



Chalice Circle Packet

November 2021

Pilgrimage

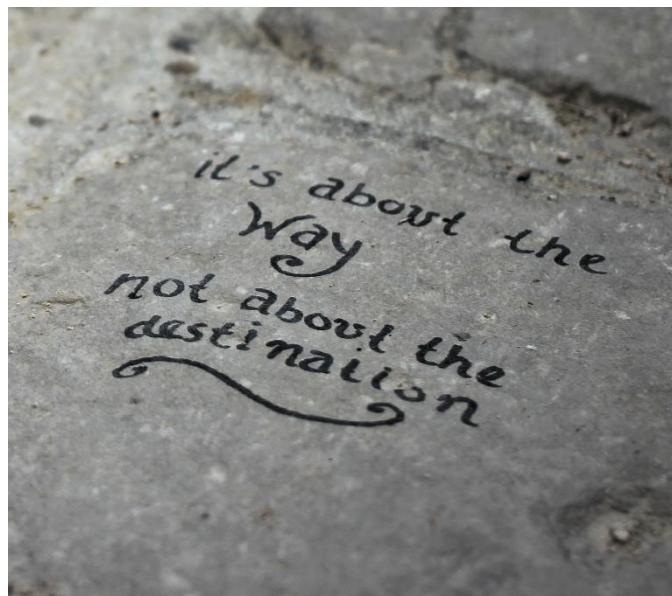


Photo by [Damien Dufour](#) on [Unsplash](#)

CONTENTS

Reflection

Spiritual Practices

Questions to Ponder

Resources

Unity Church-Unitarian, St. Paul, Minnesota

Unityunitarian.org

Pilgrimage

I have worn glasses almost as long as I can remember. Still, to my dismay, some days my perception grows dull, and no simple lens will correct it because it is obscured by a cataract of the inner “eye.” I experience a clouding of my heart’s own awareness, a brume shrouding the world’s “under glimmer,” as the poet Basho once put it, leaving me in a place that is colorless and blurred – or sometimes, just so customary that I fail to notice it.

A pilgrimage is a call to unveil and reawaken our inner vision or awareness. Whether it’s a journey to a historical or holy site, like the Hajj that, before the pandemic, brought several million Muslims to Mecca annually; or a tracing of an ancient path walked by many before us, like the Camino de Santiago; or a personal quest on an uncharted course; any of the many forms of pilgrimage invite us to observe the world anew. “Peel your eyes,” my mother used to say, as if the rind of routine looking could be pulled back like potato skins so we would notice something important. This is what we do on pilgrimage: we let the scales of familiarity fall away to restore our perception, and to stir our wonder or impel our action.

A pilgrim leaves behind the repose – and the certainty – of home not only to discover new places in the world as any tourist might, but also to explore the foreign terrain carried within. Traveling an external route on the earth, the pilgrim takes an equivalent path in the soul, outer and inner journeys mirroring and illuminating each other and inviting a larger wholeness. “I only went out for a walk,” said naturalist John Muir describing the pilgrimage of a single day’s wilderness hike, “and . . . going out, I found was really going in.”

You don’t have to venture far to take a pilgrimage; but it does require more than the average amble around the block. A pilgrim travels light, leaves comfort behind, climbs the steep path, encounters the stranger, becomes the stranger, greets the unknown, and surrenders itineraries and sometimes even maps. Pilgrims find their way by opening their senses wide and reading the signs all around them; and as they do, their inner awareness sharpens too and they themselves are changed.

Often, it is not just the place visited but the community around us that awakens us on a pilgrimage – the community of our fellow travelers, of others we encounter in the moment and of those who have made the pilgrimage before us or will make it after us. When Malcolm X performed the Hajj in 1964, he was astonished by the equality and kinship of the pilgrims making the Hajj together, sharing meals and drinks, words and silence, movement and rest with royalty and commoners alike, and with people of different races and from many parts of the world. Never before had he experienced such mutual regard and relationship across racial difference and such a profound oneness with them, and it changed him. “I could look into their blue eyes,” he wrote in a letter describing his experience, “and see that they regarded me as

the same (Brothers).” He said, it “forced me to ‘re-arrange’ much of [my] thoughts pattern and to toss aside some of my previous conclusions.”

In pilgrimages Unity Church has offered – to Transylvania, Boston, Bolivia, India, Selma and, near to home, B’dote where the Mississippi and Minnesota Rivers meet – it is often the group making the pilgrimage together that both sparks and supports the transformative power of the journey. Our conversations with one another, before, during and after a pilgrimage, help each of us to let the challenges and discoveries of our encounters open new understandings within us, and sometimes new identities as well.

Perhaps we are all pilgrims now on a challenging trail that winds through a pandemic and longterm racial and economic injustices, a pilgrimage made by many before us. The question is how will we travel it now? Are we willing to leave comfort behind, to climb the steep path, to encounter the stranger and become the stranger, to greet the unknown as an invitation to our own transformation and into a world also changed?

