



Soul Matters

What does it mean to be a
people of HOPE?

Contents

<u>Calendar Connections</u>	<u>2</u>
<u>Chalice Lightings & Opening Words</u>	<u>3</u>
<u>Meditations & Prayers</u>	<u>5</u>
<u>Readings</u>	<u>8</u>
<u>Rituals</u>	<u>14</u>
<u>Music</u>	<u>15</u>
<u>Stories For All Ages</u>	<u>20</u>
<u>Sermon Seeds</u>	<u>21</u>
<u>Sermons</u>	<u>29</u>
<u>Closing Words</u>	<u>31</u>
<u>Support & Connection</u>	<u>33</u>

Calendar Connections

Click on the name on each event for more information or inspiration.

Interfaith:

- [Advent](#) (Christian) December 3 -24 (more [here](#) and [here](#))
- [Bodhi Day](#) (Buddha's Enlightenment) - Dec 8
- [Hanukkah](#) (Jewish) - Dec 12 – 20 (more [here](#) and [here](#))
- [Yule](#), Solstice (Pagan/Wiccan) - Dec 21
- Christmas Eve - Dec 24 (Sunday)
- Christmas Day - Dec 25 (Monday)
- [Watch Night](#)/Freedom's Eve (Christian) - Dec. 31
- [Kwanzaa](#) - Dec 26 - Jan 1 (more [here](#) and [here](#))

National & Cultural Observances:

- [Drunk](#) and [Drugged](#) Driving Prevention Month
- [Seasonal Depression](#) Awareness Month
- [World AIDS Day](#) - Dec. 1
- International Day of [Persons with Disabilities](#) - Dec. 3
- [Human Rights Day](#) - Dec 10th
- Anniversary of [Sandy Hook](#) Shootings - Dec 14th

Important Historical Events:

- [Rosa Parks](#) Arrested - Dec. 1 (1955)
- [Montgomery's buses](#) are desegregated - Dec. 21 (1956)

For Fun and On the Fringe:

- [Nobel Prize](#) Day - Dec 10
- How [the Grinch](#) Stole Christmas shown for first time - Dec 18, 1966
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VOrN2gkhB9A>
- [Festivus](#) for [the rest of us](#) – Dec 23
- Copyright registration of Star Trek [theme song](#) - Dec 27, 1966
 - Star Trek is credited with the first interracial kiss on prime-time television in the US and the first African American actor in a main character on prime time

Chalice Lightings & Opening Words

Hymn to the Light

David Breeden

<http://www.uua.org/worship/words/chalice-lighting/hymn-light>

Our light is the light of the sun,
keeper of all we love;
Our light is the light of the earth,
provider of sustenance;
Our light is the light of all living things,
life precious like our own.
Our light is the light of each of us,
bound together in need and hope;
Our light is the light of the cosmos,
keeper of all we know.

In the Bleak and Cold Winter

Cynthia Landrum

<http://www.uua.org/worship/words/chalice-lighting/bleak-and-cold-winter>

In the bleak and cold winter,
We gather ourselves in
To light the fire to warm our spirits,
To kindle the flame of love and hope.

In Memory of all the flames

Amarette Callaway

<http://www.uua.org/worship/words/chalice-lighting/memory-all-flames>

In memory of all the flames that didn't die—
in the midst of darkness,
in spite of the darkness, we light this flame today.
"The light shines in the darkness,
and the darkness did not overcome it." (John 1:5 NRSV)

Chalice Lighting

Laura Wallace

<http://www.uua.org/worship/words/chalice-lighting/determined-seed>

As frozen earth holds the determined seed,
this sacred space holds our weariness, our
worry, our laughter and our celebration.
Let us bring seed and soul into the light
of thought, the warmth of community,
and the hope of love.
Let us see together, hear together

Afraid of the Dark

Andrew Pakula

<http://www.uua.org/worship/words/chalice-lighting/afraid-dark>

In sightless night, terrors draw near
Nameless fears of talon and tooth
Hopelessness yawns before us—an abyss
Alone and unknown in the gloom, longing for the dawn
O sacred flame blaze forth—wisdom brought to life
Guide us—
With the light of hope
The warmth of love
The beacon of purpose and meaning
Because we are all afraid of the dark
Let there be light

The Light for Everyone Who Comes into the World

Elizabeth M Strong

<http://www.uua.org/worship/words/chalice-lighting/symbol-light-chalice-lighting>

Reverently I offer this symbol of our hope and high intent.
Reverently I bequeath this flame to you.
This is the light that is lit for everyone who comes into the world.
Bear this light to others, one by one.
Let the flame go from life to life till all is lit with its warmth.
Tell that the light means wisdom
Tell that the light means kindness
Tell that the light means understanding
Tell that the light means tolerance
Tell that the light means sacrifice
Tell that the light is a vision of a fairer world.
Tell that this is the light that is lit for everyone who comes into the world.

We have come into this room of hope

Libbie D Stoddard

<http://www.uua.org/worship/words/opening/5448.shtml>

We have come into this room of hope
where our hearts and minds are opened to the future.
We have come into this room of justice
where we set aside our fear to name freely every oppression.
We have come into this room of love
where we know that no lives are insignificant.
We have come into this room of song
where we unite our voices
in the somber and the beautiful melodies of life.

Meditations & Prayers

Add the Alleluias

Paul R Beedle

<http://www.uua.org/worship/words/prayer/add-alleluias>

Let us contemplate the Spirit together:

Spirit of Life and Love, Justice and Peace:

Day in and day out wait weary tasks,

burdens we lift again, worn paths we wear some more,

Want, and means worn thin, and fatigue—

Pain and grief, coldness of heart, bitter and weary days

Where we know desolation, how do we call forth hope?

When our hearts buried, sunken down, how do we dig out? rise up?

What healing touch do we long for?

What balm might we take and share?

Come what may, O Spirit of Life:

May we keep a ray of light, for our inward path;

a living water, in the depths of us;

a cleansing breath, at our core.

May we keep them for ourselves, and to share.

May we call forth from each other vitality and tenacity.

May love rest in us. May justice live through us.

May we have the touch to call others back

to life and love, justice and peace.

May we sing back their songs, and add the alleluias.

In the Spirit, by the Spirit, with the Spirit giving power, so may it be. Amen.

Let us enter into silence together.

You Are the Holiday Miracle

Gwen Matthews

<http://www.uua.org/worship/words/affirmation/you-are-holiday-miracle>

As December opens up before us, we welcome in the gift of reflection. We turn toward our holiday celebrations and search for common threads of meaning.

