



Spiritual Practice Packet

November 2022

Faith



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Unity Church-Unitarian, St. Paul, Minnesota

Unityunitarian.org

Faith

It is said that a visitor once came to the home of Nobel Prize-winning physicist **Niels Bohr** and, having noticed a horseshoe hung above the entrance, asked incredulously if the professor believed horseshoes brought good luck. “No,” Bohr replied, “but I am told that they bring luck even to those who do not believe in them.”

Is Bohr expressing “blind faith” or “naïve faith?” Or perhaps “ironic faith?” Faith is not one thing – it has many facets. Consider some of the many expressions commonly used in conjunction with faith. We are asked to “keep the faith!” when we’re having a “crisis of faith.” Sometimes we have to take a “leap of faith” or simply “take it on faith.” Or, as Oliver Cromwell was quoted as saying “Put your faith in God and keep your powder dry,” understood as both a statement of both piety and practicality.

Is faith primarily about what one believes? In Islam, the belief that “there is no god but God and Muhammed is the Messenger of God,” is central to one's understanding of Islam. As one Islamic scholar writes:

“Faith in Islam means to believe in Allah, to affirm His truth, and to submit to His commands. True faith, then, must manifest itself in the heart as sincerity, on the tongue as affirmation, and on the limbs as action.”

In many Christian traditions, the recitation of the Nicene or the Athanasian Creed is the way a believer professes a faith.

What then, is “faith?” The English word “faith” derives from the Latin word *fides*, which means fidelity or loyalty. In Pali, the language of original Buddhist texts, the word for faith is *saddha*, which can also mean trust, confidence, clarity, and even devotion. We all have faith in something, whether we name it as faith or call it something else. Faith is intimately linked to trust. When we say “we light this chalice for the light of truth and the warmth of love,” we are saying that we put our trust in those qualities and that we wish to embody them.

When we ask our Coming of Age youth to write a credo, we are essentially asking them for a statement of faith. But we don’t ask them to simply reflect back whatever teachings they have absorbed, we insist that they do their own thinking about essential questions of life. We ask them to consider “in what do they place their trust” and how do they practice it. Faith then becomes not a description of an idea, but an invitation into something we practice, even when we don’t have clarity about the ultimate outcome.

“Faith is...How I personally relate to the infinite mystery of life and the universe and the world and our relationships. It’s a matter of surrender and trust...which includes doubt and uncertainty...some giving of myself to trust in life.”

A journey of faith isn’t about having a determined big picture with an outcome in mind. Almost always, there is no “end,” no final, right answer. But faith helps us see beyond the immediate moment, offers flashes of insight that give us the courage to keep going, the ability to leap into the unknown. Sometimes, having faith means letting go and believing in a power beyond our own. For some of us, the word faith brings up challenging memories--harsh expectations about following

creedal rules, of having faith in “the right way” with no space for questions or empirical tests. So often faith has been wielded as a cudgel, as a way to silence opposition even in the face of facts. We sometimes recoil from the language of faith because it has been used to wound our minds, souls, and bodies.

In the Unitarian Universalist tradition, to be a person of faith *includes* questioning the very nature of faith itself. We don’t profess blind faith in creeds without interrogation. Indeed, while the nature of faith is a mystery, it must be examined. But what is also important is the nature of that questioning. How do we examine our and others’ faith not in a way as to prove rightness or wrongness, but with curiosity and openness to the mystery that is also at the heart of faith?

One of the members of our conversation group put it this way:

“Faith is not something I have...It’s something I practice; In other words: “it’s ‘faithing in...’ I don’t see faith as anything I can possess...and, it doesn’t fall apart until I stop practicing...Sometimes, when I lose my faith, I may need to hand it over to other people...people who can hold me in place...So for me, faith is a relationship and a practice.”

