



Seeking Possibility in the New Year

Eric Bennion, Church Participant since 2012

“Seek not to follow in the footsteps of the great ones of old. Rather, seek what they sought.”

This is a quote from Basho, the most famous poet of the Edo period in Japan. I first read this quote 20 years ago, during what was simultaneously one of the most challenging and rewarding experiences of my life. It has stuck with me ever since and has been a reminder to remember to accept what is and to seek what is possible.

In 1955 Rev. Eugene Kreves and 24 former members of the Congressional Church in Lisle met to discuss the possibility of forming a liberal church committed to civil rights, civil liberties and world peace. That meeting was the foundation of what would become DUUC. Based on the path they took DUUC has become a church grounded in the humanistic teachings of the world's religions, embracing the theological diversity of its congregation rather than any single creed. Finding inspiration in scripture, science and reason, nature and philosophy, as well as personal experience and ancient tradition DUUC has become an inclusive faith community.

We have crossed the threshold into a new year. A year that is ripe with challenge and possibility. We, as a community, have the opportunity to build on the foundations of those whose hopes and dreams became DUUC. In this coming year we get to look out into a sea of possibility and chart a course that helps us further realize our goals to be a faith community that is inclusive, affirming, and a source of social justice in the world around us. We get to look back and remember what it was that Eugene Kreves and those 24 people who met with him in 1955 sought and seek to realize what they thought was possible.





PMA = Ministry of Care

Pastoral Ministry Associates (PMA) are selected church members who extend care to our church members who are experiencing a crisis or struggling with a difficult time. We provide a ministry of support through 1 to 1 care and helping activities. If you or your family are experiencing life changes and would like assistance, please continue to contact Sarah Baldwin or Sue Gately, PMA Co-Chairs, or staff member, Mary Law at the phone numbers & emails listed below.

We are pleased to let you know that our DUUC Board has contracted with Rev. Karen Mooney to provide memorial services, weddings and crisis counseling while we are without a minister. Rev Karen Moody is a UU minister currently providing pastoral support to prisoners in our area. You will get to know her as she will be preaching once a month at DUUC while we are without a minister. Rev Mooney will be preaching at DUUC for the first time on Jan. 13.

If you are in crisis and need support from Rev Moody, please contact Sarah Baldwin, Sue Gately or Mary Law at the phone numbers and emails listed below and we will connect you with Rev. Moody.

Reflections on Possibility

By Ingrid Marshall, member of Pastoral Ministry Associates

Unitarian Universalists come from a variety of backgrounds and celebrate a wide spectrum of beliefs. I searched for a long time before finding DUUC and a community where I felt I belonged. My mother was a German evangelical Lutheran and my father was a Lithuanian Catholic. Initially christened in my mother's religion, I was raised as a bad Catholic and attended weekly classes at the local parish. Some lessons from that time have stayed with me.

As lent approached, the nun who taught our third-grade class suggested that instead of giving up candy or gum we should consider an alternative. If we did without our favorites, we would be grumpy and probably take it out on our family. At the end of lent we would resume our old habits for another year and fall back into a familiar pattern. The nun suggested that we could give up anger and stop arguing with our parents so much. We could give up greed and for the Lenten period not ask for something every time we went to the store. We could stop picking on our siblings or make our beds without being asked. She hoped that by giving up a negative attitude we might develop a new and positive habit. It would be possible to change.

The New Year is a time when we make resolutions that remind me of that nun. We resolve to diet, to exercise, to save. We may also predict that our resolve will only last for a short period of time, rather like lent. Our resolutions may not have any lasting impact.

This year I would like to explore resolutions that could become more impactful. What are the possibilities?

Our church history is filled with people who came to our community from other backgrounds and asked, "Would it be possible to.....?"

Would it be possible to buy an old school building and form a new congregation? Gene Kreves and the founding members said YES! DUUC exists today because of them.





When Chalice Circles were first forming, Ginny Pace asked if it would be possible to have a Circle that was action oriented rather than a discussion group. The answer was YES! And the DUUGooders was born. That group has contributed so much to our church and the wider community.

Do you admire the wildflowers, the labyrinth, the view from Kreves Hall? So many people contribute because someone said YES to replacing grass with a natural landscape and many hands made it happen.

Over many years we have said yes to expansions, air conditioning, building improvements, becoming a Welcoming Congregation, participating in PADS, Bridging Communities, and on and on.

This year our church community is experiencing change. We will need more people to ask, "Would it be possible for me to become involved? What can I contribute? How can I say Yes?" Contributions of time and effort, no matter how small or large, will have a lasting impact. One evening a month for PADS, making coffee, finding a committee that speaks to your interests...all of these are important to the church. Plus, you will meet and get to know people and find how this community can be an important and supportive part of your life.

