



Soul Matters

What does it mean to be
a people of JOURNEY?

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Calendar Connections

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

Interfaith:

- [Holi](#) (Hindu) - March 21 (more [here](#) and [here](#))
- Mardi Gras - March 5
- [Ash Wednesday](#) (Christian) - March 6 (more [here](#))
- [Lent](#) (Christian) - March 6 - April 18 (A [humorous take](#))
- [Ostara](#)/ Spring or the Vernal Equinox (Wicca/Pagan) - March 20 (more [here](#))
- [Purim](#) begins (Jewish) - March 20-21 (more [here](#) and [here](#))
- [The Annunciation](#) (Christian) - March 25

Unitarian Universalist:

- [James Reeb](#) dies (1965) - March 11 (more [here](#) and [here](#).)
- [Susan B. Anthony's](#) Death - March 13
- [Climate Justice](#) Month - March 22 to April 22
- [Viola Liuzzo](#) dies (1965) - March 25

National & Cultural:

- [Women's History Month](#)
- Irish American Heritage Month
- [Peace Corps Established](#) - March 1 (1961)
- Season for Nonviolence - Jan. 30 - April 4
- Dred Scott Case - March 6 (1857)
- [International Women's Day](#) - March 8
- Daylight Savings Begins - March 11
- [St. Patrick's Day](#) - March 17
- [World Water Day](#) - March 22
- Archbishop [Oscar Romero](#) dies - March 24 (1980)
- [Selma–Montgomery march](#) - March 21-25 (1965)

For Fun and On the Fringe:

- [National Day of Unplugging](#) - first Friday of March / Mar. 2
- [Pi Day](#) - March 14
- Everything You Think is Wrong [Day](#) - March 15
- [Tolkien Reading Day](#) - March 2

Chalice Lightings & Opening Words

In Honor of First Steps

Soul Matters

We light this chalice in honor of first steps,
For beginning even when the path ahead is unclear
For the courage it takes to trust
 that the way will reveal itself
 that light will come to clarify our vision
 that friends will be by our side.

For All Those Who Have Gone Before

Soul Matters

We light this chalice in thanks for all who have gone before.
For all who have cleared the way
And serve as guiding lights when the days grow dim.
We never walk alone.
May our time together today help us remember this.

Refuge

Amy Carol Webb

<https://www.uua.org/worship/words/chalice-lighting/refuge>

How often we seek refuge in this sacred flame
From the world's trouble and pain.
Today, may our lamp light the way
For those who know no refuge,
That we may open our minds
Our arms
Our hearts
Our mouths to sing
"Come, whoever you are,"
Wholly new and wholly true.

Welcoming the Stranger

Theresa I. Soto, Tracy Bleakney

Original version in English by Tracy Bleakney, traducción en español por Theresa Soto

<https://www.uua.org/worship/words/chalice-lighting/welcoming-stranger>

A child journeys far from home
Fearful and brave,
in need of safe harbor.
Guided by this chalice, may we seek to understand the causes of flight.
Like the comfort of a candle flickering in a window of darkness,
Let us welcome this child into our home with
warmth, nourishment, and love.
Would we not want the same for our own child,
lost and alone in a strange land?

The End Is the Beginning

Katie Gelfand

<https://www.uua.org/worship/words/chalice-lighting/end-beginning>

We call forth the life of our faith by igniting our chalice.
This spark of new beginnings invites us into a sacred space
to reflect where we have been and where we are going.
Even knowing that this particular flame will intentionally end
with our ritual extinguishing, we fear not its end...
For we know, with brave hearts,
that from every ending of our lives,
We are sent forth to make a new beginning.

Invitation to Join the Journey

Lyn Cox

Note: this was written for a worship service with a Wizard of Oz theme.

Full piece found at

<https://www.uua.org/worship/words/invocation/invitation-join-journey>

Come you accidental pilgrims, you who find yourself on a journey of surprise and wonder. Come you who emerge into this place as an act of liberation...

This path will ask much from us. Let us move forward with love. Let us move forward with appreciation for one another. Let us move forward knowing we are not alone. Whoever you are, whatever your gifts, you are welcome to join this journey.

We Travel This Road Together

Tess Baumberger

<https://www.uua.org/worship/words/litany/we-walk-road-together>

Please respond to this call to worship with the words: We travel this road together.

From the busy-ness of everyday we gather once a week
to remember who we are, to dream of who we might become.

We travel this road together.

As companions on this journey, we share the milestones we meet along the way.
Individual moments of joy and sorrow become shared moments of comfort and celebration.

We travel this road together.

We share this journey across differences of belief and opinion
Because we value diversity and because care for one another.

We travel this road together.

