

UUCMC Covenant Circle Session

March 2019: Journey

Opening Words & Chalice Lighting

Not all those who wander are lost. ~ J.R.R. Tolkien

Reminder of our Covenant

Check-In (3-4 minutes each)

Topic with Readings

Word Roots

Journey has its roots in the Old French *ournée*, a day's length; a day's work, a day's travel. For instance, a day laborer was called a journeyman; we write our daily adventures in a journal. Looking at life as a journey, the idea of day becomes important. What part of my past do I carry forward into this day and what part do I leave behind? How do I set my compass for the travels of this day, moving into my own becoming?

Wise Words

It's time to change the question from "Where are you from?" to "Where are you going?"
~ Chetan Bhatt

If you can see your path laid out in front of you step by step, you know it's not your path. Your own path you make with every step you take. That's why it's your path. ~ Joseph Campbell

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

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

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

I don't mind getting lost now and then. Maps don't know everything. ~ Ruth Feldman

We get lost. The question is not whether we will get lost in life, but rather how we will move through it in faith. Will we dwell on everything that we have lost? Or will we focus instead on everything that we have yet to find? ~ Rev. Erik Martínez Resly

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.
~ Rev. Erik Martínez Resly

When you travel,
A new silence
Goes with you,
And if you listen,
You will hear
What your heart would
Love to say.
~ John O'Donohue

The desert journey isn't about embarking on a long and arduous struggle to find God at the end of the road. Desert spirituality is about looking for God right in the very midst of wrestling with ourselves.
~ Christine Valters Paintner

The path of awakening is not about becoming who you are. Rather it is about unbecoming who you are not.~ Albert Schweitzer

As always when returning from a time away
my counsel is: don't return entirely. ~ Rev. Steve Garnaas-Holmes

To get where you want to go you can't only do what you like. ~ Peter Abrahams

For a long time it had seemed to me that life was about to begin — real life. But there was always some obstacle in the way. Something to be got through first, some unfinished business, time still to be served, a debt to be paid. Then life would begin. At last it dawned on me that these obstacles were my life.
~ Alfred D'Souza

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

The exits were entrances in disguise. ~ Shannon B.

Life is not a straight line
it's a downpour of gifts, please --
hold out your hand
~ Julia Fehrenbacher

Do not follow where the path may lead. Go instead where there is no path and leave a trail.
~ Ralph Waldo Emerson

Silent Reflection

Questions to prompt discussion (choose ones that work for you)

1. How would you describe the current leg of your journey? Taking the first step? Down an alley? Climbing a hill? Coasting? Cruising? Sauntering? Lost? Hitchhiking it? Running on empty? Just filled the tank? Planning to get off at the next exit? Hoping that a rest area comes soon? Waiting for GPS to recalibrate? Off the map? Stuck in traffic? Sick of the commute? Thankful for the carpool? Standing at a fork in the road?
2. What friend has walked your journey with you the longest? How would you articulate the unique gift of long friendships?
3. What is the most important thing you've told your kids to pack for their journey?
4. Whose journey do you wish wasn't cut short? Who do you wish was still on the road with you? Have you figured out what treasures or clues they've left behind?
5. Could the story of your journey so far be told as an adventure story?
6. What is the most important thing you've learned about getting lost?
7. Whose journey needs your help? Is there someone that needs you to notice that they can't quite make their next step alone?
8. Do you believe in happy endings?
9. Are you close or far from home?
10. What if someone asked you "Where are you going?" instead of "Where are you from?"
11. Do you dwell on everything that you have lost? Or focus on everything that you have yet to find?
12. Are you sure your path is one of becoming who you really are. Or could it be about unbecoming who you are not?
13. What if the obstacles in front of us aren't in the way of our lives, but instead are our lives?
14. How are you called to make others' journeys possible?
15. What has been your favorite twist or turn on the road?
16. What's your question? Your question may not be listed above. As always, if the above questions don't include what life is asking from you, spend the month listening to your days to hear it. Or maybe the question or call you need to hear is waiting in one of the quotes listed. Consider looking there!

Housekeeping Details How goes your service project plans? Do you need ideas? Lisa, Michelle or Virginia are happy to help!

Check-out

Closing Words

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

Additional or alternative activity:

Map & Share Your UU Journey

As mentioned above, to know each other is to know each other's journeys. So, as a way of deepening relationship as a small group, consider setting aside some extra time in your meeting or holding a second meeting this month during which all members share their spiritual journeys with each other.

To help you map and tell your journey, we've listed a number of common "legs" along the spiritual journey. Spend the month thinking about your version of each. Some will come to you right away. Others may be experiences you've had but never quite fully recognized as part of your spiritual quest. There's also the gift of setting all the legs of your journey side by side and seeing it as a whole.

Come to your group ready to share your spiritual journey and what you learned from spending the time to map it out. Which item of on the list was harder to engage than you thought? What was not on your map before? What did you learn about the items that were not relevant? What legs of the journey did you add?

A Guide for Mapping Your Religious Road

- **The First Step** - *Who was most responsible for your first understanding of religion? What was unique about the first religious community that shaped you? How do you feel about that community today?*
- **Down the Road of Doubt** - *When did a crack in your faith first appear? Was it a moment of intellectual questioning or emotional disappointment?*
- **Partners on Your New Path** - *What mentors or fellow travelers helped light and shape your new path?*
- **Your First Spiritual Experience** - *What was the nature of your first spiritual experience? How does it still shape you today? When did your spirituality move from ideas rooted in your head to faith rooted in an experience?*
- **Your First UU Spiritual Experience** - *UUs place the interdependent web at the center of our faith. When was the first time you experienced a moment of transcendent connection that led you to feel as though who we are does not end at the barrier of our own skin?*
- **The Moment of Institutional Commitment** - *What led you to make an institutional commitment? How did it feel to publicly declare your religious group identity?*
- **The Turn Toward Practice** - *At some point on the spiritual journey our faith shifts forms, from a set of beliefs to a spiritual practice that engages and grounds our whole self. What was this shift like for you? What regular practice now grounds your spiritual self?*
- **Today's Journey** - *What was your most impactful spiritual moment of 2018?*