

First Unitarian Church in New Bedford

News & Views



WELCOME TO THE GIFT OF INTERDEPENDENCE

We adapt to the changing world.

We covenant to collectively transform and grow spiritually and ethically. Openness to change is fundamental to our Unitarian and Universalist heritages, never complete and never perfect.

“

Whether we and our politicians know it or not, Nature is party to all our deals and decisions, and she has more votes, a longer memory, and a sterner sense of justice than we do.

Wendell Berry

”



FROM THE MINISTER'S STUDIO

REV. KAREN LEBLANC
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“You are not IN the universe, you ARE the universe, an intrinsic part of it. Ultimately, you are not a person, but a focal point where the universe is becoming conscious of itself. What an amazing miracle.” -Eckhart Tolle

The feeling of rebirth is in the air and it isn't just spring in all of its glorious unfolding colors or the warmer days. It's the energy in our church right now that gives me the giggles and makes me jump up and down and do weird dances of joy. So many things are happening! Attendance has been up, visitors are coming back, we've had many YOUNG visitors, and the way our other young leaders here (I'm looking at you ToniAnne and Izzy!) have taken new young people under their wing and made them feel at home and excited about what we're doing is amazing. We have SEVEN new members this year and a wonderful infusion of kids breathing life into our church. Our New Members Dinner was a great success and we had a lovely time getting to know each other over a meal.

We have resurrected our CUUPS (Covenant of Unitarian Universalist Pagans) group and have had a consistent 30-plus people in attendance. Come and dance the maypole with us on May 4th!

APRIL SERVICES

APRIL 7: Star Trek,
Rev. Karen LeBlanc

APRIL 14: Poetry Service,
Rick Finneran

APRIL 21: Interdependence,
Rev. Karen LeBlanc

APRIL 28: Social Justice
Service with Way Cool
Sunday School, “The
Justice League”



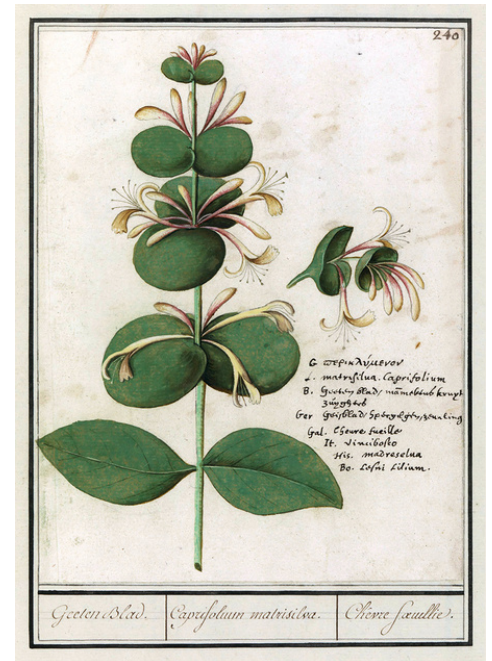
FROM THE MINISTER'S STUDIO, CONT.

Last week our church hosted Walt's Mobile Closet, an organization that helps provide free clothing to people in need. 102 people were able to get some nice new duds and it was a wonderful way to network with a bunch of other local non-profits. We can thank our administrator, Jessica, for organizing this and for doing so much to get us OUT THERE and make our church a way cooler place than ever before.

We've got some UMASS students helping to catalog our footstools, come up with a restoration plan for the Tiffany, and start creating content for our TikTok channel, all for their class projects. Our 40th Anniversary Jazz service is shaping up, but we could really use some volunteers to make this event the best it can be. That will be June 30.

Our Social Justice Committee has met with the Fairhaven UU church and we are finally building a bridge there, bringing us together to make our communities stronger and more equitable. We are trying to get our "Power to the People" solar-powered phone charging station off the ground to help our unhoused neighbors downtown, as well as improve our community cupboard and food pantry. The thrift store is going like gangbusters thanks to our dedicated volunteers and so many kind donations.

See what I mean? Things are happening! We are growing! This church is on FIRE! (In a good way.) April will bring my semi-annual Star Trek service (4/7), our annual Poetry service (4/14), and Yasmin's intergenerational service with the RE kids on 4/28, with a superhero theme. The energy is palpable right now and I couldn't be more excited about the future we are creating. Together, we RISE, church! May it be so. Bright Blessings-K





WAY COOL SUNDAY SCHOOL

YASMIN FLEFLEH-VINCENT,
DIRECTOR OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION
 flefleh@gmail.com

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

April 7: Interdependence - What is it?

What Can One Person Do When 6.8 Billion Are Frying the Planet? by Franke James

April 11: AHA! Sustainable Southcoast Earth Eve Parade - Please meet at 5:15 pm at the church or on Market St./NB Public Main Library. Please let us know if you plan to march and celebrate Earth Day every day, sign up in Parish House!

