



***What does it mean to be a people of
Belonging?***



What Does It Mean To Be A People of Belonging?

Margaret Keip writes, “as surely as we belong to the universe we belong together. We join here to transcend the isolated self, to reconnect, to know ourselves to be at home, here on earth, under the stars, linked with each other.” To be human is to belong. Belonging is a circle that embraces everything; if we reject it, we damage our nature. The poet John O’ Donohue explains that the word belonging holds together the two fundamental aspects of life: being and longing. Belonging is deep, only in a superficial sense does it refer to our external attachment to people, places and things. It is the living and passionate presence of the soul. Belonging is the heart and warmth of intimacy. When we deny it, we grow cold and empty. Our life’s journey is the task of refining our belonging so that it may become more true, loving, good and free. We do not have to force belonging. The longing within us always draws us towards belonging and again towards new forms of belonging when we have outgrown the old ones. Postmodern culture tends to define identity in terms of ownership: possessions, status, and qualities. Yet the crucial essence of who you are is not owned by you. The most intimate belonging is self-belonging. Yet your self is not something you could ever own; it is rather the total gift that every moment of your life endeavors to receive with honor. True belonging is gracious receptivity.

Our longing to belong brings us closer both to ourselves and to one another. There is a lovely balance at the heart of our nature: each of us is utterly unique and yet we live in the most intimate kinship with everyone and everything else. Our hunger to belong is the desire to awaken this hidden affinity.

To feel as if you belong is one of the great triumphs of human existence — and especially to sustain a life of belonging and to invite others into that... But it’s interesting to think that ... our sense of slight woundedness around not belonging is actually one of our core competencies; that though the crow is just itself and the stone is just itself and the mountain is just itself, and the cloud, and the sky is just itself — we are the one part of creation that knows what it’s like to live in exile, and that the ability to turn your face towards home is one of the great human endeavors and the great human stories.

It’s interesting to think that no matter how far you are from yourself, no matter how exiled you feel from your contribution to the rest of the world or to society — that, as a human being, all you have to do is enumerate exactly the way you don’t feel at home in the world — to say exactly how you don’t belong — and the moment you’ve uttered the exact dimensionality of your exile, you’re already taking the path back to the way, back to the place you should be.

May you find your way back to belonging, back to the place you should be. Blessings on your journey.

In Faith,

Andrea Johnson

Our Spiritual Exercises

Option A: Wake Up To Wider Kinship

This spiritual exercise is reflective and invites us to engage empathy as a spiritual path to kinship. Below are two links--one to a video and another to a photo exhibition. Set aside some time to meditate on the one that moves you most. Here is one way to engage them, but feel free to find your own way:

1. Look over them both and **choose one** that moves you most.
2. **Set aside an hour** to meditate on the one you've chosen.
3. **Savor it.** Watch the video or look over the pictures 2-3 times, spending enough time with it to let it "speak to you."
4. **Ask** yourself, "What is the challenge in this for me?" and "What is this piece inviting me to understand better or do more of?"
5. **Make a commitment.** Based on your engagement with the piece, identify one action or change of behavior you want to make. (For some inspiration, see the right hand column on the karmatube site called "Be The Change/Recent Pledges.")
6. Come to your group prepared to **share your experience.**

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A Lesson in Empathy (Empathy as the Blood of Kinship)

Our lives intersect with others all day, everyday. Sometimes we know these other lives well; frequently, though, the points of connection are brief and transient. Who are these people? How might they tell their own stories? What thoughts preoccupy their minds? What joys and troubles are coursing through their feelings?

This short film, produced by the Cleveland Clinic, reminds us that empathy is our tool for beginning to know these things. It asks the question: If we could catch a glimpse of others' stories, would we treat them differently? <http://www.karmatube.org/videos.php?id=3918>

(Not-So) Complete Strangers

In a world where the act of touch is reserved to those that people are comfortable with, this exhibit breaks through the stereotype and creates images that suggest that these complete strangers are close – like friends or family. In the artist's words: "Touching Strangers encourages viewers to think about how we relate physically to one another, and to entertain the possibility that there is unlimited potential for new relationships with almost everybody."

