



## White Bear Unitarian Universalist Church

Grow Your Soul & Serve the World

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*Theme for January*

### **TRUTH - the practice of discerning & discovering**

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.

*More online at [www.wbuuc.org/themes](http://www.wbuuc.org/themes).*

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#### **QUESTIONS**

What do you know to be true, and how?

From what sources do you find truth?

How do you discern truth among many claims to truth?

What have you discovered by being open to new truth(s)?

#### **QUOTES**

In a time of universal deceit - telling the truth is a revolutionary act.

- George Orwell

Perhaps the truth depends on a walk around the lake.

- Wallace Stevens

Truth is a deep kindness that teaches us to be content in our everyday life and share with the people the same happiness.

- Khalil Gibran

A lie gets halfway around the world before the truth has a chance to get its pants on.

- Winston Churchill

Truth is what works

- William James

*You shall know the truth and the truth shall set you free.*

- John 8

*It is very hard to say the exact truth, even about your own immediate feelings—much harder than to say something fine about them which is not the exact truth.*

- George Eliot

*The first point of wisdom is to discern what is false; the second to know what is true.*

- Lactantius (240-c.320)

## **POETRY & LYRICS**

### **Tell all the truth but tell it slant — (1263)**

Tell all the truth but tell it slant —

Success in Circuit lies

Too bright for our infirm Delight

The Truth's superb surprise

As Lightning to the Children eased

With explanation kind

The Truth must dazzle gradually

Or every man be blind —

- Emily Dickinson

### **The Truth**

Every time I use

my language, I tell

the truth. A cat

in a white collar,

like a priest with calico

fur, walks across the dead

grass of the yard, and out

through the white fence. The sun's

strong, but the colors of the lawn

were washed out by the winter, not the light.

February. Stained glass window of the house

next door takes the sun's full brunt.

It must look spectacular

to the neighbor in my head,

a white-haired woman with an air

of dignity and grace, who

through pools of the intensest

colors climbs the flight of stairs.

I've never seen it,

but I know it's there.

- Tim Dlugos

**Truth** by *Afaa Michael Weaver*

It was as hot as what  
stars must feel like  
so far away, certainly  
there, inside me.

I took it in my hands,  
put it where it should be  
in the wet softness  
where my heart sits.

Ugly things came  
to threaten me, to say  
I had lost the last lock  
holding me to truth.

That was not true,  
because old truths  
were now lies, I saw  
families as human.

I found the goodness  
in what is not perfect,  
and a new perfection  
in what is not good.

This happened in  
a new home twelve  
time zones away, as  
the world collapsed.

in a clitter clatter  
like a busy kitchen,  
the universe forming  
now inside all of me.

**Truth** by *Stephen Crane*

"Truth," said a traveller,  
"Is a rock, a mighty fortress;  
Often have I been to it,  
Even to its highest tower,  
From whence the world looks black."

"Truth," said a traveller,  
"Is a breath, a wind,  
A shadow, a phantom;  
Long have I pursued it,  
But never have I touched  
The hem of its garment."  
And I believed the second traveller;  
For truth was to me  
A breath, a wind,  
A shadow, a phantom,  
And never had I touched  
The hem of its garment.

## READINGS & EXCERPTS

### **Mathematics, Purpose, and Truth: The World Feels More Spacious**

<http://www.onbeing.org/blog/mathematics-purpose-and-truth-world-feels-more-spacious/4693>

By Krista Tippett

An excerpt:

The deepest truths are usually impossible to see and articulate straight on.

And I feel a kindred pull to Janna Levin's delight and passion in the great narrative of the world and humanity, epitomized in these lines from her book that we read in the show:

"I am looking on benches and streets, in logic and code. I am looking in the form of truth stripped to the bone. Truth that lives independently of us, that exists out there in the world. Hard and unsentimental. I am ready to accept truth no matter how alarming it turns out to be. Even if it proves incompleteness and the limits of human reason. Even if it proves we are not free."

Of all the ideas Janna Levin presents, the most provocative and disturbing, perhaps, is her doubt that there is free will in human existence at all. She cannot be sure that we are not utterly determined by brilliant principles of physics and biology. Yet she cleaves more fiercely in the face of this belief to the reality of her love of her children and her hopes and dreams for them. She sees "evidence of our purpose" in figures like Gödel and Turing, even though they did not find the clarity in life that they wrested from mathematics on all our behalf.

Paradoxically, perhaps, the world feels more spacious to me after this conversation with Janna Levin — even, to use her words, if it suggests incompleteness and the limits of human reason and faith; even if it suggests we are not free. She possesses a quality that keeps me interviewing scientists as often as I can — [a delight in beauty](#), a comfort with mystery, a limitless ambition for one's grandest ideas combined with a humility about them that many religious people could learn from.

### **Truth Breathed into the Void**

<http://www.onbeing.org/blog/truth-breathed-into-the-void/7644> by Sandy Ramage

*An excerpt:*

Anna inhales, stabilizing the vessel that holds the imprint. David lifts his hands to alert the expectant keys. She sings, and truth is breathed into the void. Like any spirit, this is a creative force able to be shaped but utterly resistant to capture. Fragile in its intensity like the desert sand. Exquisitely formed, but fleeting. Gone, almost as soon as it is born. Apart, that is, from the small mark made on the drying plaster of my new minimalist interior. The unique neural fingerprint that is the image of God.

### ***Meditation Practice***

#### **Meditation: The truth of the moment**

During a meditation ask yourself: "What is the truest statement I could make about myself now?" Write the statement down and meditate upon it for a while. As you sit with it, notice what feelings it elicits. Then ask if there is a truer statement you could make about yourself. Repeat this process until you feel that you have come as close as possible to the truth of your experience in the moment.