April 14: Poetry Service, The Web of Community - How we nurture it, and it nurtures us.

April 21: Caring for the Web of Creation, *You're Saved by Something Green* by Charlene Brotman. Dress rehearsal for "Justice League" service - Pancake Sunday, 10 am. Please RSVP by emailing flefleh@gmail.com

April 28: Way Cool Sunday School hosts the "Justice League" with the SJC, Teacher Appreciation during coffee hour.

BOOKS SUGGESTIONS

FOR ADULTS:

Braiding Sweetgrass
 by Robin Wall
 Kimmerer

Our Moon by Rebecca
 Boyle

FOR CHILDREN:

The Earth Gives More
 by Sue Fliess
 Illustrator Christiane
 Engel

*The Invisible Web: An
 Invisible String Story
 Celebrating Love and
 Universal Connection*
 by Patrice Karst,
 Illustrated by Joanne
 Lew-Vriethoff



WAY COOL SUNDAY SCHOOL, CONT.

Interdependence: We honor the interdependent web of all existence. With reverence for the great web of life and with humility, we acknowledge our place in it. We covenant to protect Earth and all beings from exploitation. We will create and nurture sustainable relationships of care and respect, mutuality and justice. We will work to repair harm and damaged relationships.

Passover Preparations

- Passover 2024 will be celebrated from April 22 - April 30.
- The first Seder will be on April 22 after nightfall, and the second Seder will be on April 23 after nightfall.
- Passover is celebrated by eating matzah (unleavened bread) and maror (bitter herbs).
- For the duration of the 8 (or 7 days in Israel) of Passover, which celebrates the emancipation of the Hebrews from Egyptian slavery, chametz (leaven) is strictly avoided.

April 21: dress rehearsal for “Justice League” at 10 am with a pancake breakfast. Please RSVP by emailing flefeh@gmail.com or let us know at Sunday School if you will be attending Dress Rehearsal/Pancake Sunday at 10 am to prepare for the Justice League Service on April 28th! All are welcome!



Please practice singing If I Had a Hammer By Pete Seeger and Lee Hays. We will practice on the 21st.

If I had a hammer
I'd hammer in the morning
I'd hammer in the evening
All over this land
I'd hammer out danger
I'd hammer out a warning
I'd hammer out love between my brothers and my sisters
All over this land



If I had a bell
I'd ring it in the morning
I'd ring it in the evening
All over this land
I'd ring out danger
I'd ring out a warning
I'd ring out love between my brothers and my sisters
All over this land

If I had a song
I'd sing it in the morning
I'd sing it in the evening
All over this land
I'd sing out danger
I'd sing out a warning
I'd sing out love between my brothers and my sisters
All over this land

Well I got a hammer
And I got a bell
And I got a song to sing
All over this land
It's the hammer of justice
It's the bell of freedom
It's the song about love between my brothers and my sisters
All over this land



VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Finance Committee

- Helps plan and execute the Annual Pledge Drive
- Strategizes fundraising plans for the year and more!

Outreach Committee

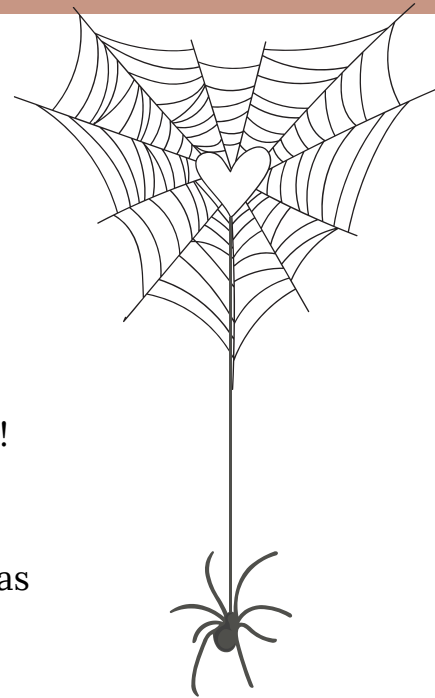
- Help design and distribute flyers
- Send out press releases about events
- Assist other committees with their outreach if needed and more!

40th Annual Jazz Service - June 30, 2024

- We will need about 12-15 volunteers for this event in areas such as
 - Raffle table
 - Kitchen help - food, dishes, cleaning up
 - Greeters to pass out programs
 - Soliciting sponsorships/ads from area businesses
 - Other areas as needed

To learn more, please email admin@uunwbedford, and the administrator can put you in touch with the Committee Chairs.