Today as we take the next steps, let us notice our fellow travelers:
The burdens that they carry, the songs that inspire their hearts.

We travel this road together.

As we gather in beloved community, let us open the holy havens of our hearts,
Let us share the sacred places of our souls
For we are pilgrims who share a common path.

We travel this road together.

River Call

Rev. Manish K. Mishra-Marzetti

From *Voices from the Margins: An Anthology of Meditations*, James and Morrison-Reed
Full piece found online [here](#) or [here](#)

“We find ourselves here, in community.
Each called from many different journeys,...
Onto this river road.
Some are here because the rocking of the boat has been too much...
Some are here with questions about where the boat is going...
Others are here as lovers of the journey, lovers of life itself...”

Step Zero

Rev. Gretchen Haley

If you had the chance to start again
To make your life from scratch
To decide what sort of person you would be
Who you would love, and how
The content of your days, your hours
What songs would you sing to yourself,
or with others?
What prayers would you let fall from your lips
Urgently and with praise,
With mercy, or hope?
What blessings would you name
and share,
with strangers, and friends?
If you could take now that first step
what journey would you begin
across deserts, or mountains -
or would you take to the sky,
which, despite the bitter cold
is still vast, and filled with light?
What work would you take,
what mischief would you make
with boldness, and bravery,
what failure would you embrace, and
what would you release,
and where
in the end,

would you return, and call home?
In this new day
on the brink of a new year
no magic wishing or wondering
is required
for such a chance
is always available
As with the in, and out of our breath
to begin now
to live like we mean it
to see with new eyes
the life that is already and always
available,
to respond to this gift
with wonder,
and gratitude
to join in this partnership
to tend this flame
even when it breaks our heart
to keep showing up
to go with courage
into this dawning day.
Come, let us worship
Together.

Meditations, Prayers & Blessings

Walking the Crooked Path

Thomas Rhodes

Full meditation found at <https://www.uua.org/worship/words/meditation/walking-crooked-path>

“Lead us this day on a crooked path...

We lose so much when we take the direct route...

So lead us on the crooked path...

Following our hearts' desire,

Not just duty's demands,

For the crooked path also leads us home.”

Desert Spring

Victoria E Safford

Full piece found at <https://www.uua.org/worship/words/meditation/desert-spring>

“...They had no idea what they were getting into, following this Moses... They had no idea, these slaves, what it could mean, this promise of land (their own country) and life abundant. Of freedom they knew nothing, except what they could taste by living in its opposite...

In the springtime we remember: the promised land is not a destination—it is a way of going... you carry it inside you all the while...”

If We Do Not Venture Out

Marni Harmony (adapted)

Full piece found at <https://www.uua.org/worship/words/meditation/if-we-do-not-venture-out>

“If we stay inside ourselves and do not venture out

then the Fullness of the universe

shall be unknown to us...”

We Imagine a Path Prayer

D. Scott Cooper

Full meditation found at <https://www.uua.org/worship/words/prayer/we-imagine-path>

“We bow our heads in order to imagine not one path, but many. We imagine a path forward for those who cannot imagine any path forward...”

The Courage to Continue on the Journey

Lyn Cox

<https://www.uua.org/worship/words/prayer/courage-continue-journey>

“We give thanks for the ability to begin again: after the disaster, after the tragedy, after the loss, after meeting the challenge set before us. Grant us the courage to continue on the journey...”

Step Zero

Rev. Gretchen Haley

See piece above under Opening Words. While written as opening words, it works equally well as a meditation.

Readings

Start Close In

David Whyte

Full poem found at <https://pathwriter.wordpress.com/2012/03/19/start-close-in-david-whyte/>

Start with your own
Question...
take a small step
you can call your own
don't follow
someone else's
heroics...

A Blessing for Traveling in the Dark

Jan Richardson

Full poem at <http://adventdoor.com/2015/11/25/advent-1-a-blessing-for-traveling-in-the-dark/>

Go slow
if you can.
Slower.
More slowly still.
Friendly dark
or fearsome,
this is no place
to break your neck
by rushing,
by running...

Detour

Ruth Feldman

Full poem found at <https://wordsfortheyear.com/2018/05/29/detour-by-ruth-feldman/>

I took a long time getting here,
much of it wasted on wrong turns...
Super highways are so sure
of where they are going:
they arrive too soon.

[*Ruth Feldman*](#)

Found While Lost

Erik W. Martínez Resly

Full reading at <https://www.uua.org/worship/words/reflection/found-while-lost>

“There is much that awaits us in our lostness. Much to be excavated examined, even exalted. In not yet knowing what will be, we are afforded the opportunity to appreciate what already is. The things hiding in plain sight. A frayed relationship, for -example, may reveal our deeper needs. An unfulfilling career may motivate us to seek out a mentor. A misstart, or a misstep, may remind us of our own fragile humanity. It may claw open our hearts and sensitize us to the suffering of others...”