We begin with Yule, the winter solstice, and we are invited to explore duality, cycles, and seasons, and to witness the Holly King being overcome by the Oak King. Yule reminds us that we all partake in the miracle of renewal.

Hanukkah, the festival of lights, commemorates a time of miracles when the faith of the Jewish people sustained them to reclaim their holy temple and keep the light of the menorah burning for eight days.

Christmas, the celebration of Jesus' humble birth in a manger, offers us to revisit the miracle of birth and the desire to find saviors to heal the scars of humanity.

Here, in our church, you are just as much a holiday miracle as the turning of the earth, as persistence and dedication to a faith, as the creation of each new life. We see the love you give to others, the space you create to hold one another's joys and sorrows, and the generosity and spirit you entrust to this community.

You are the holiday miracle. This community is one of miracle-makers.

Advent

David O Rankin

<http://www.uua.org/worship/words/meditation/advent>

During the Advent season, we celebrate the qualities of faith, hope, love, and joy. Yet these must be viewed through the prism of paradox.

No Faith is worthy without the capacity to doubt all things—for then it is only credulity.

No Hope is possible without the specter of defeat in the wings—for then it is only dreaming.

No Love is strong without the dread of loss in the heart—for then it is only passion.

No Joy is complete without the certainty of sorrow in the future—for then it is only frivolity.

Thus, it is wrong to mislead people with simplistic notions, for they distract us from the fullness of life. After all, the seas have storms, the clouds have lightning, and the roses have thorns—forever

Christmas Eve Candlelight Meditation

Gary Kowalski

Full Meditation found here: <http://www.uua.org/worship/words/meditation/154772.shtml>

“Once more the year's turned round...

bringing us always back to Christmas...

Telling us that history isn't just chasing its tail,

Not merely repeating the same old tired story, over and over

Of dog-eat-dog, might-makes-right, every-man-for-himself, blow
for-blow,

Not a tale told by an idiot,

But assuring us that history has a direction and time has a purpose,

That lines are real, as well as circles

That the human saga has a goal

Still to be realized

Yet mysteriously present, already here among us,

That the Holy is enacting a new story on the earth...”

Christmas Eve Prayer

Kristin Grassel Schmidt

Source of all gifts, Giver of all peace,

On this silent and holy night we celebrate once again our deep faith that this venture we call existence is not meaningless, is not hopeless.

We celebrate once again that though the world is mired in war and hatred, prejudice and greed, the human family was always meant for better things.

As the earth yields to the cold of winter, as our bodies yield to the tiredness of night, as our skepticism yields to the joy of this season of family, friends, and fellowship, the world will one day yield to the power of Love.

For the light of Love - our lived and embodied Love - shines in the darkness, and the darkness will not overcome it.

God whose other name is Love, on this silent and holy night rekindle in us a curious wonder about how Love's light comes to birth in, with, and among us.

Rekindle our childlike excitement about how that newborn Love might grow and change, challenge and transform us, and the world around us.

Just as a single flame recalls the noonday sun, may our time in worship - this silent and holy night - remind us ever of the power of almighty Love:

Love that we so often have no room for; Love always born fragile and vulnerable; Love endangered by cynicism and apathy; Love nurtured and reared by human care; Love willing to give up being liked for what is right; Love that speaks truth to power; Love that risks even life itself to insist the Truth – Truth that everyone is a sacred gift; Truth that everyone bears the image of God; Truth that the Light of the World shines through us all.

These and all things we pray for Love's sake.

Amen.

Readings

The Winter of Listening

David Whyte

Full poem found [here](#)

“...What we strive for
in perfection
is not what turns us
into the lit angel
we desire

What disturbs
and then nourishes
has everything
we need...

Inside everyone
is a great shout of joy [and hope]
waiting to be born.

Even with summer
so far off
I feel it grown in me
now and ready
to arrive in the world...

So let this winter
of listening
be enough
for the new life
I must call my own....”

Still the Moon Increases

Nancy Shaffer

Full poem found [here](#)

“You think the ocean should dry to sand because
all the tears it held, you have used up.
You have stolen water even from the clouds.

But the ocean is not dried, nor the clouds
gone, though you have cried them both,
multiplied, and more.

You rub your eyes that grains still ripen,
plums turn blue, still the moon increases.

You thought all of this was gone...

But, without your doing, the world is fashioned
in this way: moments
become other moments; steps
lead somewhere; all things breathe...
you are not betrayed..."

Blessing of Hope

Jan Richardson, from The Cure for Sorrow

So may we know
the hope
that is not just
for someday
but for this day—
here, now,
in this moment
that opens to us:

hope not made
of wishes
but of substance,

hope made of sinew
and muscle
and bone,

hope that has breath
and a beating heart,

hope that will not
keep quiet
and be polite,

hope that knows
how to holler
when it is called for,

hope that knows
how to sing
when there seems
little cause,

hope that raises us
from the dead—
not someday
but this day,
every day,
again and
again and
again.

Hope, An Owner's Manual

Barbara Kingsolver

https://books.google.com/books?id=cWg_BAAAQBAJ&pg=PA130&lpg=PA130&dq=Hope;+An+Owner%27s+Manual+kingsolver&source=bl&ots=D8RAnLQStA&sig=xk46F96myL6VuTOfapiM0o5g2lg&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwirmcj3p8bWAhUJsVQKHdboCvo4ChDoAQgIMAA#v=onepage&q=Hope%3B%20An%20Owner's%20Manual%20kingsolver&f=false

From a [commencement](#) address at Duke University ([transcript](#))

Hope is a state of mind

Vaclav Havel, *Disturbing the Peace*, 1986

"Hope is a state of mind, not of the world. Either we have hope or we don't; it is a dimension of the soul, and it's not essentially dependent on some particular observation of the world or estimate of the situation. Hope is not prognostication. It is an orientation of the spirit, an orientation of the heart; it transcends the world that is immediately experienced, and is anchored somewhere beyond its horizons.... Hope, in this deep and powerful sense, is not the same as joy that things are going well, or willingness to invest in enterprises that are obviously heading for success, but rather an ability to work for something because it is good, not just because it stands a chance to succeed. The more propitious the situation in which we demonstrate hope, the deeper the hope is. Hope is definitely not the same thing as optimism. It is not the conviction that something will turn out well, but the faith that something makes sense, regardless of how it turns out."

