to become aware of some other purpose that was more fundamental, not self-imposed private ambitions but something which grew out of the essence of one's own nature. People said: 'Oh, be yourself at all costs.' But I had found that it was not so easy to know just what one's self was. It was far easier to want what other people seemed to want and then imagine that the choice was one's own... It was only when I was actively passive, and content to wait and watch, that I really knew what I wanted.

Quote - Richie Norton

Intentional living is the art of making our own choices before others' choices make us.

Book - Braving the Wilderness: The Quest for True Belonging and the Courage to Stand Alone, Brené Brown

Related video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x_sYCThUQc8

Quote - Friedrich Nietzsche

The individual has always had to struggle to keep from being overwhelmed by the tribe. If you try it, you will be lonely often, and sometimes frightened. But no price is too high to pay for the privilege of owning yourself.

Quote - [Ralph Waldo Emerson](#)

For nonconformity the world whips you with its displeasure.

Quote - [Dawna Markova](#)

When you have the courage to shape your life from the essence of who you are, you ignite, becoming truly alive. This requires letting go of everything that is inauthentic. But how can you even know your truth unless you slow down, in your own quiet company? When the inner walls to your soul are graffitied with advertisements, commercials, and the opinions of everyone who has ever known and labeled you, turning inwards requires nothing less than a major clean-up.

Quote - Ralph Waldo Emerson, from "Self-Reliance"

There is a time in every man's education when he arrives at the conviction that envy is ignorance; that imitation is suicide; that he must take himself for better, for worse, as his portion; that though the wide universe is full of good, no kernel of nourishing corn can come to him but through his toil bestowed on that plot of ground which is given to him to till. The power which resides in him is new in nature, and none but he knows what that is... These are the voices which we hear in solitude, but they grow faint and inaudible as we enter into the world. Society everywhere is in conspiracy against the manhood of every one of its members. Society is a joint-stock company, in which the members agree, for the better securing of his bread to each shareholder, to surrender the liberty and culture of the eater. The virtue in most request is conformity. Self-reliance is its aversion. It loves not realities and creators, but names and customs. Whoso would be a man must be a nonconformist. He who would gather immortal palms must not be hindered by the name of goodness but must explore if it be goodness. Nothing is at last sacred but the integrity of your own mind.

Sermon - Walking Your Why, Rev. Kim K. Crawford Harvie

http://www.ascboston.org/downloads/publications/Sermons/Sermon_2017-5-14.pdf

On the struggle to stay balanced in your deepest longings and purpose rather than caught up in the "herd instinct."

Note: This sermon is not permissioned for use in worship services

Poem - The Journey, Mary Oliver

Full poem at <https://emilyspoetryblog.com/2013/04/09/the-journey-by-mary-oliver/>

"But little by little,
as you left their voices behind,
the stars began to burn...
and there was a new voice,
which you slowly
recognized as your own..."

Quote - Anna Quindlen, from [Being Perfect](#)

Someday, sometime, you will be sitting somewhere. A berm overlooking a pond in Vermont. The lip of the Grand Canyon at sunset. A seat on the subway. And something bad will have happened: You will have lost someone you loved or failed at something at which you badly wanted to succeed. And sitting there, you will fall into the center of yourself. You will look for some core to sustain you. And if you have been perfect all your life and have managed to meet all the expectations of your family, your friends, your community, your society, chances are excellent that there will be a black hole where that core ought to be. I don't want anyone I know to take that terrible chance. And the only way to avoid it is to listen to that small voice inside you that tells you to make mischief, to have fun, to be contrarian, to go another way. George Eliot wrote, 'It is never too late to be what you might have been.' It is never too early, either.

On Finding Our Center in Simplicity

Video - How To Simplify Your Life

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7IEClRif10&t=159s>

On the need to intentionally create a quieter life

Poem - What It Takes, David Budbill

<https://rosemarywashington.wordpress.com/tag/black-cats/>

Scroll all the way down the page, passed the cats. :)

Quote - Greg McKeown

Only once you give yourself permission to stop trying to do it all, to stop saying yes to everyone, you can make your highest contribution towards the things that really matter.

Quote - Thomas Fuller

If your desires be endless, your cares and fears will be so too.