Home

Warsan Shire

Full poem found at <https://www.poemhunter.com/poem/home-433/>

Visual and spoken meditation using it: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nI9D92Xiygo>

“No one leaves home unless
home is the mouth of a shark
you only run for the border
when you see the whole city running as well...”

Our Movable Mecca

Danez Smith

Full poem found at <http://www.splitthisrock.org/poetry-database/poem/our-movable-mecca>

“we who were born into conundrum, came into the world as the world was leaving...
who asked for water & were given a border...
who were hungry & were given a cell to hunger in...
we know fire is both destroyer & mother
we know change is not concept but necessity
we remember hope
we are hope...
we make heaven wherever we stand...
we refuse to wait...
we are our own mecca...”

On Lent

Frederick Buechner

From [Whistling in the Dark](#) and [Beyond Words](#)

In many cultures there is an ancient custom of giving a tenth of each year's income to some holy use. For Christians, to observe the forty days of Lent is to do the same thing with roughly a tenth of each year's days. After being baptized by John in the river Jordan, Jesus went off alone into the wilderness, where he spent forty days asking himself the question what it meant to be Jesus. During Lent, Christians are supposed to ask one way or another what it means to be themselves...

When you look at your face in the mirror, what do you see in it that you most like and what do you see in it that you most deplore? If you had only one last message to leave to the handful of people who are most important to you, what would it be in twenty-five words or less? Of all the things you have done in your life, which is the one you would most like to undo? Which is the one that makes you happiest to remember? Is there any person in the world or any cause that, if circumstances called for it, you would be willing to die for? If this were the last day of your life, what would you do with it?

To hear yourself try to answer questions like these is to begin to hear something not only of who you are, but of both what you are becoming and what you are failing to become. It can be a pretty depressing business all in all, but if sackcloth and ashes are at the start of it, something like Easter may be at the end.

Aristotle

Billy Collins

<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/46706/aristotle>

Read by Collins: https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=27&v=TpiirPSyp9I

This is the beginning.
Almost anything can happen...

This is the middle.
Things have had time to get complicated,
messy, really. Nothing is simple anymore...

And this is the end...
It is me hitting the period
and you closing the book...
what we have all been waiting for,
what everything comes down to...

Things to Do in the Belly of the Whale

Dan Albergotti

Full poem found at http://www.towncreekpoetry.com/FALL08/ALBERGOTTI_THINGS.htm

“Count the ribs... Look up for blue sky through the spout...
Listen for the sound of your heart.
Be thankful that you are here, swallowed with all hope,
where you can rest and wait...”

Having Come This Far

James Broughton

Full poem found at http://www.sharonsinger.ca/poem.php?poem_id=390

“I've been through what my through was to be...
No longer do I hunt for targets
I've climbed all the summits I need to...
Now I give praise and thanks...”

Music

Soul Matters Music Resources

Our five sources of support for music leaders:

1. **Monthly Small Group Packet**: Our small group packets also contain music recommendations on the theme. These are intended for personal devotion and inspiration not community worship, but often the list does contain songs that can be used for worship services.
2. **UUMN (UU Musicians Network) Online Database**: The wonderful leadership of the UUMN have added our monthly themes to the UUMN music database. This provides a centralized place for Soul Matters musicians to post and share music ideas with each other. You also get to tap into the suggestions from other UU musicians from around the country. You can access the UUMN Music Database [here](#). More detail is provided on the "[music resources](#)" page in the members-only section of our Soul Matters website.
3. **Soul Matters Music Support Facebook Page**: This support page is for on-going sharing among Soul Matters musicians. Click [here](#) to go to the Facebook page.
4. **Soul Matters Worship Support Facebook Page**: This support page is for on-going sharing among worship leaders and teams. It is also a great source of music support. Click [here](#) to visit the page.
5. **Soul Matters Spotify Playlists**: We create a [Spotify](#) playlist for each month that includes a number of songs on the monthly theme. 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.

