



South Fraser Unitarians

*What does it mean to be a
People of Belonging?*



SFUC Thematic Packet
September and October 2020

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What Does It Mean to Be A People of Belonging?

You hardly knew
how hungry you were
to be gathered in,
to receive the welcome
that invited you to enter
entirely...
Tentative steps
became settling in...
You began to breathe again...
You learned to sing.

But the deal with this blessing
is that it will not leave you alone,
will not let you linger...
this blessing
will ask you to leave,
not because it has tired of you
but because it desires for you
to become the sanctuary
that you have found...

Jan Richardson starts off her poem by mentioning hunger. It's also a perfect way to begin framing this month's theme of belonging. We've all felt it. Just saying the word "belonging" conjures it up: The hunger to be included; the longing to be let in. No one likes standing outside the circle. No one likes leaning against the locked door listening to everyone laughing inside. From the time we are little, belonging is the thing we seek. It's the hoped-for Holy Grail at the end of our journeys.

Or is it just the beginning of our journey?

You have to love the way Richardson surprises us with that twist. One minute she's wrapping us in comforting words about settling into belonging and the next she's shaking us awake and telling us to get up and go. And maybe what she's really waking us up to is the fact that there are two types of belonging, only one of which is a blessing.

To use her language, if you find yourself being invited to linger rather than leave, warning bells should go off. Be wary of those who welcome you with a club jacket and soft couch. They may have let you in, but soon they will enlist you to help with the work of keeping others out.

Instead, as all the true sages and sacred traditions tell us, the true blessing of belonging isn't that you get to come inside the circle; it's that you get to participate in expanding it.

Which means maybe our question this month is different than one we might expect. Instead of "Where can I find belonging?" maybe it's "How can I become belonging for others?"

May that be the question and the type of belonging this month that - to use Richardson's words - "will not leave any of us alone."

Our Spiritual Exercises

Option A - Whose Are You?... All in One Place

We all know that belonging is not just about place, but people as well. Quaker teacher, Douglas Steer gets at this beautifully:

"The ancient question, 'Who am I?' inevitably leads to a deeper one: 'Whose am I?' – because there is no identity outside of relationship. You cannot be a person by yourself. To ask "Whose am I" is to extend the question far beyond the little self-absorbed self, and wonder: Who needs you? Who loves you? To whom are you accountable? To whom do you answer? Whose life is altered by your choices? With whose life is your own bound up, inextricably, in obvious or invisible ways?"

It's such a powerful and important truth: we are who we belong to. But it's also a hard truth to remember. The world around us doesn't help. Its focus is on becoming not belonging. It wants us to wake up every morning and ask, "Am I succeeding?" not "Who needs me?" "Who loves me?" or "With whose life is my own bound up?"

So, this month why not engage in a bit of course correction? Why not see what happens when who we belong to is front and center at the start of every day?

This exercise is designed to help with this. Here are your instructions:

1. Clear off a space on a table, dresser, desk or shelf in your house.
2. Over a few days or a week populate that space with pictures of people who come to mind when you ask yourself "Whose am I?" Find or print out the pictures. Add as many as feels right. Push yourself to think beyond the obvious answers: your family, your church community, etc. Treat the question as a meditation practice. Asking it each day will lead you to unexpected pictures: a mentor from your past, an unknown boy on the other side of the world suffering because climate change caused by us, those who have been excluded from our faith because of white-centered structures. Or maybe it will take you beyond people, to a pet from your childhood or that park you walk in every Saturday of the Fall.
3. Once the space is filled with your chosen pictures, spend another week or two using it as an altar of sorts. Pause briefly before it every morning. Or maybe more than briefly.
4. Pay attention to how bringing your network of belonging changes your days. Journal about it. Discuss it with your partner or friend.
5. Come to your group with a report of how placing belonging at the center of your attention altered your days.