On Finding Our Center in Slowness

Reflection - The philosophy of slowmaxxing

<https://thegauntlet.ca/2022/08/25/the-philosophy-of-slowmaxxing/>

TED Talk - In praise of slowness

https://www.ted.com/talks/carl_honore_in_praise_of_slowness?language=en

Article - Slowing Down: 14 Science-Based Ways to Enjoy Life

<https://www.berkeleywellbeing.com/slow-down.html>

Poem - The Busy Man Speaks, David Budbill

Full poem found [here](#)

Quote - Cole Arthur Riley, This Here Flesh, p. 153-154

I see the longing and despair all around me, and I think of Christ lying in the boat with his head on a pillow while the waves toss their craft around. Everyone is frantic, thinking death itself has come for them, and the creator of the universe is fast asleep. Glory.

Sometimes the appropriate response to desperation is to do the unthinkable. Close your eyes.

On Finding Compassion Rather than Criticism at Our Center

Interview - How To Silence Your Inner Critic, Dr Kristin Neff

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IK2aHpcVFMo>

Filled with lots of studies that would well as sermon illustrations.

Video & Essay - How to silence your inner critic: Embrace it.

<https://jessicaabel.com/silence-your-inner-critic/>

Looking at the inner critic as rooted in early trauma, and the importance of asking it, “What do you need?”

Video - Confronting Your Inner Judge, Shirzad Chamine

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tHpgqV4CsXk>

Quote - Hal and Sidra Stone, from [Embracing Your Inner Critic](#)

In America your Critic is likely to criticize you if you are not special enough or if you are not superior to others. Your Critic does not want you to disappear into the crowd, to be ordinary. Australian Critics take the opposite view...You are not supposed to stand out, to be special, or to do anything that will draw special attention to you.” Inner Critics there “are quite judgmental toward people who stand out too much or who try to be special.

On Revisiting the Center of Our Faith

Webpage - Article II Study Commission

<https://www.uua.org/uuagovernance/committees/article-ii-study-commission>

Draft of the Proposed Article II Revisions

https://www.uua.org/files/2022-10/article2_draft_language_102022.pdf

Website - 8th Principle Project

<https://www.8thprincipleuu.org/>

Chalice Lighting - Exploring Who We Are, Melanie Davis

Full piece at <https://www.uua.org/worship/words/chalice-lighting/exploring-who-we-are>

“Our chalice also invites us to play, although with ideas rather than with marshmallows. The flame encourages us to explore who we are, who our neighbors are, and where we are on our spiritual journeys...”

On Placing Beloved Community at Our Center

NOTE: The bulk of our resources on the work and path of Beloved Community are found in two packets from past years:

- *Beloved Community*, from February 2021
- *Widening the Circle*, from February 2022

If you were a subscriber in those years, the packets will be in your online archives. If you weren't, you can purchase both packets individually at <https://www.soulmatterssharingcircle.com/individual-packets>

Quote - Omid Safi

If you have an inner voice telling you that how this country is now is not right. That these shootings aren't right. That racism isn't right. That treating immigrants as they are isn't right. Honor that voice. It's your heart reminding you that love is real, that there is a more beautiful way to live. Nurture this voice and link it to others.

Chalice Lighting - Toward a Place of Wholeness, By Viola Abbitt

Full piece at <https://www.uua.org/worship/words/invocation/promise-and-practice-call-worship>

"We are brought here today by the fact that Unitarian Universalism has fallen short of the image that was presented to the world, and to many of those who embraced this religion.

But we are also brought here today by the truth that Unitarian Universalism has shifted course to move toward a place of wholeness: a place that perhaps never existed for us as a denomination..."

Quote - Rev. Myke Johnson

We who believe in freedom like to tell the story that racism is easing, that, yes, we still have work to do, but so much progress has been made in the last fifty years. But each year I learn something new that astounds me concerning the depth and persistence of this plague in the very structures of our society. Schools today in America are more segregated than they were fifty years ago. Voting rights are being diminished each year, with methods that are targeted to people of color. More black men are in prison than ever before—the United States now imprisons a larger percentage of its black population than South Africa did at the height of Apartheid.

Quote - Malebo Sephodi

Existing in this era comes with many contradictions. Contradictions because we have so much to unlearn.

Quote - James Baldwin

It took many years of vomiting up all the filth I'd been taught about myself, and half-believed, before I was able to walk on the earth as though I had a right to be here.

Reflection - Self-ish, Rev. Marta I. Valentin

Found in [A Long Time Blooming](#), UUA meditation manual & Soul Matters "[Common Shelf](#)" book.

Reflection/Reading - To the people who have mistaken freedom for liberation, Rev. Teresa I. Soto

Found at <https://www.uua.org/worship/words/poetry/freedom-liberation> and in [Spilling the Light](#), UUA meditation manual & Soul Matters "[Common Shelf](#)" Book

"You must know instead, that inside you are entire
Universes—milky blue, magenta, and gold—
expanding. But to actually be free, you must
know and you must fight for the entire
Universes inside of everyone else..."

