



Soul Matters

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

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Calendar Connections

September 2019

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

Interfaith:

- [Rosh Hashanah](#) - Jewish New Year - Sept. 29 - Oct. 1
- [Al-Hijra/Muharram](#) - Islamic New Year (day and month) - begins Aug. 31 - Sept. 28
- [Mabon/Autumn Equinox](#) - Wicca - Sept. 23 (more [here](#))
- [Rumi's birthday](#) - Sept. 30

Unitarian Universalist:

- Ingathering/Water Communion Ritual - Early Sept. - date varies by congregation
- The first meeting of [the Transcendentalist Club](#) - Sept. 19 (1836) (more [here](#) and [here](#))
- "Universalism Day": [John Murray](#) preaches 1st sermon in US (1770) - Sept. 30 (more [here](#) & [here](#))

National & Cultural:

- [Hispanic Heritage Month](#) (Sept. 15 - Oct. 15)
- [Suicide Prevention Month](#), World Suicide Prevention Day is Sept. 10
- [Labor Day](#) - Sept. 04 (*first Monday)
- [International Literacy Day](#) - Sept. 08
- [Grandparents Day](#) - Sept. 10
- [9-11 Remembrance](#) - Sept. 11
- [International Peace Day](#) Sept. 21 (more [here](#))
- [World Gratitude Day](#) - Sept. 21
- [Bisexual Pride Day](#), CBD, Bisexual Pride, and Bi Visibility Day - Sept. 23
- [Bisexual Awareness Week](#) - Week of September 23 ([here](#))
- Publication of [David Walker's Appeal](#) - Sept 28 (1829) (more [here](#), [here](#) and [here](#))

For Fun and On the Fringe:

- [Johnny Appleseed Day](#) - Sept. 26
- [Talk Like a Pirate Day](#) - Sept. 19
- [Hobbit Day](#) - Sept. 22
- [Banned Books Week](#) - Sept.23-29 (more [here](#))
- "[Battle of the Sexes](#)" Tennis Match - Sept. 20 (1973)

Chalice Lightings & Opening Words

Let Them Go...

Rev. Gretchen Haley

Whatever you have come in
anticipating
Whatever you expect
Or worry
For our world, for the future
For our lives -
Let it go
Make space in your heart
to be surprised
Make room in your soul
For a new story to take shape
Let astonishment be possible
At this life that remains
a miracle
Imagine here the bursting of joy
Relentless and resilient
Coming in waves
Washing over us
with music,
and story
silence,
and still this dreaming together
Being hope for each other
and courage
to believe
in this new day
dawning
for us all.
Come let us worship, together.

This Flame of Expectation

Rev. David Breeden

We kindle this flame in expectation.
Not the expectation that justice will soon prevail.
Not the expectation that the struggle will soon be won.
Yet in the expectation that companionship and joy
will be ours on journey.
We kindle this flame in community and expectation.

Open to Unexpected Answers

Julianne Lepp

We seek our place in the world
and the answers to our hearts' deep questions.
As we seek, may our hearts be open to unexpected answers.
May the light of our chalice remind us that this is a community of warmth, of wisdom,
and welcoming of multiple truths.

Breathe

Chip Roush

We are about to enter sacred time—
we are about to make this time and this place sacred,
by our presence and intention in it.
Please turn off or silence your phones...
and as you do so,
I invite us also to turn down our fears;
to remove our masks;
and to loosen the armor around our hearts.
Don't take my word for it,
do it as slowly as you need to.
If you take a little risk, with these good people,
you may find that they have the same human needs as you do.
Breathe.
Let go of the expectations
placed on you by others—
and those they taught you
to place on yourself.
Drop the guilt and the shame,
not to shirk accountability,
but in honest expectation
of the possibility of forgiveness.
Embrace your loneliness
and know that in our hearts,
we are always together.
Let go of the thing you said the other day,
let go of the thing you dread next week.
Be here, in this moment.
Breathe, here.
Breathe.
So may we be.