Hope and the Human Soul

William Faulkner - *acceptance of Nobel Prize*

"I decline to accept the end of humanity. Humanity is immortal because they will endure: when the last ding-dong of doom has clanged and faded from the last worthless rock hanging tideless in the last red and dying evening, even then there will still be one more sound: that of one puny inexhaustible voice, still talking, saying I refuse to accept this.

I believe that humanity will not merely endure: It will prevail. We are immortal, not because we alone among creatures has an inexhaustible voice, but because we have a soul, a spirit capable of compassion and sacrifice and endurance. The poet's, the writer's, duty is to write about these things. It is their privilege to help humanity endure by lifting its heart, by reminding them of the courage and honor and hope and pride and compassion and pity and sacrifice which have been the glory of their past. The poet's voice need not merely be the record of humanity, it can be one of the props, the pillars to help them endure and prevail."

From The Movie, Matrix Revolutions

Agent Smith: "Why, Mr. Anderson? Why do you do it? Why get up? Why keep fighting? Do you believe you're fighting for something? For more than your survival? Can you tell me what it is? Do you even know? Is it freedom? Or truth? Perhaps peace? Could it be for love? Illusions, Mr. Anderson. Vagaries of perception. The temporary constructs of a feeble human intellect trying desperately to justify an existence that is without meaning or purpose. And all of them as artificial as the Matrix itself. Although, only a human mind could invent something as insipid as love. You must be able to see it, Mr. Anderson. You must know it by now. You can't win. It's pointless to keep fighting. Why, Mr. Anderson, Why? Why do you persist? "

Neo: "Because I choose to."

A Single Flame

Kent Nerburn, from Make Me an Instrument of Your Peace

We are not saints, we are not heroes. Our lives are lived in the quiet corners of the ordinary. We build tiny hearth fires, sometimes barely strong enough to give off warmth. But to the person lost in the darkness, our tiny flame may be the road to safety, the path to salvation. It is not given us to know who is lost in the darkness that surrounds us or even if our light is seen. We can only know that against even the smallest of lights, darkness cannot stand. A sailor lost at sea can be guided home by a single candle. A person lost in a wood can be led to safety by a flickering flame. It is not an issue of quality or intensity or purity. It is simply an issue of the presence of light.

Hope Needs Help

Bruce Springsteen, Live From New York Beginning of "Tenth Ave Freeze Out"

I want to find that river of life, I want to find that river of love, I want to find that river of faith, that river of hope, I want to go that river of transformation where you can go and be changed, but you have to work at it. I want to go that river of sanctification where all lifes graces and blessings can fall down upon you like rain, but you got to work at it. I want to go to that river of resurrection where everybody gets a second chance, I want to find that river of joy and river of happiness. But you don't stumble upon those things, or find them by accident, you have to seek them out and search after them. That's why we come out night after night after night. You can't get to those things by yourself. You have to have help.

Is It Still Night?

<https://www.thejewishcenter.org/Images-and-Attachments/Resources/Articles-and-Documents/Sermons/Rabbi-Feldman-RH1-5775.aspx>

An old rabbi once asked his students how they could tell when the night had ended and the day had begun.

"Could it be" asked one of the students, "when you can see a animal in the distance and tell whether it is a sheep or a dog?"

"No" answered the rabbi.

Another asked, "is it when you can look at a tree in the distance and tell whether it is a fig or a peach tree?"

"No" answered the rabbi.

"Then when is it?" they demanded.

"It is when you can look in the face of any man or woman and see that it is your sister or brother. Because if you cannot see this, then it is still night."

I have faith in nights.

Rainer Maria Rilke

You darkness, that I come from,
I love you more than all the fires
that fence in the world,
for the fire makes
a circle of light for everyone,
and then no one outside learns of you.
But the darkness pulls in everything:
shapes and fire, animals and myself,
how easily it gathers them!
powers and people,
and it is possible a great energy
is moving near me.
I have faith in nights.

Christmas Comes Whether You're Ready or Not

Cynthia Frado

<http://www.uua.org/worship/words/reading/christmas-comes-whether-youre-ready-or-not>

I am always in a bit of a shock when December 1st arrives on the calendar. I always feel like there should be at least another week beyond Thanksgiving before I can even contemplate the next holiday. I think, however, that beyond the incredible demands of the season, the hardest part to reconcile is that the heart is not always in sync with angels, presents, babes in a manger and the *ho, ho, ho* that is Christmas. Sometimes it feels like you just go through the motions because that's what is expected. Sometimes I wish Christmas would take a vacation and return mid-winter...next year.

Yet, there is something compelling about the fact that Christmas comes, no matter what. The celebration of the birth of Jesus comes, no matter the season of your heart. The Prince of Peace, the baby that would bring a message of universal equality, compassion, forgiveness, and love is reborn again and again and again, no matter our state-of-mind or being...indeed, in spite of it. Perhaps that is the real miracle of the season, that hope and possibility cannot be denied.

As I contemplate the state of the world at this moment in time, I cannot think of anything more needed than a reminder of our potential to bring peace and healing and possibility into our lives. We don't always feel it or see it or think it is there. But then there comes Christmas, even when we aren't ready to receive it. A reminder that no matter what season of the heart that we are in, no matter what struggles or grief are consuming us, Christmas will not let us forget the light that was born in us...even on the darkest night of our souls.

So, even if you can't deal with all the razzle, dazzle, and expense of this holiday, at the very least open the Inn door and prepare the manger of your heart for the gentle but powerful message that is seeking to be reborn in you. Never forget that you are a child of the Universe, and where there is life, there is light and love and hope waiting to be reborn, again and again and again. So turn on some twinkling lights, pour yourself a glass of eggnog (or not), and wait for that angel chorus to announce your heart's rebirth.

We Are Waiting (reading for Advent)

Leslie Takahashi

<http://www.uua.org/worship/words/responsive-reading/we-are-waiting>

When used as a responsive reading, "We are waiting" is the congregational response.

This is the season of anticipation,
Of expecting, of hoping, of wanting.
This is the time of expecting the arrival of something--or someone.

We are waiting.

This is the time of living in darkness, in the hues of unknowing.
Of being quiet, of reflecting on a year almost past.
Waiting for a new beginning, for a closing or an end.

This is the time for digesting the lessons of days gone past, anticipating the future for which

We are waiting.

Waiting for a world which can know justice
Waiting for a lasting peace.
Waiting for the bridge to span the divides which separate us.
Waiting for a promise or a hope. For all of this

We are waiting.