Note: *You don't have to do this exercise by yourself. Consider doing it with your partner or with your children as well.*

Option B – Widening the Circle of Concern

Join Rev. Samaya on Saturdays from 1-2 pm with your Black Lives Matter signs or any other sign promoting racial justice. For one hour we stand in front of Sunnyside United Church, our usual service location when it's safe to meet in person, letting our community know that we take our mission statement seriously to heart when we say that we care by working for a just and sustainable world.

Come to your group ready to share what the experience meant to you and how it helps to widen the circle of concern you have for the world.

Option C - Spiritual Practice from Jewish Tradition for September

The most sacred annual period in Judaism are the holidays of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. The two holidays, and often the intervening period more informally, are known as the High Holy Days. In 2020 the dates are September 18 – 27.

Rosh Hashanah (“head of the year”), is the traditional start of the Jewish New Year, according to the Hebrew calendar this is the year 5781, which represents the number of years since God’s creation of the heavens and the earth.

The period between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur is known as the Ten Days of Repentance. According to traditional Jewish teaching, God opens the Book of Life each year on Rosh Hashanah to inscribe a person’s fate for the coming year, but does not seal that fate until Yom Kippur, the “Day of Atonement.” The Days of Repentance thus offer an observant Jew the opportunity to atone for past misdeeds, seek forgiveness, and mend their behavior.

Take time this month to reflect on the past year.

Are there people you need to ask for or offer forgiveness?

Were there times when you were less than your best self? Can they be both acknowledged and atoned for? Can you forgive yourself and have a fresh start?

Make amends if possible.

OR

Pick one of the readings found in our Wise Words section and read it daily

Option D – Spiritual Practice from the Wiccan Tradition for October

Samhain (SAW-win) is a holiday that many of us know by another name – Halloween. In ancient times, it was believed that this was the time that the veil between the living and the dead was at its thinnest. Because it was at its thinnest, the ancestors could come and visit to provide advice or to help us out. To guide them, people would set out hollowed out turnips lit with candles and entice them with offerings of food. Sound familiar? The belief was/is that the dead are still our friends, family members, ancestors that wish us well – they are the ones that gave us life.

Celebrate Samhain with an Ancestor Feast. Prepare a food that your ancestors would have liked. For example, if you are of Ukrainian heritage, as Rev. Samaya is, prepare some borscht or perogies. Invite those who are in your bubble to join you for dinner or invite people to join you via zoom to share dinner with you and engage in the same practice. Take a bit of every dish prepared that night and place it on a plate in front of pictures of your beloved dead. Light candles for them and invite them into the space with a reading from the Wise Words from the Pagan Tradition section of this packet. After dinner, invite each person to tell a story about your ancestors or family – or a myth or folktale from your heritage. Pass around photos of your beloved dead and share their stories. When it's time to go to bed, thank the ancestors, blow out the candles, and put the food from their plate into the compost.

Option E - Share Your Belonging

This exercise is simple and hard (at least for us UUs) at the same time: **Invite somebody to church!**

At the heart of this exercise is a deep religious truth: True belonging is something you give, not just get. If we don't share the belonging, we've found, it becomes a cage not a home. And why would we want to keep it to ourselves anyway? Yes, it's awkward to invite people to church. Nobody wants to seem like they are pushing their religion on someone. But at the same time, the gift of finding belonging comes with a deep sense of gratitude. And gratitude naturally leads to generosity. The best way to say thanks for a gift is to share it. In the end, it's all one big reminder that being a people of belonging is inexorably intertwined with being a people of gratitude and a people of generosity.

So lean into all three this month by uttering and completing these two simple sentences: "I think you'd enjoy my church because _____. Want to join me this week?"

Option F - Find Belonging in Our Recommended Resources

Our recommended resources are full of wisdom about what it means to be a people of and a person of belonging. Engaging these resources and finding the one that especially speaks to you is a spiritual practice in and of itself.

So, if none of the above exercises call to you, engage the recommended resources section of this packet as your spiritual exercise for the month.