As a child, I remember receiving my first pair of eyeglasses and walking to grade school the next day agape with wonder. Astonished by the sharp clarity of the street signs and the faces of my classmates in the distance, I wandered slowly down the sidewalk taking in the great abundance of detail and dimension. Across the street from the school, I paused at the curb agog. I stared in awe at the intricate grid of mortar outlining each brick in a building that had grown familiar to me as only a single blurry block that I approached and entered every morning.

On that morning, my vision was sharpened, and like so many pilgrims whose perception has been cleared, I walked into a world made fresh with crisp and shining patterns emerging everywhere around me. And the world and I, we would never be the same again.

By Karen Hering on behalf of this month's theme team: Andrea La Sonde Anastos, Ahmed Anzaldua, Drew Danielson, Tom Duke, Ray Hommeyer, KP Hong, Kathy Hurt, and Laura Park (and adapted from an earlier CommUNITY reflection by Karen Hering).

Spiritual Practices

Option A

Questing

Frederic and Mary Ann Brussat note in their book, *Questing*, “Questers venture into the unknown, confront difficulties and dangers, and return home with new understandings of themselves and of the world. A pilgrimage, part trip and part ritual, is prescribed in all the religious traditions for those seeking healing and renewal. The impetus for the journey could be an urge to explore one's spiritual roots, a desire for absolution, a wish to pay homage, or a question that needs answering.”

“To practice questing, you have to leave home, both literally and figuratively. Travel to a sacred place where something has happened before and see what happens to you now. Don't stop, even if you stumble, until you have found a gift or an insight to bring back with you. If you can't go far, make an inner journey. Ask questions. Look for replies in areas where you have never thought to go before.”¹

Art can be a carrier of meaning and sacred encounter for many of us. To take a quest in the Twin Cities, consider a pilgrimage to visit some of the 300+ works of public art listed on a website map (<https://www.minneapolismn.gov/things-to-do/public-art/public-art-tour/>). Or make your own pilgrimage to a different installation of art that might hold meaning for you. If using the website, follow its directions to view one or more of six tours mapped out with routes and times for touring on foot, by bike or by car. Accompanying information about the artists is available too.

Set aside time for one long tour or a few short outings, but before you take your pilgrimage, name a question to carry with you as you set out. You might not find an answer, but challenge yourself to discover an insight, as noted in the quote above. After your art pilgrimage, take some time to reflect on the questions below and come to your circle prepared to share your experience or insights.

- What caused you to choose this pilgrimage exercise?
- Did you name an intention or question when you began your journey or was it more spontaneous or serendipitous? Did your intention or question influence your experience?
- Do you consider the sites you visited to be holy? Why or why not?
- What pieces stood out to you and why?

¹ From ***Questing*** by Frederic and Mary Ann Brussat

<https://www.spiritualityandpractice.com/practices/alphabet/view/27/questing>

- Where were you surprised in ways that opened up new understanding of yourself or others or the world you share? What surprised you in a way that invited your spiritual growth?
- What was difficult physically, emotionally or intellectually about this pilgrimage and how might you grow from leaning into the discomfort of the pilgrimage's challenges?
- What insights did you gain related to the question you named?

Before your circle meets, review your notes from day to day and your experience. Come to your group ready to share how your observations changed from day to day, what you discovered, and how you turned your attention toward the holy.

Option B ***Church as a pilgrimage experience***

When the pandemic began and the church building closed to congregational gatherings, we lost access to a place that offers sacred meaning and connection to many of us. Now, as the building reopens, some of us are returning to worship, some are stopping by for meetings with fellow members or with staff and some are slipping in mid-week to visit favorite rooms or places in the church while it is empty.

This practice asks you to consider what places at Unity Church are sites of sacred meaning or connection for you, and how might you make a pilgrimage to the church now? It could be returning for worship on Sunday morning. Or, if you are not yet ready to be in the sanctuary with others, it might be coming to the building on a weekday and sitting in the empty sanctuary – in silence or reading from the hymnal or humming or singing a favorite song. Or perhaps the kitchen or the parish hall is what calls to you; or the chapel, the center room, the library, the front desk; or the green space to the east of the building or the Portland Avenue entrance. Or all of the above.

Plan your own pilgrimage to Unity Church. Do what you can to make it a truly sacred visit – connecting to the site of our community of faith and to that which you name as holy. Include a little ritual and time for reflection. Consider how your absence from the building has changed your experience of it – or not. What do you understand about the place where we worship, gather, eat, sing, find and make meaning, that you might not have realized before the pandemic? If you are new to the community, what are you discovering about the congregation as you explore the building that you did not understand when participating online? What surprises or questions are surfacing for you now?

Come to the circle prepared to describe your pilgrimage and to share your reflections.