Luminous Darkness [The spirit of hope]

Howard Thurman

From Luminous Darkness, pp., 112-113

(note the need to alter male-centered language)

There is a spirit abroad in life of which the Judeo-Christian ethic is but one expression. It is a spirit that makes for wholeness and for community; it finds its way into the quiet solitude of a Supreme Court justice when he ponders the constitutionality of an act of Congress which guarantees civil rights to all its citizens; it settles into the pools of light in the face of a little girl as with her frailty she challenges the hard frightened heart of a police chief; it walks along the lonely road with the solitary protest marcher and settles over him with a benediction as he falls by the assassin's bullet fired from ambush; it kindles the fires of unity in the heart of Jewish Rabbi, Catholic Priest, and Protestant Minister as they join arms together, giving witness to their God on behalf of a brotherhood that transcends creed, race, sex, and religion; it makes a path to Walden Pond and ignites the flame of nonviolence in the mind of a Thoreau and burns through his liquid words from the Atlantic to the Pacific; it broods over the demonstrators for justice and brings comfort to the desolate and forgotten who have no memory of what it is to feel the rhythm of belonging to the race of men; it knows no country and its allies are to be found wherever the heart is kind and the collective will and the private endeavor seek to make justice where injustice abounds, to make peace where chaos is rampant, and to make the voice heard on behalf of the helpless and weak. It is the voice of God and the voice of humanity; it is the meaning of all the strivings of the whole human race.

Rituals

Holding the Hope for One Another

Erika A. Hewitt

Full ritual found here: <http://www.uua.org/worship/words/ritual/holding-hope-one-another>

A wonderful ritual for worship or small group setting that invites us to hold the hopes and struggles of each other. Through the sharing of anonymous hopes and fears, we are reminded to be gentle and generous to all those we encounter.

A Solstice Ritual of Letting Go, Cleansing, Intention and Hope.

Lois Van Leer

Full ritual found here: <http://www.uua.org/worship/words/ritual/ritual-letting-go-cleansing-intention-and-hope>

A ritual utilizing the burning bowl to get at the Solstices themes of letting go, setting intention, and new beginnings.

Music

Soul Matters Musicians Recommendations

We are glad to share that we now have three sources of support for music:

1. **Monthly Worship Packet:** We will continue to share ideas for contemporary and popular music here in our monthly packets.
2. **UUMN (UU Musicians Network) Online Database:** The wonderful leadership of the UUMN are adding our monthly themes to the UUMN music database. This provides a centralized place for Soul Matters musicians to post and share music ideas with each other. You also get to tap into the suggestions from other UU musicians from around the country. The UUMN has updated their [database](#) which is available to anyone to view. For more information about UUMN, how to join and contribute your ideas to the database, go to their website: uumn.org.
3. **Soul Matters Worship Support Facebook Page:** This support page is for on-going sharing. If you come across a great piece during the month, please post and share it with your fellow Soul Matters musician and worship teams. If you need some ideas, just post your requests and your Soul Matters partners will be there for support. Here's the link to the page:
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/soulmatterssharingcircle/>

Other Music Recommendations

Rise Up

Andra Day

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lwgr_1MeEgA

*"All we need, all we need is hope
And for that we have each other...
And we'll rise up, rise like the waves
We'll rise up in spite of the ache
We'll rise up... and we'll do it a thousand times again."*

A Change Is Gonna Come

Sam Cooke

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wEBlaMOmKV4&index=2&list=RDRGSMxW4Ngtw>

Somebody's Hurting My Brother

Yara Allen

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fC4zXt7X1XE>

Embodies the advent themes of waiting and holy impatience.

We Shall Over Come

Mahalia Jackson

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vTyKjj2oCO>

Tyrants Always Fall

The Nields

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y3MSLms3TAo>

One Day

Matisyahu

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

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cXACMQtuuZI> (acoustic)

Bird of Sorrow

Glen Hansard

https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=229&v=QzqiTVPLZ00

*“Even if a day feels too long,
and you feel like you can’t wait another one
and you’re slowly giving up on everything,
love is gonna find you again
Love is gonna find you, you’d better be ready then...”*

Hey World (Don't Give Up)

Michael Franti

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

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O-oETzPKRX8> (acoustic)

*“Hey world, what you say
Should I stick around for another day or two?
Don't give up on me, I won't give up on you
Just believe in me like I believe in you...”*

I Hope

Dixie Chicks

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Lm2TtsLHUYs>

Here Comes the Sun

The Beatles

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bgiQD56eWDk>

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XANF_jUS3OI (Nina Simone Cover)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=357gZV2Nfsk> (Richie Havens cover)

Sunshine

Ryan Bingham

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=it2LJS6gSS8&feature=youtu.be>

*“Well sunshine
Fall on me...
Tell the darkness
That you ain't no slave
Well sunshine
Won't you follow me*

Soul Matters

Through the night..."

Dog Days Are Over

Florence + The Machine

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UwrfZ5hnhhc>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0HuYEOO2r1g> (offering the song as a gift)

"Happiness, hit her like a train on a track..."

The dog days are over

The dog days are done..."

O Come, O Come Emanuel

(Can be used as an Advent musical meditation)

Daviz Lanz

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fwssGB1RZvo>

Advent Song

(Can be used as an Advent musical meditation)

Music: John McIntosh; Words: Christine McIntosh

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YCrMeUbrZoE&index=9&list=RdfwssGB1RZvo>

By Night

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YSTdw3Vth0A>

An excerpt from the track "By Night" from the album "In God Alone", featuring chants from the Taize Community, recorded in the chapel of Fitzwilliam College, Cambridge.

Within Our Darkest Night You Kindle A Fire that Never Dies Away

Charles Pope - Taize

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EqQsZK57OX8>

Gabriel's Message of Hope

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=prcrGVcxYdo&index=27&list=RdfwssGB1RZvo>

The Edinburgh Singers performing a hymn by John Rutter, on BBC Songs of Praise, at Linlithgow, broadcast November 30th 2008.

The Christians and the Pagans

Dar Williams

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

Interview about the song:

http://www.slate.com/blogs/outward/2015/12/24/dar_williams_explains_how_the_christians_and_the_pagans_became_a_holiday.html

Solstice Carole

Wyrd Sisters

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3T0i4akX5a8&list=Rdt_KiHRHwaAs&index=3

I Hear You Calling – Wiccan chant for solstice

Chalice and Blade

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QQWEfGhEnpY&index=11&list=RDt_KiHRHwaAs

Listening for hope in the dark

On Midwinter's Day

Damn the Bard

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NHadBQ3-9hs&index=13&list=RDt_KiHRHwaAs

"We'll sing for the rising sun..."