More Love: A Call to Worship

Rev. Nancy McDonald Ladd

On offering love without expectation or "if only's" ...
Found in [To Wake, To Rise](#), A UUA meditation Manual & Soul Matters "[Common Shelf](#)" Book

We are a People of Expectation

Rev. Suzelle Lynch

We are a people of expectation:
Trusting that the world will deliver what we want,
yet opening our hearts to a universe of beauty and struggle
beyond all prediction.

We are a people of expectation:
Anticipating what we feel we deserve,
but faithful to the path's unfolding, even when it leads to wilderness.
As a people of expectation,
we light this chalice with hope and joy.
May its warmth fire our hearts and inspire our spirits.

On The Brink

Rev. Leslie Takahashi Morris

Found at <https://www.uua.org/worship/words/chalice-lighting/brink>

Also found in [Voices from the Margins](#), A UUA meditation Manual & Soul Matters "[Common Shelf](#)" Book

What Are You Here For?

Quinn G. Caldwell

Full piece found at <https://www.uua.org/worship/words/opening/what-are-you-here>

If you came to this place expecting a tame story, you came to the wrong place.
If you came for a story that does not threaten you, you came for a different story than the one we tell...
If you came for a story of reversals that might end up reversing you...
If you came for salvation and not safety, then: ah, my friends, you are in the right place.

Space for Greater Expectation

Soul Matters Worship Team

May the chalice we light
and time we share today,
make space for greater expectation.
May the truth we learned yesterday
be changed by what we hear today.
May the fear that seems so certain
Be loosened by a new found trust.
May our doubts and disappointments
be replaced by an ever-unfolding faith in
more beauty
more trust
more joy
more goodness
more life.

Meditations, Prayers & Blessings

Loving the Arc

Rev. Elizabeth Nguyen

Full piece at <https://www.uua.org/worship/words/prayer/loving-arc>

“We do not know if this arc bends toward justice. The great test of our Unitarian Universalist faith is not whether we believe we can bend the arc, but how we are when the bending looks oh so differently from what we expected...”

God Give Us

Michael Leunig

On the “gift” of having our expectations upended

Full prayer found at <https://www.leunig.com.au/works/prayers>

“God give us rain when we expect sun...”

Even This Is Enough

Rev. Vanessa Southern

On putting all the expectations down and letting ourselves rest in the knowledge that we are already enough

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

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

Love won't cease to flow in your direction,

your heart won't stop beating...

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

Video & Musical Meditation on Defying Expectations

X Ambassadors – Renegades

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1u-niluB8HI>

Readings

Things to Think

Robert Bly

Full poem at <http://www.twistedkite.net/things-to-think-by-robert-bly/>

When someone knocks on the door, think that he's about
To give you something large: tell you you're forgiven,
Or that it's not necessary to work all the time, or...

Expect Nothing

Alice Walker

Full poem found at <https://www.goodreads.com/quotes/42100-expect-nothing-live-frugally-on-surprise-become-a-stranger-to>

Expect nothing. Live frugally
On surprise...
Wish for nothing larger
Than your own small heart
Or greater than a star...

Recognition

Daron Larson

http://www.athomeinyourlife.com/blog/recognition?rq=It%20is%20so%20difficult%20to%20see%20this%20flower%20**%20

Full poem printed with permission.

It is so difficult to see this *flower***
because the countless others
we've seen before
cloud the view,
along with how we expect it to look
and how it might be improved.

Even the faces of the ones we love deeply
hide like buried treasure
behind histories of expression.

In order to see
what is right in front of our eyes,
we first have to recognize
we have gradually
become blind,
and then begin
the slow work of forgetting.