Option C

Justice Pilgrimage

Are there local sites you might visit to encounter again or for the first time the places of historical significance in our own community? A few you might consider are:

- B'dote and other Dakota sites: <http://bdotememorymap.org/memory-map/>
- George Floyd Memorial Square: <https://www.minneapolis.org/support-black-lives/38th-and-chicago/>
- Say Their Names Cemetery: <https://www.saytheirnamescemetery.com/>
- Rondo Plaza: <https://www.monitorsaintpaul.com/stories/plaza-memorializes-destruction-of-rondo-community-60-years-ago,1067>

Choose one of the above or another site you're interested in discovering for its place in our Cities' justice history. Take some time before you go to learn its stories. Consider the questions that caused you to choose this site to visit. Then visit the site, allowing plenty of time to take it in – using as many of your senses as you can, pausing frequently in silence, noticing how you are responding to it emotionally, physically, intellectually and spiritually. While you're there if it's appropriate, or right after, reflect on your experience. Consider some of the following questions and come to your circle prepared to share your experience or insights.

- What site did you choose to visit and why?
- What emotions stirred up in you as you considered the stories of that place and the people who were part of those stories?
- Did you know the stories before? Did your understanding of the stories change because of your pilgrimage?
- Where did you place yourself in those stories? How did that affect your pilgrimage experience?
- What might the grief of this story ask of you?
- Where were you surprised in ways that opened up new understanding of yourself or others or the world you share? What surprised you in a way that invited your spiritual growth?
- Did this experience change you? If so, how?
- What questions are you still pondering?
- What have you learned on your journey?

Questions to Ponder

Read through the questions below and notice which one(s) resonate with you. One or more of the questions might seem particularly compelling – or some might stir resistance in you. Either of these reactions might make the question fruitful to consider. Choose just one and take time to consider it, over several days if possible. Write it down on a piece of paper you carry in your pocket. Or take a picture of that paper with your phone. Or record it in your journal—and spend some time, each day if you can, reflecting on it in writing or otherwise, noticing where it leads you and what you learn from it and your response to it.

1. How is the experience of pilgrimage different from vacation or tourism? Why?
2. Many pilgrimage practices involve removing oneself from the everyday experience and urgencies of ordinary life. Why do you think that's important?
3. Does pilgrimage require travel? Why or why not?
4. Is sacrifice necessary to make something a pilgrimage? Why do you think sacrifice or discomfort is a part of so many pilgrimage traditions?
5. On the Boston pilgrimage/pilgrimage to Walden Pond, just before we walked around the pond Rob asked us to consider, "If you were to live a more deliberate life, what would that look like?" What does that question mean to you today? Would it be any different to ask it at Walden Pond?
6. If you had all the resources and time, all barriers removed, where would you go on pilgrimage and why?
7. What do you make of the idea that a pilgrimage helps us see with the eyes of the heart? Has there been a time when a pilgrimage has helped you do that?
8. Is there somewhere you need to go, or something you need to do?
9. Are you resistant to the change that a pilgrimage may spark? Where does that resistance come from?
10. What might you learn from leaning into the physical, emotional or intellectual challenges of pilgrimage? What would be at stake if you did?
11. Where do you go/have you gone to find your meaning? Do you have to travel to search for your own truth?
12. What would it mean to make going to church every Sunday your pilgrimage?
13. **What is your question?** Your question may not be listed above. As always, if the above questions don't name what life is asking from you now, spend the month listening to your heart to hear what your question is.

Resources

Recommended Resources

for Personal Exploration & Reflection

The following resources are not required reading. They will not be analyzed in our circles. 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 develop a spiritual practice of curiosity.

Word Definitions & Roots

Pilgrimage

A journey or search of moral or spiritual significance. It can be made to a sacred place as an act of religious devotion or to pay homage or a quest for purpose. It can also be the intentional search for the holy land of one's soul.

noun

- 1 a journey of a pilgrim, especially one to a shrine or a sacred place
- 2 the course of life on earth

Word Origin:

Middle English: from Provençal *peregrin*, from Latin *peregrinus* 'foreign'

Wise Words

"What matters most on your journey is how deeply you see, how attentively you hear, how richly the encounters are felt in your heart and soul."

~Phil Cousineau, *The Art of Pilgrimage: The Seeker's Guide to Making Travel Sacred*

"This determined human pattern of pilgrimage points, as we have come to believe, to the basic human need to make a

connection with something outside themselves, some holiness or value which helps ground the pilgrim in a new being, in a new lease on life, in something which gives meaning and direction and which is frequently experienced as healing."

~Jean Dalby and Wallace Clift, *The Archetype of Pilgrimage: Outer Action with Inner Meaning*

"We are all, from the moment we are born until the moment that we die, engaged in this search for meaning. Pilgrimage to a special place, where the divine pierces through the mundane, holds out the promise of help and comfort in this world, and of a living encounter with deity."

~Jennifer Westwood, *On Pilgrimage*

"The pure lotus growing in muddy water is a metaphor for enlightenment. The lotus arises from all its impediments. It actually needs the impurity of the water for its nourishment. In the same way, in our own personal development, we can't just work with what we like about ourselves. We have to work with our muddy water."