Set aside some regular time throughout a week to go through them and meditate on them until you find the one that most expands or deepens your understanding of belonging. After you've found it, consider printing it out and carrying it with you or pinning it up so you can continue to reflect on it throughout the weeks leading up to your group meeting. Come to your group ready to share where the journey led you.

Your Question

As always, don't treat these questions like "homework" or a list that needs to be covered in its entirety. Instead, simply pick the single question that speaks to you most and let it lead you where you need to go. The goal is to figure out what being a part of a people of blessing means for you and your daily living. So, which question is calling to you? Which one contains "your work"? Where is that question trying to lead you?

1. Are there people you need to ask for or offer forgiveness?
2. Were there times when you were less than your best self? Can they be both acknowledged and atoned for? Can you forgive yourself and have a fresh start?
3. Samhain also marks the wiccan new year where birth and death represent two sides of the same thing. As you contemplate birth and death, what needs to be let go of in order for new beginnings to occur?
4. How would your days and heart change if you told yourself (and really believed): "I'm already home. I've already arrived"?
5. Who is sitting just outside your circle and needs welcomed in?
6. Does your "belonging work" lie in making room for your grief?
7. Have you ever had to sacrifice belonging for integrity? How about right now? Is your current source of belonging asking you to compromise your integrity?
8. Is it time to shift the question from "Who am I?" to "Whose am I?" How would your living and loving be different (and better) if it was a bit less about becoming and a bit more about belonging? What if "Am I succeeding?" was replaced with "Who needs me?" "Who loves me? With whose life is my own bound up?"
9. Have you ever found your better self in the middle of a forest?
10. Who taught you that it is safe to show your whole self? That every part of you belongs?
11. Did you find your place of belonging or create it?
12. What if belonging happens when you finally say to yourself "I'm enough"? What if belonging isn't the moment you find your people but instead the moment you stop trying to prove yourself? What if the whole game is about finally belonging to yourself?
13. **What's your question?** Your question may not be listed above. As always, if the above questions don't include what life is asking from you, spend the month listening to your days to hear it. Or maybe the question or call you need to hear is waiting in one of the quotes listed below. Consider looking there!

Family Faith Formation

Books and Readings on Belonging

All I See Is Part of Me

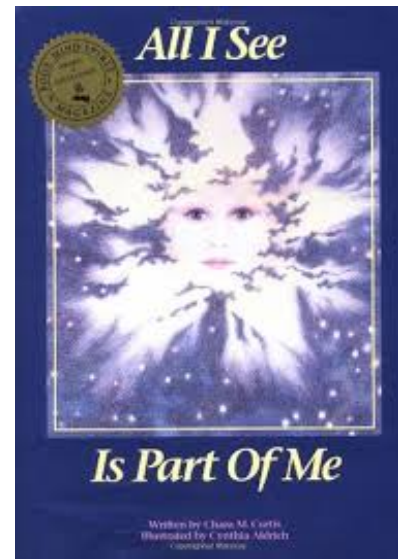
by Chara M. Curtis (Author), Cynthia Aldrich (Illustrator)

Book: <https://www.amazon.com/All-I-See-Part-Me/dp/0692339868>

Video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C5V_gv9X9TE

“This is unquestionably the most accessible and beautiful book about the interconnected web of existence I have ever found. I used it as the children's sermon at the UU Church where I sometimes preach, and the response was incredible. People came up to me afterwards raving about how it simply and movingly it expressed the most complex spiritual concept that is at the heart of the faith.

It is, perhaps, particularly valuable at a time when physicists are sounding more and more like mystics; Neil DeGrasse Tyson has said that we are part of the universe and the universe is part of us and that should make us feel large, not insignificant. That key truth is the crux of "All I See is Part of Me."



Chara Curtis's poetic story begins with a small child of indeterminate gender (some children see a girl, some a boy and that is part of the charm) sitting on a hilltop and observing the world, solipsistically sensing that it was all somehow connected to her (or him). That feeling is confirmed by conversations with the various elements of the world: Brother Sun and Sister Star. These encourage the child to look inside to find the connection with the Universe, manifesting as a light (energy).