<https://mymodernmet.com/touching-strangers-33-photos/>

Option B: Your Many Homes

When do you feel “at home”? Answering that question reminds us that home is never a single place. Many places, experiences, and people offer us the experience of welcome, connection and belonging. The more we think about it, the longer the list becomes.

So take some time this month to finally write that long list down. That’s all there is to it. Just number a page and see how many things you can name that give you a sense of home: “At the ocean.” “Whenever I smell freshly baked cookies like my mom use to make.” “In the arms of my loved one.” “In the quiet of the morning.” “While painting.” “When my skills are noticed or put to use.”

Come to your group ready to share what surprised you about the list. Did you notice a pattern? Was there a connection between your many experiences of home that you’d not recognized before? Did the list itself leave you feeling more at home in the universe? Are other people core to your sense of home? Or were you surprised at how much home has to do with solitude and spaces that allow you to connect with your deepest self? Was home less of a place than previously thought? Did you realize that it’s possible to “always be at home”? Or as poet John O’Donohue puts it, “Sometimes the urgency of our hunger blinds us to the fact that we are already at the feast. To accept this can change everything; we are always home, never exiled.”

Here’s some help and inspiration as you work on your list:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rWt76WqRCVs>

Option C: Let the Music Welcome You In

Music is often the key to opening us up. This month our packet is filled with songs calling us to welcome in others and life itself in new and larger ways. So which song is calling to you? This month, use our list of recommend songs as meditations. Listen to them in one sitting or use the list as your daily meditation for a week. As you go through them, identify one that speaks to you most directly and deeply. Come to your group ready to share which one you picked, what message it had for you and how it helped you expand your understanding of belonging.

[Love Reaches Out](#) Erik Martinez Resly

[Wayfaring Stranger](#) Rhiannon Giddens

[Would You Harbor Me](#) Sweet Honey in the Rock

[Leave the Light On](#) Overcoats

[Home](#) Phillip Phillips

[Home](#) Edward Sharpe and the Magnetic Zeros

[Home](#) Flash Chorus

[Come, Come, Whoever You Are](#) Shimshai Live

[Invitation Song](#) with Micah Massey & Aaron Keyes

[When I Come Home](#) William Fitzsimmons

And if none of these speak to you, do a little searching and find “your belonging song.”

Option D: Invite & Welcome A Friend To Church

This exercise may seem predictable, but that doesn't mean it's easy. We UUs have a complicated relationship with sharing our faith and inviting others to receive what has been given to us. If sorting through those complications is something your heart is calling you to do, then this exercise is for you. Don't rush into it. Take time to figure out *why* you want to invite someone to church. This exercise is really about you figuring out *your* reason. Once, you've got better clarity, go do it.

For inspiration:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lzrPIDNd0LO>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5UuMbxLT9pc>

Your Question

*As always, don't treat these questions like "homework" or a list that needs to be covered in its entirety. Instead, **simply pick the one question** that speaks to you most and let it lead you where you need to go. The goal is not to analyze what "love" means in the abstract, but to figure out what being a part of a people of love means for you and your daily living. So, which question is calling to you? Which one contains "your work"?*

1. Do you know yourself well enough to know where you belong?
2. Do you believe that you have to earn belonging? What would your life look like if you didn't have to prove that you're worthy?
3. Is believing "I'm the only one" or "No one can understand" separating you from belonging?
4. Where do you feel a sense of belonging in your life? How do you know you belong?
5. We are all longing to go home to some familiar place. Where is home for you?
6. Has whiteness kept you from identifying with your ethnic group, cultural group or a nationality? What might you do to reclaim your ethnic or cultural heritage?
7. Can you remember the last time you truly "widened the circle"?
8. Might widening the circle mean you stepping away from the center?
9. That mess or roadblock which just came your way? Are you sure that it's not a guest in disguise trying to offer you a gift? Are you sure you need to fight or fix it? Or is welcoming it in and embracing it what you really need to do?
10. What's your question? Your question may not be listed above. As always, if the above questions don't include what life is asking from you, spend the month listening to your days to hear it.

