



# Wonder

Theme for December is



What does it mean to live a life of wonder? It seemed easier when we were children and discovering the world for the first time. Our eyes were connected to our hearts and our mind had not taken over entirely.

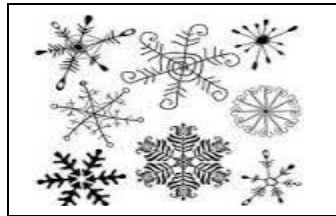
When did you stop seeing the world through eyes of wonder? Was it when tragedy and hardship came into your life? When beauty seemed only for others?

I know that a sense of wonder can be reclaimed and renewed. The month of December is one of those periods in our seasonal calendar when we are reminded that even in the darkest of times there is hope and where there is hope there is a place for wonder and the renewal of the spirit.

The first Unitarian Source reminds us of the richness of 'direct experience of that transcending mystery and wonder, affirmed in all cultures, which moves us to a renewal of the spirit and an openness to the forces which create and uphold life.'

May your spirit be renewed through a rediscovery of wonder in your being, in the human family and in the world that is our home.

*Warmly, Rev. Debra Thorne*



## Inspirational Quotes:

Nature is full of genius, full of divinity;  
that not a snowflake escapes its fashioning hand.  
--Henry David Thoreau

If I had influence with the good fairy who is supposed to preside over the christening of all children I should ask that her gift to each child in the world be a sense of wonder so indestructible that it would last throughout life, as an unailing antidote against the boredom and disenchantments of later years, the sterile preoccupation with things artificial, the alienation from the sources of our strength." - Rachel Carson, *The Sense of Wonder*

When you don't cover up the world with words and labels, a sense of the miraculous returns to your life that was lost a long time ago when humanity, instead of using thought, became possessed by thought." - Eckhart Tolle, *A New Earth: Awakening to Your Life's Purpose*



## Questions to live into this month:

Which of the following questions 'hook' you? Bring your musings to next Soul Matters Group.

- \* What does it mean to you to live a life of wonder?
- \* When you were young was your sense of wonder encouraged or squashed?
- \* What have you taught your children about wonder? (It's never too late!)
- \* What's your beef with wonder? When is wonder something you can't get behind?
- \* What is the biggest wonder in your life?
- \* What is the most common wonder in your life?



## Spiritual Practices for the individual and the family:

- ☆ Take a 'wonder walk'. This is a set time to be in the world and intentionally look for the wonder of life, growth, and change.
- ☆ Share a moment that awoke 'wonder' in you. The wonder moment could be recent or from another time in your life.

"The secret of beginning a life of deep awareness and sensitivity lies in our willingness to pay attention. Our growth as conscious, awake human beings is marked not so much by grand gestures and visible renunciations as by extending loving attention to the minutest particulars of our lives. Every relationship, every thought, every gesture is blessed with meaning through the wholehearted attention we bring to it. In the complexities of our minds and lives we easily forget the power of attention, yet without attention we live only on the surface of existence. It is just simple attention that allows us truly to listen to the song of a bird, to see deeply the glory of an autumn leaf, to touch the heart of another and be touched. We need to be fully present in order to love a single thing wholeheartedly. We need to be fully awake in this moment if we are to receive and respond to the learning inherent in it." - Christina Feldman and Jack Kornfield, *Stories of the Spirit, Stories of the Heart*



"The most beautiful thing we can experience is the mysterious. It is the source of all true art and all science. He to whom this emotion is a stranger, who can no longer pause to wonder and stand rapt in awe, is as good as dead: his eyes are closed."

— Albert Einstein

### VIDEOS ON WONDER

- ▣ A stunning "murmuration" of starlings, spotted by two women in a canoe on the River Shannon (2 minutes): <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iRNqhi2ka9k>
- ▣ Neil deGrasse Tyson on Why We Shouldn't Feel Small in the Universe (1 minute): <http://billmoyers.com/2014/01/10/neil-degrasse-tyson-on-why-we-shouldnt-feel-small-in-the-universe/>
- ▣ "The biological advantage of being awestruck" by a very enthusiastic Jason Silva (5 minutes): <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yF15TekHVVO>
- ▣ Jill Bolte-Taylor's stroke of insight (A TED Talk): An astonishing story. (19 minutes): [http://www.ted.com/talks/jill\\_bolte\\_taylor\\_s\\_powerful\\_stroke\\_of\\_insight](http://www.ted.com/talks/jill_bolte_taylor_s_powerful_stroke_of_insight)
- ▣ Habit of Mind: Responding with Wonder and Awe (20 minutes): <http://vimeo.com/22253792>

### Book Suggestions for Adults

Robertson Davies, *The Deptford Trilogy*: including *World of Wonders*  
Lama Surya Das, *Awakening to the Sacred*,  
Hildegard of Bingen, *Illuminations of Hildegard of Bingen*,  
Paul Woodruff, *Reverence: Renewing a Forgotten Virtue*  
Rachel Naomi Remen, *My Grandfather's Blessings: Stories of Strength, Refuge, and Belonging*,

### Books and Films for Children

From Amber: '*On the Night You Were Born*' by Nancy Tillman and '*Someday*' by Alison McGhee  
From Laura and Charlotte: '*The Hobbit*' by J. R. R. Tolkien, '*A Wrinkle in Time*' by Madeleine L'Engle, and '*The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*' by C. S. Lewis  
From Nancy: '*The Polar Express*', '*Owl Moon*' by Jane Yolen, and '*The Wizard of Oz*'