Do you think it is impossible? Walt Disney said, "It's kind of fun to do the impossible." Have some fun this year.

PASTORAL MINISTRY ASSOCIATES (PMA) INVITES YOU TO ATTEND

RECHARGING YOURSELF: CREATING A TOOLBOX FOR SELF CARE

Saturday, Feb 2nd 8:30a.m. - 12:30p.m.
at DuPage UU Church

Come for Mindfulness, Journaling and Movement





People of Possibility

By Steve Cooper, Director of Religious Education

Welcome to the month of “What Does It Mean to be a People of Possibility?” I’m excited about the four rich angles we’re taking on possibility this month:

Jan 6: The Possibility of You - Multi-generational service looking at what possibilities lie inside of you.

Inside each of us is the possibility of anything, we say. We practice the spirituality of potential, which gives us hope for a new beginning in the new year. We encourage the possibility of kindness and caring as essential to develop our potential. Notice, too, that the last session of the month for the theme of possibility is the Possibility of Being Wrong and the spiritual practice of humility. This first and last topics offer a balance between potential and arrogance, humility and hubris.

Jan 13: Impossible Possibilities - The future is wonderfully impossible to predict. Celebrate our love of science and reason with a Take Apart Party. Invite them to invent something impossible. And a “hands on” prayer flag meditation, too.

Jan 20: The Possibility of Change - It is possible to make a difference. We UU’s are an idealistic, hopeful people. One of our beliefs is that it is possible to make a difference in the world. Our spiritual practice is justice making. Celebrate the possibility of change today by sharing the story of the recent change in marriage equality. Support those who are working for change and predict the future with the traditional children’s paper folded Fortune Teller (aka a Cootie Catcher.)

Jan 27: The Possibility of Being Wrong - You might not see the whole picture. Making mistakes is a natural part of being human. Today, we invite the children to reflect on what happens when we are wrong and how we can learn and deepen from our mistakes. We reflect on a not to common practice of humility in Unitarian Universalism.

Later this month we will also be introducing our Traveling Chalice program. The Purpose of the Traveling Chalice Program is to deepen our understanding of one of our most familiar Unitarian Universalist symbols. The light of the Chalice connects us all together and is a sacred element of our beloved community. The Chalice may also be used as a symbol of hope when one is feeling or experiencing a sense of darkness. We will learn about its history and how it brings people together through learning and love.

I’ll see you next Sunday!

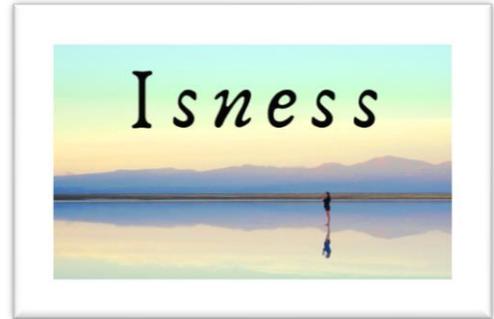




What It Is

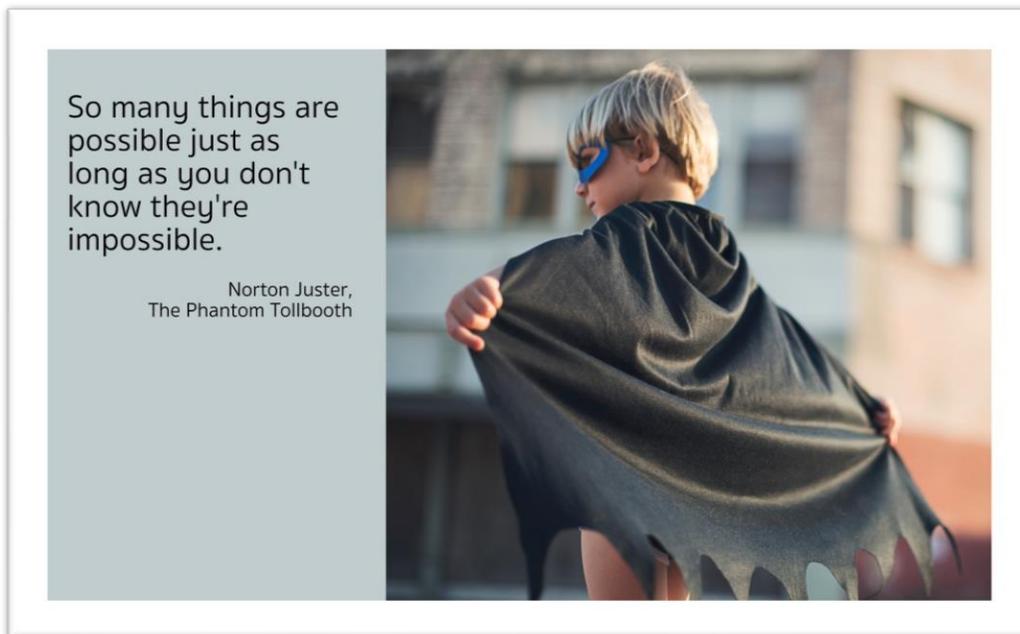
Mary Law, Congregational Life Coordinator