When we approach the question of faith not as a system of beliefs, but as a community of relationships that informs a committed spiritual practice, we are in a better position to live into the statement by Universalist minister Olympia Brown. “Stand by this faith,” Brown proclaimed from the pulpit. “Work for it and sacrifice for it.” Brown promised that “there is nothing in all the world so important as to be loyal to this faith which has placed before us the loftiest ideals, which has comforted us in sorrow, strengthened us for noble duty and made the world beautiful. Do not demand immediate results but rejoice that we are worthy to be entrusted with this great message, that you are strong enough to work for a great true principle without counting the cost.”

Stand by this faith. That is a hard charge from the first female Universalist minister, but it is a journey we can share together, knowing we will be living out our faith in a community of love.

By Kathleen Rolenz on behalf of this month’s theme team: Andrea La Sonde Anastos, Tom Duke, Karen Gustafson, KP Hong, Drew Danielson, and Ray Ann Hommeyer.

Spiritual Practices

Option A:

Noticing how much we take on faith

It is likely that we don't notice how much we take on faith.

For instance, we go to bed, faithing that the sun will appear in the morning, that the earth will not have been destroyed by some astronomical cataclysm in the night. Or we get in the car, faithing that everyone else on the road will obey the traffic laws and we will arrive safely at our destination. Perhaps we faith that the laws of physics will hold fast and there will be an oxygen-saturated environment to breathe now, and tomorrow.

Madeleine L'Engle wrote, 'Some things need to be believed to be seen.' Faithing is the practice of believing in order to see. What do you see as a result of your practice of faithing?

During this month, choose a few moments each day to notice one aspect of your life that you take on faith. It can be something concrete or something ephemeral. Some people find it best to choose the same time every day (just after waking up, just before turning out the light, or during a solitary lunch). Perhaps you notice the love of a partner or spouse. Perhaps it is the loyalty of a friend. Perhaps it is an amaryllis bulb that has not yet put forth a shoot.

During your chosen moments, write down what it is that you have taken on faith, what you see because you have believed. Do you see a beloved group of colleagues because you faithed that you would be able to prepare for this fulfilling career you now have? Do you see a beautiful garden because you faithed that you could plan and plant one, and that it would come back year after year?

You can use words or pictures, color or texture, or all of the above and more.

Reflect on the energy you embody that allows you to live in faith. What enables you to faith?

What would you like to see, what do you long to see, that you have not yet believed (faithed)?

What would need to happen for you to be faith-full with that longing? To see that unseen desire?

Option B: What is your credo?

Many of us use the word 'faith' as a synonym for 'credo' or 'belief system.'

Many of us have also rejected a previous faith, or set of creeds, or specifically religious belief system.

What have we embraced in its place?

This month, take a few minutes each day to write your own (current) credo: that in which you believe. You may find it possible to do this in words, but you might also find that words are too limiting and you would prefer to draw, or to cull pictures from magazines or newspapers to create a collage.

You can be as specific or as general as seems appropriate to capture what you 'faith'. For instance, you might say, 'I believe the earth will turn green every spring' (general); or 'I believe in the beauty of this rose' (specific).

Try to embrace what comes to you without judgment. Just because you have been told that gravity is a force of nature, doesn't mean you can't also faith it. There are some people who think of gravity as a temporary force that could change at any time.

Toward the end of the month, you might want to put your credo into a poetic form that you can turn to when you are uncertain or confused. You may want to change the wording of a belief or a line of your credo, or remove it, or add to it. You may find that a general belief ('I believe in justice') might become more specific as your life and witness change. ('I believe in the power I have to help my indigenous neighbors protect their sacred burial ground.')

Try substituting the word 'faith' for the word 'believe'. Does that sound strange? Does it evoke curiosity? Have you ever used 'faith' as a verb? What do you feel when you do?

