



# *Soul Matters*

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**What does it mean to be  
a people of CURIOSITY?**



# Contents

<a href="#"><u>Calendar Connections</u></a>	2
<a href="#"><u>Chalice Lightings &amp; Opening Words</u></a>	3
<a href="#"><u>Meditations, Prayers &amp; Blessings</u></a>	5
<a href="#"><u>Readings</u></a>	7
<a href="#"><u>Music</u></a>	9
<a href="#"><u>Stories For All Ages</u></a>	10
<a href="#"><u>Sermon Seeds</u></a>	11
<a href="#"><u>Recommended Sermons</u></a>	14
<a href="#"><u>Closing Words</u></a>	16
<a href="#"><u>Support &amp; Connection</u></a>	17

# Calendar Connections

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

## Interfaith:

- [Beltane](#) (Wiccan) - May 1 (more [here](#))
- [Ramadan](#) (Islam) - May 5 - June 4 (more [here](#) and [here](#))
- [Visakha Puja](#) -the birth, the enlightenment & death of the Buddha.(Buddhist) - May 18-19 (more [here](#))
- [Ascension of Baha'u'llah](#) (Baha'i) - May 28-29
- [Ascension Day](#) (Christian) - May 30 (more [here](#))

## Unitarian Universalist:

- [UUA Founding Day](#) (1961) - May 15
- [Emerson's birthday](#) - May 25 (1803)
- American Unitarian Association founded May 25 (1825)

## National & Cultural:

- Asian/ Pacific American Heritage Month
- [May Day](#)/International Workers Day - May 1 (more [here](#))
- [Cinco de Mayo](#) - May 5
- [Mother's Day](#) (US & Canada) - May 12
- First HIV/AIDS death in North America - May 15 (1969)
- [Brown v. Board of Education](#) - May 17 (1954)
- [Victoria Day](#) (Canada) May 21
- Memorial Day (US) - May 27

## For Fun and On the Fringe:

- [World Press Freedom Day](#) - May 3
- [Star Wars Day](#) - May 4
- [World Laughter Day](#) - First Sunday in May

# Chalice Lightings & Opening Words

## **Welcome to this Community of Seekers**

*Alexis Engelbrecht, [Soul Matters Team](#)*

Welcome to this community of seekers, of questioners, and of those open to the revelation that comes from experiences with one another and the Spirit of Life.

May we remember that while we have some answers, we don't have all the answers; while we know some things, we don't know everything; and while we have lived, others have experiences very different from our own.

Welcome to this community full of questions and possibilities.

## **What Does this Flame Represent?**

*Alexis Engelbrecht, [Soul Matters Team](#)*

What does this flame represent?

It represents the gift of hospitality, reason, life, and community. It represents sanctuary and the willingness to be different. It represents life and love. It represents that which cannot be captured by words alone, thus reminding us of the power and importance of being willing to ask questions. We light this flame to represent both what has been said and felt. We light this flame for what is yet to be realized.

## **Let Us Be Curious**

*Alexis Engelbrecht, [Soul Matters Team](#)*

All: Let us be curious.

Speaker: May we contemplate what we believe and why.

All: Let us be curious.

Speaker: May we inquire to learn more about beliefs and experiences different from our own.

All: Let us be curious.

Speaker: May we explore the world around us so that we might broaden our awareness and appreciate the beauty that is while exploring what else might be.

## **May this flame**

*Bets Wienecke*

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

May this flame,

symbol of transformation since time began,

fire our curiosity,

strengthen our wills,

and sustain our courage

as we seek what is good within and around us.

### **With Love for Mothers and Foremothers (for Mother's Day - May 12)**

*Selena Fox*

<https://www.uua.org/worship/words/chalice-extinguishing/love-mothers-and-foremothers>

We kindle this flame with love for mothers and foremothers past, present, and future;  
We kindle this flame in celebration of community and its generations.  
We kindle this flame with respect and support for the greater circle of life of which we are all part.

### **Mother's Day Chalice Lighting (for Mother's Day - May 12)**

*Claudene (Deane) Oliva*

<https://www.uua.org/worship/words/chalice-lighting/mothers-day-chalice-lighting-0>

We light this chalice for mothers and mothering;  
to celebrate those who have taken on the task of nurturing a young one-baby, child, or youth-into adulthood;  
to celebrate those who have nourished the light of truth and compassion in growing minds and hearts;  
to celebrate those who have committed time, money, energy to the growth of others in this world.  
We light this chalice to celebrate and hold dear this flame of love.