Somebody recently told me that they were going to focus on the 'Isness' of life. They said that they didn't want to continue getting upset on how things are when those things are out of this person's control. I love the concept of what they were saying. I am going to have to go back to them in a few months and ask how the 'Isness' is going.



Face 2 Face is on Sunday, January 20th after second service. Face 2 Face is a great opportunity to talk to others about your 'isness' about any topic in an atmosphere that isn't as challenging as Coffee Hour. There are conversation starters to help you if you need them. The Sign Up sheet is on the kiosk in Kreves Hall.

I hope you are able to attend Pastoral Ministry Associates (PMA) workshops on February 2nd on **Recharging Yourself: Creating a Toolbox for Self-Care**. PMA has been trying to find ways to help the congregation through our 'isness'.





Possibility

The following resources are being used for our small groups at DuPage UU Church and may be helpful for you to use to think about what it means to be a people of and a person of sanctuary. If you are interested in learning more about Covenant or other small groups, contact Mary Law at membershipduuc@gmail.com.

The Possibilities in a Word:

An Alternative New Year's Practice

In his early days, Abba Euprepus went to see an old man and said to him, "Abba, give me a word so that I may be saved."

— from the "Apophthegmata Patrum, The Sayings of the Fathers"

[Catholics](#) talk of a time in the third and fourth centuries when people would go to the desert and seek out monk-like hermits for guidance and wisdom. This tradition is referred to as "seeking a word." These wise "[desert mothers and fathers](#)" would offer people a word or a phrase to ponder for weeks, years and even a lifetime.

The idea behind this practice was that a simple word - when reflected upon with discipline - has the power to create possibilities in us and in the world. These words weren't instructions as much as invitations to open oneself in new ways. As one [writer](#) puts it, they are about deepening and unfolding, rather than fixing and improving.

So this New Year's lets lean into that work of unfolding, rather than fixing. Forget about making a list of resolutions to improve yourself. Instead try out this ancient practice of picking a word that will help keep you open to new possibilities throughout the year.

There are tons of words to choose from. Online you can find many examples of potent words that people have selected: embrace, listen, home, wholeheartedness, patience, presence, blossom, soar, overcome, treasure, nourish, expect, release, finish, delight, follow, lead. It's not hard to imagine how holding any one of these in front of you on a daily basis can open possibilities and expand the way you walk in the world.

But how do you find yours? Well, it's more of a matter of it finding you. For many, it will be easy. It may simply come up immediately. If not, take some time to make a list and then read it over until one pops out to you in neon lights. It often helps to ask yourself questions like: What do I need? What do I want? What do I need to focus on? What is in the way?

You will also want to find a way to hold on to your word. Some people put their word on their computer's screen saver or cellphone's home screen. Others have drawn their word on [rock](#) or made/bought [jewelry](#) with the word on it. Creative folks and families have done [vision boards](#) or paintings that hung on a wall in their house all year. Some small groups have written their word on a piece of paper and then given it to the group facilitator who kept them in envelopes for a few months and then returned them to the group members as