Questions to Ponder

Read through the questions below and notice which ones 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. What is your image of faith? For instance, do you imagine faith as a crutch for a time of woundedness? As a walking staff for a time of discovery? As a safety net for dangerous activities?
2. Do you consider yourself a person of faith? If so, how do you express that faith? If not, would you like to think of yourself as a person of faith? Why? Or Why not?
3. We honor many faiths in our UU worship services. How do faith traditions in religions not your own, enhance your understanding of your own faith?
4. What is the relationship between faith and trust? Are they different names for the same thing? Does one depend on the other? Can one exist without the other in your life?
5. Have you ever wanted to believe (to faith) something and felt bereft when you could not?
6. What is the relationship between faith and mystery? Do we expand our capacity for faith if we expand our capacity to live with the mysterious, the unknowable, the undefinable? Is accepting that some questions have no accessible answers a defeat or a liberation? Or both, or something else entirely?
7. Whose faithfulness do you admire? Are you inspired by someone's example of faith?
8. How do you react when someone questions your concept of faith? Do you feel stress when your faith is being questioned? Or do you feel calmness, or peace in your body?
9. How do you maintain faith in the face of disappointments? When you can hold onto your faith after an apparent setback or betrayal, how does that faith differ from optimism or hope?
10. Many of us have a complicated relationship with the idea of faith, especially if we have left one religious tradition for another, or if our belief systems have undergone deep shifts. How has your understanding of faith in your life changed over time? How do you feel about those changes?
11. What is the relationship between faith and trust? Can one exist without the other in your life?
12. How is faith in action in your life? How do you practice being faithful?
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 of you now, spend the month listening to your heart to hear what your question is.

Inspiration

Recommended Resources for Personal Exploration & Reflection

These resources are not required reading. They may not be analyzed in our sermons, newsletter, Chalice Circles, Wellspring, or other programs. 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 faith. The hope is not that you will engage them all or even most of them; rather that the variety here will offer you at least several access points to the theme that invite you to consider it thoughtfully and perhaps with new insights or understanding.

Word Definitions

Faith

noun

- 1 Allegiance to duty or a person - LOYALTY
Fidelity to one's promises
Sincerity of intentions
- 2 Belief and trust in and loyalty to God
Belief in the traditional doctrines of a religion
Firm belief in something for which there is no proof
Complete trust
- 3 Something that is believed especially with strong conviction

Related words

Acceptance, belief, conviction, loyalty, hope, doctrine, fidelity, loyalty, trust, confidence, clarity, devotion, and promise

Wise Words

Some things have to be believed to be seen.

~Madeleine L'Engle

It's really a wonder that I haven't dropped all my ideals, because they seem so absurd and impossible to carry out. Yet I keep them, because in spite of everything, I still believe that people are really good at heart.

~Anne Frank, from *The Diary of a Young Girl*

To have faith requires courage, the ability to take a risk, the readiness even to accept pain and disappointment. Whoever insists on safety and security as primary conditions of life cannot have faith; whoever shuts off in a system of defense, where distance and possession are the means of security, becomes a prisoner... The practice of faith and courage begins with the small details of daily life. The first step is to notice where and when one loses faith, to look through the rationalizations which are used to cover up this loss of faith, to recognize where one acts in a cowardly way, and again how one rationalizes it. To recognize how every betrayal of faith weakens one, and how increased weakness leads to new betrayal, and so on, in a vicious circle. Then one will also recognize that while one is consciously afraid of not being loved, the real, though usually unconscious fear is that of loving. To love means to commit oneself without guarantee, to give oneself completely. Love is an act of faith, and whoever is of little faith is also of little love.

~Eric Fromm

When it comes down to it, my faith comes from the amazing, against-all-odds, courageous, beautiful resilience of the human heart: the way that people find joy after grief, courage after fear, liberation after oppression.

~Amanda Poppei, from *Stitching a Layered Faith*.
<https://www.uuworld.org/articles/layered-faith>

Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

~Hebrews 11:1, NKJV.
<https://www.biblestudytools.com/nkjv/hebrews/11.html>

If doubt appears, it should not be considered as the negation of faith, but as an element which was always and will always be present in the act of faith. Existential doubt and faith are poles of the same reality, the state of ultimate concern.... serious doubt is confirmation of faith.

~Paul Tillich, from *The Dynamics of Faith*.

The salvation we should most covet is the result not of faith, but faithfulness; not the acceptance of a saving scheme proffered from without, but loyalty to a saving grace springing from within; not acceptance of belief, but the dispensing of kindness.