Why volunteer? Participation in a committee provides a sense of belonging and purpose. It's more than attending meetings; it's actively contributing to the shared vision and mission of the church. Whether involved in outreach, social justice, or community events, each committee member plays a unique role in shaping the collective identity of the First Unitarian Church. The connections formed within these committees go beyond casual interactions, evolving into deep and meaningful relationships that extend into our daily lives.





UPCOMING EVENTS

April 8: Hearts United

Struggling to support a loved one with mental illness? You're not alone. Come together with understanding hearts and open minds at Hearts United, our dedicated support group for families affected by mental illness.

At Hearts United, we offer a safe space for sharing, empathy, and support. Whether you're seeking guidance, solace, or simply a listening ear, our compassionate community is here for you.

Join us on **April 8th at 7:00 PM** as we unite in strength, resilience, and hope. Together, we can navigate the challenges and find comfort in knowing we are not alone. This group will take place on the second Monday of each month.

April 9: Trustees Meeting in the office, 6 PM. All are welcome to attend!

April 13: Yoga with Chris Swanson, 10 AM, \$5 donation suggested

April 14: Drum Circle, 7 pm

April 24: The International Perfume Bottle Association will be doing a tour of the sanctuary and the Tiffany mosaic

To see all upcoming events added to the calendar in real time, visit www.uunewbedford.org/calendar

Guest WiFi

Our WiFi issue has been resolved, thanks to Brenden from Best Buy. The new guest WiFi password is Chalice71. There will be updated cards in our facility with the new information.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

We are sad to announce the passing of our friend and former church member Alfredo Delatorre on March 24, 2024. Alfredo has been away from church for several years as his health declined, but we were always happy to see his smile when he visited. Our love and sympathy go out to his family and to his friend Bill Bennett, who cared for him so wonderfully for so long. When a service is planned, we will let you know.

Social Justice Committee

Meetings are held on Wednesdays at 6:30 pm via Zoom if you want to join. The Zoom meeting link can be found by visiting the calendar on our website, www.uunewbedford.org/calendar. Be part of the change you want to see in our community!

Pledge Reminders

Only three months left of Fiscal Year '24! Emails indicating the remainder of your pledge commitment were sent out in March. Our fiscal year ends on June 30, 2024. Please make sure all payments are sent in before then. Thank you for supporting the church and its ministry.

Food Pantry

Our indoor food pantry is in full swing! We added more shelves and will be regularly getting donations from the Boston Food Bank thanks to Lisa Rahn from the YMCA in New Bedford. The food pantry will be open to the public Tuesday-Thursday from 10 AM - 1 PM. Visitors are instructed to ring the office bell and a staff member or volunteer will open the food pantry doors. (There is a sign on the 8th Street doors with instructions for access.)

Items we will need regular donations of are shelf-stable milk, pasta, canned fruit, kid-friendly snacks, granola bars, and canned chicken, pork, and beef. Personal care items are also good! Shampoo, soap, toilet paper, toothpaste, and feminine hygiene products.

INTRICATE BEAUTY

By Quinn Gormley



“Have enough courage to trust love one more time and always one more time.”
—Maya Angelou

Lately, my ADHD coping mechanism of hyper-fixation has been about seaweed.

Seaweed is incredible, and I go through a seaweed phase about once a year. I've amassed a collection of seaweed and intertidal field guides. I often go digging through it whenever I'm near the water. I even took a marine botany class just for fun a few years ago. And my delightful sibling got me a book for my birthday a few years ago: the product of someone else's hyperfixation.

We went to the beach together recently: my family and some old friends. I was excited. The beach is full of things to wonder about, especially all the rockweed and dead man's fingers that wash ashore. But on the way there I couldn't shake the fear: Would I be too much?

Before we arrived, I felt the need to warn those around me how excited I was about seaweed and to apologize in advance. They know me. They love me. It would have been fine. But once on the beach, I held back. I didn't go hunting. I tried to read a different book. I ate some cheese. I pretended to be interested in other things.

I didn't go on about the incredible structure of seaweed. I didn't explain that it's actually just a colony of single cells: unlike vascular plants, all the cells in a seaweed plant are entirely independent of one another. They know where they are only through interaction with the cells next to them. With this information, and detecting the direction of sunlight, they form incredibly intricate patterns together to optimize access to nutrients and light in their particular ecological niche: one cell talking to the next.

Continued on the next page...

INTRICATE BEAUTY

Continued

I think this is my favorite thing about seaweed: it feels so much like my neurodiverse brain. One thought jumping to the next, rarely with order or purpose. I'm excited by this, and then, "Ooh, what about that." Over, and over, and over again. It's chaos, I imagine, to witness. But inside my head it's like *Ascophyllum nodosum*: There is order in that chaos. And it thrives, reaching ever closer to the light.