Sermon - Courage to Decolonize, Rev. Karen G. Johnston

<https://blog.awakeandwitness.net/wp/2022/10/courage-to-decolonize-sermon/>

Note: This sermon is not permissioned for use in worship services

Book - I Never Thought of It That Way: How to Have Curious Conversations in Dangerously Divided Times, Monica Guzman

<https://www.penguinrandomhouse.com/books/691561/i-never-thought-of-it-that-way-by-monica-guzman/>

On how we can come to know ourselves well enough, have enough faith in ourselves that we can listen to others' experiences, values, etc., in a way that remains openly curious without needing to fight, without worrying that in the listening we will lose ourselves, and without believing that we will somehow become contaminated by the "other."

Related Book/Chapter: Chapter four, "People Are Hard to Hate Close Up, Move In, from Brené Brown's [*Braving the Wilderness*](#): *The Quest for True Belonging and the Courage to Stand Alone*

On Centering Ourselves While Pulled Between the Desires to Save and Savor the World

Quote - E.B. White

I arise in the morning torn between a desire to improve the world and a desire to enjoy the world. This makes it hard to plan the day.

Reflection - To Savor the World or Save It, Richard S. Gilbert *

[Permission Source](#)

Full piece found at <http://www.uua.org/worship/words/meditation/savor-world-or-save-it>

I rise in the morning torn between the desire...

To save the world or to savor it—to serve life or to enjoy it...

God of justice... What is that you say?

To save, one must serve?

To savor, one must save?

The one will not stand without the other?

Forgive me...

In my concern for my own life

I had forgotten...

Forgive me, and make me whole.

Quote: Sylvia Boorstein, from Don't Just Do Something, Sit There

Equanimity doesn't mean keeping things even; it is the capacity to return to balance in the midst of an alert, responsive life. I don't want to be constantly calm. The cultural context I grew up in and the relational life I live in both call for passionate, engaged response. I laugh and I cry and I'm glad that I do. What I value is the capacity to be balanced between times.

Book - Rest Is Resistance: A Manifesto, Tricia Hersey

<https://www.hachettebookgroup.com/titles/tricia-hersey/rest-is-resistance/9780316365536/>

Website - The Nap Ministry

<https://thenapministry.com/>

On Finding Our Center in the Work of De-Centering

NOTE: Our resources on the work and path of De-Centering are found in two packets from past years:

- *Beloved Community*, from February 2021
- *Widening the Circle*, from February 2022

If you were a subscriber in those years, the packets will be in your online archives. If you weren't, you can purchase both packets individually at <https://www.soulmatterssharingcircle.com/individual-packets>

Find Additional Resources In Our Specialty Worship Packets

In addition to our “regular” monthly themed packets, we make specialty packets on a number of special Sundays and observances. You can check out all of those specialty packets on our website at:

<https://www.soulmatterssharingcircle.com/special-worship-packets.html>

For this month, you might want to check out the following specialty packet:

Honoring Martin Luther King Jr.: *We have assembled a resource packet that includes inspiration and source material from the work of Dr. King. The vast majority of the over 35 pages of material includes over 80 quotes from Dr. King, as well as many curated selections from his speeches and sermons. It also includes a variety of articles focused on his work and vision, liturgy and many sermon seeds. You can purchase this packet on our Special Worship Packets page on our website: <https://www.soulmatterssharingcircle.com/special-worship-packets.html>*

Recommended Sermons

Notes about 2022-23 sermon recommendations:

- **We mostly list written scripts:** In order not to undermine UU preachers who depend on live and online guest preaching income for their livelihood, we mainly focus on sharing sermon texts (and sometimes audio clips), but not videos. When, on occasion, we include a video sermon, it will be from congregations that share those as part of their mission.
- **Permissions Secured:** All of the sermons below have received permission for your online use. Unless otherwise noted, they can be used for both live streaming and recorded services that are posted on YouTube or a podcast. **However, to be extra cautious and in good relationship, we ask that you reach out to the minister to let them know you are planning to use their sermon, also asking if they have any particular requests or guidance for how to do that.**
- **An Important Note About Editing:** If you want to make changes to the sermon for brevity or context, **you need to reach out to the preachers directly for such editing permission.** Contact information of each of the referenced preachers is listed after the list of sermons.
- **Note about hiring preachers for online guest preaching:** All of the texts listed below can be used and read in your worship services for free. And, in some cases, the preachers of these sermons are glad to be hired to guest preach and give these sermons at your congregation either by zooming into your service or sending you a recording of them giving it. When this is the case, there is a note under the sermon title/link with the preacher's contact information.