"All the plants, the animals and trees

Are in your light, and you are these."

In that light, the child finds all the answers to any question that can be asked, and touches, in a profound way, eternity...This is a kind of spirituality for the 21st Century when science and faith are coming closer to each other than they ever have. It is non-sectarian; quite the opposite. It is an expression, on a level even a child can understand, of the Spirit that moves the Universe and is accessible in the smallest blade of grass.

"I said a prayer I know was heard,

`Cause all I am hears every word."

Amen.” - Jeremy McGuire review on Amazon

Family Activity

During the High Holiday of Yom Kippur in Judaism, the Jews seek to improve themselves and the world in the coming year. Watch this short video about Yom Kippur

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NQN9ym9DfDs>

How would you try to improve yourself and the world in the coming year? How would you seek to include all peoples in a circle of love?

Think of one way you could start today and do it.

Family Movie

Coco - Aspiring musician Miguel, confronted with his family's ancestral ban on music, enters the Land of the Dead to find his great-great-grandfather, a legendary singer.

Companion Pieces

Recommended Resources for Personal Exploration & Reflection

The following resources are not required reading. We will not analyze these pieces in our group. Instead they are here to companion you on your journey this month, get your thinking started and open you to new ways of thinking about what it means to be part of a people of belonging.

Word Roots

The word 'belonging' holds together the two fundamental aspects of life: Being and Longing, the longing of our Being and the being of our Longing.

[*John O'Donohue*](#)

We have this word, belong. We use it to mean, “being part of.” But the old English prefix be- has the semantic consequence of intensifying as it goes. So belonging means something closer to “the deepening of longing.” That’s how you belong—not by finally arriving, but by having longing for arrival quickened, by being willing to long after life by living

Stephen Jenkinson

Wise Words from the Jewish Tradition

A Kol Nidrei* ~ Mark Belletini (in Sonata for Voice and Silence)

the Kol Nedrei is spoken ritual to open the Yom Kippur service

Let's set it all down, you and me.

The disappointments.

Little and large.

The frustrations.

Let's open our fists and drop them.

The useless waiting.

The obsession with what we cannot have.

The focus on foolish things.
The pin-wheeling worry which wears us out.
The fretting.
Let's throw them down.
The comparisons of ourselves with others.
The competition, as if Domination
was the best name we could give to God.
The cynical assumptions.
The unspoken, shelved anger.
Let's toss them.
The inarticulate suspicions.
The self-doubt.
The pre-emptive self-dumping.
The numbing bouts of self-pity.
Let's sink them all like stones.
Like stones in the pool of this gift of silence.
Let's drop them like hot rocks
into the cool silence.
And when they are gone,
let's lay back gently, and float,
float on the calm surface of the silence.
Let's be supported in this still cradle
of the world, newborn, ready for anything.

Other readings for Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur found in Singing the Living Tradition

#633 Atonement Day ~ Chaim Stern

Once more Atonement Day has come.
All pretense gone, naked heart revealed to the hiding self,
We stand on holy ground, between the day that was and the one that must be.
We tremble.
At what did we aim?
How did we stumble?
What did we take?
What did we give?
To what were we blind?
Last year's confession came easily to the lips.
Will this year's come from deeper than the skin?
Say then: Why are our paths strewn with promises like fallen leaves?
Say then: When shall our lust be for wisdom?

Say now:

Love and truth shall meet;
justice and peace shall embrace.

#634 On Turning ~ Jack Riemer

Now is the time for turning.

The leaves are beginning to turn from green to red and orange.
The birds are beginning to turn and are heading once more toward the South.

The animals are beginning to turn to storing their food for the winter.
For leaves, birds, and animals turning comes instinctively.

But for us turning does not come so easily.
It takes an act of will for us to make a turn. It means breaking with old habits.
It means admitting that we have been wrong; and this is never easy.
It means losing face; it means starting all over again; and this is always painful.
It means saying: I am sorry.