Next time, I hope I can trust those who love me to see the beauty with me too. My husband asked me if I was okay when we got back to the car. "I thought you'd be more excited; the beach was covered today."

All I could do was apologize: "The doubt got to me today."

Not every story of neurodiversity is one of overcoming. But it doesn't mean I can't try again. Those voices in our head that give us doubt can be so loud sometimes. But an embrace of the holy gifts we're given requires that we move through doubt and into grace.

Prayer

God, please grant me the strength to love all you've given me without doubt or shame. May I remember that I am your blessed creation, each quirk of my being a sign of your delight. I am grateful.

About the Author

Quinn Gormley (she/her) is a spiritual caregiver, equity advocate, and student at Chicago Theological Seminary. She has substantial work backgrounds in clinical, policy, and non-profit settings and is dedicated to work that lifts up marginalized people, encourages communities to...

BLUE: Sanctuary
 GREEN: Tryworks
 PINK: Maja Capek Room

The Thrift Shop is open Tuesdays and Saturdays from 10 AM - 1 PM

APRIL 2024						
S	M	T	W	TH	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6 
7 Sunday Service 11 AM	8	9 Board of Trustees Meeting 6 PM  GNBCS	10 Social Justice Zoom 6:30 Sea Chanty Chorus	11 AHA! New Bedford SouthCoast Lessons	12	13 Yoga 10 AM 
14 Sunday Service 11 AM Drum Circle 7PM	15	16  GNBCS	17 Social Justice Zoom 6:30 Sea Chanty Chorus	18 SouthCoast Lessons	19	20 Yoga 10 AM Festival Theater 12-4 
21 Sunday Service 11 AM	22	23  GNBCS	24 International Perfume Bottle Association Tour of Tiffany Mosaic SJC Zoom 6:30 Sea Chanty Chorus	25 SouthCoast Lessons	26	27 Birthday Party 1 PM 
28 Sunday Service 11 AM	29	30 				

Check out the calendar on our website to see real-time updates by visiting www.uunewbedford.org/calendar

Welcome to the Gift of Interdependence

Talk of interdependence immediately calls up the work of *saving* the planet, rightly so. But what if the first step toward saving the planet is learning to *speak* to it? And hear it? Could our collective failure to confront the climate crisis be rooted in our lost ability to listen? What if the quickly-going-extinct creatures don't want our sympathy, but our ear? What if the fraying of the web isn't just about us failing to act, but also us having forgotten who we are. And what if nature itself is the only one who can help us remember?

It's a month of tricky questions, friends. As we begin, may these words by Rev. Kaaren Anderson send us on our way.

We Are One

Perhaps if I could pull my senses back
to the scraping squeak of the window opening
that welcomes in the pasture's chorus of peepers,
whose resonate tones glide over my bed sheet and mental haze,
I'd be able to hear my amphibian friends' primordial call:
We are one, we are one, we are one

Perhaps if I could recall the rapid thrum
of the nine hummingbirds beating wings,
whipping in and out around the feeder,
with a thrummmm, thrummmm, thrummmm
on that cold Montana morning in May,
I'd remember that my heart beat synched with metronomic ease
to their tiny thrumming selves and rhythmic reminder:
We are one, we are one, we are one

Perhaps if I could be real still
and lay my body on the syrupy mud
along the creek behind the wood
and hear the ferns unfurling in unison
and the roots of the poplar stretching toward the spring,
I'd remember that the universe sings a song to us,
each minute, of every hour, of every day, of every year:
We are one, we are one, we are one

Perhaps if I made it a priority to listen to that siren song,
I'd ask the right questions, and make the right statements;
and return to the communion of creatures of which I am a part.

The truth is we make this planet about us, and only us
and when we do, the earth calls our separate selves back, singing:
*"Ask yourself, you beautiful, thoughtful, gorgeous species,
How much of the planet are you really entitled to?
How much of the planet are you really entitled to?"*

And with the peepers, and the hummingbirds and the ferns and the roots,
I would respond:
We are one, we are one, we are one.

Our Spiritual Exercises

It's one thing to analyze a theme; it's quite another to experience it. By pulling us out of the space of *thinking* and into the space of *doing*, these exercises invite us to figure out not just what we have to say about life, but also what life has to say *to us*!

Pick the exercise that speaks to you the most. Come to your group ready to share why you picked the exercise you did and what gift it gave you.

Option A

Build a Relationship with a Sibling from the Natural World

May we love the earth not as an object—beautiful nature to pass through—but as a complex, miraculous subject that we build a relationship with.

[Courtney Martin](#)

This exercise is all about leaning into Courtney Martin's wish for us. We know how to appreciate nature. And, unfortunately, we are very skilled at how to *use* it. But we are less practiced at building a relationship with it. So, this month, let's work on a two-way, instead of one-way, relationship with the natural world.