** Substitute with any noun: beach, stone, bird, soap bubble, house, grandmother, beef stew, homeless person, celebrity, potato, dollar bill, construction worker, politician, drug addict, child, teacher, report card, mail order catalogue, boss, swimming pool, dog, towel, onion, computer, neighbor, planet, pine cone, cigarette, airplane, spam subject, fork, mountain, etc.

Harlem

Langston Hughes

Poem found at <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/46548/harlem>

What happens to a dream deferred?...

A Plagued Journey

Maya Angelou

Full poem at <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/48992/a-plagued-journey>

Through all the bright hours

I cling to expectation, until...

Perhaps

On the power of “perhaps” and staying open to what might lie beyond our darkest expectations

Shu Ting

Full poem at <http://www.ayearofbeinghere.com/2013/12/shu-ting-perhaps.html>

Perhaps when all the tears have been shed

the earth will be more fertile...

Lessons from a Car Radio

When life turns on and off with a will of its own...

Rev. Jackie Clement

Found in [Voices from the Margins](#), A UUA meditation Manual & Soul Matters “[Common Shelf](#)” Book

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

Hymn and Choral Recommendations

from Soul Matters Music Resources Coordinator, Sara Brandt-Doelle:

https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1Nt8WWGfAOA0rKlTSRLUntokcdXGwucgUfUC3ui_-qwE/edit?usp=sharing

Hymns Recommended as Easier to Lead

357 Bright Morning Stars

396 I Know This Rose Will Open

144 Now Is the Time Approaching

95 There Is More Love Somewhere

Choral or Vocal Pieces

Ain-a: That Good News Spiritual - There are several arrangements.

Do the research and choose well

All Shall Be Well - Several arrangements (Angela Saviaggione is a UU Musician)

<http://www.angelapiano.com/products/>

Amazing Things - Jana Stanfield and Megan McDonough https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CrwNzBNZK_o &

<http://www.heartwindmusic.com/amthu.html>

And Sure Stars Shining - Z Randall Stroope <https://www.jwpepper.com/sheet-music/search.jsp?keywords=and+sure+stars+shining>

Expectation- Sharon Scholl
https://www.freeprintmusic.com/cgi-bin/fpm_showMusic.cgi

In Meeting We Are Blessed - Troy Robertson
<https://troy-robertson.squarespace.com/music-1>

Hymn of Promise - Natalie Sleeth
https://hymnary.org/text/in_the_bulb_there_is_a_flower

I Can See Clearly Now - Johnny Nash

Sacred Circle - Heather Pierson and Bernice Martin
http://heatherpierson.com/listen/s/sacred_circle_ &
http://heatherpierson.com/store/heart_songs_circle_songs_songbook/

Spiritual - Ysaye Barnwell
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t5SZFNareYM>
<https://www.musicalsource.com/sheet-music/spiritual/lop-ymb124>

I Know This Rose Will Open (STLT #396)
Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uxXxcM72ctY>

Can't No One Know - Sweet Honey in the Rock
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3RezioxixRU>
Cover: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2fG7ndu6zwQ>
"Can't no one know at sunrise how this day is going to end..."

Stories For All Ages

The Hungry Coat

On how the expectations and assumptions that arise from appearance deceive and divide us.

Video: <https://www.questformeaning.org/family-quest/the-hungry-coat-2/>

Story: <https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/tales/session6/123344.shtml>

Book: [The Hungry Coat: A Tale from Turkey by Demi](#)

The Ugly Duckling

Hans Christian Anderson

The classic tale of our expectations hiding who we truly are and what we are capable of

http://read.gov/books/pageturner/ugly_duckling/#page/4/mode/2up

The Empty Pot

Demi

On choosing honesty over fitting into others' expectations

Online from Tapestry of Faith, Creating Home:

<https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/home/session13/60162.shtml>

Magic Tricks & being Surprised Out of Our Expectations!

Find someone who can perform magic tricks. Talk about how magic trick turn our expectations on their head. A quarter shouldn't burst from your ear. A card shouldn't disappear!