Suggestions For This Month

from Soul Matters Music Resources Coordinator, [Sara Brandt-Doelle](#)

Hymns -Easier to Lead & Sing

| | |
|------|----------------------------------|
| 2 | Down the Ages We Have Trod |
| 4 | I Brought My Spirit to the Sea |
| 6 | Just as Long as I Have Breath |
| 42 | Morning, So Fair to See |
| 95 | There Is More Love Somewhere |
| 106 | Who Would True Valor See |
| 116 | I'm On My Way |
| 149 | Lift Every Voice and Sing |
| 152 | Follow the Drinking Gourd |
| 188 | Come, Come, Whoever You Are |
| 199 | Precious Lord, Take My Hand |
| 205 | Amazing Grace |
| 206 | Amazing Grace |
| 211 | We Are Climbing Jacob's Ladder |
| 295 | Sing Out Praises for the Journey |
| 1017 | Building a New Way |
| 1018 | Come and Go with Me |
| 1046 | Shall We Gather At The River |
| 1057 | Go Lifted Up |

Hymns - More difficult to lead

351 A Long, Long Way the Sea-Winds Blow
1064 Blue Boat Home
1020 Woyaya

Recommended Choral or Vocal Pieces

I seek a Journey - Gwen Hall <https://www.jwpepper.com/I-Seek-a-Journey/3298250.item#myratebox2>
My Ship - Ysaye Barnwell found in Singing In The African American Tradition Vol. 2
I Feel Like Going On - Ysaye Barnwell Singing in the African American Tradition
Spiritual - Ysaye Barnwell <https://www.jwpepper.com/Spiritual/10288420.item#/submit>
We Will - Ann Reed <https://www.annreed.com/sheetmusic.html>
Storm is Passing Over -Charles Tindley there are several arrangements of this
Sitting in Limbo (Jimmy Cliff) <https://www.musicnotes.com/sheetmusic/mtd.asp?ppn=MN0118679>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vRoJyaZW6SA>
Step out of the Shadows - G. Hansard https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XTjRp_urJK0
I'm Gonna Walk it with You -Claflin & Grace <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c8boCrXOp9M>
<https://claflinandgrace.wordpress.com/140-2/>
The Road not Taken from Frostiana Randall Thompson
This Train Still Runs - Janis Ian https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=19&v=oHf03Gnicxs
<https://store.janisianstore.com/collections/digital-sheet-music>

Stories For All Ages

The Walk of the Migrant

Full story at <https://www.uua.org/worship/words/meditation/walk-migrant>

Imagine you live in a little village on a mountain.
You've always lived there with your family, friends.
Every day you play. Everyday everyone plays...

Imagine little by little, things start to change.
You listen to the adults talk about the trouble...

Our Souls Have to Catch Up

<https://storiesforpreaching.com/waiting-for-our-souls-to-catch-up/>

Theme Message: When attempting a journey, leave time for your soul to catch up.

Toribio Quimada - Making a Difference

In Tapestry of Faith, Faithful Journeys, The Journey Begins

<https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/journeys/session1/132144.shtml>

Theme Message: When you are on a journey to find a loving God, having fellow travelers like UU's is a gift. Toribo was on an internal journey, not having others around him who believed the same way.

Empty Your Cup - Zen Story

Pour a cup as in this story.

Nan-in, a Japanese master during the Meiji era (1868-1912), received a university professor who came to inquire about Zen. Nan-in served tea. He poured his visitor's cup full, and then kept on pouring. The professor watched the overflow until he no longer could restrain himself. "It is overfull. No more will go in!" "Like this cup," Nan-in said, "you are full of your own opinions and speculations. How can I show you Zen unless you first empty your cup?"

Theme Message: The journey inward begins with making room so that new stuff can come in.

The Monk's Heavy Load (Zen story online)

<https://www.kindspring.org/story/view.php?sid=63753>

Theme Message: Let go of the resentments and judgements that weigh down our journey unnecessarily.

Be the Boss - Zen Story

A horse suddenly came galloping quickly down the road. It seemed as though the man had somewhere important to go. Another man, who was standing alongside the road, shouted, "Where are you going?" and the man on the horse replied, "I don't know! Ask the horse!"

Theme Message: Are we conscious of our journey or are we like the rider, letting the horse decide where to go? This story teaches us to be mindful of the journey we are on, and make decisions, not just be at the mercy of mindless activity.

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.

I felt in need of a great pilgrimage, so I sat still for three days, and God came to me.

Kabir

In my case, Pilgrim's Progress consisted in my having to climb down a thousand ladders until I could reach out my hand to the little clod of earth that I am.

Carl Jung

And the world cannot be discovered by a journey of miles, no matter how long, but only by a spiritual journey, a journey of one inch, very arduous and humbling and joyful, by which we arrive at the ground at our own feet, and learn to be at home"

Wendell Berry

Where we had thought to travel outward,
we will come to the center of our own existence;
where we had thought to be alone,
we shall be with all the world.

Joseph Campbell

There are two questions that [a person] must ask [themselves]. The first is "Where am I going?" and the second is "Who will go with me?" If you ever get these questions in the wrong order, you are in trouble.

