



White Bear Unitarian Universalist Church

“Grow Your Soul & Serve the World”

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Monthly Theme for May: **Vocation : the practice of saying yes**

Each month, our church gathers around a monthly theme and practice to guide our congregational life: worship, small groups, religious education, justice, and classes. Use these readings for reflection around the dinner table, in your own prayer practice, alone or with others.

If you are interested in a monthly Sharing Circle, contact:
Rev. Luke Stevens-Royer revluke@wbuuc.org or 651.426.2369x103

Questions

In what ways do you distinguish between "work" and "vocation."

What do you feel most called to do in life?

Where does your deep gladness, and a deep need in the world, meet?

What has helped or hindered you saying "yes" to your life's passion?

What makes you feel most alive?

Quotations

Discovering vocation does not mean scrambling toward some prize just beyond my reach but accepting the treasure of true self I already possess. Vocation does not come from a voice out there calling me to be something I am not. It comes from a voice in here calling me to be the person I was born to be, to fulfill the original selfhood given me at birth by God.

- Thomas Merton

Before I can tell my life what I want to do with it, I must listen to my life telling me who I am."

- Parker J. Palmer, *Let Your Life Speak*

The divine mandate to use the world justly and charitably, then, defines every person's moral predicament as that of a steward. But this predicament is hopeless and meaningless unless it produces an appropriate discipline: stewardship. And stewardship is hopeless and meaningless unless it involves long-term courage, perseverance, devotion, and skill. This skill is not to be confused with any accomplishment or grace of spirit or of intellect. It has to do with everyday proprieties in the practical use and care of the created things - with "right livelihood."

- Wendell Berry, *The Gift of Good Land: Further Essays Cultural and Agricultural*

“The creative impulse can be killed, but it cannot be taught...What a teacher can do...in working with children, is to give the flame enough oxygen so that it can burn. As far as I'm concerned, this providing of oxygen is one of the noblest of all vocations.”

- Madeleine L'Engle, *A Circle of Quiet*

There are three words that tend to be used interchangeably – and shouldn't be. They are “vocation, career and job.” Vocation is the most profound of the three, and it has to do with your calling. It is what you are doing in life that makes a difference for you, that builds meaning for you, that you can look back on your later years to see the impact that you've made on the world. A calling is something you have to listen for. You don't hear it once and then immediately recognize it. You've got to attune yourself to the message.

- Timothy Butler, Harvard Business School psychologist.

A society in which vocation and job are separated for most people gradually creates an economy that is often devoid of spirit, one that frequently fills our pocketbooks at the cost of emptying our souls.

- Sam Keen

Vocation is where your deep gladness meets the world's deep need.

- Frederick Buechner

Vocation does not come from willfulness. It comes from listening. I must listen to my life and try to understand what it is truly about - quite apart from what I would like it to be about - or my life will never represent anything real in the world, no matter how earnest my intentions.....Before I can tell my life what I want to do with it, I must listen to my life telling me who I am. I must listen for the truths and values at the heart of my own identity, not the standards by which I must live-but the standards by which I cannot help but live if I am living my own life.

- Leaving the Nest - Pema Chodron

Poetry & Lyrics

From *Song of Myself*

Do you guess I have some intricate purpose?

Well I have, for the Fourth-month showers have, and the mica on the side of a rock has.

Do you take it I would astonish?

Does the daylight astonish? does the early redstart twittering through the woods?

Do I astonish more than they?

- Walt Whitman

Just Say Yes by *The Cure*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=91--rtKGeUU>

Say this is it
Don't say maybe
Don't say no
Say this is it
Don't say hold on
Don't say slow
Say this is it
Don't say next time
Don't say when
Say this is it
Don't say later
No, don't say then

Just say yes! Do it now!
Let yourself go!
Just leap! Don't look!
Or you'll never know
If you love it
You might really love it
If you love it
You might really love it!

Oh come on and love it!

Yeah, this is it
Don't be cautious
Don't think twice
This is it

Don't play it safe
Don't put on ice
Yeah, this is it
Don't chew it over
No don't kick it around
This is it
Don't wait and see
Don't try to work it out

Just say yes! Do it now!
Let yourself go!
Just leap! Don't look!
Or you'll never know
If you love it
You might really love it!

So don't tell me
It could all go wrong
No don't tell me
It could all be a mess
Oh don't tell me
It could all be a waste of time
Just say oui! Si! Sim! Da! Ja! Yow! Igen!
Kylla!
Just say yes!

Readings & Excerpts

Introduction, Session 14: All Work Has Honor In "*Windows and Mirrors,*" a Tapestry of Faith program:

Our belief in the inherent worth and dignity of all people tells us everyone has the right to dignity of work—that is, the ability to earn a decent livelihood; a work environment that supports one's safety, health and self-respect; and appreciation for the value one's work brings to us all. Yet, as a society we tend to value some jobs more than others—even though we know that when a person's work is disrespected, undervalued or taken for granted, both they and their community suffer.

I urge you precisely as I urge myself: Reach for your deepest joys. Heed what you genuinely need and value, here and now. Strengthen your good judgment, your discernment, so that you – and those you love – profit from the risks you take... Bit by intelligible bit, make choices that honor your healthiest instincts, your noble desires. That is how we build a life.

– Marsha Sinetar

Most of us don't know what we want. We live our whole lives doing what we think we should want or what we think other people want us to do, and then when we realize we haven't lived our dreams, we have regrets...

Ask yourself the question, "What do I want?"...

Write down whatever it is. A greenhouse, a better relationship with your mother, financial security, world peace. Do it every day for a week, then take that list and cross off everything on that list that isn't what you want.

Cross off what your mother wants, what your father wants, what your other relatives want, what your spouse wants, what your neighbor wants, what the other people in your profession want, so that the only thing you have left is what you want. Once you know what it is, then you can make plans to get it.

Make a treasure map with you at the beginning and what you want at the end.

- Jennifer James, PhD

... Integrity is an ongoing process, a dynamic happening over time that requires our ongoing attention.

... Deep inside, our integrity sings to us whether we are listening or not. It is a note that only we can hear. Eventually, when life makes us ready to listen, it will help us to find our way home. "

"If the cabin loses pressure, the oxygen masks will fall from above. Put on your own mask first before you try to help the person next to you." Service is based on the premise that all life is worthy of our support and commitment.

...Blessing life is about filling yourself up so that your blessings overflow onto others."

- From Rachel Naomi Remen – *My Grandfather's Blessings*