Message: Magic confounds our expectations. Having our expectations radically upended helps us loosen our everyday expectations a little bit, allowing us to question all the things and people we expect to "never change" or "never get better."

The Thomas Potter/John Murray story (Universalism Day is September 30th)

<https://www.uuworld.org/articles/john-murray-day>

<https://www.uuworld.org/articles/john-murray-conversion>

Thomas Potter waited expectantly and faithfully for 10 years for a preacher who believed in a loving God.

John Murray expected the winds to send him on his way, but instead he had to adjust to and trust the unexpected shifts in life's weather.

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.

Quote - Henry David Thoreau, Walden

We must learn to reawaken and keep ourselves awake, not by mechanical aids, but by an infinite expectation of the dawn, which does not forsake us even in our soundest sleep. I know of no more encouraging fact than the unquestionable ability of man to elevate his life by a conscious endeavor.

Hymn - I Know This Rose Will Open (STLT #396)

On the "faith-full" expectation that there is something in us that can and will blossom, even in the midst of storms...

"I know this rose will open
I know my fear will burn away
I know my soul will unfurl its wings
I know this rose will open"

Scripture -Matthew 7:7-8

Ask, and it will be given you; search, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened for you. For everyone who asks receives, and everyone who searches finds, and for everyone who knocks, the door will be opened.

Reflection - Fiercely Waiting

Tony Robinson

Full piece at

https://www.ucc.org/daily_devotional_fiercely_waiting?utm_campaign=dd_dec2_16&utm_medium=email&utm_source=unitedchurchofchrist

It's strange—and striking—how the Bible ends...ends by not ending. It ends in anticipation. It ends with the faithful still waiting, with Jesus saying, "Very soon now, I shall be with you."...this is what it means to be people of faith—to be still waiting, still watching, still hoping, still listening... If you're still waiting, it means you haven't settled in... you haven't given up...

Quote - Bishop Ken Untener

Full piece at <https://bishopbillmcalilly.com/2018/02/07/a-future-not-our-own/>

On being released from the expectation of having to do it all...

"This is what we are about. We plant the seeds that one day will grow...

We cannot do everything, and there is a sense of liberation in realizing this.

This enables us to do something...

It may be incomplete, but it is a beginning..."

Poem - Valentine for Ernest Mann

Naomi Shihab Nye

On unlocking gifts by shifting our expectations

Poem found at <https://poets.org/poem/valentine-ernest-mann>

He really

liked those skunks. So, he re-invented them

as valentines and they became beautiful

At least, to him...

Article - Great Expectations: Studying Expectancy's Effects - Utne Reader

Jessica Cohen

<https://www.utne.com/mind-and-body/expectancy-effects-zm0z16szdeh>

"Knowing which group would fail when he first met with them, he had somehow contaminated them with his expectations without knowing how..."

Talk - When Expectations Override our Senses: TEDxTunali

Dan Ariely

Captivating mind-body studies about how placebos and our expectations alter our experience. Makes for some great sermon illustrations, leading to the reminder that reality is never something separate from our expectations and imaginings!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JTTBruF21Fk>

Another [study](#) that makes for a great sermon illustration about mind over matter, well mind over body really!

Blog - Do positive expectations help you achieve goals?

Positive expectations do. Positive fantasies don't.

<https://www.bakadesuyo.com/2011/04/do-positive-expectations-and-positive-fantasi/>

Great angle and twist for a sermon.

Article - How the Power of Expectations Can Allow You to 'Bend Reality' - Scientific American

Gareth Cook

<http://www.scientificamerican.com/article/how-the-power-of-expectations-can-allow-you-to-bend-reality/>

In depth article and more sermon illustrations

[Here's the book](#) related to the article.