### **Even in the most broken places, there is room for love (for Mother's Day - May 12)**

*Becky Brooks*

Full piece at <https://www.uua.org/worship/words/opening/even-most-broken-places-there-room-love>

Mother's Day is complicated. Joyful for many, yes, but complicated...  
And so let's go to church. Let's be a church where we can acknowledge how difficult it is to have this day, right alongside how joyful this day can be...

### **For Those Who Serve (for Memorial Day (US) - May 27)**

*Rev. Cynthia Landrum*

<https://www.uua.org/worship/words/chalice-lighting/those-who-serve>

In honor of those who have served,  
And those who continue to serve,  
At home and abroad, for peace and in war,  
We light our chalice,  
And we offer our thanks.

### **Called by Loss, Called by Peace (for Memorial Day (US) - May 27)**

*Rev. Heather K Janules*

Full piece at <https://www.uua.org/worship/words/opening/called-loss-called-peace>

We come this day, called by war...  
We come this day, called by loss...  
We come this day, called by hope...  
And we come this day called by peace...  
May we hear its song, may we proclaim its promise.  
May our remembrance today renew our struggle  
We can never stay or rest.

# Meditations & Prayers

## **Holy Curiosity**

*Rev Alicia R. Forde*

Full meditation at <https://www.patheos.com/blogs/uucollective/2012/05/holy-curiosity/>

The businessman in this story is by no means unique!  
When invited into a moment of human connection  
When invited to ponder the little glittering...the stars,  
to notice and grow playfully curious about them  
He declined...  
So it is with all of us sometimes...

## **Garden of Your Mind - A visual or audio meditation**

*Mister Rogers Remixed*

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OFzXaFbxDcM&fbclid=IwAR0uoa4AupE\\_8LNCVW5XbjJ8yvKaAkepRbFWK10-0kMP3KeZOuluo2vsWEO](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OFzXaFbxDcM&fbclid=IwAR0uoa4AupE_8LNCVW5XbjJ8yvKaAkepRbFWK10-0kMP3KeZOuluo2vsWEO)

"It's good to be curious!"

## **For All the Mothers (for Mother's Day - May 12)**

*Rev. Lindasusan Ulrich*

Full piece at <https://www.uua.org/worship/words/blessing/all-mothers>

For all the mothers and mother figures...

The soon-to-be mothers, the wish-they-were mothers, the never-wanted-to-be mothers, the "it's complicated" mothers

The birth mothers, foster mothers, adoptive mothers, stepmothers

The "used to be Dad" mothers and "more than one Mom" mothers...

## **Prayer for All Who Mother (for Mother's Day - May 12)**

*Rev. Victoria Weinstein*

Full piece at <https://www.uua.org/worship/words/meditation/5827.shtml>

We reflect in thanksgiving this day for all those whose lives have nurtured ours...

On this day that honors Mothers

let us honor all mothers

men and women alike

who from somewhere in their being

have freely and wholeheartedly given life, and sustenance, and vision to us...

### **Memorial Day Prayer (for Memorial Day (US) - May 27)**

*Rev. Barbara J Pescan*

<https://www.uua.org/worship/words/meditation/memorial-day-prayer>

Spirit of Life...

Send peace for the soldiers who did not make the wars

but whose lives were consumed by them

Let strong trees grow above graves far from home

Breathe through the arms of their branches...

For the wounded ones, and those who received them back,

let there be someone ready when the memories come

when the scars pull...

### **Prayer of the War Atheist (for Memorial Day (US) - May 27)**

*Jessica Purple Rodela*

<https://www.uua.org/worship/words/meditation/prayer-war-atheist>

My prayer today is that I learn to stay a war atheist...

My prayer today is that I never again succumb to fear,

fear which seduces me to believe that the expediency of violence provides a permanent answer,

fear which clouds my judgment and convinces me firmly that violence is a fix...

# Readings

## **When Death Comes**

*Mary Oliver*

Full poem at <http://www.awakin.org/read/view.php?tid=477>

When death comes...  
I want to step through the door full of curiosity, wondering...  
When it's over, I want to say all my life  
I was a bride married to amazement...