The key here is reciprocity, even friendship. Pick an animal, flower, plant or body of water that you have an affinity for or want to deepen your relationship with. Then spend a week (or the entire month) and engage that "natural sibling" in some or all of these ways:

- [Introduce yourself](#) and get to [know it](#).
- Take care of it somehow; Support its thriving.
- Visit it regularly, like you would a close friend.
- Capture its beauty by [photographing](#), painting or [drawing](#) it at different times of day and in [different weather](#)
- Learn about how it came to live in the place it does. Is it natural to your landscape or not?
- Learn its [scientific name](#).
- Learn [its role](#) in [its ecosystem](#).
- Learn how [Native Americans relate](#) to it.
- Spend an entire [day around it](#).
- [Sleep](#) near it.
- Practice the spiritual discipline of [listening to it](#) or even [talking to it](#). Want some guidance about listening to the natural world? Try [here](#), [here](#) and [here](#)
- Bring questions to it. [Ask it for advice](#).

Option B

Be Like Noah

In the biblical story of Noah's Ark, God made sure that Noah saved all the animals along with himself. Clearly God felt that the new world would not thrive without all the natural creatures in it. But one also wonders if God commanded this because God knew we human beings *also* needed the community of creatures to thrive!

To honor the gift and miracle of the animal community, let's be like Noah this month and ***collect as many animals as we can, just with a camera rather than an ark.***

As inspiration, check out how a group called The Art of Creation did a similar project:

<https://www.ecodisciple.com/blog/circlewood-photo-ark/?ref=the-ecological-disciple-newsletter>.

Option C

Reconnect with the Place You Already Are

Who we are is deeply intertwined with where we live. And yet our connection to and with our nearby world is often frayed. So, in an effort to reconnect with your sense of place, we invite you this month to go on some “micro-adventures”!

Here’s more information to explain it and guide you along your way:

- <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/07/05/well/live/awe-microadventure-exploration.html>
- <https://www.noemamag.com/a-single-small-map-is-enough-for-a-lifetime/>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vwHwXld0pxE&t=119s>
- <https://www.outsideonline.com/adventure-travel/destinations/north-america/outdoor-activities-ideas-close-to-home-fun/>

Option D

Find Yourself in the World of Climate Apathy

Social psychologists are in wide agreement that the vast majority of us suffer from some level of [climate apathy](#). However, they are quick to point out that, in most cases, this apathy isn’t driven by us not knowing the facts about the climate emergency, but instead by us not knowing how to act on what we know.

Luckily, moral philosopher, Elizabeth Cripps, is here to help. She has written a guide for how to escape climate apathy. Here’s the link to it: <https://psyche.co/guides/how-to-escape-climate-apathy-and-help-to-avert-catastrophe>

So, for this exercise, read through her guide and do two things:

1. **Identify yourself in her writing.** She lifts up many different attitudes and struggles in her guide. Find the ones that describe the feelings you have. Where in her article do you see a reflection of yourself?
2. **Follow one of her suggestions.** Cripps offers many suggestions. Find one that calls to you and engage it this month, alone or with a partner.

Option E

Write a Letter to the Future

Parent-activist [Jill Kubit](#) and the behavioral scientist Trisha Shrum, [created a project](#) called [DearTomorrow](#) which challenges people to [write a letter](#) to a child who is important to them, for those [children to receive in 2050](#). The instructions are to express your hopes and fears about the climate crisis in your letter, describing the world you want for them, in 27 years’ time. You are also asked to write about what you think especially needs to change and what you will do to help make that happen.

So, for your exercise this month, take on [DearTomorrow’s challenge](#) of writing this letter to an important child. It helps to do it with a partner, so enlist someone to not only write a letter, but also get together with you to read and discuss each other’s letter and how the process was for you.

Option F

Name the Gift of Being Bound in Friendship

Our friendships shape, save and inspire us in ways too many to count. This form of interdependence is among our most treasured. But we rarely tell our friends how much being bound to them means.

So this month, tell them! Yes, it will be awkward. Yes, it will feel incomplete and imperfect. But do it anyway. Our friends deserve to know what a gift they are to us.

If telling them off the cuff is too intimidating, consider writing it out and reading it to them. Watch this video to get inspired: https://www.instagram.com/reel/C0K2d_6JinX/?igsh=MTFINnBneHRsMzUzYw%3D%3D

Option G

Ask Them about Interdependence!

One of the best ways to explore our monthly themes is to have conversations about them with people who are close to you. It not only deepens our conversations but also our relationships. Below is a list of “interdependence questions” to help you on your way. Be sure to let your conversation partner know in advance that this won’t be a typical conversation. Telling them a bit about Soul Matters will help set the stage.