Howard Thurman

To journey without being changed is to be a nomad.
To change without journeying is to be a chameleon.
To journey and to be transformed by the journey
is to be a pilgrim.

Mark Nepo

All journeys have a secret destination of which the traveler is unaware.

Martin Buber

I've come to believe that there exists in the universe something I call "The Physics of The Quest" — a force of nature governed by laws as real as the laws of gravity or momentum. And the rule of Quest Physics maybe goes like this: "If you are brave enough to leave behind everything familiar and comforting (which can be anything from your house to your bitter old resentments) and set out on a truth-seeking journey (either externally or internally), and if you are truly willing to regard everything that happens to you on that journey as a clue, and if you accept everyone you meet along the way as a teacher, and if you are prepared — most of all — to face (and forgive) some very difficult realities about yourself... then truth will not be withheld from you." Or so I've come to believe.

Elizabeth Gilbert, Eat, Pray, Love

Exile calls us to soften our hard defenses, to acknowledge that we don't have all the answers, to seek the resources available in our new communities and reach out to strangers for support.

Christine Valters Paintner

Emerging Faith: A Unitarian Universalist Journey

Rev. Seth Carrier-Ladd

<http://www.uuchurchmuncie.org/emerging-faith-a-unitarian-universalist-journey/>

Story: Our Souls Have to Catch Up

<https://storiesforpreaching.com/waiting-for-our-souls-to-catch-up/>

When on a journey, leave time for your soul to catch up.

Story: Frank Lloyd Wright's Learning

<https://storiesforpreaching.com/category/sermonillustrations/rest/> (scroll down to the fifth story on the list)

It is the journey that is important, not the destination. Also, it's important to not let the treasure waiting at the end of the journey make us miss the many other treasures along the way.

Reflection: Desert Spring

Victoria E Safford

Full piece found at <https://www.uua.org/worship/words/meditation/desert-spring>

"In the springtime we remember: the promised land is not a destination—it is a way of going..."

Reflection: It's Not All About You

David Brooks

<https://www.nytimes.com/2011/05/31/opinion/31brooks.html?mtrref=undefined&gwh=BE1238DA018B0E369ADBAD47179E2D24&gwt=pay>

Advice for young graduates, but really an invitation for us all to rethink how journeys begin: with a clear and fully formed self? Or by discovering the problem you are called to help fix? Brooks writes: "Most successful young people don't look inside and then plan a life. They look outside and find a problem, which summons their life.... Most people don't form a self and then lead a life. They are called by a problem, and the self is constructed gradually by their calling."

Article: 11 Guideposts for Loving Your Path - (11 great sermon angles!)

Paolo Coelho

<http://www.awakin.org/read/view.php?tid=570>

Article: When Leaving Becomes Arriving

Maria Popova

A reflection on the work of David Whyte and Mary Oliver

<https://www.brainpickings.org/2015/04/06/david-whyte-the-journey-house-of-belonging/>

Quote: The Fine Art of Being a Good Guest: Ask little, accept what is offered, and give thanks

Jeffrey Lockwood, from A Guest of the World

The most important thing that I've learned in traveling to more than twenty countries is the art of being a guest. And I'm a particularly fine visitor at the supper table. I've consumed live fish in Inner Mongolia, not-quite-coagulated blood sausage on the Tibetan plateau, shredded pig's ear in China, grilled lamb fat in Uzbekistan, horse steaks in Kazakhstan, vodka made from fermented mare's milk in Siberia, vegemite in Australia, goat in Brazil, and snails in France. I don't have an iron stomach, by any means, but I do have the will to be a virtuous visitor.

We are all visitors—even when we are home. Our time in any relationship or place is ultimately limited. We are passing through; nobody stays forever. How might we act if we consider ourselves guests in the lives of friends and family? Being a good guest is rather simple in principle but occasionally challenging in practice.

One begins by demanding nothing more than the bare elements of life and dignity, which every host is more than delighted to exceed. The good guest then simply allows the other person to be a good host—to share his gifts, to play her music, to tell his stories, to show her places, and to serve his foods. Finally, a guest should cultivate and express genuine gratitude. It need not be effusive or exorbitant, only sincere.

We might also think of ourselves as uninvited, but not unwelcome, guests of the planet. And I think the rules for being a good guest of the world are just the same: Ask little, accept what is offered, and give thanks.