~Bernard Glassman and Rick Fields, *Instructions to the Cook: A Zen Master's Lessons in Living a Life That Matters*

"The rhythm of walking generates a kind of rhythm of thinking, and the passage through a landscape echoes or stimulates

the passage through a series of thoughts. This creates an odd consonance between internal and external passage, one that suggests that the mind is also a landscape of sorts and that walking is one way to traverse it. A new thought often seems like a feature of the landscape that was there all along, as though thinking were traveling rather than making. And so one aspect of the history of walking is the history of thinking made concrete—for the motions of the mind cannot be traced, but those of the feet can.

Walking can also be imagined as a visual activity, every walk a tour leisurely enough both to see and to think over the sights, to assimilate the new into the known. Perhaps this is where walking's peculiar utility for thinkers comes from. The surprises, liberations, and clarifications of travel can sometimes be garnered by going around the block as well as going around the world, and walking travels both near and far.”

~Rebecca Solnit

“What we seek we do not find—that would be too trim and tidy for so reckless and opulent a thing as life. It is something else we find.”

~Susan Glaspell

“At its heart, the journey of each life is a pilgrimage, through unforeseen sacred places that enlarge and enrich the soul.”

~John O'Donahue

“Just as there is no free lunch, there is no free transformation. I favor incremental change. My model for this is Dr. Suzuki, who developed a method for teaching children to play classical music. He discovered that if steps are small enough anyone could move forward into mastery. People rarely try to

take giant steps, and if they do they often fall down. The trick is finding the step size that propels people forward but allows them to succeed with each move.”

~Mary Pipher, *Letters to A Young Therapist*

“In each of us dwells a pilgrim. It is the part of us that longs to have direct contact with the sacred.”

~Phil Cousineau

Poetry

Passengers

by Billy Collins

At the gate, I sit in a row of blue seats
with the possible company of my death,
this sprawling miscellany of people -
carry-on bags and paperbacks -

that could be gathered in a flash
into a band of pilgrims on the last open
road.

Not that I think
if our plane crumpled into a mountain

we would all ascend together,
holding hands like a ring of sky divers,
into a sudden gasp of brightness,
or that there would be some common spot

for us to reunite to jubilize the moment,
some spaceless, pillarless Greece
where we could, at the count of three,
toss our ashes into the sunny air.

It's just that the way that man has his
briefcase
so carefully arranged,
the way that girl is cooling her tea,
and the flow of the comb that woman

passes through her daughter's hair...
and when you consider the altitude,
the secret parts of the engines,
and all the hard water and the deep
canyons below...

well, I just think it would be good if one of us
maybe stood up and said a few words,
or, so as not to involve the police,
at least quietly wrote something down."

<https://writersalmanac.publicradio.org/index.php%3Fdate=2004%252F12%252F07.html>

Wasteful Gesture Only Not

by Tony Hoagland (excerpt, about a pilgrimage to a gravesite)

Ruth visits her mother's grave in the California hills.
She knows her mother isn't there but the rectangle of grass marks off the place where the memories are kept,

like a library book named Dorothy.
Some of the chapters might be: Dorothy: Better Bird-Watcher Than Cook;

Dorothy, Wife and Atheist;
Passionate Recycler Dorothy, Here Lies But Not."

<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/42548/wasteful-gesture-only-not>

Hard Is The Journey

by Li Po

Gold vessels of fine wines,
thousands a gallon,
Jade dishes of rare meats,
costing more thousands,

I lay my chopsticks down,
no more can banquet,
I draw my sword and stare wildly about me:
Ice bars my way to cross the Yellow River,
Snows from dark skies to climb the T'ai-hang mountains!
At peace I drop a hook into a brooklet,
At once I'm in a boat but sailing sunward...
(Hard is the journey,
Hard is the journey,
So many turnings,
And now where am I?)

So when a breeze breaks waves,
bringing fair weather,
I set a cloud for sails,
cross the blue oceans!"

<https://allpoetry.com/Hard-Is-The-Journey>

I'm Going to Start Living Like a Mystic

by Edward Hirsch

Today I am pulling on a green wool sweater and walking across the park in a dusky snowfall.

The trees stand like twenty-seven prophets in a field,
each a station in a pilgrimage—silent, pondering.

Blue flakes of light falling across their bodies
are the ciphers of a secret, an occultation.

I will examine their leaves as pages in a text and consider the bookish pigeons, students of winter.

I will kneel on the track of a vanquished squirrel
and stare into a blank pond for the figure of Sophia.

I shall begin scouring the sky for signs
as if my whole future were constellated upon it.

I will walk home alone with the deep alone,
a disciple of shadows, in praise of the mysteries."