Interdependence Questions:

- Has a tree ever *spoken* to you? How about [a river](#)? Or the ocean? Or the moon? What about [a weed](#)?
- Do you think age impacts the way we *connect with* the interdependent web?
- How does climate anxiety or grief show up in your life?
- Do you feel that “sacrifice” has a central role to play in addressing the climate crisis?
- When was the last time you became thoroughly absorbed in the curiosity of understanding [another creature's life](#)?
- How has the place where you live shaped the way you understand and approach life? And yourself?
- Do you struggle with “burdening” others with your troubles and worries? If so, who or what led to your belief that your grief, worry or struggle is unwanted by or too heavy for others?
- Have you ever been “loved” by the natural world?

Option H

Which Interdependence Quote Calls to You?

Spend some time this month reading through the quotes in the *Companion Pieces* section below to ***find the one that speaks most powerfully to you***. We encourage you to use the same discernment practice with these quotes as you do with the packet’s list of questions:

- **Read through the list of quotes** a few times, noting which ones “shimmer” (i.e. call to you or have an emotional gravitational pull for you). It often helps to circle or star these quotes that stand out.
- With each reading, **narrow your focus** in on those that stick out, until you finally **settle on the one quote** that pulls at you the most.
- Then make space to **reflect** on the gift, challenge or insight your chosen quote is offering you.
- Some of us may want to **go further** and capture your reflections with journaling or creative expression.

Come to your group ready to share your quote and the journey it took you on.

Your Question

This list of questions is an aid for deep reflection. They are not meant to be answered as much as to take you on a journey. Read through the questions 2-3 times until one question sticks out for you and captures your attention, or as some faith traditions say, until one of the questions "shimmers."

Then reflect on that question using one or all of these questions:

- *What is going on in my life right now that makes this question so pronounced for me?*
- *How might my inner voice be trying to speak to me through it?*
- *How might Life or my inner voice be trying to offer me a word of comfort or challenge through this question?*

Writing out your thoughts often enables you to go deeper. It also sometimes helps to read the list of questions to a friend or loved one and ask them which question they think is the question you need to wrestle with.

A note about self-care: *Often these questions take us to a vulnerable space. It is OKAY to ignore the questions that may be triggering – or lean in if that feels safe.*

1. What aspect of nature did you connect with most meaningfully as a child? A dog? A horse? A tree? The ocean? Lightning bugs? The rain? A path in the woods?
2. Do you think age impacts the way we *care for* the interdependent web?
3. Do you think age impacts the way we *connect with* the interdependent web?
4. Has a beloved young person ever altered the way you think about your relationship with nature or the planet?
5. Where do you feel your connection to nature in your body? What happens to you when that place of connection is stirred? What has that feeling of connection communicated to you most recently?
6. Do you feel that "sacrifice" has a central role to play in addressing the climate crisis?
7. When was the last time you became thoroughly absorbed in the curiosity of understanding another creature's life?
8. How has the place where you live shaped the way you understand and approach life? And yourself?
9. Some of us *live in* a place and others of us *belong to* a place. Have you found a place you belong to yet?
10. What time of day do you feel most like "yourself"?
11. Has a tree ever *spoken* to you? How about a river? Or the ocean? Or the moon? What about a weed?
12. Has your commitment to community been tripped up by the trap of self-improvement?
13. We are glad to support and bear the burdens of others. But many of us wouldn't dare "burden" those same people with *our* troubles. What has tricked you into thinking that your grief, worry or struggle is unwanted by or too heavy for others? Who or what taught you that the weight of your worries must be carried by yourself alone?
14. Have you ever had a friend that "birthed a new world in you"?
15. **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 find it.

Companion Pieces

Recommended Resources for Personal Exploration & Reflection

The following resources are 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 you thinking and open you up to new ways of imagining the gift of interdependence.

Wise Words

A human being is a part of the whole called by us 'the universe'... [But we] experience ourselves, our thoughts and feelings as something separated from the rest, a kind of optical delusion of our consciousness. This delusion is a kind of prison for us, restricting us to our personal desires and to affection for a few persons nearest to us. Our task must be to free ourselves from this prison by widening our circle of compassion to embrace all living creatures and the whole of nature in its beauty.

Albert Einstein

And if it's true we are alone,
we are alone together,
the way blades of grass
are alone, but exist as a field.
Sometimes I feel it,
the green fuse that ignites us,
the wild thrum that unites us...

[Rosemerry Wahtola Trommer](#)

You are not IN the universe, you ARE the universe, an intrinsic part of it. Ultimately, you are not a person, but a focal point where the universe is becoming conscious of itself. What an amazing miracle.