Reflection: Living on the Edge

Richard Rohr

Full reflection found at <https://cac.org/living-on-the-edge-2016-07-13/>

“We often enter liminal space when our former way of being is challenged or changed—perhaps when we lose a job or a loved one, during illness, engagement, or at the birth of a child. During this graced time we are not certain or in control. This openness allows room for something genuinely new to happen. We are empty and receptive—an erased tablet waiting for new words... Because we have avoided liminal space, we have created a very smug and middle-class kind of Christianity that has little wisdom or compassion to offer the world today. Much of the work of authentic spirituality and human development is to get people into liminal space and to keep them there long enough that they can learn something essential and new... Liminality keeps one in an ongoing state of shadowboxing instead of ego-confirmation; it can keep us struggling with the dark side of things, calling the center and so-called normalcy into creative question.”

Book: Wisdom Walking: Pilgrimage as a Way of Life

Gil Stafford

<https://www.amazon.com/Wisdom-Walking-%20Pilgrimage-Way-Life/dp/0819233498>

Book: Wanderlust: A history of walking

Rebecca Solnit

https://www.amazon.com/Wanderlust-%20History-Walking-Rebecca-%20Solnit/dp/0140286012/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1507398257&sr=8-%201&keywords=wanderlust+solnit

Video: What Makes a Hero - Joseph Campbell's monomyth

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hhk4N9A0oCA>

Poem: At Home

Rev. Steve Garnaas-Holmes

www.unfoldinglight.net

"Why were you searching for me?

Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?" - Luke 2.49

On this windblown street
here I,
finding my way,
stand, thinking of being lost
while in truth I am home,
in your house,
far from where I came from
and still
because all flesh is Word made flesh
at home in you.
And here in this temple you
not with answers but with questions
call me home
to not a place
but a presence,
heartwise,
close to you in this
beatific, banal or horrific
place I am,
the distance between us
vanished.

Article: What Muslims do on Hajj and Why

Diaa Hadid

<https://www.nytimes.com/2016/09/09/world/middleeast/hajj-muslim-pilgrimage-mecca.html>

It is incumbent upon every able-bodied Muslim who can afford to do so to travel to Mecca, Saudi Arabia, Islam's holiest site, at least once in his or her lifetime. The annual pilgrimage is known as the hajj, and it is one of the five pillars of Islam, prescribed in the Quran:

Reflection: The Seeking Woman at the Heart of the Pilgrimage

Omid Safi

<https://onbeing.org/blog/the-seeking-woman-at-the-heart-of-a-pilgrimage/>

There is a time and place for those ways of approaching the hajj, but I want to focus on a simpler truth. Every one of those pilgrims walks in the footsteps of a black woman, a maiden or a slave (depending on the story you prefer), a woman left in God's care, or abandoned by a husband, a co-wife, or the victim of Sarah's jealousy. Every pilgrim walks in the footsteps of our mother Hajar/Hagar, a noble, lone, tired, exhausted woman living as a single mother in the desert, without family, without support, without money, without water...
Death was close. God was closer..."

Article: The True Story of the Colonization of the United States of America

<https://www.uua.org/multiculturalism/dod/what-doctrine-discovery>

Article: Remember the Forced March of the Dakota in 1862

<http://healingmn.blogspot.com/p/nov-2012-commemorative-march.html>

Video: What Was the 2nd Middle Passage?

<https://www.theroot.com/what-was-the-2nd-middle-passage-1790895016>

Movie: Traces of the Trade

<https://www.pbs.org/pov/tracesofthetrade/>

When Katrina Browne discovered that her slave-trading ancestors from Rhode Island were not an aberration she invited 200 of her living relatives on a journey with her from Rhode Island to Ghana to Cuba and back to learn about her slave-trading family roots.

Book: The Warmth of Other Suns: The Epic Story of America's Great Migration

Isabel Wilkerson

https://www.amazon.com/dp/B003EY7JGM/ref=dp-kindle-redirect?_encoding=UTF8&btcr=1

In this epic, beautifully written masterwork, Pulitzer Prize-winning author Isabel Wilkerson chronicles one of the great untold stories of American history: the decades-long migration of black citizens who fled the South for northern and western cities, in search of a better life.

Seeking Mercy, Seeking Home

Erika A. Hewitt

Full reflection at <https://www.uua.org/worship/words/reading/seeking-mercy-seeking-home>

“For many reasons—many of them inconceivable to us, who live in relative peace and prosperity—people can’t stay where they are, in the places they know; so for themselves and for their children, they trade the hell they know for the unknown, and the foreign. For so many reasons—unimaginable to me, and maybe to you, too—people give up their sense of belonging; they surrender the climate and food and sounds and smells that their bodies have always known for the new, the unfamiliar, the harsh and unlearnable. What deep respect these refugees, asylees, and immigrants deserve for their courage; for their capacity to keep moving forward, toward hope...”