Solstice Night

S J Tucker

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tNk-ZeDMQDU&list=RDt_KiHRHwaAs&index=31

"Our hearts bring back the light as all the earth must do. May stars fill up our sight with wishes coming true..."

Stories For All Ages

A Lamp in Every Corner.

<http://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/multigenerational/miracles/session-6/lamp>

Share this classic story of light and the hope of creating a Unitarian Church in Transylvania to which the people brought their heirloom oil lamps. Use a kerosene lamp as a prop and dig out any embroidery from a Partner Church.

U.U. Advent Calendar

<http://www.uua.org/worship/words/image/uu-advent-calendar>

Tell the U.U. involvement in the winter holidays with this colorful Advent calendar. Create your favorite images in a PowerPoint to use as a Story for All Ages. Invite families to download it themselves and use it at home.

Elijah's Angel: A Story for Chanukah and Christmas

by Michael J. Rosen (Author), Aminah Brenda Lynn Robinson (Illustrator)

<https://www.amazon.com/Elijahs-Angel-Story-Chanukah-Christmas/dp/0152015582>

A child's vision of religious tolerance is exquisitely played out in this story about an elderly Christian barber and a Jewish child who befriends him. As a hobby, the African American barber makes elaborate woodcarvings--many of which refer to events or characters in the Bible. Michael, a 9-year-old Jewish boy, often visits the barbershop just to admire old Elijah's carvings, especially that of Noah's Ark--a story that belongs to Jewish as well as Christian teachings. One day when Hanukkah and Christmas coincidentally overlap, Elijah gives Michael a special gift, a carved guardian angel. Immediately Michael is filled with a jumble of feelings--gratitude for such a beautiful gift, concern that his parents might disapprove, and an even greater fear that God may frown upon a Christmas angel, "a graven image," in Michael's home.

Sermon Seeds

Angles, Ideas & Twists To Get Your Sermon Started!

Don't forget to explore the small group packet for more sermon seeds. In addition to offering more quotes and poems to enhance your sermon, you can find numerous sermon angles in the questions and the spiritual exercises.

Essay: [The Case for Hope](#)

Rebecca Solnit

Everything changes: there lies most of our hope and some of our fear.... If you take the long view, you'll see how startlingly, how unexpectedly but regularly things change. Not by magic, but by the incremental effect of countless acts of courage, love, and commitment, the small drops that wear away stones and carve new landscapes, and sometimes by torrents of popular will that change the world suddenly. To say that is not to say that it will all come out fine in the end regardless. I'm just telling you that everything is in motion, and sometimes we are ourselves that movement...

Despair is often premature: it's a form of impatience as well as certainty. My favorite comment about political change comes from Zhou En-Lai, the premier of the People's Republic of China under Chairman Mao. Asked in the early 1970s about his opinion of the French Revolution, he reportedly answered, "Too soon to tell."...

Quote: Saved by Hope, by Faith, by Love

Reinhold Neibuhr

<http://www.uua.org/worship/words/quote/reinhold-neibuhr-quote>

Nothing that is worth doing can be achieved in our lifetime; therefore we must be saved by hope. Nothing which is true or beautiful or good makes complete sense in any immediate context of history; therefore we must be saved by faith. Nothing we do, however virtuous, can be accomplished alone; therefore we are saved by love.

Quote: The Hopefulness of History

Howard Zinn

To be hopeful in bad times is not just foolishly romantic. It is based on the fact that human history is a history not only of cruelty, but also of compassion, sacrifice, courage, kindness. What we choose to emphasize in this complex history will determine our lives. If we see only the worst, it destroys our capacity to do something. If we remember those times and places – and there are so many – where people have behaved magnificently, this gives us the energy to act and at least the possibility of sending this spinning top of a world in a different direction. And if we do act, in however small a way, we don't have to wait for some grand utopian future. The future is an infinite succession of presents, and to live now as we think human beings should live, in defiance of all that is bad around us, is itself a marvelous victory.

Quote: On Hope

Paul Tillich

There are many things and events in which we can see a reason for genuine hope, namely, the seed-like presence of that which is hoped for. In the seed of a tree, stem and leaves are already present, and this gives us the right to sow the seed in hope for the fruit. We have no assurance that it will develop. But our hope is genuine. There is a presence, a beginning of what is hoped for. And so it is with the child and our hope for his maturing; we hope, because maturing has already begun, but we don't know how far it will go. We hope for the

fulfillment of our work, often against hope, because it is already in us as vision and driving force. We hope for a lasting love, because we feel the power of this love present.

Quote: Keeping Our Connections Strong

Rev. Sean Parker Dennison, <http://www.uua.org/braverwiser/keeping-our-connections-strong>

The danger of hopelessness is that we can lose each other. In times of hopelessness, it's easy to get scared of everything and everyone. It's easy to start believing that your neighbor is the problem and that hoarding is a better strategy than generosity. The problem is that when community starts to break down, we lose the most important source of hope we have: each other.

Quote: Hope as an Obstacle

Thich Nhat Hanh, from Peace is Every Step

Western civilization places so much emphasis on the idea of hope that we sacrifice the present moment. Hope is for the future. It cannot help us discover joy, peace, or enlightenment in the present moment. Many religions are based on the notion of hope, and this teaching about refraining from hope may create a strong reaction. But the shock can bring about something important. I do not mean that you should not have hope, but that hope is not enough. Hope can create an obstacle for you, and if you dwell in the energy of hope, you will not bring yourself back entirely into the present moment. If you re-channel those energies into being aware of what is going on in the present moment, you will be able to make a breakthrough and discover joy and peace right in the present moment, inside of yourself and all around you.

Reflection: When Merry Meets Mess

Rev. Erika A. Hewitt

<http://www.uua.org/braverwiser/merry-meets-mess>

I know a little about "merry" meeting "mess" at the holidays — and by a little I mean How much time have you got? Four Christmases ago, a painful break-up sent me spinning into a long tango with depression. Two Christmases ago, I came down with the stomach flu. Last year, as tears streamed down my face, friends cut off my long hair in preparation for my first round of chemotherapy. And this year? Like many, I'm grieving an election that, I believe, has already damaged the hearts and bodies of our country's most fragile people. I haven't soured on the holidays, however — and I will not give up on Christmas — for two reasons. First: long before my heart was broken and I lost my hair to chemo, I learned to shape the holidays to fit into whatever-shaped hole is in my heart. The other reason I won't give up on Christmas is its central message: the Holy will never give up on us, her people. In fact, from Hanukkah to Solstice, that's the message of most winter holy days: the Holy — call it God, call it The Force, call it Love's Impulse — will never give up on us, even when we feel like curling up in a dark room and revoking our membership in the human family.