~Jenkin Lloyd Jones, from *Faithfulness in The Faith that Makes Faithful* p. 25.

Suffering naturally gives rise to doubt. How can one believe in God in the face of such horrendous suffering as slavery, segregation, and the lynching tree? Under these circumstances, doubt is not a denial but an integral part of faith. It keeps faith from being sure of itself. But doubt does not have the final word. The final word is faith giving rise to hope.

~Rev. James H. Cone, from *The Cross and the Lynching Tree*

Believe something and the Universe is on its way to being changed. Because you've changed, by believing. Once you've changed, other things start to follow. Isn't that the way it works?

~Diane Duane, from *So You Want to Be a Wizard*

You do not need to know precisely what is happening, or exactly where it is all going. What you need is to recognize the possibilities and challenges offered by the present moment, and to embrace them with courage, faith and hope.

~Thomas Merton

Faith in Buddhism is not blind faith that rejects the criteria of reason. It is in fact a rational function, a process of cultivating wisdom that begins with a spirit of reverent searching. The impulse of true reason is to continuously and eternally transcend the confines of the present self. It aims to reach beyond its grasp, always improving, always surpassing itself. The source of energy and foundation for that constant search is faith in something larger than oneself. Faith purifies reason, strengthens it, and elevates it.

~Daisaku Ikeda, from <https://www.daisakuikedada.org/>

Prayer

Prayer

by Andrea La Sonde Anastos

Breathe with us hope in countless possibilities.

Breathe with us trust in friend and stranger.

Breathe with us confidence in soul-strength.

Breathe with us compassion for our fear.

Breathe with us courage to be present to one another.

Center me in this moment.

Center me in the wisdom of the ancestors.

Center me in the curiosity of being.

Center me in the patience of conviction.

Center me in resilience of spirit.

Stretch every heart past old boundaries.

Stretch every vision past old seeing.

Stretch every yearning past old knowing.

Stretch every belief past the limits of reason.

Stretch every love past all measure.

May we be so. May I be so. May it be so.

Poetry

Let America Be America Again

by Langston Hughes

Excerpt:

O, yes,
I say it plain,
America never was America to me,
And yet I swear this oath—
America will be!

<https://poets.org/poem/let-america-be-america-again>

One enduring example of faith is the faith that somehow the United States will consistently improve, will move toward making real the ideals we render in our shared institutions - sometimes against all the evidence.

Let Evening Come

By Jane Kenyon

Let the light of late afternoon
shine through chinks in the barn, moving
up the bales as the sun moves down.

Let the cricket take up chafing
as a woman takes up her needles
and her yarn. Let evening come.

Let dew collect on the hoe abandoned
in long grass. Let the stars appear
and the moon disclose her silver horn.

Let the fox go back to its sandy den.
Let the wind die down. Let the shed
go black inside. Let evening come.

To the bottle in the ditch, to the scoop
in the oats, to air in the lung
let evening come.

Let it come, as it will, and don't
be afraid. God does not leave us
comfortless, so let evening come.

<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/46431/let-evening-come>

Praise Song for the Day

by Elizabeth Alexander

Excerpt:

I know there's something better down the road.
We need to find a place where we are safe.
We walk into that which we cannot yet see.

Say it plain: that many have died for this day.
Sing the names of the dead who brought us here,
who laid the train tracks, raised the bridges,

picked the cotton and the lettuce, built
brick by brick the glittering edifices
they would then keep clean and work inside of.

Praise song for struggle, praise song for the day.
Praise song for every hand-lettered sign,
the figuring-it-out at kitchen tables.

Some live *by love thy neighbor as thyself*,
others by *first do no harm or take no more
than you need*. What if the mightiest word is love?

Love beyond marital, filial, national,
love that casts a widening pool of light,
love with no need to pre-empt grievance.

