



Beacon Unitarian Church

JANUARY's theme is

# JOURNEYS

**"Not all those who wander are lost."**

- J.R.R. Tolkien, *The Fellowship of the Ring*

**"We travel, some of us forever, to seek other states, other lives, other souls."**

- Anaïs Nin, *The Diary of Anaïs Nin, Vol. 7: 1966-1974*

**"Though the road's been rocky it sure feels good to me."**

- Bob Marley



The spiritual journey and the life journey is simply engaging the whole experience with eyes, mind and heart open. The journey is life lived from a desire to know and understand the human experience and to grow from that experience. Unitarians identify with being questioning curious people, so the life journey becomes one in which we ask questions and live into the answers. Sometimes we don't even know the question, nor do we know the answer. And this is not a bad thing as it means to me that we are truly open to the unknown. In my experience of being a teacher and my personal experience of being a student of life, true learning comes when one allows oneself to step beyond the known. It is into that place of openness and curiosity that new ideas, new experience and new relationships enter. When we travel we are naturally open and welcoming of the new and the unknown. Yet we don't need to travel to distant lands to experience the unknown: it is all around us every day. *Rev. Debra Thorne*

## *Suggestions for Spiritual Deepening*

- Write, draw or speak the story of your spiritual journey. Here are some questions to consider: What were/are the insights gained? What were/are the challenges? What have/are you wrestling with? What have/are you yearning for?
- Plan a day or an hour devoted to noticing where you walk, who you meet, what you see and hear. Then write about the experience framed by this question: What is the Universe showing me?'
- Write or think about a time when one or more of the Unitarian Principles influenced your actions, or when you realized that something you had said or done exhibited one or more of the Principles in action.



## *Questions to Live Into:*

- What does the Universe want me to notice today?
- What is the hole in the road that I keep falling into? Is there anyone in the hole with me? How do I get out?
- Where is the sacred/god in my life today?
- What calls to me?
- Today, can I welcome all my experiences, as part of my spiritual journey?

### *Books for Adults about Journeys*

*Autobiography of a Yogi* by Paramahansa Yogananda  
*The Places that Scare You: A Guide to Fearlessness in Difficult Times* by Pema Chodron  
*The Priest and the Medium* by Suzanne R. Giesemann  
*The Alchemist* by Paulo Coelho  
*The Orenda* by Joseph Boyden  
*Eat, Pray, Love* by Elizabeth Gilbert  
*The Lord of the Rings* and *The Hobbit* by J.R.R. Tolkien  
*Around the World in 80 Days* by Jules Verne



### *Books for Children about Journeys*

*Where The Mountain Meets the Moon* by Grace Lin  
*Where the Wild Things Are* by Maurice Sendak  
*Salmon Creek* (the journey is for the salmon!)  
*The Chronicles of Narnia* by C.S. Lewis  
*James and the Giant Peach* by Roald Dahl  
*The Boundless* by Kenneth Oppel  
*Bud, Not Buddy* by Christopher Paul Curtis  
*The Lightning Thief* by Rick Riordan

### *Films about Journeys*

*Life of Pi*  
*Up*  
*Into the Woods*  
*Wild*  
*The Book of Negroes* (Six part mini-series, Jan 7, CBC)  
*The Motorcycle Diaries*  
*Thelma and Louise*  
*The Straight Story*

Many Thanks to Sue, Amber, Nancy, Crystal, Katie, Karston, Bart, Glenn, Peter, Anne, Jill, Nicoline, Joyce, and Bette for the suggestions. Check out Debra Thorne's FB page for more ideas.



"If you are willing to give up everything you know to go on an adventure, and then treat every person you meet as a clue to your future, then the truth will be yours."

Elizabeth Gilbert, 'Eat, Pray, Love'

### *When Things Fall Apart* by Pema Chodron

Life is a good teacher and a good friend. Things are always in transition if we could only realize it. Nothing ever sums itself up in the way that we would like to dream about. The off-center, in between state is an ideal situation, a situation in which we don't get caught, and in which we can open our hearts and minds beyond limit. The spiritual journey involves going beyond hope and fear, stepping into unknown territory, continually moving forward. The most important aspect of being on the spiritual path may be to just keep moving. Usually, when we reach our limit, we feel exactly like Rinpoche's attendants and freeze in terror. Our bodies freeze and so do our minds. Rather than indulge or reject our experience, we can somehow let the energy of the emotion, the quality of what we're feeling pierce us to the heart. This is a noble way to live. It's the path of compassion - the path of cultivating human bravery and kindheartedness.



The road we travel from birth to death is sometimes straight, sometimes meandering; sometimes it has unexpected pits and bumps, and sometimes the experience is so rare and beautiful it takes your breath away. - Rev. Debra Thorne

Check out the Beacon webpage at: [beaconunitarian.org](http://beaconunitarian.org)