It means recognizing that we have the ability to change. These things are hard to do.

But unless we turn, we will be trapped forever in yesterday's ways.
God, help us to turn -- from callousness to sensitivity, from hostility to love, from pettiness to purpose,
from envy to contentment, from carelessness to discipline, from fear to faith.

Turn us around, O God, and bring us back toward You.
Revive our lives, as at the beginning.

And turn us toward each other, God, for in isolation there is no life.

#635 A New Heart ~ Chaim Stern

Who can say: I have purified my heart, and I am free from sin?

There are none on earth so righteous that they never sin.
Cast away all the evil you have done and get yourselves a new heart and a new spirit.
A new heart will I give you, a new spirit put within you. I will remove the heart of stone
from your flesh and give you a heart that feels.
For thus says the Eternal God: I, Myself, will search for My sheep, and seek them out.
As a shepherd seeks them out when any of the flock go astray, so will I seek out My
sheep.
I will put My spirit within you and teach you to live by My laws.
For I desire love and not sacrifices, the knowledge of God rather than burnt offerings.

#636 Bless Us with Peace ~ Gates of Repentance

O Source of peace, lead us to peace,
a peace profound and true;
lead us to a healing,
to mastery of all that drives us to war within ourselves and with others.

May our deeds inscribe us in the Book of life
and blessing, righteousness and peace!
O Source of peace, bless us with peace.

#637 A Litany of Atonement ~ Robert Eller-Isaacs

For remaining silent when a single voice would have made a difference

We forgive ourselves and each other; we begin again in love.

For each time that our fears have made us rigid and inaccessible

We forgive ourselves and each other; we begin again in love.

For each time that we have struck out in anger without just cause

We forgive ourselves and each other; we begin again in love.

For each time that our greed has blinded us to the needs of others

We forgive ourselves and each other; we begin again in love.

For the selfishness which sets us apart and alone

We forgive ourselves and each other; we begin again in love.

For falling short of the admonitions of the spirit

We forgive ourselves and each other; we begin again in love.

For losing sight of our unity

We forgive ourselves and each other; we begin again in love.

For those and for so many acts both evident and subtle which have fueled the illusion of
separateness

Wise Words from the Wiccan Tradition

#517 ~ Starhawk

I who am the beauty of the green earth and the white moon among the stars and the mysteries of the
waters,

I call upon your soul to arise and come unto Me.

For I am the soul of nature that gives life to the universe.

From Me all things proceed and unto Me they must return.

Let My worship be in the heart that rejoices, for behold-all acts of love and pleasure are My rituals.

Let there be beauty and strength, power and compassion, honor and humility, mirth and reverence within you.

And you who seek to know Me, know that your seeking and yearning will avail you not, unless you know the Mystery:

For if that which you seek, you find not within yourself, you will never find it without.

For behold, I have been with you from the beginning,

And I am that which is attained at the end of desire.

#524 ~ Starhawk

Earth mother, star mother,
You who are called by
a thousand names,
May all remember
we are cells in your body
and dance together.
You are the grain and the loaf
that sustains us each day,
And as you are patient
with our struggles to learn
So shall we be patient
with ourselves and each other.
We are radiant light
and sacred dark-the balance-
You are the embrace that heartens
And the freedom beyond fear.
Within you we are born,
we grow, live, and die--
You bring us around the circle to rebirth,
Within us you dance
Forever.