Eckhart Tolle

Douglas Steere, a Quaker teacher, says that the ancient question, "Who am I?" inevitably leads to a deeper one, "Whose am I?" – because there is no identity outside of relationship. You can't be a person by yourself. To ask "Whose am I?" is to extend the question far beyond the little self-absorbed self, and wonder, Who needs you? Who loves you? To whom are you accountable? To

whom do you answer? Whose life is altered by your choices? With whose life, whose lives, is your own all bound up, inextricably, in obvious or invisible ways?

[Victoria Stafford](#)

Each friend represents a world in us, a world possibly not born until they arrive, and it is only by this meeting that a new world is born.

Anais Nin

Each experience of love nudges us toward the Story of Interbeing, because it only fits into that story and defies the logic of Separation.

[Charles Eisenstein](#)

Frequently in my practice, patients tell me that they often cry in private. I ask them whether they ever allow their grief to be witnessed and shared with others. There is usually a quick retort of "No, I couldn't do that. I don't want to be a burden to anyone else." ...We need to recover our right to ask for help in grief, otherwise it will continue to recycle perpetually. Grief has never been private; it has always been communal. Subconsciously, we are awaiting the presence of others, before we can feel safe enough to drop to our knees on the holy ground of sorrow.

[Francis Weller](#)

We are all broken by something. We have all hurt someone and have been hurt... The ways in which I have been hurt—and have hurt others—are different from the ways [others have] suffered and caused suffering. But our shared brokenness connects us.

Bryan Stevenson

When members of the Native American Blackfoot tribe meet each other, they don't ask "How are you?" Instead, they ask "How are the connections?"

[Jeremy Lent](#)

Much as I enjoy popular New Age commentary on love, I am often struck by the dangerous narcissism fostered by spiritual rhetoric that pays so much attention to individual self-improvement and so little to the practice of love within the context of community. Packaged as a commodity, spirituality becomes no different from an exercise program. While it may lead to the consumer feeling better about his or her life, its power to enhance our communion with ourselves and others in a sustained way is inhibited.

[bell hooks](#)

If you want to go fast, go alone.
If you want to go far, go together.

African Proverb

We never know how our small activities will affect others through the invisible fabric of our connectedness. In this exquisitely connected world, it's never a question of 'critical mass.' It's always about critical connections.

Grace Lee Boggs

Our values arise from our identity. If someone defines themselves as an isolated individual, they will feel entitled to pursue their own happiness at the expense of others. Someone who identifies primarily with their nation will have no qualms about putting up barriers to prevent others from entering... that old worldview of separation has expired. It's not just dangerous, leading us to the precipice of ecological devastation and climate breakdown—it's plain wrong.

[Jeremy Lent](#)

There is nobody in this country who got rich on their own. Nobody. You built a factory out there-- good for you. But I want to be clear. You moved your goods to market on roads the rest of us paid for. You hired workers the rest of us paid to educate. You were safe in your factory because of police forces and fire forces that the rest of us paid for... Now look. You built a factory and it turned into something terrific

or a great idea--God bless! Keep a hunk of it. But part of the underlying social contract is you take a hunk of that and pay forward for the next kid who comes along.

Senator Elizabeth Warren

I wish the knowledge were easier to come by, that individualism is just a scam, that you are always the butterfly wings. You are always a flap of the storm... You must not believe the lying lie that you do not matter, that whatever change you can organize is so insufficient as to not be worth your time...

[Rev. Julián Jamaica Soto](#)

Here is the question we must at last confront: Is land merely a source of belongings, or is it the source of our most profound sense of belonging? We can choose... You, right now, can choose to set aside the mindset of the colonizer and become native to place, you can choose to belong.

[Robin Wall Kimmerer](#)

Whether we and our politicians know it or not, Nature is party to all our deals and decisions, and she has more votes, a longer memory, and a sterner sense of justice than we do.

[Wendell Berry](#)

We Americans are not usually thought to be a submissive people, but of course we are. Why else would we allow our country to be destroyed? Why else would we be rewarding its destroyers? Why else would we all — by proxies we have given to greedy corporations and corrupt politicians — be participating in its destruction? Most of us are still too sane to piss in our own cistern, but we allow others to do so and we reward them for it. We reward them so well, in fact, that those who piss in our cistern are wealthier than the rest of us. How do we submit? By not being radical enough. Or by not being thorough enough, which is the same thing.

[Wendell Berry](#)

You carry Mother Earth within you. She is not outside of you. Mother Earth is not just your environment. In that insight of inter-being, it is possible to have real communication with the Earth, which is the highest form of prayer.