Recommended Resources

As always, this is not required reading. We will not analyze these pieces in our group. Instead they are here to companion you on your journey this month, get your thinking started, and maybe open you to new ways of thinking about what it means to be part of a people of Belonging.

Word Roots

Belong (n).

Be the property of, be the possession of, be held by, be in the hands of.

To be member or part of a particular group, organization or class. Close or intimate relationship. A sense of belonging.

Wise Words

That is part of the beauty of all literature. You discover that your longings are universal longings, that you're not lonely and isolated from anyone. You belong.

-F. Scott Fitzgerald

I don't even remember the season. I just remember walking between them and feeling for the first time that I belonged somewhere.

-Stephen Chbosky, The Perks of Being a Wallflower

Because true belonging only happens when we present our authentic, imperfect selves to the world, our sense of belonging can never be greater than our level of self-acceptance.

-Brene Brown, Daring Greatly

Owning our story can be hard but not nearly as difficult as spending our lives running from it. Embracing our vulnerabilities is risky but not nearly as dangerous as giving up on love and belonging and joy—the experiences that make us the most vulnerable. Only when we are brave enough to explore the darkness will we discover the infinite power of our light.

-Brene Brown

Those who have a strong sense of love and belonging have the courage to be imperfect.

-Brene Brown

A generous heart is always open, always ready to receive our going and coming. In the midst of such love we need never fear abandonment. This is the most precious gift true love offers - the experience of knowing we always belong.

-bell hooks, all about love

A person with ubuntu is open and available to others, affirming of others, does not feel threatened that others are able and good, for he or she has a proper self-assurance that comes from knowing that he or she belongs in a greater whole and is diminished when others are humiliated or diminished, when others are tortured or oppressed

-Desmond Tutu

She didn't belong anywhere and she never really belonged to anyone. And everyone else belonged somewhere and to someone. People thought she was too wonderful. But she only wanted to belong to someone. People always thought she was too wonderful to belong to them or that something too wonderful would hurt too much to lose. And that's why she liked him-- because he just thought she was crazy.

-C. JoyBell C.

Some of us aren't meant to belong. Some of us have to turn the world upside down and shake the hell out of it until we make our own place in it.

-Elizabeth Lowell, Remember Summer

It was a great mistake, my being born a man, I would have been much more successful as

a seagull or a fish. As it is, I will always be a stranger who never feels at home, who does not really want and is not really wanted, who can never belong, who must be a little in love with death!

-Eugene O'Neill

Perhaps home is not a place but simply an irrevocable condition.

-James Baldwin, *Giovanni's Room*

I been with strangers all day and they treated me like family. I come in here to family and you treat me like a stranger.

-August Wilson, *The Piano Lesson*

He drew a circle that shut me out--
Heretic, a rebel, a thing to flout.
But Love and I had the wit to win:
We drew a circle that took him in!

- Edwin Markham

"I believe every inch of America is sacred, from sea to shining sea. I believe we make it holy by who we welcome and by how we relate to each other. Call it my Muslim eyes on the American project. "We made you different nations and tribes that you may come to know one another," says the Qur'an."

-Eboo Patel

Everything might scatter. You might be right. I suppose it's something we can't easily get away from. People need to feel they belong. To a nation, to a race. Otherwise, who knows what might happen? This civilization of ours, perhaps it'll just collapse. And everything scatter, as you put it.

-Kazuo Ishiguro, *When We Were Orphans*

Maybe your country is only a place you make up in your own mind. Something you dream about and sing about. Maybe it's not a place on the map at all, but just a story full of people you meet and places you visit, full of books and films you've been to. I'm not

afraid of being homesick and having no language to live in. I don't have to be like anyone else. I'm walking on the wall and nobody can stop me.