Quote: Hopeful Waiting

Rev. Christina Shu

As the Advent calendar demonstrated, this is a time of anticipation and waiting, of allowing oneself to be in a state of preparation to receive hope. We live in a culture that does not value waiting, or taking the long view. Our individualism, our consumerism, our addiction to "fast" everything. Just when I thought two-day delivery was pretty quick there was one day delivery, and now, next hour delivery. I remember the Dalai Lama once joked that Americans always want to know, what is the easiest, the fastest, and the cheapest way to enlightenment.

Our desire for instant gratification will not serve us in the hard work for justice and peace. Advent reminds us that waiting can be a fruitful time, not a passive one, but a gathering of energy.

This is not the silencing and oppressive, “Wait,” told to the activist, but rather the internal preparation of holding stillness and building strength before action. If we need to wait, let it be the waiting of a farmer who knows that deep below the earth, her seeds are sprouting their roots. Let it be the waiting of a musician, who knows to count to just the right moment to strike the bell. Let it be the waiting of self-care, knowing that one’s body and spirit needs times of activity, and times of rest, in order to be effective.

from sermon: <http://www.neighborhooduu.org/wp-content/sermons/text/20161211ahopefulpeopleweb.pdf>

Quote: Jan Richardson, from Circle of Grace

Hope opens us to the future but releases us into the present. Advent draws our eyes toward the horizon as we watch and wait for the Christ who comes to us. In this season, we sing with Zechariah, “By the tender mercy of our God, the dawn from on high will break upon us” (Luke 1:78). When we are in grief, looking toward the horizon with hope and anticipation is no small feat. Instead of luring us away from the present, however, Advent invites us more deeply into it, where the kingdom of God is at work even now. This is the nature of the hope that Advent cultivates in us. Rich with memory and infused with expectation, hope calls and enables us to work here and now, in company with the [Sacred that] is already about the work of heaven in our midst.

Essay: The Grace of Darkness

Nick Ross

<https://nickross.me/2015/11/22/the-grace-of-darkness/>

Excerpt: “In the pilgrimage towards the solstice itself we must endure darker, shorter days. Endurance is part of the dark trial as, I think, is faith. There is a farmer’s faith that I know well, borne out of years of seasonal work. What appears dead is always intimately connected with what is alive; the apple tree sits, silently holding its vigil for spring. The blossoms will wait, I know, for the right moment—an uncorrupted and universal wisdom that speaks of some intelligence beyond my comprehension. The prunings and dead wood from the years growth will make kindling for a living fire. The blossom waits and its patience and faith will be rewarded we trust, by the warmth of days to come. I am always moved by the ways in which the trees here offer real guidance for my own life. Maybe that is what this season is about, what love is about—being patient and kind.”

Poem: Sweet Darkness

David Whyte

Full poem found [here](#)

“...Time to go into the dark
where the night has eyes
to recognize its own.
There you can be sure
you are not beyond love.
The dark will be your womb
tonight.
The night will give you a horizon
further than you can see.
You must learn one thing.
The world was made to be free in...”

Quote: Annie Dillard

The day widened, pulled from both ends by the shrinking dark, as if darkness itself were a pair of hands and daylight a skein between them, a flexible membrane, and the hands that had pressed together all winter — praying, paralyzed with foreboding — now flung wide open.

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Quote: Jürgen Moltmann, The Source of Life

But the ultimate reason for our hope is not to be found at all in what we want, wish for and wait for; the ultimate reason is that we are wanted and wished for and waited for. What is it that awaits us? Does anything await us at all, or are we alone? Whenever we base our hope on trust in the divine mystery, we feel deep down in our hearts: there is someone who is waiting for you, who is hoping for you, who believes in you. We are waited for as the prodigal son in the parable is waited for by his father. We are accepted and received, as a mother takes her children into her arms and comforts them. God is our last hope because we are God's first love.

Quote: St Paul's letter to the Corinthians

Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.

Video: Overcoming hopelessness – TED talk

Nick Vujicic

The power of hopeful words

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6P2nPI6CTlc>

Video: Hope Is an Action We Can All Take – Big Think

Cornel West

<http://bigthink.com/videos/cornel-west-love-and-justice-are-indivisible>

Hope is a force, not a feeling – a way of being in the world now, not just an imagination of what the world might be.

Quote: Rebecca Solnit, from [The Case for Hope](#)

I still value hope, but I see it as only part of what's required, a starting point. Think of it as the match but not the tinder or the blaze. To matter, to change the world, you also need devotion and will and you need to act. Hope is only where it begins.

Essay: Reclaiming Hope For Progressive Religion

Daniel Schultz

<http://religiondispatches.org/grace-under-pressure-reclaiming-hope-for-progressive-religion/>

In an essay for Religion Dispatches, Daniel Schultz argues that Barack Obama's political hope-mongering was too shallow for our troubled times, and less useful than a theological approach to hope, which would concentrate on "imagining a new way altogether" rather than "fixing what already exists." From his essay: "Hope results in the immoderate belief that any and all barriers to the realization of that purpose must be torn down now. Moreover, it results in the troubling assertion that *our* end goal is to do the tearing down..."

Quote: Doris Donnelly

The message of the Incarnation is not to behold an innocent baby resplendent in inertia, but rather to take sides with a God who agitates for reform and shatters the status quo.

Quote: Jürgen Moltmann, [Theology of Hope](#)

That is why faith, wherever it develops into hope, causes not rest but unrest, not patience but impatience. It does not calm the unquiet heart, but **is itself this unquiet heart in [us]**. Those who hope in Christ can no longer put up with reality as it is, but begin to suffer under it, to contradict it. Peace with God means conflict with the world, for the goad of the promised future stabs inexorably into the flesh of every unfulfilled present.

Bible: Zechariah 9:12

Return to your fortress,
O you prisoners of hope...

Essay: The Place Beyond Fear and Hope

Margaret Wheatley

Excerpt: "Rudolf Bahro, a prominent German activist and iconoclast, describes the first step: "When the forms of an old culture are dying, the new culture is created by a few people who are not afraid to be insecure."... I don't know what Bahro meant by "insecure"; however, I've noted that those who endure, who have stamina for the long haul and become wiser in their actions over time, are those who are not attached to outcomes. They don't seek security in plans or accomplishments. They exchange certainty for curiosity, fear for generosity. They plunge into the problem, treat their attempts as experiments, and learn as they go. This kind of insecurity is energizing..."