## **Live the Questions**

*Ranier Maria Rilke*

<https://www.goodreads.com/quotes/717-be-patient-toward-all-that-is-unsolved-in-your-heart>

Be patient toward all that is unsolved in your heart and try to love the questions themselves like locked rooms and like books that are written in a very foreign tongue. Do not now seek the answers, which cannot be given you because you would not be able to live them. And the point is, to live everything. Live the questions now. Perhaps you will then gradually, without noticing it, live along some distant day into the answer.

## **The Tree of Knowledge**

*LeeAnne McIlroy Langton*

Full poem at <http://www.ayearofbeinghere.com/2014/03/leeanne-mcilroy-langton-tree-of.html>

I noticed that most of my students  
Were gazing longingly out the window...  
I paused in my lecture to discover  
That they were collectively noticing the unusual fruit  
Exploding on the tree just outside our window  
“What kind of fruit is that?”  
They wondered with more curiosity than  
They had ever shown for Plato or Rousseau  
And so I told them about the pomegranate...

## **There Is More Love Somewhere**

*Glen Thomas Rideout*

Full reflection at <https://www.uua.org/worship/words/reflection/there-more-love-somewhere>

“She looked into eyes and she said, “You know what? I always sing that song: There is more love right here... We’ve already found a community of love.” ... She asked with genuine curiosity why it is that we don’t all sing the words that she had come to know. I was compelled to respond to the woman I had just met with, “Thank you for trusting me with that question.” And then I explained to her why I thought it was necessary — particularly with the music of people of color — that we enter and examine these songs with more curiosity than colonization.

I thanked her, and I explained that for those of us who live with the privilege of knowing love, it can be difficult to understand the perspective of one who lives without such a privilege. I explained that it can be difficult to understand the lived experience of those who have trouble finding the evidence of love in their immediate vicinity; in their church; in their neighborhood; in their city; in their nation; even in their planet...”

### **I Am Mother (for Mother's Day - May 12)**

*Kristin Kany*

Full piece found at <https://www.uua.org/worship/words/affirmation/i-am-mother>

Kristin Kany wrote this multi-voice poem in 2016 to be read by a group of "diverse moms."

### **Mothering (for Mother's Day - May 12)**

*Grace Paley*

Excerpt below, full short story at <http://readashort.blogspot.com/2008/06/mother-by-grace-paley.html>

One day I was listening to the AM radio. I heard a song: "Oh, I Long To See My Mother in the Doorway." By God! I said, I understand that song. I have often longed to see my mother in the doorway. As a matter of fact, she did stand frequently in various doorways looking at me. She stood one day, just so, at the front door, the darkness of the hallway behind her. It was New Year's Day. She said sadly, If you come home at 4 a.m. when you're seventeen, what time will you come home when you're twenty? She asked this question without humor or meanness. She had begun her worried preparations for death. She would not be present, she thought, when I was twenty. So she wondered.

Another time she stood in the doorway of my room. I had just issued a political manifesto attacking the family's position on the Soviet Union. She said, Go to sleep for god sakes, you damn fool, you and your Communist ideas. We saw them already, Papa and me, in 1905. We guessed it all.

At the door of the kitchen she said, You never finish your lunch. You run around senselessly. What will become of you?

Then she died.

Naturally for the rest of my life I longed to see her, not only in doorways, in a great number of places...

— in the dining room with my aunts, at the window looking up and down the block, in the living room with my father...

### **Mutual Mothering (for Mother's Day - May 12)**

*Jade Angelica*

Full piece at <https://www.uua.org/worship/words/reading/mutual-mothering>

"For decades prior to my mother's diagnosis of Alzheimer's, we had suffered a strained relationship born from her alcoholism. When I learned she had Alzheimer's, my hope for forgiveness and reconciliation drained away, along with her cognitive abilities. But the world of Alzheimer's teems with surprises..."

### **Endearments (for Mother's Day - May 12)**

*Lilia Cuervo*

Full piece at <https://www.uua.org/worship/words/reflection/endearaments>

From the time I was a baby, my mother often displayed her love for me by reciting a list of endearments such as: mi chiquitica linda, mi preciosa, mi criaturita hermosa, mi alegría, la hija más amada en el mundo, el tesoro de mi corazón. Loosely translated, her litany would go like this: my cute little thing, my precious, my beautiful child, my joy, the most loved little daughter in the world, my heart's treasure.... The overture to her list was the sound of endearment tsh, tsh, tsh, accompanied by the question, Who loves you so much?...