-Hugo Hailton, *The Speckled People: A Memoir of a Half-Irish Childhood*

"Whiteness has been used throughout the histories of America and Europe to praise desirable groups of people and exclude undesirable groups. But "whiteness" is not an ethnic group, a cultural group, or a nationality. In the United States, the Supreme Court legally defined what it meant to be "white" in a pair of decisions in 1922. In other words, whiteness was created by law to let some people in and keep others out..."

- Sarah C Stewart, from *The Story of Whiteness*,

<http://www.uua.org/worship/words/reading/story-whiteness>

"Hospitality means primarily the creation of a free space where the stranger can enter and become a friend instead of an enemy. Hospitality is not to change people, but to offer them space where change can take place. It is not to bring men and women over to our side, but to offer freedom not disturbed by dividing lines. It is not to lead our neighbor into a corner where there are no alternatives left, but to open a wide spectrum of options for choice and commitment. It is not an educated intimidation with good books, good stories, and good works, but the liberation of fearful hearts so that words can find roots and bear ample fruit"

- Henri Nouwen

"We bear the universe in our beings as the universe bears us in its being. The two have a total presence to each other and to that deep mystery out of which both the universe and ourselves have emerged."

-Thomas Berry

Sometimes the urgency of our hunger blinds us to the fact that we are already at the feast. To accept this can change everything; we are always home, never exiled.

- *John O'Donohue*

Society, as we have constituted it, will have no place for me, has none to offer; but Nature, whose sweet rains fall on unjust and just alike, will have clefts in the rocks where I may hide, and secret valleys in whose silence I may weep undisturbed. She will hang the night with stars so that I may walk abroad in the darkness without stumbling, and send the wind over my footprints so that none may track me to my hurt: she will cleanse me in great waters, and with bitter herbs make me whole

—*Oscar Wilde, De Profundis*

“You must teach your children that the ground beneath their feet is the ashes of our grandfathers. So that they will respect the land, tell your children that the earth is rich with the lives of our kin. Teach your children what we have taught our children-- that the earth is our mother. Whatever befalls the earth, befalls the sons [and daughters] of the earth. If [people] spit upon the ground, they spit upon themselves. This we know. The earth does not belong to [us]; [we] belong to the earth. This we know. All things are connected like the blood which unites one family. All things are connected. Whatever befalls the earth befalls the sons [and daughters] of the earth. We did not weave the web of life; [We are] merely a strand in it. Whatever [we] do to the web, [we] do to [ourselves]....”

—*Chief Seattle*

Poems

I belong to the world

Judi Romaine

<https://hellopoetry.com/words/belonging/>

I belong to the world.
I belong to the beauty,

To the struggle,
To the joy,
To the wrenching grief,
To the heron,
To the sparrow,
The dweller and
The homeless.
The earth and
The wasteland.
The builder and
Destroyer.
The loved and
Unwanted.
I belong to all of it and
It is mine. For now.

Star-Breath

Joyce Rupp

With the first sigh of the evening star
my heart responds to a distant touch,
a wisp of recognition, a waft of joy.

Life-giving breath of the galaxies sails
through the heavens
into my grasping, yearning spirit,
uniting me in the morrow of my soul.

Star-breath washes over me
like god-breath
filling the soul of a new creation,
awakening my soul's withered bones,
lifting them into lightness and dance.

I open my small, isolated self to the stars
and am once again healed of my disparity,
the falsehood of a separate identity.

For Belonging

John O'Donohue

May you listen to your longing to be free.
May the frames of your belonging be
generous enough
for your dreams.
My you arise each day with a voice of
blessing
whispering in your heart.
May you find a harmony between your soul
and your life.

May the sanctuary of your soul never
become haunted.
May you know the eternal longing that lives
at the heart of time.
May there be kindness in your gaze when
you look within.
May you never place walls between the light
and yourself.
May you allow the wild beauty of the
invisible world to gather you, mind you, and
embrace you in Belonging.

