

**Theme for October - Vision:**  
***The Practice of Waking up to the Holy***

*Questions for discussion and discernment on your own, around the table, or with each other...*

Our Unitarian Universalist tradition teaches us that the ‘holy,’ or the sacred, is in the world and not apart from the world. But how do we notice the holiness we seek? What vision is required of us to see the sacred within common ‘stuff’ of life? And how does our world view impact our ability to fulfill our faith’s promise to ‘dwell together in peace, seek truth in love, and to help one another’?”

Think of a time when you ‘woke up’ and realized a personal blind spot? What woke you up?

What is your vision for what is possible in the world? How do you nurture that vision? When you or others disappoint you how do you begin again to connect with your vision?

What makes something or someone ‘holy’? What exercise or pastime helps you to feel human, connected, in touch with what is holy or sacred to you?

Do you allow yourself to get lost in something? If so, while doing this, do you feel a spark of the divine? As you go through your day, do you give what you are doing your full devotion, taking time to attend to the sights, smells, and sounds around you?

When do you feel you are removed from what is most sacred, holy to you? What is limiting your ability to connect with your sacred space? Is it simply perspective?

What helps you live with your longing for more?

How do you direct your focus, on the present, the past or the future? Do you wish you could be more focused on the present? If so, what in the past or the future consumes you? What in the present do you wish you could embrace and experience more fully?

## **Readings and Information for Reflection:**

The English word "holy" dates back to the 11th century old English word "halig" derived from "hal" meaning whole and used to mean "uninjured, sound, health, entire, complete". The Scottish hale (health, happiness, and wholeness) is the most complete modern form of this Old English root. Our modern word "health" is also derived from the Old English "hal".

### **To Be Great, Be Entire-- Fernando Pessoa**

To be great, be entire:  
Of what is yours nothing  
exaggerate or exclude  
Be whole in each thing. Put all that you are  
Into the least you do  
Like that on each place the whole moon  
Shines for she lives aloft.

### **Albert Einstein, excerpt from the book, *Twelve Steps to a Compassionate Life* by Karen Armstrong**

"To know that what is impenetrable to us really exists, manifesting itself to us as the highest wisdom and the most radiant beauty, which our dull faculties can comprehend only in their most primitive forms--this knowledge, this feeling is at the center of all true religiousness. In this sense, and in this sense only, I belong to the ranks of the devoutly religious men."

### **God Climbed a Mountain**

**Cynthia Rylant**

(From *God Went to Beauty School*)

God Climbed a Mountain  
And not just any mountain.  
Mount Everest.  
And you know why?  
BECAUSE IT WAS THERE.  
He was tired of hearing about it—  
He decided just to  
go do it.  
And he did.  
It was terrible.  
It was awful.  
He'd never been so cold.  
He'd never been so tired.  
He hated snow.  
And it was like that

all the way  
to the top.  
Then at the top  
He turned around  
and His heart just broke.  
Suddenly the whole world  
was plain as day,  
and still.  
It was so still.  
"Should've put everybody  
on top of Mount Everest,"  
God thought.  
Nobody'd want to hit the guy next to him  
on top of Mount Everest.  
"Next time," thought God.  
Next time.

**The Good News** — Thich Nhat Hanh

They don't publish  
the good news.  
The good news is published  
by us.  
We have a special edition every moment,  
and we need you to read it.  
The good news is that you are alive,  
and the linden tree is still there,  
standing firm in the harsh Winter.  
The good news is that you have wonderful eyes  
to touch the blue sky.  
The good news is that your child is there before you,  
and your arms are available:  
hugging is possible.  
They only print what is wrong.  
Look at each of our special editions.  
We always offer the things that are not wrong.  
We want you to benefit from them  
and help protect them.  
The dandelion is there by the sidewalk,  
smiling its wondrous smile,  
singing the song of eternity.  
Listen! You have ears that can hear it.  
Bow your head.  
Listen to it.  
Leave behind the world of sorrow  
and preoccupation  
and get free.

The latest good news  
is that you can do it.

**To Live with The Spirit- Jessica Powers**

To live with the Spirit of God is to be a listener.  
It is to keep the vigil of mystery,  
earthless and still.  
One leans to catch the stirring of the Spirit,  
strange as the wind's will.  
The soul that walks where the wind of the Spirit blows  
turns like a wandering weather-vane toward love.  
It may lament like Job or Jeremiah,  
echo the wounded hart, the mateless dove.  
It may rejoice in spaciousness of meadow  
that emulates the freedom of the sky.  
Always it walks in waylessness, unknowing;  
it has cast down forever from its hand  
the compass of the whither and the why.  
To live with the Spirit of God is to be a lover.  
It is becoming love, and like to Him  
toward Whom we strain with metaphors of creatures:  
fire-sweep and water-rush and the wind's whim.  
The soul is all activity, all silence;  
and though it surges Godward to its goal,  
it holds, as moving earth holds sleeping noonday,  
the peace that is the listening of the soul.

**Excerpt from Song of Myself--Walt Whitman**

Swiftly arose and spread around me the peace and knowledge that pass all the argument  
of the earth,  
And I know that the hand of God is the promise of my own,  
And I know that the spirit of God is the brother of my own,  
And that all the men ever born are also my brothers, and the women my sisters and  
lovers,  
And that a kelson of the creation is love,  
And limitless are leaves stiff or drooping in the fields,  
And brown ants in the little wells beneath them,  
And mossy scabs of the worm fence, heap'd stones, elder, mullein and poke-weed.

**NIGHT LETTER TO THE READER - Billy Collins**

I get up from the tangled bed and go outside,  
a bird leaving its nest,  
a snail taking a holiday from its shell,

but only to stand on the lawn,  
an ordinary insomniac  
amid the growth systems of gardens and woods.

If I were younger, I might be thinking  
about something I heard at a party,  
about an unusual car,

or the press of Saturday night,  
but as it is, I am simply conscious,  
an animal in pajamas,

sensing only the pale humidity  
of the night and the slight zephyrs  
that stir the tops of the trees.

The dog has followed me out  
and stands a little ahead,  
her nose lifted as if she were inhaling

the tall white flowers,  
visible tonight in the darkened garden,  
and there was something else I wanted to tell you,

something about the warm orange light  
in the windows of the house,  
but now I am wondering if you are even listening

and why I bother to tell you these things  
that will never make a difference,  
flecks of ash, tiny chips of ice.

But this is all I want to do -  
tell you that up in the woods  
a few night birds are calling,

the grass was cold and wet on my bare feet,  
and that at one point, the moon,  
looking like the top of Shakespeare's

famous forehead,  
appeared, quite unexpectedly,  
illuminating a band of moving clouds.