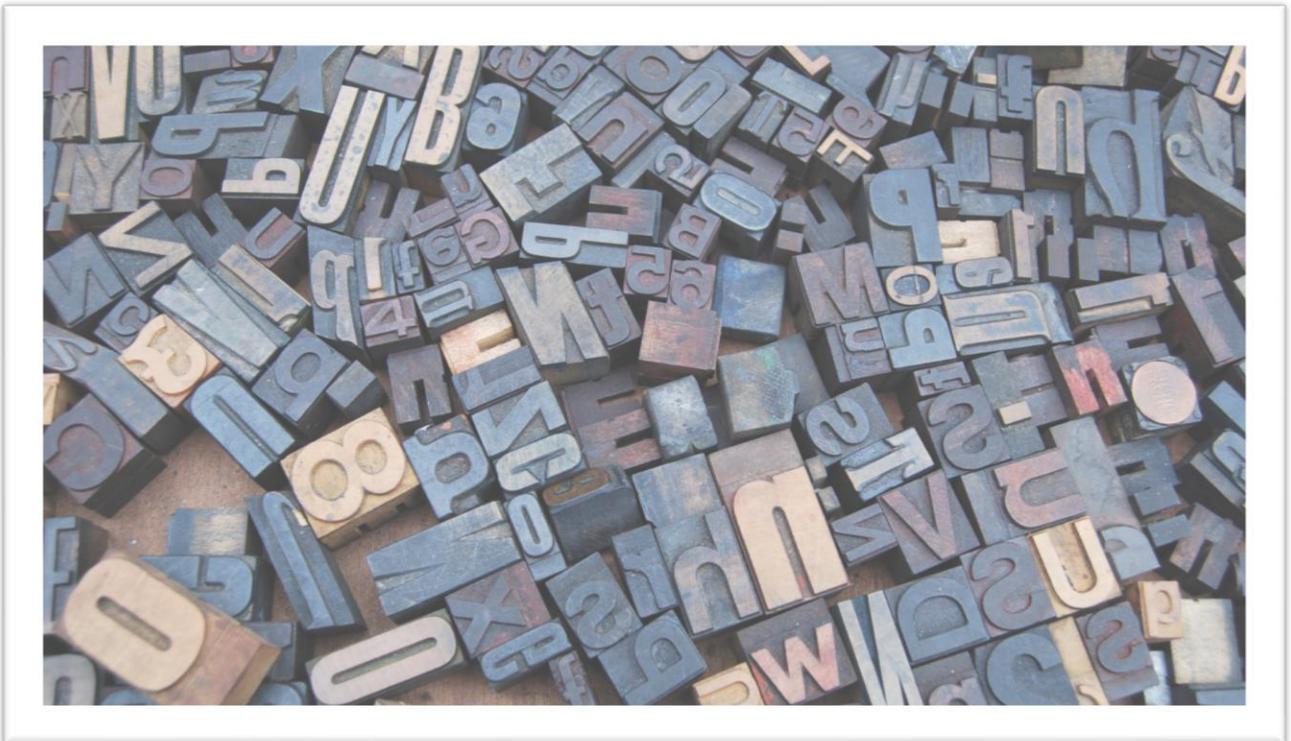
reminders. Whatever your method of choice, this holding on part is key to making the exercise work.

Feel free to share not only the word you chose (or that chose you) and why, but also the method you've selected to hold on to it. And maybe even give some thought to how you as a group can help each other hold on to it.

Enjoy the possibilities that this alternative new year's practice unfolds for you!

Here are a few links to inspire and guide you along the way:

- <https://apairandasparediy.com/2017/01/choose-word-guide-resolutions-2017/>
- <https://www.chicagotribune.com/news/columnists/schmich/ct-met-personal-word-of-the-year-mary-schmich-20180109-story.html>
- <https://gretchenrubin.com/podcast-episode/podcast-26-pick-a-one-word-theme-for-the-year-take-the-first-step-and-paper-or-digital-calendar/>
- <https://abbeyofhearts.com/blog/2016/12/06/give-me-a-word-2017-8th-annual-giveaway/> (scroll down to read words people have chosen and why)
- <https://www.artbarblog.com/one-word-resolutions/>





Your Questions

As always, don't treat these questions like "homework" or a list that needs to be covered in its entirety. Instead, simply pick the one question that speaks to you most and let it lead you where you need to go. The goal is to figure out which question is "yours." Which question captures the call of your inner voice? Which one contains "your work"? And where is it trying to lead you?

1. Who taught you the most about "living and leaning into possibility"? How does their memory call you to today?
2. What did your childhood and family of origin teach you about possibility? Are those lessons ones you need to remember or reject?
3. What are others learning about living and leaning into possibility by watching you?
4. We all have dreams of what's possible. We live with a voice that says "One day I will..." What "possible life" has been with you the longest? Why has it remained a dream for so long?
5. What "possible new you" did you pledge yourself to last new year's? Is it time to pledge yourself to it again? Or is time to finally let it go?
6. Is it possible that the thing you want is not the thing you need?
7. Is it possible that the thing you're sure you're right about is wrong?
8. Is "That was unfair!" or "I was wronged" keeping you from the possibility of [moving on](#)?
9. Is avoiding rejection keeping you safe but also keeping you from what's possible?
10. Are you sure you're too old to do it?
11. Are you sure it's too late to try it?
12. Is there more to see in your "enemy" than what you've been staring at?
13. Is it possible that your loved one is doing the best they can? And finally need forgiven for not living up to who you want them to be?
14. **What's your question?** Your question may not be listed above. As always, if the above questions don't include what life is asking from you, spend the month listening to your days to hear it. Or maybe the question or call you need to hear is waiting in one of the quotes listed below. Consider looking there!