Podcast: Change and Hope Come From the Margins

<https://onbeing.org/blog/krista-tippett-change-and-hope-come-from-the-margins/>

Book: A House for Hope

Rev. Dr. Rebecca Parker

<http://www.beacon.org/A-House-for-Hope-P889.aspx>

Includes inspiringly hopeful stories such as this: "In 1992 The principal cellist of the Sarajevo Opera, Vedran Smailovic, heard a mortar shell burst in the street near his home, quickly followed by screams. People had been standing in line to buy bread from one of the few remaining bakeries in the violence ravaged city. When he looked out his window, Vedran saw the carnage. The Shell killed twenty two people. Grieved and shocked, he felt he must do something. But what? He did what he felt he, as an artist, could do. Dressed up in his formal concert clothes, he went out the next afternoon and sat where the shell had burst and played the plaintive alinoni Adagio in G Minor. He played every afternoon for the next twenty two days, one day of music for every person killed. Then he kept playing As Swati Chopra describes his discipline - he played to ruined homes,

smoldering fires, scared people hiding in basements. He played for human dignity that is the first casualty in war. Ultimately, he played for life, for peace, for the possibility of hope that exists even in the darkest hour.”

Book: Holy Curiosity: Stories of a Liberal Religious Faith

Bruce T Marshall

<https://h/www.amazon.com/holy-curiosity-Stories-liberal-religious/dp/0962671606>

Chapter 8 discusses hope.

Reflection: Hope, Cynicism and the stories we tell ourselves

Maria Popova

<https://www.brainpickings.org/2015/02/09/hope-cynicism/>

Excerpt: “To live with sincerity in our culture of cynicism is a difficult dance — one that comes easily only to the very young and the very old. The rest of us are left to tussle with two polarizing forces ripping the psyche asunder by beckoning to it from opposite directions — critical thinking and hope. Critical thinking without hope is cynicism. Hope without critical thinking is naïveté...”

Reflection: We’ve Hoped Our Way Into Our Current Crisis

Miguel Clark Mallet

<https://onbeing.org/blog/miguel-clark-mallet-weve-hoped-our-way-into-our-current-crisis/>

Excerpt: “We’re urged to embrace hope as an antidote. Hope for a brighter day. Hope for justice. Hope for peace. Hope that compassion will win out. But speaking for myself, I’m giving up hope. Not that I don’t understand the impulse. It’s tempting to think that looking to the future will get me through hardship. But in my life’s struggles, hope hasn’t worked out that way. Too often hope has hardened into anticipation and expectation for specific outcomes...”

Blog: Hope Impedes Adaptation

Eric Barker

<http://www.bakadesuyo.com/2012/06/is-there-a-time-to-give-up-hope/>

Video: Beyond Hope

Derrick Jenson

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=58tWEaqZ-GM>

Reaching beyond hope to commitment

Video: Against Hope

Dave Pollard

https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=35&v=WNc5-QQazq4

<http://howtosavetheworld.ca/2015/09/28/against-hope-a-primer-on-complexity-and-collapse/>

Quote & Essay: Cynicism Hides Hurt

Serene Hitchcock

<http://www.wisdompill.com/2016/11/13/4-reasons-its-not-cynicism-but-cowardice/>

“Everyone has been hurt. Many people have been hurt so deeply that their scars are vivid reminders of visceral pain. Yet, not everyone walks around with a vocal and audacious negativity that can be harmful to others. What you’re blaring to the world through a megaphone when you are openly and ceaselessly cynical *is that you are fundamentally wounded*; that you are **so** hurt, you still aren’t capable of doing the work required to heal yourself. People don’t naturally gravitate towards cynicism without some negative experience (or many) precipitating their response. So when you’ve been disappointed or hurt or let down, you use cynicism as a defense mechanism to protect yourself from being hurt again. The funny thing is, to anyone really listening, *you’re doing just that.*”

Quote: George Carlin

Scratch any cynic and you will find a disappointed idealist.

Quote: Rebecca Solnit, [The Case for Hope](#)

For comfortably situated people, hopelessness means cynicism and letting oneself off the hook. If everything is doomed, then nothing is required.

The Advent Wreath: Chuck Knows Church:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hPHXooW6Nfl&list=RDFwssGB1RZvo&index=27>

UU Connections: Hope and UU History:

Theodore Parker

“I do not pretend to understand the moral universe; the arc is a long one, my eye reaches but little ways; I cannot calculate the curve and complete the figure by the experience of sight; I can divine it by conscience. And from what I see I am sure it bends towards justice.”

From a speech entitled, “The present aspect of slavery in America and the immediate duty of the North” delivered in the hall of the State House, before the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Convention, on January 29th, 1858.

John Murray

By 1790, there were perhaps two dozen organized Universalist societies, and plenty of people who believed in the doctrine of Universal Salvation throughout New England, Pennsylvania and New Jersey. Murray helped organize these believers and they met in Winchester, New Hampshire, and put together what is now known as the Winchester Profession. Universalism grew quickly with its hopeful message of a loving God. Murray preached that everybody will be saved which was also tied to an Enlightenment belief in the potential of human beings. We are all “the Elect;” we all have the divine light within us. This is the message that he preached when he said:

Go out into the highways and by-ways.
Give the people something of your new vision.

You may possess a small light,
but uncover it, let it shine,
use it in order to bring more light and understanding
to the hearts and minds of men and women.

Give them not hell, but hope and courage;
preach the kindness and
everlasting love of God.

(#704, Singing the Living Tradition)

Sermons exploring the story of John Murry:

Give them Hope Not Hell, Meg Barnhouse

<https://austinuu.org/wp2013/give-them-hope-not-hell/>

The Bright Thread of Hope, Rev. Gretchen Haley

<https://revgretchenhaley.wordpress.com/2012/11/04/the-bright-thread-of-hope/>

A House of Hope, Jay Wolin

<https://jwoworld.blogspot.com/2012/09/a-house-of-hope.html>

Sermons

A House of Hope

Jay Wolin

Text: <https://jwoworld.blogspot.com/2012/09/a-house-of-hope.html>

An exploration of the sources of hope through a celebration of UU historical figures:

“Hope comes from looking back and knowing we are on that arc... *Hope comes from looking forward and knowing can we harness the collective power of [the community around us]...* Hope comes from looking [deeply] and knowing we can change, and grow...”