Follow Your Bliss, Rev. Sarah York

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1TtPpQg1RN_zl9Pwjq9qmv2koy3_3Z03z/edit?usp=sharing&ouid=101245613595157190644&rtpof=true&sd=true

Note: Rev. York is available to offer this sermon as a recording or by Zooming into your service for a fee. If you are interested, you can contact Rev. York at sarahmcyork@gmail.com

From Shell to Core, Rev. Kaaren Anderson

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1JCMMqix7zchaOt2SfLalp3ygU4ZL1Ccq/edit?usp=sharing&ouid=101245613595157190644&rtpof=true&sd=true>

Note: Rev. Anderson is available to offer this sermon as a recording or by Zooming into your service for a fee. If you are interested, you can contact Rev. Anderson at solveigstudio@gmail.com or Revkaaren@uufvb.org

In Defense of Imbalance, Rev. Douglas Taylor

<https://douglastaylor.org/2006/05/07/in-defense-of-imbalance/>

On the benefits of falling off your center in order to find it.

Featured Preacher Bios & Contact Information

- Rev. Sarah York: sarahmcyork@gmail.com
- Rev. Kaaren Anderson: <https://uufvb.org/colibri-wp/about/staff>
- Rev. Douglas Taylor: <https://uubinghamton.org/about-uus/uucb-leadership/our-ministry-and-staff/>

Closing Words

The Fire At The Center, Rev. Jone Johnson Lewis *

Permission Secured by Soul Matters

There is a fire at the center of each of us. A fire that, if nourished, brings light and warmth into our lives. Every other person also has a fire at their center. Our actions in this world can nourish the fire of others. Or, depending on our choices, our actions can dampen, even extinguish those fires. As we dampen or extinguish the fire of others, we dampen or extinguish our own. As we encourage and nourish the fire of others, we encourage and nourish our own fire. By encouraging and nourishing the fire at the center of each other, we bring even greater light and warmth to this world, and to ourselves. This week, may you nourish and encourage the fire at the center of others, and may you be nourished and encouraged in your center.

That which is worthy of doing, Rev. Steve J Crump *

Full piece at <https://www.uua.org/worship/words/closing/6037.shtml>

...That which is worthy of remembering, hold in your hearts.
And that which is worthy of living, go and live it now.

The Daring of Our Intentions, Rev. Kaaren Anderson *

Permission secured from Soul Matters

May we dare to live from the center of our being.
May we make our own choices before others' choices make us* (*From a quote by Richie Norton)
May the fire that burns in our belly, light our way.
And may that personal commitment to our own individual lights, make the world shine anew.

To Make Ready for the Coming Day, Rev. Bill Hamilton-Holway *

Full piece at <https://www.uua.org/worship/words/benediction/make-ready-coming-day>

If I were to wish you peace...
It would be peace
to rest, to reflect, to make ready
for the coming day...

As we leave this community of the spirit, Rev. Richard S. Gilbert *

Full piece at <https://www.uua.org/worship/words/closing/6003.shtml>

May we do what needs to be done,
Postpone what does not...
may we learn to separate
That which matters most
And that which matters least of all.

Home is Always Waiting, Rev. Scott Tayler *

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When the weight of the world tips us over,
When the winds of the world leave us spinning,
When the voices of the world lead us astray,
May we remember that, here, home is always waiting,
With stillness to calm us,
Friends to anchor us,
And voices to help us find our way.
Amen

Sharing What We've Found, Rev. Scott Tayler *

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Having found stillness, may we share peace.
Having received connection, may we reach out to others.
Having heard the call of our deepest self, may we live in greater alignment.
Having returned to our center, may we expand the circle of love.
Amen.

Support

Join the Soul Matters Worship Leader Support Facebook Page:
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/soulmatterssharingcircle/>

Join the Soul Matters Ministers' Support Facebook Page:
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/719788338192570/>

Attend one of our two monthly online ministers' brainstorming groups:
First Tuesdays and First Thursdays of each month at 1pm eastern
with this zoom link: <https://zoom.us/j/5857099120>

Attend our monthly online musicians' brainstorming group:
First Tuesdays of each month from 6-7pm eastern
with this zoom link: <https://zoom.us/j/5857099120>

Inspiration

Our Facebook Inspiration Page:
<https://www.facebook.com/soulmatterssharingcircle/>

Our Instagram Page:
Find us as "soul_matters_circle"

Music Playlists:
Click [here](#) for links to the [Spotify playlists](#) for each month.
Click [here](#) to check out the [YouTube playlists](#).



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