Songs and Music

Everything Is Possible Now

Clouds And Thorns

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HPwik0T7Obs>

32 Flavors

Ani DiFranco

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vVg7mtgEqGY>

If You Want to Sing Out

Cat Stevens

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NDq36YD1ESM>

Cover by Rani Arbo & Daisy Mayhem:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D3QRci5VYpU>

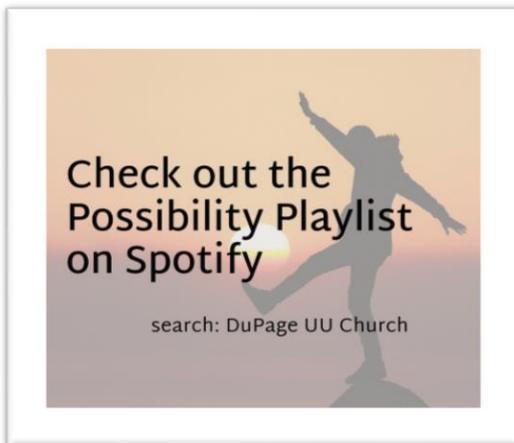
Black as Night

Nahko and Medicine for the People

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lkGBLLjAXEA&list=RDm3rLLALWYyk&index=9>

“I believe in the good things comin’, comin’, comin’ comin’

Who have I been, who am I becomin’? ‘comin’, ‘comin’, ‘comin’, ‘comin’...”



More “Possibility Songs” are found in our January Soul Matters Spotify playlist. Click [here](#) to check them out! You can also explore the playlists from other months [here](#).

Online

Breaking Free

What’s Your Version of “Breaking Free”? Do You Believe It’s Possible to Live Another Way?

<https://vimeo.com/14425446>

Holding on to the Possibilities After a Diagnosis - a must watch

What I’ve Learned from ALS

Eric Brown

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_421iX2-P-c

Turning Rejection into Possibility

What I learned from 100 days of rejection - TED Talk

Jia Jiang

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

See Jia’s blog where he posts videos of each day of rejection:

<https://www.rejectiontherapy.com/100-days-of-rejection-therapy/>

The Possibilities of Just Saying Yes!

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jKQuY_X2WtY

How Movements Become Possible - a TED Short

https://www.ted.com/talks/derek_sivers_how_to_start_a_movement?referrer=playlist-ted_in_3_minutes#t-144248

The Possible Future of UUism

https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=1842&v=H7sjTUK-iu0

As part of the First UU Congregation of Ann Arbor 150th anniversary year, UU leaders from around the country gathered to discuss the future of the UU movement and how UU congregations can boldly go into the dawning future.

Articles

The Possibility Report

<https://www.theatlantic.com/sponsored/vmw-are-2017/the-possibility-report-move/1431/>

A multi-series exploration of how new technologies will reframe our understanding of the world and unleash new possibilities.





To Pray Without Apology

Imagining the Possibility of MLK as a UU

Rosemary Bray McNatt

<https://www.uuworld.org/articles/why-martin-luther-king-jr.-wasnt-uu>

What would have happened if Martin Luther King Jr. had cast his lot with the Unitarian Universalists?

Books

The Art of Possibility: Transforming Professional and Personal Life

Rosamund Stone Zander and Benjamin Zander

https://www.amazon.com/Art-Possibility-Transforming-Professional-Personal/dp/0142001104/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1538834867&sr=8-1&keywords=the+art+of+possibility+by+benjamin+zander

Related TED talk: https://www.ted.com/talks/benjamin_zander_on_music_and_passion

Related interview with Diane Rehm: <http://wamu.org/programs/dr/01/03/29.php>

The Tipping Point (How possibilities become realities)

Malcom Gladwell

<https://www.amazon.com/Tipping-Point-Little-Things-Difference/dp/0316346624>

Movies

Ballast

On the possibility of moving on, together https://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/1197307_ballast?

Black Mirror

TV series on the dark possibilities in a future dominated by technology https://www.rottentomatoes.com/tv/black_mirror

Man on Wire

After watching, very little will seem impossible! https://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/man_on_wire/

Billy Elliot

One of the best films of all time about the possibility of pursuing your dreams despite the odds. https://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/billy_elliott

Big Fish

Perfect film about for convincing you to believe the unbelievable. Maybe anything IS possible! https://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/1127787_big_fish?

Ratatouille

Not just for kids! If a rat can make his dream a reality, then so can we! <https://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/ratatouille>