I am sure that after I die, my children and grandchildren will remember some of the ways I manifested my love and care for them. I trust with all my heart that one of those ways will be my reciting the special litany of endearing names I developed just for them, just as I remember my mother showering me with her litany of endearments, now that she is gone.

# Music

## Soul Matters Music Resources

In addition to this packet, we offer three other important sources of support for music leaders:

1. **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.
2. **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.
3. **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

1074	<i>Turn The World Around</i>
1003	<i>Where Do We Come From?</i>
375	<i>As saffron trees...</i>
376	<i>Sing loudly till the stars</i>
398	<i>To See the World</i>
304	<i>A Fierce Unrest</i>
112	<i>Do You Hear?</i>
352	<i>Find a Stillness</i>
356	<i>Will You Seek in Far-Off Places</i>
113	<i>Where Is Our Holy Church?</i>
1003	<i>Where Do We Come From?</i>

### Hymns - More difficult to lead

84	<i>How Far Can Reach a Smile</i>
319	<i>Ye Earthborn Children of a Star</i>
339	<i>Knowledge, They Say</i>
341	<i>O World, Thou Choosest Not the Better Part</i>
297	<i>The Star of Truth</i>

### Choir anthems/ vocal solos / band pieces

<i>Upside Down, Jack Johnson</i>	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dqUdi4AIDFO">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dqUdi4AIDFO</a>
<i>Will There Really be a Morning</i>	Various Settings
<i>Will You Teach Me</i>	Various Settings - links are for Victor Johnson <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pSBxj0px6Q4">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pSBxj0px6Q4</a> <a href="https://www.sheetmusicplus.com/title/will-you-teach-me-sheet-music/19225180">https://www.sheetmusicplus.com/title/will-you-teach-me-sheet-music/19225180</a>
<i>Do You Really Want to Know, Peter Mayer</i>	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qaw_8ssCeCk">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qaw_8ssCeCk</a> <a href="http://www.petermayer.net/music/">http://www.petermayer.net/music/</a>

# Stories For All Ages

## **A Tour of the Heavens; Clyde Tombaugh Discovers Pluto**

From Tapestry of Faith, Faithful Journeys, Ask Questions

<https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/journeys/session9/132495.shtml>

## **Things We Still Can't Explain**

From Tapestry of Faith, Miracles, Still a Mystery

<https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/multigenerational/miracles/session-8/activity-2>

## **Pandora's Box**

<http://myths.e2bn.org/mythsandlegends/textonly562-pandoras-box.html>

One interpretation of the myth on the blog "Enlightened Conflict" -

"One of Life's biggest truths is that Curiosity comes with a price ... and a reward."

"But, truthfully, curiosity embodies both good and bad. And I say that as one who is unequivocally in the camp of "knowing more of anything is good." Sounds UU to me.

<http://brucectague.com/pandora-and-curiosity>

## **The Wise Sailimai, a Muslim Tale from China**

From Tapestry of Faith, Love Surrounds Us

<https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/lovesurrounds/session1/wise-sailimai>

# 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.

It wasn't curiosity itself that killed the proverbial cat. What really got him in trouble was his inability to deal with the new situation he was in. And when it comes to learning about new environments, curiosity is key.

*Kate Berardo*

It is a miracle that curiosity survives formal education.

*Albert Einstein*

Curiosity is a vice that has been stigmatized in turn by Christianity, by philosophy, and even by a certain conception of science. Curiosity [is seen as] futility. The word, however, pleases me. To me it suggests something altogether different: it evokes 'concern'; it evokes the care one takes for what exists and could exist; a readiness to find strange and singular what surrounds us; a certain relentlessness to break up our familiarities and to regard otherwise the same things; a fervor to grasp what is happening and what passes; a casualness in regard to the traditional hierarchies of the important and the essential.

I dream of a new age of curiosity. We have the technical means for it; the desire is there; the things to be known are infinite; the people who can employ themselves at this task exist. Why do we suffer? From too little: from the channels that are too narrow, skimpy, quasi-monopolistic, insufficient. There is no point in adopting a protectionist attitude, to prevent 'bad' information from invading and suffocating the 'good.' Rather, we must multiply the paths and the possibility of comings and goings.