Love after Love

Derek Walcott

<https://onbeing.org/blog/love-after-love/>

The time will come
when, with elation,
you will greet yourself arriving
at your own door, in your own mirror,
and each will smile at the other's welcome,

and say, sit here. Eat.
You will love again the stranger who was
your self.
Give wine. Give bread. Give back your heart
to itself, to the stranger who has loved you

all your life, whom you ignored
for another, who knows you by heart.
Take down the love letters from the
bookshelf,

the photographs, the desperate notes,
peel your own image from the mirror.
Sit. Feast on your life.

The Road Home

by Stephen Paulus

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LbwhSP3Zlq4&list=RDAarowtnr-hs&index=10>

Tell me where is the road I can call my own,
That I left, that I lost, so long ago.
All these years I have wondered, oh when
will I know,
There's a way, there's a road that will lead
me home.

After wind, After rain, when the dark is
done,

As I wake from a dream, in the gold of day,
Through the air there's a calling from far
away,
There's a voice I can hear that will lead me
home.

Rise up, follow me, come away is the call
With (the) love in your heart as the only
song
There is no such beauty as where you belong
Rise up, follow me, I will lead you home.

The Longing for Home

By Starhawk

from *Dreaming the Dark: Magic, Sex, and
Politics* (Beacon Press); Also #36 in "Lifting
Our Voices"

We are all longing to go home to some place
we have never been—a place half-
remembered and half-envisioned
we can only catch glimpses of from time to
time.

Community.

Somewhere, there are people to whom we
can speak with passion
without having the words catch in our
throats.

Somewhere a circle of hands
will open to receive us, eyes will light up as
we enter,
voices will celebrate with us whenever we
come into our own power.

Community means strength
that joins our strength to do the work that
needs to be done.

Arms to hold us when we falter.

A circle of healing.

A circle of friends.

Someplace where we can be free.

Guest House

by Jelaluddin Rumi (Coleman Barks, trans.)

This being human is a guesthouse.
Every morning is a new arrival.
A joy, a depression, a meanness,
some momentary awareness comes
as an unexpected visitor.
Welcome and entertain them all!

Even if they're a crowd of sorrows,
who violently sweep your house
empty of its furniture,
still, treat each guest honorably.
[S]he may be clearing you out
for some new delight.
The dark thought, the shame, the malice,
meet them at the door laughing,
and invite them in.
Be grateful for whoever comes,
because each has been sent
as a guide from beyond.

Videos and Podcasts

Belonging Creates and Undoes Us Both

Padraig O Tuama

<https://onbeing.org/programs/padraig-o-tuama-belonging-creates-and-undoes-us-both-mar2017/>

Pádraig Ó Tuama is a poet, theologian, and extraordinary healer in our world of fracture. He leads the Corrymeela community of Northern Ireland, a place that has offered refuge since the violent division that defined that country until the 1998 Good Friday Agreement. And Pádraig and Corrymeela extend a quiet, generative, and joyful force far beyond their northern coast to people around the world. "Over cups of tea, and over the experience of bringing people together," Pádraig says, it becomes possible "to talk with each other and be in the same room with the people we talk about."

Opening the Question of Race to the Question of Belonging

John A. Powell

<https://onbeing.org/programs/john-a-powell-opening-the-question-of-race-to-the-question-of-belonging/>

"Race is a little bit like gravity," John Powell says: experienced by all, understood by the few. He is an esteemed legal scholar and thinker who counsels all kinds of people and projects on the front lines of our present racial anguish and longings. Race is relational, he reminds us. It's as much about whiteness as about color. And it largely plays out, as we're learning through new science, in our unconscious minds.

Dare to refuse the origin myths that claim who you are

Chetan Bhatt

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

We all have origin stories and identity myths, our tribal narratives that give us a sense of security and belonging. But sometimes our small-group identities can keep us from connecting with humanity as a whole -- and even keep us from seeing others as human. It's time to change the question from "Where are you from?" to "Where are you going?"