Story - The Future is In Our Hands

Source: <http://www.firstchurchofharwich.org/sermon-on-the-tiptoe-of-expectation/>

Once there was a king and a wise old man. The king resented the old man because the people respected him so much, and they were always seeking his advice. The king stayed awake many a night, trying to think of some way to discredit him. He wanted to embarrass him in front of the people. One day he hits upon a scheme, and summoning all his followers and the old man, the king asks him, "O wise man, tell me this. I have the tiniest of birds cupped between my hands. I command you to tell me if the bird is alive or dead." The wise man immediately realizes he's in a dilemma, for if he says, "Alive," the king will surely snuff out the little bird's life with one squeeze of his hand; and if he says, "Dead," the king will simply open his hand, and the bird will be released into the air. Either answer will be used to discredit him. The old man ponders his decision. The king grows impatient. "Well, is the bird alive or dead?" he demands. And the wise man replies, "It is as you wish, your Majesty. The choice is in your hands."

Quote - [Dawn Fortune](#)

I see the divine in the generosity of those who often have the least to give, in kindness offered by those who would arguably have the most reason to be bitter. The divine is like love in this regard: irrational, unexpected, and beautiful.

Reflection - Do you see this woman?

Rev. Steve Garnaas-Holmes

Full reflection at <https://www.unfoldinglight.net/reflections/3593>

"A woman in the city, who was a sinner, stood behind him at his feet, weeping, and began to bathe his feet with her tears....He said, "Do you see this woman?" —Luke 7.37, 44

No, we do not see. To one of Jesus' most arresting questions, we have to answer: we don't see her. We see our prejudices and stereotypes. We see our fears and projections. We don't see this woman; we see what we think of her. We see a sinner. We see someone disrupting our dinner..."

Quote - Rev. Steve Garnaas-Holmes

Everybody is a figment of my expectations.

Quote - Anaïs Nin [& the Talmud](#)

We do not see things as they are, we see them as we are.

Reflection - Expect Nothing - Braver/Wiser

Rev. Robin Tanner

<https://www.uua.org/braverwiser/expect-nothing>

"Sometimes, people surprise you. Sometimes, our expectations are wholly insufficient..."

Quote - Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

If you treat an individual as he is, he will remain how he is. But if you treat him as if he were what he ought to be and could be, he will become what he ought to be and could be.

Podcast - How To Become Batman - Invisibilia

<https://www.npr.org/programs/invisibilia/378577902/how-to-become-batman?showDate=2015-01-23>

"Examines the surprising effect our expectations can have on the people around us. Plus, the story of a blind man who says expectations have helped him see. Yes, see."

Article - How To Become Batman, Five Lessons on Expectation from NPR's "Invisibilia"

<https://www.buzzfeed.com/kasiagalazka/invisibilia-episode-three-how-to-become-batman>

Story - Maybe so, Maybe not. We'll see.

Different versions of the classic tale

http://www.drmarlo.com/?page_id=181

https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=86&v=OX0OARBqBp0 - with commentary from Alan Watts

Quote - [Steve Garnaas-Holmes](#)

Life is not under my management.

It is free, and dappled, not pure.

Life is this, not something else...

Even God does not yet know

what's in store before unfolding in it.

Video - A Reason Not to Worry What Others Think - School of Life

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X75Roe_davA

On the tragedy and liberation of not being noticed

Video - The Wisdom of Pessimism - School of Life

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5jADnNpx3R4>

Why expecting a half empty glass makes you grateful for the drink!

Article - The Upside of Pessimism -The Atlantic

Olga Khazan

<https://www.theatlantic.com/health/archive/2014/09/dont-think-positively/379993/>

Video - Alain de Botton on Pessimism - School of Life Sunday “Sermon”

https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=77&v=Aw1oLtuJOXQ

Book - The Positive Power Of Negative Thinking

Julie Norem

<https://www.amazon.com/Positive-Power-Negative-Thinking-Defensive-ebook/dp/B009IU4VHQ>

Blog - Optimists vs. Pessimists: Who’s right? - Barking Up the Wrong Tree

<https://www.bakadesuyo.com/2012/10/optimists-vs-pessimists-right/>

Book - [Factfulness](#): ten reasons we’re wrong about the world

Hans Rosling

On how life right now is better than you might expect... and why we refuse to believe that’s the case.