Home

Warsan Shire

Full poem found at <https://www.poemhunter.com/poem/home-433/>

Visual and spoken meditation using it: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nI9D92Xiygo>

“No one leaves home unless
home is the mouth of a shark
you only run for the border
when you see the whole city running as well...”

Video: Wilderness Journey

Ron Cordes

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LK86pRn3b-4&feature=youtu.be>

The struggle for black empowerment and racial justice within the Unitarian Universalist Association

My Journey as a Unitarian Universalist

Marissa Gutierrez-Vicario

<http://www.igcuu.org/my-journey-as-unitarian-universalist/>

“My journey as a Unitarian Universalist has not been a straightforward one. It has had its ups and downs, to say the least. Perhaps it is more accurate to consider it as a path of sharp curves and broken trails...”

Some Seeds for Women's History Month

MAKERS

<https://www.makers.com>

“We tell the stories of today's trailblazing women to inspire the change MAKERS of tomorrow.”

Bold & Untold

<https://www.makers.com/bold-and-untold>

“The badass women in history you never knew about—until now”

Celebrating UU Women in History

<https://www.uua.org/pressroom/stories/celebrating-uu-women-history>

Glorious Women: Award-Winning Sermons About Women

<https://www.harvardsquarelibrary.org/women-religion/glorious-women-award-winning-sermons-about-women/>

Reading List: African-American Women

<https://sermonsinstones.com/2015/03/13/reading-list-african-american-women/>

In this fictionalized memoir in verse, renowned poet Nelson lyrically recounts her passage from ages 4 to 14, from numerous military base homes; through friends, schools, and dogs; and from developmental stages of initiative through industry to identity. Chronicling the decade of 1950s America, a young self-aware speaker connects national events to daily life experiences. In the author's note of her self-ascribed “portrait of an artist as a young American Negro girl,” Nelson disclaims that the “I” in the title is she. Rather, her autobiographically inspired collection of 50 nonrhyming sonnets is enhanced by research and imagination.

The Forgotten Female Transcendentalists

Rev. Dr. John Buehrens

<https://uucb.org/learning/adult-programs/personal-theology/personal-theology-archives/>

(Scroll down to 09-09-2018)

“Why we should know more about such women as Elizabeth Peabody, Margaret Fuller, Lydia Maria Child, Caroline Healey Dall, and Julia Ward Howe, among others. Brief stories of each will help to expand our understanding of the Transcendentalists' role in helping to launch the American movement for women's rights.”

Recommended Sermons

This Is Now

Rev. Margaret Weis

<https://fpwatertown.org/this-is-now-by-margaret-weis-may-19-2013/>

“It’s difficult though when we don’t know that the worst is over. It’s difficult when we are in the thick of it, tired and worn out, and there seems to be no light at the end of the tunnel. It just keeps going and going and going. It’s too much to name; too much to think about. We spend a lot of our time in the middle, maybe even most of it... Our society is so focused on what is coming next, that we rarely pause long enough to reflect on the past and the present. We are quick to jump to the next things on our to-do list or the next errand to run. I wonder what we lose because of this automatic tumble into the future...”

(The Journey Through) Thin Places

Rev. John T. Morehouse

<https://uwestport.org/sermons/rev-john-t-morehouses-sermons/thin-places-january-29-2017/>

“To go through the thin places you have to let go, if even more a moment, what you “know” to be true...”

Sauntering

Rev. Kim Crawford Harvie

Found at <https://itunes.apple.com/podcast/arlington-street-church/id95710635?mt=2>

Scroll down to date: 6/8/2014 & #262

A celebration of our allies along the path.

On Setting Out and Coming Home

Josh Pawlek

<http://uuse.org/?s=on+setting+out#.XBFHwhNKi8g>

“The question I’d like you to consider this morning and in the coming weeks is this: when you contemplate your own spiritual journey, are you setting out or coming home?...”

Long Hauls

Rev. Wendy Williams

<https://vimeo.com/254221452>

Celebrating journeys of perseverance.

Among the Shipwrecked

Rev. Lee Bluemel

<http://www.northparish.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/2016-10-16-Among-the-Shipwrecked.pdf>

“How might we accompany each other even more faithfully? How might we continue to accompany our neighbors, including those who’ve lost almost everything and those seeking social, political and economic liberation? There are so many different ways to walk together in faith...”

Half Way Through the Journey of Life

Rob Hardies

<http://www.all-souls.org/node/1901>

“Mid-life crises: they’re not just for the middle-aged anymore. The poet David Whyte says they can occur “anytime that the tide of life seems to have left us stranded on the beach.”