Finding our way to true belonging

Brene Brown

<https://ideas.ted.com/finding-our-way-to-true-belonging/>

True belonging is not something you negotiate externally, it's what you carry in your heart. It's finding the sacredness in being a part of something.

Leaving, Loving & Coming Home

The Moth Radio Hour

<https://themoth.org/search/results>

In this episode we feature four stories about our relationship to home. Yearning for a place to call home, leaving one home in search of another and coming to find beauty and a true sense of belonging.

Articles

Belonging and How to Be at Home in Yourself

Maria Popova

<https://www.brainpickings.org/2015/06/29/david-whyte-belonging/>

To feel as if you belong is one of the great triumphs of human existence — and especially to sustain a life of belonging and to invite others into that... But it's interesting to think that ... our sense of slight woundedness around not belonging is actually one of our core competencies; that though the crow is just itself and the stone is just itself and the mountain is just itself, and the cloud, and the sky is just itself — we are

the one part of creation that knows what it's like to live in exile, and that the ability to turn your face towards home is one of the great human endeavors and the great human stories.

Reflection: A Candid Welcome; 10 Reasons You May Not Feel Welcome in a UU Congregation

Rev. Meg Riley

<http://www.uuworld.org/articles/candid-welcome-uu>

A list of welcoming and unwelcoming beliefs from a UU perspective. Engages the question, Is UUism about believing anything you want?

Knowing is Belonging

Abigail Pogrebin

<https://onbeing.org/blog/abigail-pogrebin-knowing-is-belonging/>

I didn't find myself feeling suffocated by the sameness; I was comforted by it. Awakened by it — to the warmth of kin beyond blood; comrades in habits, ethics, kvetching (complaining), anxiety, and yes, matzah.

Essay: We Must Change

Rosemary Bray McNatt

<http://www.uuworld.org/articles/uu-must-change>

We must admit that Unitarian Universalism has a specific, sometimes alienating culture, and we must change it.

Essay: The Power of Welcome in an Age of Loneliness *by Jennifer Bailey*

<https://onbeing.org/blog/jennifer-bailey-the-power-of-welcome-in-an-age-of-loneliness/>

“We're living in what's been termed “the age of loneliness”...One of our biggest sources of resilience in combating loneliness is what psychologists call “common humanity”: the degree to which you see your struggles as part of the human experience. “To feel less lonely in your stress, two things help,” writes Stanford psychologist Kelly McGonigal. “The first is to increase your awareness of other people's suffering. The second is to be more open about yours... [so] Over the past two months, I have gotten in the habit of breaking bread

with strangers over dinner tables small and large all across the United States...”

Reflection: Everything Belongs: The Three Boxes (True communities of welcome require “re-ordering”)

by Richard Rohr

Full piece found here: <https://cac.org/the-three-boxes-2016-12-06/>

Excerpt: “Whenever we're led out of normalcy into sacred, open space, it's going to feel like suffering, because it is letting go of what we're used to. This is always painful at some level. But part of us has to die if we are ever to grow larger... The role of the prophet is to lead us into sacred space by deconstructing the old space; the role of the priest is to teach us how to live fruitfully in sacred space. The prophet disconnects us from the false, and the priest reconnects us to the real at ever larger levels. If “priests” have been largely unsuccessful, it is because there are so few prophets. And to be honest, most ministers confuse the maintaining of order with re-order!

Music

Wayfaring Stranger *Rhiannon Giddens*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b1Z4PAZX9Bs>

“I'm goin home...”

Would You Harbor Me? (musical video meditation)

Sweet Honey in the Rock

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i0XBXJjoXJ4>

Leave The Light On (for myself!)

Overcoats

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3wLGdxw8_ao&t=69s

Home *by Phillip Phillips*

Original:

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

Cover: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KSN-vrO4IAk>

“Just know you're not alone, cause I'm going to make this place your home...”

