



## 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@wbuuc.org](mailto:revluke@wbuuc.org) or 651.426.2369

### **Covenant: the practice of walking together** September, 2013

#### **QUESTIONS**

How have you experienced “covenant” in your life?

What calls you into a covenant with the people of this church?

What do you hope to promise to others in this community, and what do you hope for others to promise to you?

How is your life transformed by connections made in community?

#### **POETRY/LYRICS**

##### **WALKING PEACE**

Peace is the walk.  
Happiness is the walk.  
Walk for yourself  
And you walk for everyone.  
- Thich Nhat Hanh

Circle round for freedom, circle round for peace.  
For all of us imprisoned, circle for release.  
Circle for the planet, circle for each soul.  
For the children of our children, keep the circle whole.  
- From *Singing the Living Tradition*, our hymnal.

## WALKING MEDITATION

Take my hand.  
We will walk.  
We will only walk.  
We will enjoy our walk  
without thinking of arriving anywhere.  
Walk peacefully.  
Walk happily.  
Our walk is a peace walk.  
Our walk is a happiness walk.

Then we learn  
that there is no peace walk;  
that peace is the walk;  
that there is no happiness walk;  
that happiness is the walk.  
We walk for ourselves.  
We walk for everyone  
always hand in hand.

Walk and touch peace every moment.  
Walk and touch happiness every moment.  
Each step brings a fresh breeze.  
Each step makes a flower bloom under our feet.  
Kiss the Earth with your feet.  
Print on Earth your love and happiness.

Earth will be safe  
when we feel in us enough safety.

- From *The Long Road Turns To Joy - A Guide To Walking Meditation* by Thich Nhat Hanh

## READINGS & EXCERPTS

A covenant is not a contract. It is not made and signed and sealed once and for all, sent to the attorneys for safekeeping or guarded under glass in a museum. A covenant is not a static artifact and it is not a sworn oath: Whereas, whereas, whereas. . . . Therefore, I will do this, or I'll die, so help me God. A covenant is a living, breathing aspiration, made new every day. It can't be enforced by consequences but it may be reinforced by forgiveness and by grace, when we stumble, when we forget, when we mess up... I love singing the round in our hymnal based on Rumi's invitation, "Come, come, whoever you are." Whenever I sing it, I think of one line that doesn't appear in *Singing the Living Tradition*, however: "Though I've broken my vows a thousand times." Yet, because I am held in and hold to a covenant—with the people in my church and with others whom I love, with convictions I cherish and principles I mean to practice—I turn to a different page in the same hymnal. I sing the line, "We forgive ourselves and each other; we begin again in love," and I remember: a covenant is an aspiration to go deeper in relation to ourselves, to our best intention, to our God, and to each other.

Someone said to me not long ago, "Covenant is a promise I keep to myself, about the kind of person I want to be, the kind of life I mean to have, together with other people, and with all other living things." When we welcome babies in our church, when we welcome new members into the community, when we celebrate the love of beaming couples, when we ordain new ministers, we speak not in the binding language of contract, but in the life-sustaining fluency of covenant, from covenant, to travel together. We will walk together with you, child; we will walk together with you, friend; we will walk together with each other toward the lives we mean to lead, toward the world we mean to have a hand in shaping, the world of compassion, equity, freedom, joy, and gratitude. Covenant is the work of intimate justice.

- Victoria Safford, from the article *Bound in covenant* from UU World magazine, summer 2013.

Music from our Principal Collaborative Musician, Carol Caouette:

## COVENANT

Carol Caouette & James Vila Blake

$\text{♩} = 90$

To cross the riv-er, to blur the line be-tween your mem-o-ry of  
sor-row my fear of the un - known. We have the cou-rage to  
wade in-to the wa-ters, to swim a-gainst the cur-rent and tread a dee-per  
course. This is our cov - e-nant to dwell to-ge-ther peace-ful-ly.  
To seek the truth in love and help each o-ther grow