<https://poets.org/poem/im-going-start-living-mystic>

Coral Road
by Garrett Hongo
(excerpt)

I keep wanting to go back, across an ocean, blue-gray and uncaring,
White cowlicks of waves at the continental shore, then the midsea combers
Like white centipedes far below the jetliner that takes me there.
And across time too, to 1919 and my ancestors fleeing Waialua Plantation, Trekking across the northern coast of O'ahu, that whole family
of first Shigemitsu

Walking in geta and sandals along railroad ties and old roads at night, Sleeping in the bushes by day, *ha'alelehana*—runaways From the labor contract with Baldwin or American Factors.

My grandmother, ten at the time, hauling an infant brother on her back, Said there was a white coral road in those days, pieces of crushed reef Poured like gravel over the brown dirt, and, at night, with the moon up,

As it was those nights during their flight, silver shadows on the sea, It lit their path like a roadway made of dust from the Ocean of Clouds.

Michiyuki is what they called it, the Moon Road from Waialua to Kahuku.

Full poem at:

<http://knopfdoubleday.com/2013/04/08/knopf-poem-a-day-april-8-garrett-hongos-coral-road/>

Different Ways to Pray
by Naomi Shihab Nye

There was the method of kneeling, a fine method, if you lived in a country where stones were smooth. The women dreamed wistfully of bleached courtyards, hidden corners where knee fit rock. Their prayers were weathered rib bones, small calcium words uttered in sequence, as if this shedding of syllables could somehow fuse them to the sky.

There were the men who had been shepherds so long they walked like sheep. Under the olive trees, they raised their arms—
Hear us! We have pain on earth!
We have so much pain there is no place to store it!
But the olives bobbed peacefully in fragrant buckets of vinegar and thyme. At night the men ate heartily, flat bread and white cheese, and were happy in spite of the pain, because there was also happiness.

Some prized the pilgrimage, wrapping themselves in new white linen to ride buses across miles of vacant sand.

When they arrived at Mecca
they would circle the holy places,
on foot, many times,
they would bend to kiss the earth
and return, their lean faces housing
mystery.

While for certain cousins and grandmothers
the pilgrimage occurred daily,
lugger water from the spring
or balancing the baskets of grapes.
These were the ones present at births,
humming quietly to perspiring mothers.
The ones stitching intricate needlework into
children's dresses,
forgetting how easily children soil clothes.

There were those who didn't care about
praying.
The young ones. The ones who had been to
America.
They told the old ones, you are wasting
your time.

Time?—The old ones prayed for the
young ones.
They prayed for Allah to mend their brains,
for the twig, the round moon,
to speak suddenly in a commanding tone.

And occasionally there would be one
who did none of this,
the old man Fowzi, for example, Fowzi the
fool,
who beat everyone at dominoes,
insisted he spoke with God as he spoke with
goats,
and was famous for his laugh.

<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/48595/different-ways-to-pray>

Pilgrimage
by Natasha Trethewey

Vicksburg, Mississippi

Here, the *Mississippi* carved
its mud-dark path, a graveyard
for skeletons of sunken riverboats.
Here, the river changed its course,
turning away from the city
as one turns, forgetting, from the past—
the abandoned bluffs, land sloping up
above the river's bend—where now
the Yazoo fills the *Mississippi*'s empty bed.
Here, the dead stand up in stone, white
marble, on Confederate Avenue. I stand
on ground once hollowed by a web of
caves;
they must have seemed like catacombs,
in 1863, to the woman sitting in her
parlor,
candlelit, underground. I can see her
listening to shells explode, writing
herself
into history, asking *what is to become
of all the living things in this place?*
This whole city is a grave. Every spring—
Pilgrimage—the living come to mingle
with the dead, brush against their cold
shoulders
in the long hallways, listen all night
to their silence and indifference, relive
their dying on the green battlefield.

At the museum, we marvel at their clothes—preserved under glass—so much smaller than our own, as if those who wore them were only children. We sleep in their beds, the old mansions hunkered on the bluffs, draped in flowers—funereal—a blur of petals against the river's gray.

The brochure in my room calls this *living history*. The brass plate on the door reads *Prissy's Room*. A window frames the river's crawl toward the Gulf. In my dream, the ghost of history lies down beside me,

rolls over, pins me beneath a heavy arm."

<https://poets.org/poem/pilgrimage>

Prayer

Traditional Irish Blessing

May the road rise up to meet you.
May the wind be always at your back.
May the sun shine warm upon your face;
the rains fall soft upon your fields and until
we meet again,
may God hold you in the palm of His hand.

https://www.worldprayers.org/archive/prayers/_invocations/may_the_road_rise_up.html

Prayer Song from Ghana
as found in ***The Soul of a Pilgrim*** by Christine Valters Painter

Journeying God,
Pitch your tent with mine so that I may not be deterred
by hardship, strangeness, doubt.
Show me the movement I must make toward a wealth not dependent on possessions,
toward a wisdom not based on books,
toward a strength not bolstered by might,
toward a god not confined to heaven.
Help me to find myself as I walk in others' shoes.