Home

Edward Sharpe and the Magnetic Zeros
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4306i99LMXo>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tSTLv8cYBms>
Imagine your choir or whole congregation singing it together!

Come, Come, Whoever You Are *Shimshai*
- Live
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hdp1_QIT1gA&index=16&list=RDOvlPa28cVfA

Movies

Whale Rider

<https://www.intofilm.org/films/filmlist/78>
Tradition causes trouble in a family when a young Maori girl wants to take up what she believes is her rightful place at the head of her tribe.

Home (animated)

<https://www.intofilm.org/films/filmlist/78>
Colourful comedy adventure about a tribe of aliens in search of a new place to live.

Moonlight

https://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/moonlight_2016/
The tender, heartbreaking story of a young man's struggle to find himself, told across three defining chapters in his life as he experiences the ecstasy, pain, and beauty of falling in love, while grappling with his own sexuality.

Chocolat

https://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/1103080_chocolat
We must measure our goodness, not by what we don't do, what we deny ourselves, what we resist, or who we exclude. Instead, we should measure ourselves by what we embrace, what we create, and who we include?

Southern Comfort

https://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/1104978_southern_comfort
This 2001 award winning documentary chronicles the final year in the life of Robert

Eads, a transgender man living in the Deep South. An early and moving call for a more welcoming world.

Books

Braving the Wilderness: The Quest for True Belonging and the Courage to Stand Alone

Brene Brown
https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/34565022-braving-the-wilderness?from_search=true
A timely and important new book that challenges everything we think we know about cultivating true belonging in our communities, organizations, and culture

Belonging

Sameem Ali
https://www.amazon.com/All-About-Love-New-Visions/dp/0060959479/ref=mt_paperback?encoding=UTF8&me=
Abandoned by her parents, Sameem Ali spent six and a half years growing up in a children's home. When she was told that her family wanted to take her back she couldn't wait to start her new life with them. Instead, she returned to a dirty house where she was subjected to endless chores. Her mother began to beat her and her unhappiness drove her to self-harm.

Centering - Navigating Race, Authenticity, and Power in Ministry,

Edited by Mitra Rahnema
<http://www.uuabookstore.org/Centering-P18206.aspx>

In October 2015, a group of distinguished UU religious professionals of color gathered together in Chicago to embark on a radical project... It started with the premise that discussions of race in Unitarian Universalism have too often presupposed a White audience and prioritized the needs, education, and emotions of the White majority. The goal was to reframe Unitarian Universalist anti-oppression work by putting the voices, experiences and learnings of people of color at the center of the conversation.

Book: Belonging: A Culture of Place *by*

Bell Hooks

https://www.amazon.com/Belonging-Culture-Place-bell-hooks/dp/041596816X/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1497917277&sr=8-1&keywords=Belonging%3A+A+Culture+of+Place

“What does it mean to call a place home? Who is allowed to become a member of a community? When can we say that we truly belong? Traversing past and present, *Belonging* charts a cyclical journey in which Hooks moves from place to place, from country to city and back again, only to end where she began--her old Kentucky home... In these critical essays, hooks finds surprising connections that link of the environment and sustainability to the politics of race and class that reach far beyond Kentucky.”

Book: Voices from the Margins –

Editors: Jacqui James, Mark Morrison-Reed

<http://www.uuabookstore.org/Voices-from-the-Margins-P17223.aspx>

"This collection of reflections and aspirations invites us to listen to voices that have been silenced in the past. This kind of listening is vitally important to our religious movement. In order to create a beloved community--one that shares a powerful love and shapes a common purpose--we must know one another. In order to know one another, we must hear each other's stories, see the world through each other's eyes." - Rev. Peter Morales, from the Foreword

This packet was created based on the Soul Matters Sharing Circle model of small groups. To be used at Unity Church only.



<https://www.facebook.com/soulmatterssharingcircl>