“The Crone, the Reaper... She is the Dark Moon, what you don't see coming at you, what you don't get away with, the wind that whips the spark across the fire line. Chance, you could say, or, what's scarier still: the intersection of chance with choices and actions made before. The brush that is tinder dry from decades of drought, the warming of the earth's climate that sends the storms away north, the hole in the ozone layer. Not punishment, not even justice, but consequence.” *Starhawk*

“In the Craft, we do not believe in the Goddess ~~ we connect with her; through the moon, the stars, the ocean, the earth, through trees, animals, through other human beings, through ourselves. She is here. She is within us all” *Starhawk*

The spiritual world is not unlike the natural world: only diversity will save it. *Margot Adler*

Wise Words on Belonging

Home is where I want to be, but I guess I’m already there.
Talking Heads, “[This Must Be the Place](#)”

Somewhere, there are people to whom we can speak with passion without having the words catch in our throats. Somewhere a circle of hands will open to receive us, eyes will light up as we enter, voices will celebrate with us whenever we come into our own power. Community means strength that joins our strength to do the work that needs to be done. Arms to hold us when we falter. A circle of healing. A circle of friends. Someplace where we can be free.”
Starhawk, from Dreaming the Dark

The moment we cease to hold each other, the moment we break faith with one another, the sea engulfs us, and the light goes out. *James Baldwin*

Where you belong is where you choose to constantly choose to show up. *Karina Antonopoulos*

When you recover or discover something that nourishes your soul and brings joy, care enough about yourself to make room for it in your life. *Jean Shinoda Bolen*

I believe every inch of America is sacred, from sea to shining sea. I believe we make it holy by who we welcome and by how we relate to each other. Call it my Muslim eyes on the American project. “We made you different nations and tribes that you may come to know one another,” says the Qur’an. *Eboo Patel*

I’m on my way to a job where I am the only black person in my office. I work with people who either don’t know or don’t care about Alton Sterling or Philando Castile. They are going to ask me “How are you this morning?” and the simple truth is that I can’t be honest. I can’t say that I’m scared and angry and that I want to take a mental health day. I can’t say that I and people like me subconsciously fear for our lives on a daily basis. I can’t say how I am this morning because it will make them uncomfortable and offended. The offensiveness of my pain is why we have to remind America over and over again that Black Lives Matter: because if you lack empathy for our tears it’s likely that you lack respect for our lives. *[Shane Paul Neil](#)*

The me that shows up in mostly white UU spaces isn’t inauthentic but is guarded and not my full self. *Rev. Marisol Caballero*

"Who you affiliate with, not what you affiliate with, is the name of the game," explains one interviewee in this Moishe House report on engaging Gen Z by Danya Shults. Think Instagram influencers instead of denominations and single-issue campaigners over political parties. *[Casper ter Kuile](#)*

The ancient question, “Who am I?” inevitably leads to a deeper one: “Whose am I?” – because there is no identity outside of relationship. You cannot be a person by yourself. To ask “Whose am I” is to extend the question far beyond the little self-absorbed self, and wonder: Who needs you? Who loves you? To whom are you accountable? To whom do you answer? Whose life is altered by your choices? With whose life is your own all bound up, inextricably, in obvious or invisible ways? *Douglas Steer*

Our society teaches us to ask, “What do I want?” Our religion invites us to ask, “Whose am I?” Two very different questions that lead to two very different lives. One question walks us down the path of accumulation and clinging. The other points to the way of community and connection. One says we find fulfillment in “success.” The other says we find ourselves in belonging. So friends, which question will we allow to lead us? Every single sacred tradition says our choice is a matter of life and death. *Rev. Scott Tayler*

In the absence of belonging, there is always great suffering. [*Brené Brown*](#)

There are invisible lines
connecting everything
together,
and I am particularly fond
of the one that connects
me to you.
Gabriel Andreasm, "Heart Lines" ([StoryPeople](#))

Anam cara in the Celtic world was the “soul friend.”... With the anam cara you could share your innermost self... you are understood as you are without mask or pretension. The superficial and functional lies and half-truths of social acquaintance fall away, you can be as you really are. Love allows understanding to dawn, and understanding is precious. Where you are understood, you are at home. Understanding nourishes belonging. [*John O'Donohue*](#)

Thousands of tired, nerve-shaken, over-civilized people are beginning to find out that going to the mountain is going home; that wildness is necessity; that mountain parks and reservations are useful not only as fountains of timber and irrigating rivers, but as fountains of life. *John Muir*