[Thich Nhat Hanh](#)

How monotonous our speaking becomes when we speak only to ourselves! And how insulting to the other beings – to foraging black bears and twisted old cypresses – that no longer sense us talking to them, but only about them... Small wonder that rivers and forests no longer compel our focus or our fierce devotion. For we walk about such entities only behind their backs, as though they were not participants in our lives. Yet if we no longer call out to the moon slipping between the clouds, or whisper to the spider setting the silken struts of her web, well, then the numerous powers of this world will no longer address us – and if they still try, we will not likely hear them.

[David Abram](#)

Weed, it is you with your bad reputation that I love the most. Teach me not to care what anyone has to say about me. Help me to be in the world for no purpose at all except for the joy of sunlight and rain. Keep me close to the edge where every wild thing begins.

[Tom Hennen](#)

Your great mistake is to act the drama as if you were alone... To feel abandoned is to deny the intimacy of your surroundings. Surely, even you, at times, have felt the grand array; the swelling presence, and the chorus, crowding out your solo voice... Put down the weight of your aloneness and ease into the conversation. The kettle is singing even as it pours you a drink... Everything is waiting for you.

[David Whyte](#)

In some Native languages the term for plants translates to “those who take care of us.”

[Robin Wall Kimmerer](#)

If you find yourself... hearing, again, the earth's great, sonorous moan that says... all you love will turn to dust... Do not raise your small voice against it... Instead, curl your toes into the grass... Walk through the garden's dormant splendor. Say only, thank you.

[Ross Gay](#)

I've come to believe... we already know our oneness with each other, so the process of coming to consciousness... is a process of recollecting. When we awake... We will understand that we have never been alone.

[Rob Spiegel](#)

Music

Two different playlists for each of our monthly themes: one in Spotify and another in YouTube. They are organized as a journey of sorts, so consider listening from beginning to end and using the playlists as musical meditations.

- Click [here](#) for the **Spotify playlist** on Interdependence.
- Click [here](#) for the **YouTube playlist** on Interdependence

Articles

Re-Composing Shakespeare

<https://13tonsoflove.substack.com/p/re-composing-shakespeare>

Greed Does Not Have to Define Our Relationship to Land, Robin Wall Kimmerer

<https://lithub.com/robin-wall-kimmerer-greed-does-not-have-to-define-our-relationship-to-land/>

“He is the obscene of the Anthropocene... Windigo is the name for that which cares more for itself than for anything else... Windigo tales arose in a commons-based society where sharing was a survival value... But in a profit-based society, the indulgent self-interest that our people once held as monstrous is now celebrated as success. Americans are called on to admire what our people viewed as unforgivable...”

Living in the Shelter of Each Other

<https://kathrynwonders.wordpress.com/2015/05/03/the-shelter-of-each-other/>

Smoking gun proof': fossil fuel industry knew of climate danger as early as 1954

<https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2024/jan/30/fossil-fuel-industry-air-pollution-fund-research-caltech-climate-change-denial>

Videos & Podcasts

Dance With Life

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O0AC9tT2iYk&t=257s>

Understanding Interconnectedness

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kmvwG-tD918>

Gotta love [this kid's way](#) of getting close to nature!

Between the Earth and the Sky: The interconnective art of Wangechi Mutu

<https://vimeo.com/575476465>

Ubuntu: The Essence of Being Human, Bishop Desmond Tutu

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=44xbZ8MN1uk>

Fighting Climate Change with Art

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xfrC_tBSI_k

Stop-Motion Film Warns of Climate Crisis

<https://www.thisiscolossal.com/2023/12/up-in-smoke-wwf/>

Got Climate Doom? Here's What You Can Do to Actually Make a Difference

<https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/10/opinion/climate-change-personal-actions.html?>

Why Humans Are So Bad At Thinking About Climate Change

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DkZ7BJQupVA>

New Climate Promises, Same Old Global Warming

<https://www.nytimes.com/2022/07/12/opinion/net-zero-global-warming.html>

To Save The Climate, Reimagine Capitalism

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fua_rUk0zk0&t=126s

Exposing UN Greenwashing

<https://www.planetcritical.com/p/exposing-un-greenwashing>

Related articles [here](#) & [here](#)

The Case For A More Radical Climate Movement

<https://www.vox.com/vox-conversations-podcast/22691428/vox-conversations-climate-change-andreas-malm>

Books

[Braiding Sweetgrass](#)

[Our Moon](#): How Earth's Celestial Companion Transformed the Planet, Guided Evolution, and [Made Us Who We Are](#)

[The Hidden Life of Trees](#): What They Feel, How They Communicate

[The Inner Life of Animals](#): Love, Grief, and Compassion

Movies

[My Octopus Teacher](#)

[The Elephant Whisperers](#)

[The Hottest August](#)

[The World Before Your Feet](#)

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