Pilgrimage

Rev. Mike Morran

<http://www.fusden.org/listen/services/pilgrimage>

http://www.fusden.org/sites/default/files/11%20Sermon%20-%20Pilgrimage_0.mp3

Holy Journeys

Rev. Alison Wilbur Eskildsen

<https://www.uuathensga.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/10-13-13-Holy-Journeys-final2.pdf>

“You and I may feel we are living on a long and winding road. Most of us have no idea where we are going, even when we try very hard to control or direct our lives. But for at least once in their lifetime, during the Hajj able and observant Muslims know exactly where they are going...”

A Personal Journey to the Border

Rev Kellie Walker Hart

https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=65&v=X1U-PrPFvJg

A Journey Towards the Other America

Rev. Jill Cowie and Steve Farough

<https://uuharvard.org/services/journey-towards-america/>

https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B_-n7ZiNpKDFoERTVIZ5ak5KRjA/view

Lengthening Love - A Sermon for Lent

Rev. Pamela M. Barz

- <http://cloud2.snappages.com/5624a7c26130d73fd8bc02853fb40190b5aa1249/Lengthening%20Love%20-%20February%2014,%202016.pdf>
- <http://firstparishscituate.org/blog/2016/02/16/lengthening-love-a-sermon-for-lent-and-valentines-day-feb-14-2016>

On lent as the journey towards the person you want to be and the journey of helping the light grow: “Instead, of giving something up for Lent, she said that we should take something on. That we should think about who you want to be and begin to do something that will bring you closer to being that person. So that year, for the first time ever, I tried observing Lent... do you know what the word “Lent” means? It isn’t about lending something. It comes from an Old English word meaning “to lengthen.” In our part of the world, Lent comes at the time when the days are lengthening. The light is growing. And the word Lent reminds us that this season is about helping light to grow in and through us...”

Closing Words

Blessed is the Path

Eric Williams

<https://www.uua.org/worship/words/benediction/blessed-path>

Blessed is the path on which you travel.
Blessed is the body that carries you upon it.
Blessed is your heart that has heard the call.
Blessed is your mind that discerns the way.
Blessed is the gift that you will receive by going.
Truly blessed is the gift that you will become on the journey.
May you go forth in peace.

It Is Our Journey Together

Debra Haffner

<https://www.uua.org/worship/words/closing/it-our-journey-together>

We are on a journey.
We didn't plan it.
We didn't have time for the bread to rise.
We may find ourselves in the wilderness, hungry, thirsty,
Doubting that we should have ever come.
But look around:
We are not alone.
It is our journey together:
A journey to our better selves,
A journey to a better world,
A journey to a more promised land.

Let Us Begin Again in Love

Lois Van Leer

<https://www.uua.org/worship/words/closing/let-us-begin-again-love>

Having let go,
Set our intentions,
Named our curiosity,
Committed our energies,
And given ourselves over to lives of balance, purpose and meaning,
Let us begin again
In love

We Give Thanks for Life

Andrew Usher

<https://www.unitarian.org.uk/pages/closing-words>

We give thanks for life:
For fellowship and love;
For the songs of birds
and the beauty of flowers;
For the memories of people and places
long since gone;
For hope, bursting new each morning with the sun,

and peace coming with the close of day
and the end of a journey.

For all that gives meaning to existence
we give thanks

In freedom, hope, fellowship and love.

This Benediction was written to be followed by the 'Communal Blessing' used at Golders Green Unitarians ('In the name of us all...' by Keith Gilley, included in Sing Your Faith). Included in Marking the Days.

A Prayer for the Refugee and Immigrant

Rev. Eric Cherry

<https://www.uua.org/worship/words/reading/seeking-mercy-seeking-home>

Let us hold the refugee and the immigrant in prayer:

May God be with you.

May your grief and loss be assuaged.

May the hard road you travel include spaces of rest and security.

May you know your inherent worth and dignity
every day of the journey.

Let us pray for the people who are met along the way:

May they remember how they were strangers too.

May they embrace the pathways of compassion.

May they recall the teachings of the prophets.

May they make room in their hearts and their homes.

Thomas Merton's [Prayer](#) Blessing

"My Lord God, I have no idea where I am going. I do not see the road ahead of me. I cannot know for certain where it will end. Nor do I really know myself, and the fact that I think that I am following your will does not mean that I am actually doing so. But I believe that the desire to please you does in fact please you... I hope that I will never do anything apart from that desire. And I know that if I do this you will lead me by the right road."

Support & Inspiration

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

Attend our monthly online musicians' brainstorming group:

Second Thursdays of each month at 1pm eastern

Join the Soul Matters Inspiration Facebook Page:

<https://www.facebook.com/soulmatterssharingcircle/>

Find musical inspiration on our Soul Matters Spotify music playlists:

<https://www.soulmatterssharingcircle.com/spotify-lists.html>

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