



## Living the Questions: Theme Packet

Each month, our church gathers around a common theme and practice to guide our reflection in worship, education, justice and small groups. This packet provides questions and excerpts to guide personal or group writing or discussion, and serves as the guide for our monthly Sharing Circles. For more info. contact Rev. Luke Stevens-Royer [revluke@whitebearunitarian.org](mailto:revluke@whitebearunitarian.org) or 651.426.2369

### Home: The Practice of Being Here Now

March, 2013

#### QUESTIONS

When are you most at home in yourself?

When are you most at home with others?

For you, is home most related to people, land, places, etc.?

What gets you into the present moment, even if for a brief time?

What prevents you from being present to the moment?

What is it about our church that creates a feeling of home –leads people to say – there is no place I'd rather be on Sunday morning than here?

#### QUOTES

The population on this continent will become grounded, will find their place, by a slight change of mind that says "I'm here."  
—Gary Snyder

All our prayers in the morning, in the evening, start with the word "Here."  
—Edmund Ladd

It is not on any map; true places never are.  
—Herman Melville

Most educated people say where is it written? Our people say where is it lived?  
—Steve Rodriguez

With the past, I have nothing to do; nor with the future. I live now.  
—Ralph Waldo Emerson

Home is like what you take away each time you leave the house. Like a wristwatch, it ticks beside the ticking that is your heart. Whether or not you hear it, look at its face, or feel its hold. We're with you is what the minute, hour, and second hands of home have to tell.  
—Michael J. Rosen, *Home*

Home is the place where you are most thoroughly yourself, with no pretenses.  
—Victoria Moran, *Creating a Charmed Life*

I am here simply to make you alert and aware. That is, to be here now - with all the insecurity that life is; with all the uncertainty that life is; with all the danger that life is.  
— Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh

## POETRY/LYRICS

### *At Home from Church*

The lilacs lift in generous bloom  
Their plumes of dear old-fashioned flowers;  
Their fragrance fills the still old house  
Where left alone I count the hours.  
High in the apple-trees the bees  
Are humming, busy in the sun,—  
An idle robin cries for rain  
But once or twice and then is done.  
The Sunday-morning quiet holds  
In heavy slumber all the street,  
While from the church, just out of sight  
Behind the elms, comes slow and sweet  
The organ's drone, the voices faint  
That sing the quaint long-meter hymn—  
I somehow feel as if shut out  
From some mysterious temple, dim  
And beautiful with blue and red  
And golden lights from windows high,  
Where angels in the shadows stand  
And earth seems very near the sky.  
The day-dream fades—and so I try  
Again to catch the tune that brings  
No thought of temple nor of priest,  
But only of a voice that sings.

—Sarah Orne Jewett

Here Now  
Now and again  
I am here now  
And now is when  
I'm here again

—Samuel Menashe

***Here now – a hymn from our Worship services***

breathing calming  
present moment wonderful moment  
breathing healing  
present moment wonderful moment  
let nothing upset you  
let nothing frighten you  
everything is changing  
only now is changeless  
patience attains the goal  
who has now lacks nothing  
now alone fills all needs  
i have arrived i am home  
in the here in the now  
i am solid i am free  
in the ultimate i dwell

**READINGS & EXCERPTS**

***From Ram Dass***

Come back. Come home. Be present again. Be Here Now.  
Being Here Now is experiential and it takes practice. It's about being rather than doing. When you are in the moment, truly in the moment, this is it, it's all there is. Time slows down. You can enter a flow of love with a quiet mind, simply being present. You flow from one activity to the next, moment to moment, being with one person, then with another, just Being Here Now.

***From When Women Were Birds by Terry Tempest Williams***

I wish someone had told me when I was young that it was not happiness I could count on, but change. Democracy demands we speak and act outrageously. We can change the world if our view is long and focused with friends drawn lovingly around the place we call home. I believe my own voice continues to be found wherever I am

being present and responding from my heart, moment by moment. My voice is born repeatedly in the fields of uncertainty.

***From Scott Russell Sanders in Staying Put***

“The man who is often thinking that it is better to be somewhere else than where he is excommunicates himself” we are cautioned by Thoreau, that notorious stay-at-home. The metaphor is religious: to withhold yourself from where you are is to be cut off from communion with the source. It has taken me a half a lifetime of searching to realize that the likeliest path to the ultimate ground leads through my local ground. I mean the land itself, with its creeks and rivers, its weather, seasons, stone outcroppings, and all the plants and animals that share it. I cannot have a spiritual center without having a geographical one; I cannot live a grounded life without being grounded in place.

In belonging to a landscape, one feels a rightness, at-homeness, a knitting of self and world. This condition of clarity and focus, this being fully present, is akin to what Buddhists call mindfulness, what Christian contemplatives refer to as recollection, what Quakers call centering down. I am suspicious of any philosophy that would separate this-worldly from other-worldly commitment. There is only one world, and we participate in it here and now, in our flesh and our place.

***Walking with Peace and Presence by Thich Nhat Hanh***

Peace is something we can contemplate every day. Walking meditation is one of the ways to contemplate peace, and today we are going to walk together, generating the energy of peace, solidity, and freedom. I suggest that when you breathe in, you make three steps. Bring your attention to the soles of your feet, and become aware of the contact between your foot and the ground. Bring your attention down from the level of the brain to the soles of your feet. Breathing in, we make three steps, and we may tell ourselves with each step, "I have arrived. I have arrived. I have arrived." And breathing out, we make another three steps, always mindful of the contact between our feet and the ground, and we say, "I'm home. I'm home. I'm home."

Arrived where? Where is our home? According to the teaching and the practice of the Buddha, life is available only in the present moment, in the here and the now. And when you go back to the present moment, you have a chance to touch life, to encounter life, to become fully alive and fully present. That is why every step brings us back to the present moment, so that we can touch the wonders of life that are available. Therefore, when I say, "I have arrived," I mean I have arrived in the here and the now -- the only place, the only time where and when life is available, and that is my true home.