Videos on this are [here](#) and [here](#)

Video - Why we're unhappy -- the expectation gap - TED Talk

Nat Ware

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9KiUq8i9pbE>

Videos - On the Expectation, Necessary and Burden of Code Switching

- What Is Code-Switching? (And the danger of not doing it):
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QNbdn0yuUw8>
- The Cost of Code Switching - TED Talk: Chandra Arthur:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bo3hRq2RnNI>
- What Had Happened Was on Code Switching and the Struggle to Settle into Yourself:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5iQuATmEbVw>
- 3 ways to speak English - A powerful spoken-word essay about the pain behind code switching:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k9fmJ5xQ_mc
- Key & Peele on Code Switching:
<https://www.npr.org/sections/codeswitch/2015/07/29/427411327/key-peelee-is-ending-here-are-a-few-of-its-code-switch-iest-moments>

“The Talk”

The painful and heart-breaking task of having to explain to your child that they need to expect that someday, someone might want to hurt you or kill you because of the color of your skin.

- Black Parents on the Talk: <https://www.vox.com/2016/8/8/12401792/police-black-parents-the-talk>
- How to Deal with the Police | Parents Explain: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=coryt8IZ-DE>
- Dear Child: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Mkw1CetjWwl>

Speech - 2018 UU GA Ware Lecture - The Spirit of Expectancy

Brittany Packnett

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WkV2fNuN1C4>

Excerpt: "Do you know what your fellow black and brown UUs expect of you? Do you know if you've met their expectations? Do you know that standing with the oppressed is not to save them but to save yourself?... At work you ask your manager every day, every week, every quarter exactly what they expect of you. And then you break your back to meet or exceed those very expectations in exchange for a paycheck. Why not ask your community every day, every week, every quarter exactly what they expect of you and then use everything you got to meet or exceed those very expectations in exchange for justice? This is our work. And I promise it pays the very best dividends..."

Article - Walker's Appeal

Renae Reints - Boston Magazine

<https://www.bostonmagazine.com/news/2017/09/28/walkers-appeal/>

On the transformative power of declaring your expectations and demanding immediate justice...

(more [here](#), [here](#) and [here](#))

Excerpt: "On September 28, 1829, [David] Walker published a document that would define his legacy and change the course of the anti-slavery debate. Walker's Appeal has been remembered as the first assault on slavery to come from the pen of a black man, rallying those who had long fought for freedom... Walker also criticized Thomas Jefferson, the former president who said black people "must be removed beyond the reach of mixture." He wrote clearly about the injustice of colonization, a popular movement that would move free black people out of America and into an African colony. Walker believed African Americans had a right to live in the United States, having been part of the foundation that built it. "America is more our country than it is the whites'," Walker argued, "we have enriched it with our blood and tears."...

Quote/Reflection - I Am Who I Am

John Nichols

Full piece found in [A Wind Swept Over the Waters](#)

On expecting the unexpected and unavoidable call of God)

God said to Moses, "I am who I am." He said further, "Thus you shall say to the Israelites, 'I am has sent me to you.'" -Exodus 3:7-14

What's in a name? Why do we ask for them?... Moses and the rest of us will have to get used to the idea that God is radically, mysteriously, and beautifully different from anything we can shape, control, or even describe... We can only hope that once in a while, and likely when we least expect it, we will find ourselves "on holy ground." There may be no burning bush in those moments but we will, as a result, become more sure of who we are and more confident of what we must do. God leads not by becoming more attractive or visible to us, but by becoming unavoidable... The Israelites finally sought their freedom not because they knew God would hold their hands, leading them safely past all danger and then making everything right, but because they believed they had to do it. Something finally unavoidable compelled them to leave the comparative securities of slavery for the freedom and terror of the wilderness. As it turned out, God's five-word self-description really meant, "I am who you must confront." When those confrontations arise, when we are asked to do what is difficult but right, something crucially important to our future integrity and happiness happens. May we recognize this even if we don't understand why.