I didn't climb the tree because I [was] angry at the corporations and the government. I climbed the tree because when I fell in love with the redwoods, I fell in love with the world. My feeling of ‘connection’ is what drives me, instead of my anger and feeling of being disconnected. [*Julia ‘Butterfly’ Hill, on her 738-day vigil to protect redwoods from logging*](#)

It's only when you hitch your wagon to something larger than yourself that you realize your true potential. *Barack Obama*

The child does not yet know what belongs and what does not: therefore for her all things belong. The ear of the child is open to all music. Her eyes are open to all arts. Her mind is open to all tongues. Her being is open to all manners. In the child's country, there are no foreigners. *Kenneth L. Patton, This World, my Home*

We belong to every part of our lives and every part of our lives belongs to us. Even the failures. The cruelty. The betrayals. The addictions. The cowardice. Until we embrace those scared and tender parts with the kindness and forgiveness, we so generously give to others we will never be whole. We will never be home. *Rev. Scott Tayler*

The Guest House

Jellaludin Rumi, translated by Coleman Barks

Full poem [here](https://allpoetry.com/poem/8534703-The-Guest-House-by-Mawlana-Jalaluddin-Rumi) <https://allpoetry.com/poem/8534703-The-Guest-House-by-Mawlana-Jalaluddin-Rumi>

“Welcome and entertain them all!
Even if they are a crowd of sorrows...”

Talking to Grief by Denise Levertov

Full poem found here: <https://www.poemhunter.com/poem/talking-to-grief/>

“Ah, Grief, I should not treat you like a homeless dog...
I should trust you.
I should coax you
into the house and give you your own corner...”

Listening for Our Song

Rev. David S Blanchard

On the “song that belongs to us” and the work it takes to belong to oneself...

Full piece at <https://www.uua.org/worship/words/meditation/listening-to-our-song>

“Our songs sing back to us something of our essence, something of our truth, something of our uniqueness. When our songs are sung back to us, it is not about approval, but about recognizing our being and our belonging in the human family...”

But most of all, above everything else, who in the Bible besides Jesus knew—knew—that we’re carrying the kingdom of heaven around with us, inside, where we’re all too goddam stupid and sentimental and unimaginative to look? *J.D. Salinger, Franny and Zooey.*

The only true belonging is the courage to stand alone and belong to ourselves. [Azriel ReShel](#)

As it turns out, men and women who have the deepest sense of true belonging are people who also have the courage to stand alone when called to do that. They are willing to maintain their integrity and risk disconnection in order to stand up for what they believe in... Guess what emerged as the greatest barrier to belonging? Fitting in. Because when we fit in, we assess a situation and acclimate. When we belong, we bring ourselves to it and say this is who I am.

[Brené Brown](#)

Some of us aren't meant to belong. Some of us have to turn the world upside down and shake the hell out of it until we make our own place in it. *Elizabeth Lowell, Remember Summer*

This is where we all belong
Many many miles from home
Don't look back, you know better than that
Mapai, [A Million Ways To Live](#)

You only are free when you realize you belong no place — you belong every place. *[Maya Angelou](#)*

No one is as capable of gratitude
as one who has emerged from the kingdom of night.
We know that every moment is a moment of grace,
every hour an offering;
not to share them would mean to betray them.
Our lives no longer belong to us alone;
they belong to all those who need us desperately.
Elie Wiesel, Safe Passage

May the frames of your belonging be large enough for the dreams of your soul. *[John O'Donohue](#)*

Online - Videos

What Does Home Mean to You? - All ages answer

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rWt76WqRCVs>
<https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=10155754153816117>

Earthrise

<https://emergencemagazine.org/story/earthrise-film/>

Award winning short video telling the story of the Apollo 8 astronauts and the first image captured of Earth from space in 1968. About “escaping” earth to realize how deeply we belong to it, and each other...