Hope is a Journey

Rob Hardies

Podcast: <http://www.all-souls.org/node/1580>

Lessons about hope guideposts on the spirital journey of hope

“Hope is not given or delivered... In order to be hopeful people we must work at it. We must make of hope a life-long spirital disciple, an intentional practice. Hope is like love in this way; it is not a once-and-for-all cure; It is one of the most important on-going spirital projects of our lives. Hope is a journey. A difficult path, through our beautiful and broken world.”

Light Within Light

Rev. Victoria Safford

Podcast: <http://whitebearunitarian.org/light-within-light-12-11-16-sermon/>

On hope, Advent and the Standing Rock, Dakota access pipeline protest:

“At this time of year, during these darkening days, every ancient story that we have ever told -- from the solstice fire, to the lights of the menorah, to the advent candles -- all of these ancient stories whisper the same [message]: ‘The light will return, but you must go out and meet it. The great light will come back, but you must kindle your own little lights to guide it back. The light will return *because* you have kept an ember of it burning all along. Your hope, your faith, your resistance, your resilience, your love - these little lights, these lights within you and among you *are important!*’ There is a line in the gospel of Thomas where Jesus says, ‘There is light within a person of light and it lights up the whole universe, and if it does not shine, there will be darkness. We are called to shine like stars!’”

Still the Moon Increases: A Meditation on Hope in the Dark Season

Rev. Joshua Mason Pawelek

Text: <http://uuse.org/still-the-moon-increases-a-meditation-on-hope-in-the-dark-season/#.WYr9W63Mz1w>

“It is very tempting as a pastor to take the path of least resistance in this season and proclaim the message that as we kindle lights against the darkness, so we kindle hope in our hearts. It is an easy message—the ‘stock-in-trade’ message for so many clergy in this season—the message so many people expect to hear in this season. Light overcoming dark. But therein lies this tension I experience: I want to feel hopeful, but I don’t want to be split—one side or the other. I don’t want to demonize the dark or lionize the light. I want to search for the spiritual blessings in both and I want to engage the spiritual challenges in both. I don’t want to be divided within myself or against the world. *I don’t want hope to emerge at the expense of wholeness.* I am hopeful, but not for anything that requires the waging of some cosmic battle between the forces of good and evil. I want to be very careful, in speaking about hope, not to re-inscribe these pernicious false dualisms because, in the end, I believe

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they diminish our humanity. I believe they diminish Nature—the earth. I believe they diminish any worthwhile concept of divinity. How might we talk about hope in this season without resorting to light overcoming darkness?... by celebrating and embracing] acceptance and struggle...”

A Hope Worth Having

Rev. Dr. Bill Sinkford

Podcast: <http://neighborhooduu.org/worship/sermons/>

Explores a hope that comes from “living as if despair is never on the table and as if anything but strength is beneath you...” and finding hope in the belief that “the power of love can overcome the love of power.”

Hope and Holy Reversal

Rev Meg Barnhouse

Video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=75&v=lZAwlxiecdA

A sermon on Mary, her words, and the radical social, political and personal layers of this most ancient of Christian hymns.

The Christians and the Pagans

Rev Meg Barnhouse

Video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=16&v=yD6Q4-oEhkE

Text: <https://austinuu.org/wp2013/the-christians-and-the-pagans/>

“What I want to talk about is the Divine Child in each of us. I want to say that maybe we are all divine and human at the same time...”

Hope in the Dark

Rev. Erin Gingrich

Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=31wVkstSxG4>

Advent and the hope of sitting in – and with – the dark.

Closing Words

'Tis not too late

Alfred Lord Tennyson

The long day wanes: the slow moon
climbs: the deep
Moans round with many voices.
Come, my friends,
'Tis not too late to seek
a newer world.

May We Show an Affirming Flame

W.H. Auden,

from his poem, **September 1, 1939:**

<https://macaulay.cuny.edu/eportfolios/smonte10/files/2010/08/September-1.pdf>

Defenceless under the night
Our world in stupor lies;
Yet, dotted everywhere,
Ironic points of light
Flash out wherever the Just
Exchange their messages:
May [we], composed like them
Of Eros and of dust,
Beleaguered by the same
Negation and despair,
Show an affirming flame.

A World Attained

Barrow Dunham

<http://www.uua.org/worship/words/benediction/world-attained>

And now, since the struggle deepens, since evil abides, and good does not yet prosper,
Let us gather what strength we have, what confidence and valor that our small victories may end in triumph,
and the world awaited be a world attained.

Share Your Glorious Light with the World

James Morison

<http://www.uua.org/worship/words/benediction/share-your-glorious-light-world>

Within each of our hearts there is a most glorious light.
Go forth, and let its spark help you understand what troubles both you and others;
Go forth, and let its light of reason be a guide in your decisions;
Go forth, and bring its ray of hope to those in need of help in both body and spirit, that they may find healing;
Go forth, and fan the flames of passion to help heal our world;
Go forth, and spread the warm glow of love, pushing back the darkness of the world;
Go forth, and share your glorious light with the world.

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For Hard Times

Maureen Killoran

<http://www.uua.org/worship/words/benediction/closing-words-hard-times>

No matter how weak or how frightened we may feel, we each have gifts that can make a difference in the world. In this coming week, may you do at least one thing to support the broken; to welcome the stranger; to celebrate what is worthy; to do the work of justice and love.

Be strong.

Be connected.

Each day, act — so you may be a little more whole.

Now the Work of Christmas Begins

Howard Thurman

<http://www.uua.org/worship/words/affirmation/now-work-christmas-begins>

When the song of the angels is stilled,
when the star in the sky is gone,
when the kings and princes are home,
when the shepherds are back with their flocks,
the work of Christmas begins:
to find the lost,
to heal the broken,
to feed the hungry,
to release the prisoner,
to rebuild the nations,
to bring peace among the people,
to make music in the heart.

Reach Out For Support & Connection

Join the Soul Matters Inspiration Facebook Page:

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

Join the Soul Matters Worship Leader Support Facebook Page:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/soulmatterssharingcircle/>

Join the Soul Matters Ministers' Support Facebook Page:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/719788338192570/>

*And don't forget about our monthly online planning & implementation labs for worship leaders.
On the first Thursday of each month from 1-2pm eastern, we host a lab/webinar for worship leaders*

On the first Tuesday of each month from 1-2pm eastern, we host a lab/webinar for ministers.

Susan, our Soul Matters Director, sends out notice of the meetings well in advance.

Contact Susan, our Soul Matters Membership Director, for more information

(susan@soulmatterssharingcircle.com).



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