Reflection - Crossing Bridges

On adventuring beyond our expectations and trusting in the unknown

Jan Taddeo

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

“Creating adventure was a theme in my family. My father would take us out on Sunday drives just to “get lost.”... My mother would take us on penny hikes, flipping a coin at each fork in the trail to see which direction to walk next... Growing up with an appreciation for the unknown and creating adventures in unexpected ways has served me well.... Unitarian Universalists step out into the unknown all the time as we embark on our spiritual adventures...”

Quote - Thoreau

I went to the woods because I wished to live deliberately, to front only the essential facts of life, and see if I could not learn what it had to teach, and not, when I came to die, discover that I had not lived.

Reflection - Even This Is Enough

Rev. Vanessa Southern

On putting all the expectations down and letting ourselves rest in the knowledge that we are *already* enough

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

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

Love won't cease to flow in your direction,

your heart won't stop beating...

Article - Queering Faith, UU World

On challenging the idea and expectation of “normal” and embracing a new understanding of UU truth

Alex Kapitan

<https://www.uuworld.org/articles/queering-faith>

“Queer theory... teaches that there is no such thing as a single, universal, absolute truth; that there are always multiple—even contradictory—equally true interpretations and meanings of something. Queer theory also questions everything that is presented as truth based on social norms like the gender binary. It upends and rejects those norms... Instead, it emphasizes the choices we make. It's first and foremost about what we do and how we experience the world, not who we are or how we identify.

This sounds a whole lot like Unitarian Universalism to me...”

Reflection - When Things *Don't* Go from Bad to Worse

Rev. Jane Rzepka

Found in [From Zip Lines to Hosaphones](#), A UUA meditation manual & Soul Matters “[Common Shelf](#)” Book

“Here's the thing: Once in a while, the future works out just fine...”

Water Communion and Expectation Angles

On trusting and expecting that “love is the water that wears down the rock”

Water communion as a celebration of the “waters” that slowly but surely carve the way to justice and joy

Song - Brother Sun

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8BBbgLS87do>

“Let me tell you something you know in your bones...”

Sermon - Rev. Kevin Tarsa

<https://www.ugrassvalley.org/multimedia-archive/love-is-the-water-that-wears-down-the-rock/>

Have faith in the drip!

On trusting and expecting life to carry us when we lean back and let go.

Water communion as a celebration of the “waters” that carry us and buoy us up

First Lesson By Philip Booth

<https://www.poemhunter.com/poem/first-lesson/>

“Lie back, and the sea will hold you.”

Calendar Connection Seeds

Rosh Hashanah - Jewish New Year - Sept. 29 - Oct. 1

The New Year: Transforming repetition into renewal - Parabola

Rabbi Adin Steinsaltz

<https://parabola.org/2018/12/31/the-new-year-by-rabbi-adin-steinsaltz/>

On Rosh Hashanah and repentance as the call to awake from the slumber of routine and expect something new.

“Universalism Day”: John Murray preaches first sermon in US (1770) - Sept. 30

UU World Articles

<https://www.uuworld.org/articles/john-murray-day>

<https://www.uuworld.org/articles/john-murray-conversion>

On the winds that undermine our expectations and invite us to something new

“Potter asked the reluctant Murray if he would at least preach on the coming Sunday. Murray said his boat would sail out of port by Sunday and so he wouldn’t be available. Of course, ships in those days relied upon wind power and the winds would literally have to change in order for his ship to sail. Potter asked him if he would preach on Sunday if his ship hadn’t yet sailed, and Murray gave in. “If I’m still here on Sunday,” he said, “I will preach.””