In today's sharp sparkle, this winter air,
any thing can be made, any sentence begun.
On the brink, on the brim, on the cusp,

praise song for walking forward in that light.
<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/52141/praise-song-for-the-day>

The sun never says

by Hafiz

And still, after all this time,
The sun never says to the earth,
"You owe Me."

Look what happens with
A love like that,
It lights the Whole Sky.

It & Co.

by Tracy K. Smith

We are a part of It. Not guests.
Is It us, or what contains us?
How can It be anything but an idea,
Something teetering on the spine
Of the number i? It is elegant
But coy. It avoids the blunt ends
Of our fingers as we point. We
Have gone looking for It everywhere:
In Bibles and bandwidth, blooming
Like a wound from the ocean floor.
Still, It resists the matter of false vs. real.
Unconvinced by our zeal, It is un-
Appeasable. It is like some novels:
Vast and unreadable.

From *Life on Mars*

What We Need Is Here

by Wendell Berry

Horseback on Sunday morning,
harvest over, we taste persimmon
and wild grape, sharp sweet
of summer's end. In time's maze
over fall fields, we name names
that rest on graves. We open
a persimmon seed to find the tree
that stands in promise,
pale, in the seed's marrow.
Geese appear high over us,
pass, and the sky closes. Abandon,
as in love or sleep, holds
them to their way, clear
in the ancient faith: what we need
is here. And we pray, not
for new earth or heaven, but to be
quiet in heart, and in eye,
clear. What we need is here.

<http://www.awakin.org/read/view.php?tid=2144>

Video

Five Ways to Restore Your Faith in Humanity

by Jill Suttie

Excerpt:

Does the news make you feel like everything is hopeless? That's when you need to consciously seek out the good.

1. Be a proactive consumer of different types of media
2. Be careful about what you post on Facebook or other social media
3. Get involved by volunteering to help those in need or joining a movement
4. Try a little mindfulness
5. Make moral elevation a part of your everyday emotional hygiene

https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/five_ways_to_restore_your_faith_in_humanity

Example:

Life Vest Inside - Kindness Boomerang - "One Day"

<https://youtu.be/nwAYpLVyeFU>

The gospel of doubt

by Casey Gerald

What do you do when your firmly held beliefs turn out not to be true? When Casey Gerald's religion failed him, he searched for something new to believe in – in business, in government, in philanthropy – but found only false saviors. In this moving talk, Gerald urges us all to question our beliefs and embrace uncertainty.

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

Articles/Online Resources

Why Atheists Need Faith

by Michael Guillen.

Excerpt:

All worldviews are built on core beliefs that cannot be proved. Axioms from which everything else about a person's perception of reality is derived. They must be accepted on faith.

Even reason itself—the vaunted foundation of atheism—depends on faith. Every logical argument begins with premises that are assumed to be true. Euclid's geometry, the epitome of logical reasoning, is based on no fewer than 33 axiomatic, unprovable articles of faith....

Faith is the foundation of the entire human experience—the basis of both science and religion. Our faith in physical reality drives us to seek treatments for deadly diseases like Covid-19, to explore the depths of the sea, to invent the perfect source of energy. Our faith in spiritual reality drives us to create breathtaking works of art, music, and architecture; to see life as a divine creation, not an accident of nature; to be curious about things that are not of this world.

...Faith is anything but a weakness. It is the mightiest power in the universe.

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/atheists-need-faith-christianity-science-reason-physics-math-astronomy-11632426886>

Reclaiming Faith

Interview with Sharon Salzberg about her Book: *Faith* in Tricycle Magazine.

Excerpt:

In the Theravadan tradition, there are three kinds of faith. The first is "bright faith," which is like falling in love—perhaps with Buddhism or other spiritual teachings. Usually a teacher or a text inspires us, lifting us out of the narrow confines of our world. We have a sense of energizing possibility. But bright faith is just the beginning; it's not meant to deny the intellect. In fact, the only way to get to the second stage—to what is called

"verified faith"—is by knowing the truth of something for ourselves: we have to investigate the very person or thing that has inspired our faith in order to ground our inspiration in personal and direct experience. That means testing the teachings through our own practice and learning how to question all that we've been told. Otherwise, our faith will not mature into verified faith. As verified faith develops, it becomes "abiding," or "unwavering," faith. With abiding faith, we know a truth so deeply that it's not something we even think about anymore—we are it.