Online - Podcasts

Opening the Question of Race to the Question of Belonging - On Being Podcast

John A. Powell

<https://onbeing.org/programs/john-a-powell-opening-to-the-question-of-belonging-may2018/>

On anti-racism as “the project of belonging” and a challenge to enlightenment individualism.

TED Talk - Dare to refuse the origin myths that claim who you are

Chetan Bhatt

https://www.ted.com/talks/chetan_bhatt_dare_to_refuse_the_origin_myths_that_claim_who_you_are

“We all have origin stories and identity myths, our tribal narratives that give us a sense of security and belonging. But sometimes our small-group identities can keep us from connecting with humanity as a whole -- and even keep us from seeing others as human. It's time to change the question from "Where are you from?" to "Where are you going?"”

Articles

The Healing is Not Done

Rev. Rebekah Savage

On our failing and struggle to create a true community of belonging...

Full piece at <https://www.uua.org/worship/words/homily/promise-and-practice-healing-not-done-reflection>

“I play this moment over and over again in my head: the day I heard of the Thomas Jefferson Ball, hosted by Unitarian Universalists in 1993. As a person of color, raised in a UU congregation, I felt a shiver down my spine as I learned something new and unsettling about the faith that I call home...”

Finding Our Way to True Belonging

Brené Brown

<https://ideas.ted.com/finding-our-way-to-true-belonging/>

Why Unitarians and Universalists Belong Together

Marilyn Sewell

https://www.huffpost.com/entry/unitarians-and-universalists_b_873972?fbclid=IwAR2xAeZbT4A1joulTos_aedb_l94KjKkrSfqBPc5ddARbz29f-7sJrsJyhA

Books

Eternal Echoes: Exploring Our Yearning to Belong

John O'Donohue

Excerpt: “There is a lovely balance at the heart of our nature: each of us is utterly unique and yet we live in the most intimate kinship with everyone and everything else. Its more profound intention is the awakening of the Great Belonging which embraces everything. Our hunger to belong is the desire to awaken this hidden affinity. Then we know that we are not outsiders cut off from everything, but rather participants at the heart of creation...”

Book - Braving the Wilderness: The Quest for True Belonging and the Courage to Stand Alone."

Brené Brown

Review: <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/author-brene-brown-social-scientist-new-book-braving-the-wilderness/>

Beloved

Toni Morrison

On the struggle to break free from belonging to our trauma and secrets, and how they become entities we live with, our tragic community, if we don't.

You're in the Wrong Bathroom! And 20 Other Myths and Misconceptions About Transgender and Gender Nonconforming People

Laura Erickson-Schroth, Laura A. Jacobs

<http://www.beacon.org/Youre-in-the-Wrong-Bathroom-P1261.aspx>

Confronting our myths to become a community of true belonging.

Movies

[You Can Count on Me](#)

On the redeeming discovery that we belong to each other, no matter what.

[Short Term 12](#)

The journey of a young woman offering belonging to others but struggling to find it for herself.

[Antonia's Line](#)

A celebration of radical belonging, courage and expanding what family means.

[Minding the Gap](#)

A celebration of the belonging of friendship and a study of what happens when a circle of young men struggle to move from childhood to adulthood but don't quite belong to either.

[Chocolat](#)

"We must measure our goodness, not by what we don't do, what we deny ourselves, what we resist, or who we exclude. Instead, we should measure ourselves by what we embrace, what we create, and who we include.

Future Themes

Theme packets will be posted to our website, surreyunitarians.ca, on the Thursday prior to the theme starting. If you'd like to join a small group, please contact Rev. Samaya. Small groups typically meet:

- the third Monday evening of each month (except in November when the group will meet on the last Monday evening of the month); and
- the fourth Wednesday afternoon of each month.

Themes for the 2020-2021 year have been set! Look forward to the following:

September and October – What does it mean to be a people of belonging?

November and December – What does it mean to be a people of awe?

January and February– What does it mean to be a people of resilience?

March and April– What does it mean to be a people of wisdom?

May and June– What does it mean to be a people of play?



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