On holding on to hopeful expectations even while staring at an empty sea for a very long time

“Potter had built a meetinghouse for Universalist discussion groups in the woods ten years earlier and had been looking for a minister ever since. “I have been expecting you a long time!” Potter greeted Murray...”

Recommended Sermons

Recalculating

Rev. Victoria Safford

Text and audio at <https://whitebearunitarian.org/recalculating-02-18-18-sermon/>

On the inevitable disruption of our expectations... and the religious call to continually recalibrate:

"We crave order and control and predictable patterns in this life. When we can't find them (because they mostly do not exist), we get anxious and we make them up, imposing our will or our opinion or our expectations of ourselves, of everybody else, all over the place, and when the universe rears up on its hind legs and says, "Well, actually no. You're not the boss of the world, and this is not how it's gonna go," we are mightily disrupted... How we weather the disruptions; how we welcome them sometimes, or at least acknowledge them, honor them; how we grieve completely when loss or affliction assails us – how we grieve completely, and keep on moving forward anyway, however incompletely; how we let go of one idea, or one assumption, one dream, and re-orient our minds, our spirits, our plans around new revelations of reality – well, that is the religious life..."

Do You Believe You are a Chicken or an Eagle?

Rev. Jake Morrill

Video: <https://www.facebook.com/revjakebmorrill/videos/10219166755389131/>

On what we expect of ourselves...and how it determines who we are.

Expect Chaos

Rev. Bill Sinkford

Video: <https://vimeo.com/309914972>

Audio: <https://www.firstunitarianportland.org/podcast/rev-bill-sinkford-expect-chaos/>

Beyond Fear

Rev. Barbara Wells

Text: <http://www.pbuuc.org/sermons/archive/sermons0304/beyondfear.html>

On getting stuck in our fearful expectations

What Beyoncé Taught Me About Race

Brittany Barron

Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fDzj9vRw5yM>

The internet says this is a TED Talk, but don't be fooled, it is a powerful sermon by a powerful pastor!

On America as "an expert at **expecting** certain things from a woman who looks like Beyoncé." A powerful engagement of Maya Angelou's admonishment, "First, recognize that I am a black woman. And then, forget that I am a black woman."

Does the Story Have an Ending?

Rev. Dr. Terasa Cooley

Text: <http://www.uucava.org/sermon-does-story-have-ending/>

Video: <https://yourstreamlive.com/replaylink/mp4/873448>

On how we refuse to expect the best and why the stories we tell ourselves make all the difference.

"I'm still interested in how we willfully refuse to believe those things that have objectively improved. I think it's something even deeper: data and facts actually don't make much of a difference in how we see things. Even for those of us who are fact-saturated, Rosling shows that we really don't pay attention to the facts that don't coincide with the larger story we are telling ourselves. Here's my theory of why: Because story is what matters more to us, to all of us, than facts do."

Closing Words

Remembering that the universe is larger

[*Marjorie Newlin Leaming*](#)

Remembering that the universe is so much larger than our ability to comprehend, let us go forth from this time together with the resolve to stop trying to reduce the incomprehensible to our own petty expectations, so that wonder—that sense of what is sacred—can find space to open up our minds and illumine our lives.

Expect Joy

Isaiah 55:12

For you shall go out in joy,
and be led back in peace;
the mountains and the hills before you
shall burst into song,
and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands.

Go in Trust and Expectation

Inspired by and adapted from the opening words in this packet by Rev. Suzelle Lynch

May we go with our expectation renewed,
Trusting that the world will deliver what we want,
yet opening our hearts to a universe of beauty and struggle
beyond all prediction.
May we travel with confidence,
Anticipating what we feel we deserve,
but faithful to the path's unfolding, even when it leads to wilderness.
And may we go knowing that there are always friends
waiting for us on the road ahead.

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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