<https://tricycle.org/magazine/sharon-salzberg-faith/>

Remembering the teaching of Abraham

Joshua Heschel

by Susannah Heschel

Excerpt:

Where did my father find his faith and hope? In prayer, most of all. I loved to sit in his study while he prayed, just to be near him and feel enveloped by his prayers. I think of him, praying with tallit and tefillin, and I feel his warmth and love. More than anything, he was a person of enormous depth; you could talk to him about anything, he was so open and able to feel so deeply. His empathy was extraordinary.

Abraham Joshua Heschel marched with Martin Luther King Jr. in Selma to protest segregation and chaired the Clergy and Laity Opposed to the War in Vietnam.

<https://www.tikkun.org/susannah-heschel-remembers-her-father-abraham-joshua-heschel/>

Faith for the Unbeliever

by Daniel Chesney Kanter

Excerpt:

What is faith? When we get right down to it, it's pretty clear we don't know. But it's often taken to mean strong religious feelings or a devout belief in something unprovable. If the only people who had faith were those who devoutly believed in unprovable religious concepts, many of us would be left out of the conversation. To go beyond these superficial definitions, we must move past purely

traditional religious ideas and consider things that we practice every day but that are rarely given much attention.

<https://www.uuworld.org/articles/faith-unbeliever>

Stages of Faith Development

This Handout is based on the work of James Fowler, author of Stages of Faith. UUA Tapestry of Faith:

- Pre-Stage: Undifferentiated Faith
- Stage 1: Intuitive-Projective Faith
- Stage 2: Mythic-Literal Faith
- Stage 3: Synthetic-Conventional Faith
- Stage 4: Individuative-Reflective Faith
- Stage 5: Conjunctive Faith
- Stage 6: Universalizing Faith

<https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/youth/wholeness/workshop2/handout1-stages-faith-development>

How to Keep Your Faith Everyday

by Deepak Chopra

Excerpt

Every life has its ups and downs, and most of them don't test a person's faith. The things that do, tend to be matters of crisis. If you consider what kind of crisis is involved, something familiar emerges. Faith in God is tested when things you consider evil or cruel happen, or when an innocent person suffers greatly—then you say to yourself, "A kind, loving God wouldn't let this happen."

<https://chopra.com/articles/how-to-keep-your-faith-every-day>

Faith: Its Role and Meaning in a Buddhist Wisdom Tradition

by Sharon Salzberg

Salzberg describes many different forms of faith, and the relationship between faith and wisdom.

Excerpt:

Faith can also take the form of inspiration, where all of our being comes together behind something, behind an endeavor. This doesn't feel like a struggle, because we are so inspired to engage in a pursuit. We might be inspired by a teacher or a

teaching, but whatever it is a sense of possibility is awakened for us. This initial inspiration is what brings us to a practice or to any deeper exploration, and it helps sustain us in the difficulties we inevitably encounter.

<https://www.buddhisticquiry.org/article/faith-its-role-and-meaning-in-a-buddhist-wisdom-tradition/>

From Belief to Faith: Can the skeptic embark on a Jewish spiritual journey?

by Rabbi Daniel Gordis

Excerpt

Many people today begin their conversations about religion with the proverbial question 'Do you believe in God?' But Judaism understands that if that question is the first one, then people who cannot answer yes will not be able to begin the journey. That is why the question 'Do you believe in God?' is not the central Jewish spiritual question. It is not an illegitimate question; Jews are certainly not forbidden to ask it. But Judaism has chosen a different emphasis, a focus not on belief, but on faith. Jewish life is interested not in proving God's existence, but in feeling God's presence. Judaism is interested not in philosophic arguments for God, but in what modern Jewish philosopher Abraham Joshua Heschel (1907-1972) called moments of 'awe and wonder,' moments when God suddenly seems close.