<https://progressivepilgrimage.com/prayers/>

Walking in Beauty: Excerpt, Closing Prayer from the Navajo Way Blessing Ceremony

In beauty all day long may I walk.
Through the returning seasons, may I walk.
On the trail marked with pollen may I walk.
With dew about my feet, may I walk.
With beauty before me may I walk.
With beauty behind me may I walk.
With beauty below me may I walk.
With beauty above me may I walk.
With beauty all around me may I walk.
In old age wandering on a trail of beauty, lively, may I walk.
In old age wandering on a trail of beauty, living again, may I walk.
My words will be beautiful...

For the full text and a link to hear the prayer spoken in Navajo: <https://talking-feather.com/home/walk-in-beauty-prayer-from-navajo-blessing/>

Articles

The Dalai Lama on the Value of Pilgrimages (excerpt)

"Pilgrimages are a part of nearly every religion. The faithful set out in hopes of finding virtue and gaining merit. Among Buddhists, they visit places where a spiritual master once spent time meditating. His presence makes the place seem somehow blessed or charged, as if there is some kind of electricity around it. Pilgrims come to feel these mysterious vibrations. They try to share in the visions of the master. Along their road, they undertake hardship with no thought of material reward. Their every step, every movement, becomes filled with a sense of spiritual progress. Many intensify the sense of hardship along the way by going barefoot, or reciting prayers or mantras, and so increase the spiritual merit they gain."

Entire article:

<https://www.dalailama.com/news/2007/the-dalai-lama-on-the-value-of-pilgrimages>

An African pilgrimage

by Rev. Bill Sinkford (excerpt)

Last November, I led a small group of pilgrims on a three-week journey to Africa. I was accompanied by the Rev. Eric Cherry, director of the UUA's International Resources Office; Paula Cole Jones, a leader in our antiracism and anti-oppression work; and my wife, Maria. We built relationships with newly emerging and long established Unitarian and Unitarian Universalist congregations in South Africa, Uganda, Kenya, and Nigeria. We visited and were inspired by the work of justice-seeking groups in Ghana, South Africa, and Kenya.

We learned in greater depth about the South African Truth and Reconciliation process, both of its success and of the enormous work yet to do in that new democracy.

Entire article:

<https://www.uuworld.org/articles/an-african-pilgrimage>

The Pilgrim's Path: Seeing the Sacred

by Mary DeJong (excerpt)

As soon as you mark your journey as a pilgrimage, you are drawing a line in the sand transforming how you move through the world-how you see, hear and taste the world around you. And inevitably, because of this manner of intention-and because the Powers that Be know what you've done (that whole line in the sand act)-there will be things that go wrong...terribly wrong. That is simply the nature of the Pilgrim's Path; no longer can you just simply curse at an inconvenience or change in plans. There is Some One speaking to you now through the chaos. There is a Force that will derail all your best laid undertakings and ideals for this journey just so you will see things anew, afresh; just so you will see the Holy, the Mystery that is present.

Entire article:

<https://waymakers.wordpress.com/2012/02/29/the-pilgrims-path-seeing-the-sacred/>

Explaining the Muslim pilgrimage of hajj

from ***The Conversation***

Around 1.7 million Muslims have gathered this year in the holy city of Mecca in Saudi Arabia for the annual pilgrimage – the hajj. The five-day pilgrimage is a once-in-a-lifetime obligation for all Muslims who have

the physical and financial ability to undertake the journey.

So, what is the hajj and what is its spiritual significance?

Millions of Muslims from diverse countries such as Indonesia, Russia, India, Cuba, Fiji, the United States, Nigeria and others congregate in Mecca during the last month of the Muslim lunar year.

Pilgrims wear plain, white garments. Men drape seamless, unstitched clothing and women dress in plain white dresses and headscarves. The idea behind dressing simply is to mask any differences in wealth and status....

The rites of the hajj are believed to retrace events from the lives of prominent prophets such as Ibrahim and Ismail.

Entire article:

<https://theconversation.com/explaining-the-muslim-pilgrimage-of-hajj-83284>

Podcasts

***The external and internal pilgrimage:
Author Pico Iyer on the purpose of
journeying in modern times.*** (Excerpt)

Jonathan Bastian: "Pico, one thing I've heard you say is that a pilgrimage is one of our deepest longings in the secular age. I'm sure a number of people listening may think of themselves as living mostly in a secular world. Can a pilgrim take a pilgrimage in a secular world?"

Pico Iyer: "...Pilgrimage is just for me a journey towards whatever is deepest inside you, which many people will say, what is

beyond you. You know, when Romeo and Juliet first meet at the ball, they speak in a sonnet to one another. And the central word in that sonnet is pilgrim. Romeo says, 'My lips, these blushing pilgrims,' and Juliet says, 'Good pilgrim, you do wrong your hand too much.' But it's a way of suggesting each has found his or her spiritual destiny, or source and by meeting each other, that meeting something essential within themselves.