*Michel Foucault, From The Masked Philosopher (an excerpt)*

### **William Faulkner on Curiosity over Talent**

<https://vimeo.com/117679022>

### **The Case for Curiosity (TED talk)**

*Mario Livio*

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?time\\_continue=1102&v=Z\\_ojyXVVFKA](https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=1102&v=Z_ojyXVVFKA)

A celebration of curiosity as the most human and maybe most precious "hunger" that exists.

### **Our Whole Life Is a Series of Signs**

***(On the need to be curious about what others' actions are trying to "say")***

*Jake Morrill*

<https://www.uua.org/braverwiser/our-whole-life-sign-language-0>

"I worked at a group home in Coralville, Iowa... I learned to look for disaster, to steer away from situations that would set Trey off...I was just glad he wasn't inside, breaking stuff. Can you blame him? His heart was ripped out. Fridays, he stood at the front window, waiting on family that never arrived. And then he'd erupt. Anyone would've, even you, even me. But Trey didn't have words. He spoke in flying lamps, end-tables, flung puzzle-boxes... It wasn't chaos, the wreckage. If you looked, it meant something.

Years later, I fell for Alfred Adler, the Austrian therapist who broke off from Freud. He said all behavior is meaningful, it has context and purpose. Our whole life is a series of signs..."

## **How Curiosity Can Help Us Heal from Pain and Grow**

*Caroline van Kimmenade*

<https://tinybuddha.com/blog/how-curiosity-can-help-us-heal-from-pain-and-grow/>

"I started to see that, as long as I could keep my curiosity engaged, I would be able to find a way out of the mess I was in... Whenever I was confronted with a limitation, or a depressing diagnosis, I focused on my curiosity. What was happening and how could I use that to find my way? I became very curious about my experience, my interpretation of it, and the interpretations made by others..."

## **How Curiosity Can Help Us Be Kinder and Less Judgmental**

*Jen Picicci*

<https://tinybuddha.com/blog/how-curiosity-can-help-us-be-kinder-and-less-judgmental/>

"Something clicked: Curiosity is the key to letting go of judgment, as well! I became even more certain of this about a month ago. I had taken my daughter to story time at the library... As we left the circle, I noticed one mom, a woman who had two children with her, was not engaged with her kids at all. In fact, she was sitting at a table turned away from the group, playing with her phone.

I saw this as a perfect opportunity to test out my new theory that curiosity would help me let go of judgment. My old thought would have been "Ugh, look at her! She's not even paying attention to her kids! What's so important on her phone that she has to look at it right this second?" ... but this time, I consciously shifted the direction of my thoughts, trying to be curious about her actions rather than making assumptions about them. Could she be waiting for a really important email from a family member or friend? Is she using her phone to search for a new job?

There's something so freeing about giving a person the benefit of the doubt and coming up with possible reasons for their behavior that go beyond the obvious. It feels so good to operate this way..."

## **Beginner's Mind**

*Bob Bushorn*

<https://player.fm/series/unitarian-universalist-church-of-charlotte-172543/open-and-willing-moving-toward-courageous-connections-beginners-mind>

A lay sermon full of wonderful building blocks for a sermon of the curiosity of a beginner's mind.

## **It's Not Easy Being A Unitarian Universalist**

*Charles Magistro*

<https://www.uua.org/worship/words/reading/183751.shtml>

I'm amused by the view that it's easy to be a Unitarian Universalist. It's as easy to be a Unitarian Universalist as it is to be persistent, courageous, and curious. It's as easy to be a Unitarian Universalist as it is to search the murky waters of life without sure charts to guide us or any guarantee that we will find a safe port to put down anchor. It's as easy to be Unitarian Universalist as it is to overcome the natural fear of the unknown and venture forth with nothing to sustain us save our zest for living and hunger for new experience and knowledge.

Our way in religion is not the way of ease. We are called to be sailors; for many worlds exist waiting to be discovered. And not the least of these worlds are within ourselves. It takes as much persistence, courage, and curiosity to look into our own depths, to come to terms with the twin mysteries of being alive and having to die, to see ourselves in new and larger ways without being dishonest about our limitations as it did for Columbus to sail thousands of miles into an unknown ocean until he found dry land.