<https://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/from-belief-to-faith/>

Books

A Pilgrimage to Eternity, From Canterbury to Rome in Search of a Faith

by Timothy Egan

Making his way through a landscape laced with some of the most important shrines to the faith, Egan finds a modern Canterbury Tale in the chapel where Queen Bertha introduced Christianity to pagan Britain; parses the supernatural in a French town built on miracles; and journeys to the oldest abbey in the Western world, founded in 515 and

home to continuous prayer over the 1,500 years that have followed. He is accompanied by a quirky cast of fellow pilgrims and by some of the towering figures of the faith--Joan of Arc, Henry VIII, Martin Luther.

From Goodreads: <https://bit.ly/3TeV8WU>

Wholehearted Faith

by Rachel Held Evans.

This book is for the doubter and the dreamer, the seeker and the sojourner, those who long for a sense of spiritual wholeness. Through theological reflection and personal recollection, Rachel wrestles with God's grace and love in an imperfect world, looks unsparingly at what the Church is and does, and explores universal human questions about becoming and belonging

From the author's website:

<https://rachelheldevans.com/wholehearted-faith>

In the Unity Bookstall, November 2022

A Curious Faith: The Questions God Asks, We Ask, and We Wish Someone Would Ask Us

by Lore Ferguson Wilbert.

A Curious Faith invites readers to go beyond pat answers and embrace curiosity, rather than certainty, as a hallmark of authentic faith.

<https://www.acuriousfaithbook.com/>

In the Unity Bookstall, November 2022.

The Heart of the Buddha's Teaching

by Thich Nhat Hanh

The chapter, "The Three Jewels" is helpful in understanding what faith means in a Buddhist sense.

Excerpt:

In Buddhism our faith is concrete, not blind, not a leap. It is formed by our own insight and experience. When we take refuge in Buddha, we express trust in our capacity to walk in the direction of beauty, truth, and deep understanding, based on our experience of the efficacy of the practice.

Chinese and Vietnamese practitioners always say, "I go back and rely on the Buddha in myself." Adding "in myself" makes it clear that we ourselves are the Buddha. When we take refuge in the Buddha, we must also understand, "The Buddha takes refuge in me." Without the second part, the first is not complete. There is a verse we can recite when planting trees and other plants:

*I entrust myself to the Earth,
Earth entrusts herself to me.
I entrust myself to Buddha,
Buddha entrusts herself to me.*

From Goodreads: <https://bit.ly/3gbSzqp>

Sunday and Every Day: My Little Book of Unitarian Universalism

by Patricia Frevert

This child-friendly introduction puts a sampling of the Unitarian Universalist faith in a child's hands.

Available in the Unity Libraries.

Skinner House Books: <https://bit.ly/3CPTUMr>

Children's book

Traveling Mercies: Some Thoughts on Faith

by Anne Lamott

Lamott's faith isn't about easy answers, which is part of what endears her to believers as well as nonbelievers. Against all odds, she came to believe in God, and then, even more miraculously, in herself. As she puts it, 'My coming to faith did not start with a leap but rather a series of staggers.' At once tough, personal, affectionate, wise, and very funny, *Traveling Mercies* tells in exuberant detail how Anne Lamott learned to shine the light of faith on the darkest part of ordinary life, exposing surprising pockets of meaning and hope.

Available at Unity Library.

From Goodreads: <https://bit.ly/3SUOQf4>

Stars

by Mary Lyn Ray with illustrations by Maria Frazee

Stars is a reflection on all the ways stars appear in our lives, and about how we can depend on them to bring us confidence and comfort. The book talks about making a star to carry in your pocket and giving stars to friends to help them.

Excerpt:

A star is how you know it's almost night. As soon as you see one, there's another, and another. And the dark that comes doesn't feel so dark. What if you could have a star?

From Goodreads: <https://bit.ly/3eoFkSG>

Children's book

On the Spectrum: Autism, Faith, and the Gifts of Neurodiversity

by Daniel Bowman, Jr.