I don't think it's so important to put a name to it or even feel that there are texts around it. All of us have some longing, that there's something forgotten or undiscovered within ourselves, that we want to release and I think in some ways that longing is stronger than ever because the junk food that Vrajaprana was remembering, and mentioning that were filled more and more with the wrong kind of distraction.

When you ask about secular pilgrimage, of course I'm amused. You're talking to a lifelong Santa Barbarian, who has been a very committed Hindu nun for almost half a century and a Hindu guy who doesn't know anything about his tradition or Hinduism or the source, but who travels the world to observe the pilgrimages of the Ethiopian, Orthodox faith, Buddhist and Muslims. So I think even those who are spiritually unaffiliated, get something just from making that resolve. I want to find out what means most to me, whatever terms or no terms I choose to put on it."

<https://www.kcrw.com/culture/shows/life-examined/pilgrimage-walking-faith-christianity-via-francigena/pico-iyer-pravrajika-vrajaprana-pilgrimage>

Paulo Coelho - The Alchemy of Pilgrimage

Interview From On Being with Krista Tippett

The Brazilian lyricist Paulo Coelho is author of *The Alchemist* (on the *New York Times* bestseller list for over 400 weeks). His fable-like stories turn life, love, writing, and reading into pilgrimage. In a rare conversation, we meet the man behind the writings and explore what he's touched in modern people.

<https://onbeing.org/programs/paulo-coelho-the-alchemy-of-pilgrimage/>

Books

Wanderlust: A History of Walking

by Rebecca Solnit

This volume provides a history of walking, exploring the relationship between thinking and walking and between walking and culture. The author argues for the preservation of the time and space in which to walk in an ever more car-dependent and accelerated world.

~Goodreads

Spirit Car: Journey to a Dakota Past

by Diane Wilson

The author traces the journey of her Dakota family in Minnesota from the Dakota War to the present.

To the Lighthouse

by Virginia Woolf

The serene and maternal Mrs. Ramsay, the tragic yet absurd Mr. Ramsay, and their children and assorted guests are on holiday on the Isle of Skye. From the seemingly trivial postponement of a visit to a nearby

lighthouse, Woolf constructs a remarkable, moving examination of the complex tensions and allegiances of family life and the conflict between men and women.

As time winds its way through their lives, the Ramsays face, alone and simultaneously, the greatest of human challenges and its greatest triumph—the human capacity for change.

https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/5971-6.To_the_Lighthouse

Pilgrimage in Islam: Traditional and Modern Practices

by Sophia Rose Arjana

It is not only the holy cities of Mecca and Karbala to which Muslim pilgrims travel, but a wide variety of sacred sites around the world. Journeys are undertaken to visit graves of important historical and religious individuals, the tombs of saints, and natural sites such as mountaintops and springs.

Exploring the richness and diversity of traditions practiced by the 1.5 billion Muslims across the world, Sophia Rose Arjana provides a rigorous theoretical discussion of pilgrimage, ritual practice and the nature of sacred space in Islam, both historically and in the present day. This all-encompassing survey covers issues such as time, space, tourism, virtual pilgrimages and the use of computers and smartphone apps. Lucidly written, informative and accessible, it is perfectly suited to students, scholars and the general reader seeking a comprehensive picture of the defining ritual of religious pilgrimage in Islam.

~Goodreads

https://books.google.com/books?id=80u4DgAAQBAJ&newbks=0&hl=en&source=newbks_fb

Between Two Kingdoms: A Memoir of a Life Interrupted
by Suleika Jaouad

A memoir about a writer who contracts leukemia. During her treatment, she reads letters from readers of her book. Feeling depleted in many ways after coming out of treatment, she takes a 1500 mile road trip to connect with some of the people who wrote to her, in an effort to begin life again after cancer.

<https://www.penguinrandomhouse.com/books/540210/between-two-kingdoms-by-suleika-jaouad/>

Siddhartha
by Herman Hesse

Herman Hesse's classic novel has delighted, inspired, and influenced generations of readers, writers, and thinkers. In this story of a wealthy Indian Brahmin who casts off a life of privilege to seek spiritual fulfillment. Hesse synthesizes disparate philosophies-- Eastern religions, Jungian archetypes, Western individualism--into a unique vision of life as expressed through one man's search for true meaning.

<https://www.gutenberg.org/files/2500/2500-h/2500-h.htm>

Movies

Into the Wild
Directed by Sean Penn 2007

After graduating from Emory University, top student and athlete Christopher

McCandless abandons his possessions, gives his entire \$24,000 savings account to charity and hitchhikes to Alaska to live in the wilderness. Along the way, Christopher encounters a series of characters that shape his life.

<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0758758/>

Little Miss Sunshine
Directed by Jonathan Dayton and Valerie Faris 2006

A family determined to get their young daughter into the finals of a beauty pageant take a cross-country trip in their VW bus.