## **The Things I Miss Most from My Life Before Kids (for Mother's Day - May 12)**

*Courtney Martin*

<https://onbeing.org/blog/courtney-martin-the-things-i-miss-most-from-my-life-before-kids/>

“My body boundaries...

Timelessness...

Following the muse...

Wandering...

Being fearless about dying...

Being one person...”

## **Black Mamas Matter - Mother's Day Resource from the UUA**

[https://www.uua.org/sites/live-new.uua.org/files/2016\\_mamas\\_day\\_resource\\_black\\_mamas\\_matter\\_final.pdf](https://www.uua.org/sites/live-new.uua.org/files/2016_mamas_day_resource_black_mamas_matter_final.pdf)

“This year, in light of the conversations about the need to re-center Black voices and experiences, telling the stories of Black mamas in our Mother's Day worship services seems particularly meaningful and necessary. Here are two stories written by Black mamas. Dr. Janice Marie Johnson writes about how the reality of police violence and anti-Black racism affect her experience of being a mother and grandmother. Rev. Qiyamah Rahman shares a poem and prayer about how she comforts her daughter by reminding her of their ancestor's struggles for justice. Both stories call on us to reflect on how the experience of motherhood is not invented in the individual relationship between child and mama but is passed down generation to generation.”

## **More Than Mother's Day: Acknowledging the Full Spectrum of Caretaking**

*Omid Safi*

<https://onbeing.org/blog/more-than-mothers-day-acknowledging-the-full-spectrum-of-caretaking/>

“This cult of motherhood reduces women to the function of motherhood... I wonder if we are honoring women as women, women as fully human, or if it reduces women to the functions of reproduction and child-rearing.”

## **The End and the Beginning (for Memorial Day (US) - May 27)**

*Wisława Szymborska*

Full poem found here: <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/52955/the-end-and-the-beginning>

After every war  
someone has to clean up.  
Things won't  
straighten themselves up, after all...

Someone has to get mired  
in scum and ashes,  
sofa springs,  
splintered glass,  
and bloody rags...

## **The Other Decoration Day Speech (for Memorial Day (US) - May 27)**

*Ta-Nehisi Coates*

<https://www.theatlantic.com/national/archive/2011/01/the-other-decoration-day-speech/69782/>

## **Remembering Liberation on Memorial Day (for Memorial Day (US) - May 27)**

<https://www.uuworld.org/articles/remembering-liberation>

“The very first Memorial Day, the story goes, was originated by newly freed slaves in Charleston, South Carolina, who gathered May 5, 1865, to express their gratitude to the Union soldiers who had perished in an open-air Confederate prison.”

# Recommended Sermons

## Opening to Change (with Curiosity)

*Rev. Emily Wright-Magoon*

<http://www.uumidland.org/blog/2015/09/08/opening-to-change/>

“How can we approach change with curiosity?... Psychologists have done many studies to compare how we function when we use the avoidance vs. the approach parts of our brains. In one popular study, two separate groups of people were given a sheet of paper which showed a cartoon mouse trapped inside a maze. The task was to help the mouse find a way out of the maze. But there was one slight difference in the mazes the two groups received. One maze had a piece of cheese lying at the end. The other maze was identical except that, instead of a piece of cheese at the end, an owl hovered above – watching and ready to dive and catch the mouse at any moment. So, to review: in one maze the mouse is approaching the yummy cheese, and in the other, the mouse is fleeing from the threatening owl. After both groups did the maze, they did creativity exercises. Those who had helped the mouse reach the cheese came out with scores 50% higher in creativity than those who had been fleeing the owl. The researchers concluded that, for those fleeing from the owl, the “avoidance” mechanism of their brains had been activated – from just that simple and short exercise! ... producing a lingering sense of caution and vigilance. This weakened their creativity by closing down their imagination, curiosity, and flexibility. Those who were headed toward the cheese activated the approach side of their brains... So, using the approach part of our brains – being open and curious...”