On the Spectrum debunks myths with a realistic yet hope-filled deep dive into the heart, mind, and life of a Christian. Daniel Bowman, a novelist, poet, and professor, received an autism diagnosis at age thirty-five after experiencing crises in his personal and professional life. The diagnosis shed light on his experience in a new, life-giving way. In this captivating book, Bowman reveals new insights into autism, relationships, faith, and the gift of neurodiversity.

From Goodreads: <https://bit.ly/3CsPBoD>

I'm Gonna Like Me: Letting Off a Little Self-Esteem

by Jamie Lee Curtis with illustrations by Laura Cornell

A book for children about having faith in oneself even when things go wrong or we look silly or we get chosen last.

From Goodreads: <https://bit.ly/3CRoMw8>

Children's Book

The Dance of the Dissident Daughter

by Sue Monk Kidd

When Sue Monk Kidd reached a point in her life when the certainties of her faith were no longer

expansive enough to embrace her yearning, she began a process of questioning. This is the story of her personal transformation from a narrower faith to a broader one.

Goodreads: <https://bit.ly/3rMFOVD>

Podcasts

Out Loud: Queer Stories of Faith

Out Loud is a podcast by and for queer people of faith in the South. Here we tell our stories of varied religious upbringings, messy coming outs, and the gift of community with one another.

Sample episodes:

- *Blake Haney and Writing His Way to Belief*
<https://open.spotify.com/episode/4wyov5CpBVzeU8XnZ5OmEC>
- *Rachel Lacovone and Finding God During Such a Time as This*
<https://open.spotify.com/episode/4PnHRJhk68xpjeA66bhxo>

From *Out Loud* <https://outloudstories.com/>

Queerology

by Matthias Roberts

How might we live better as queer people of faith and allies? Matthias brings together theologians, psychologists, poets, thinkers, and change makers for conversations around belief and being.

Queerology: <https://matthiasroberts.com/queerology/>

Movies

Whale Rider

Directed by Niki Caro, 2002

A contemporary story of love, rejection and triumph as a young Maori girl fights to fulfill a destiny her grandfather refuses to recognize.

From IMDb: <https://imdb.to/3fNIPmX>

Contact

Directed by Robert Zemeckis, 1997

Dr. Ellie Arroway, after years of searching, finds conclusive radio proof of extraterrestrial intelligence, sending plans for a mysterious machine.

From IMDb: <https://imdb.to/3fO5C00>

Forrest Gump

Directed by Robert Zemeckis, 1994

The presidencies of Kennedy and Johnson, the Vietnam War, the Watergate scandal and other historical events unfold from the perspective of an Alabama man with an IQ of 75, whose only desire is to be reunited with his childhood sweetheart.

From IMDb: <https://imdb.to/3VhQ71r>

Music

Will The Circle Be Unbroken?

by the Staple Singers

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Lwa1MQsqHwM>

Faith Spotify playlist

<https://spoti.fi/3ylgSbl>

- Lou Reed – *Busload of Faith*
- Johnnie Taylor – *I believe In You (You Believe In Me)*
- Clannad, Bruce Hornsby – *Something to Believe In*
- Eric Clapton – *Running On Faith*
- Aimee Mann – *True Believer*
- Bing Crosby – *Faith Of Our Fathers*
- George Michael – *Faith*
- Stevie Wonder – *I Believe (When I Fall in Love It Will Be Forever)*
- Amy Rigby – *Believe In You*

The New Faith

by Jake Blount

<https://open.spotify.com/album/4gFEUGggJX6tXlpvzR4Pbm>

Conceived, written and recorded during the darkest months of lockdowns—while Blount himself was still recovering from what he now knows was likely a bout with long COVID—and just after the unrest that followed the murder of George Floyd, the album aims to envision what Black religious music would sound like in a not-so-distant future world devastated by climate change.

Photos

Faith in Action

by Erika Sanders



Cover Photo



[photosforyou from Pixabay](https://www.pexels.com/photo/stone-staircase-in-forest/)

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