<https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0449059/>

Kodachrome
Directed by [Mark Raso](#) 2017

Set during the final days of the admired photo development system known as Kodachrome, a father and son hit the road in order to reach the Kansas photo lab before it closes its doors for good.

<https://www.imdb.com/title/tt1880399/>

Art

The Pilgrim
by Rene Magritte

[https://www.renemagritte.org/the-pilgrim.jsp#prettyPhoto\[image2\]/0/](https://www.renemagritte.org/the-pilgrim.jsp#prettyPhoto[image2]/0/)

Pilgrim
by Robert Rauschenberg

<https://www.artsy.net/artwork/robert-rauschenberg-pilgrim>

Music

Pilgrimage Spotify playlist

- David Bowie - *Sound and Vision*
- Replacements - *Within Your Reach*
- John E. Bell - *We Walk His Way (Ewe Thina)*
- Mazzy Star - *So Tonight That I May See*
- Leonard Cohen - *Traveling Light*
- Emmylou Harris - *Deeper Well*
- Floyd Dixon - *We'll Be Together*
- Shearwater - *Wake for the Minotaur*
- Jimmy Cliff - *I Can See Clearly Now*
- Peter Gabriel - *In Your Eyes*

<https://open.spotify.com/playlist/16C5i8ANjjPX1GtLlyf0JK?si=ad5a16c926dd4a76>

Closer I Am to Fine

by the Indigo Girls

And I went to the doctor, I went to the mountains
I looked to the children, I drank from the fountains
There's more than one answer to these questions
Pointing me in a crooked line
And the less I seek my source for some definitive
(The less I seek my source)
Closer I am to fine, yeah

Full lyrics available at:

<https://www.lyrics.com/lyric/1155005/Indigo+Girls/Closer+to+Fine>

Watch:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HUGwM1Ky228>

***I am a Pilgrim* by Doc Watson or Johnny Cash**

<https://open.spotify.com/track/5sI7sF9xrWU6VyuZRDVCsk?si=988ea684a6834949>

TV/Video

Fullmetal Alchemist: Brotherhood

A 2009 2012 Japanese anime television series adapted from the original Fullmetal Alchemist manga series by Hiromu Arakawa.

Brothers Edward and Alphonse Elric search for the Philosopher's Stone, hoping to restore their bodies, which were lost when they attempted to use their alchemy skills to resurrect their deceased mother.

<https://www.imdb.com/title/tt1355642/>

High on the Hog: How African American Cuisine Transformed America (Netflix)

This is a powerful pilgrimage story, of a food writer who visits Benin to understand the roots of African American cuisine.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7wsEdxt1Ico>

Sacred Journeys

[PBS series]

Join best-selling author and adventurer Bruce Feiler as he travels with American pilgrims to six of the world's most sacred places.

[Sacred Journeys \(pbs.org\)](http://SacredJourneys.pbs.org)

180° South

The film follows adventurer Jeff Johnson as he retraces the epic 1968 journey of his heroes Yvon Chouinard and Doug Tompkins to Patagonia.

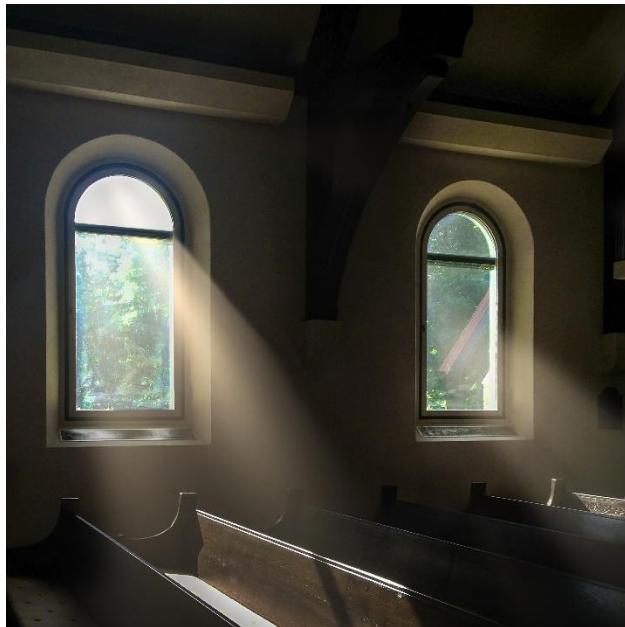
<https://www.justwatch.com/us/movie/180-south>

Free Solo

Follow Alex Honnold as he attempts to become the first person to ever free solo climb Yosemite's 3,000 foot high El Capitan wall. With no ropes or safety gear, this would arguably be the greatest feat in rock climbing history.

<https://www.justwatch.com/us/movie/free-solo>

Photographs



Church Windows by Richard Birger
Richard Birger ©,
<https://richardbirger.myportfolio.com>

Camino de Santiago cover photograph by Damien Dufour on [Unsplash](#).

The Camino de Santiago is a network of Christian pilgrimage routes that lead to the cathedral of Santiago de Compostela in Spain.