## Being a Person of Curiosity

*Rev. Ellen Quaadgras*

<https://www.westminsteruu.org/services/being-a-person-of-curiosity/>

“How can I both attend to the things that can be done “perfectly”, that can be “solved” – things that, when doing them, feel like standing on safe and solid ground.... how do I balance that with simply being willing to witness, allow things to unfold, to not know, and be curious? Maybe what my friend was saying was simply: I wish you could tell that there is room for you – maybe there’s more safety and more room for you, than you can tell. Or maybe that’s my wish for you – for all of us. Life is challenging. Things get hard. We get anxious, we get frustrated, we get tense. How can I, how can we, find that childlike place – where we know we’re going to stumble while we learn, but trust in an unfolding future?”

## Born from a continuous ‘I don’t know.’

*Rev. Jay Leech*

<https://player.fm/series/unitarian-universalist-church-of-charlotte-172543/born-from-a-continuous-i-dont-know>

## Beginner’s Mind

*Rev. David Pyle*

<http://celestiallands.org/wayside/?p=886>

On the curious mind as the mind of many perspectives: “There is an idea I keep coming back to in my own life and religious practice, and that is the idea of having many different lenses to see through and encounter life through and I wonder if both Beginner’s mind and Expert’s mind are just two of these lenses. If in order to encounter the fullness in each moment, I need to be able to experience that moment, or that person in more than one way at the same time...”

## **A Curious Ministry**

*Rev. Josh Pawelek*

<http://uuse.org/a-curious-ministry/#.XB7CIBNKi3c>

“Sometimes the greatest ministry we offer to each other—the way we know, hold and love each other—is through encountering each other’s stories. And what inspires us to offer such a ministry? Curiosity. When we are curious about each other’s stories—really, truly, genuinely curious—when we listen with open hearts and minds—we offer a humanizing ministry, a ministry of recognition, acknowledgment, embrace. Continuous revelation is not only out there in the natural world, in the expanding universe, or the universe of ideas. Our lives and our stories are sources of continuous revelation as well...”

## **Curiosity as a Spiritual Practice**

*Rev. Dr. Sandra Fees*

<https://www.uuberks.org/sermon/curiosity-spiritual-practice>

“At the art workshop I took this summer, I met someone who didn’t vote in the last presidential election. We stumbled onto the topic. I was stunned because this was a creative person, and I just couldn’t imagine an artist or poet not realizing how important voting is. I wanted to convince her of the importance of voting. But I stopped myself. Believe me, that was a true exercise in self-control. Instead, I asked myself: Am I going to lose it every time someone tells me they didn’t vote or voted for the other candidate? How else might I respond? Does my negative judgment build the common good and foster understanding? Does it build connection? Where is my growing edge? I held my judgment at bay. I had other conversations with her over a five-day period, conversations that were very personal. They had nothing to do with politics. If I had pushed my agenda about voting, I have no doubt the other conversations would never have happened. *I focused instead on human connection. I was curious about her life, who she is and what motivates her. We ended up sharing common experiences as women. This story does not end with me convincing her to vote. It ends—or maybe really begins—with me choosing curiosity over judgment...*”

## **Remembrance**

*Rev. Abhi Janamanchi*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n0-C2xJ-l1A>

Memorial Day originally became part of our national calendar in the years after the Civil War as a day to honor the war dead. Memorial Day is complicated. It is complicated in its contemporary manifestations of military prowess and glorification of war.

## **What are We Remembering**

*Justin Schroeder*

<https://firstuniv.podbean.com/e/may-27-2018-sermon-by-rev-justin-schroeder-what-are-we-remembering/>

# Closing Words

## **May We Be Changed**

*Rev. Scott Tayler*

May we go with courage,  
hungry for a curiosity that challenges  
and changes us,  
knowing that our answers are never complete  
and the questions make us whole.

## **Bring Happiness**

*Barbara Cheatham*

<https://www.uua.org/worship/words/closing/5998.shtml>

And now we take our leave.  
Before we gather here again--  
may each of us bring happiness into another's life;  
may we each be surprised by the gifts that surround us;  
may each of us be enlivened by constant curiosity --  
And may we remain together in spirit  
til the hour we meet again.

## **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

## **Love the Questions Themselves**

*Rilke*

Be patient toward all that is unsolved in your heart,  
and try to love the questions themselves,  
like locked rooms,  
and like books in a very foreign tongue.  
Do not now seek the answers,  
which cannot be given you because you would not be able to live them,  
and the point is, to live everything.  
Live the questions now.  
Perhaps you will then, gradually, without even noticing,  
live along some distant day into the answer.

## 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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