



## White Bear Unitarian Universalist Church

Grow Your Soul & Serve the World

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*Theme for April*

### **Soul – the practice of diving deep**

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 believe about the *soul*?

How has *diving deep* in self-reflection brought you insight or wisdom?

How do you guard against self-absorption?

What makes a person, place, or object *soulful*?

What practices help you *dive deep* and grow your soul so that you can more faithfully serve the world?

#### **QUOTES**

It takes a long time to sift through the more superficial voices of your own gift in order to enter into the deep significance and tonality of your Otherness. When you speak from that deep, inner voice, you are really speaking from the unique tabernacle of your own presence. There is a voice within you that no one, not even you, has ever heard. Give yourself the opportunity of silence and begin to develop your listening in order to hear, deep within yourself, the music of your own spirit.

- John O'Donohue

When someone witnesses something amazing, what matters most is not 'out there' . . . but deep within, at the vital emotional center of witness."

- Lawrence Weschler

My soul is in the sky.

- Shakespeare, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*

When you do things from your soul  
you feel a river moving in you, a joy.

When action comes from another part of you,  
the feeling disappears.

- Rumi

The first peace, which is the most important,  
is that which comes within the souls of people  
when they realize their relationship, their oneness,  
with the universe and all its powers,  
and when they realize that at the center of the universe  
dwells the Great Spirit,  
and that this center is really everywhere,  
it is within each of us.

- Black Elk, Oglala Sioux

Out beyond ideas of wrong-doing  
and right-doing there is a field.  
I'll meet you there.

When the soul lies down in that grass  
the world is too full to talk about.

- Rumi

Put your ear down close to your soul and listen hard.

- Anne Sexton

"Love makes your soul crawl out from its hiding place."

- Zora Neale Hurston

## **POETRY**

The divine will  
is a deep abyss  
of which the present moment  
is the entrance.  
If you plunge  
into this abyss  
you will find it  
infinitely more vast  
than your  
desires.

- Jean Pierre de Caussade

The search may begin  
with a restless feeling, as  
if one were being watched.  
One turns in all directions  
and sees nothing. Yet  
one senses that there is a  
source for this deep  
restlessness, and the path  
that leads there is not a  
path to a strange place,  
but the path home.

- Peter Matthiessen

### **When Great Trees Fall**

When great trees fall,  
rocks on distant hills shudder,  
lions hunker down  
in tall grasses,  
and even elephants  
lumber after safety.

When great trees fall  
in forests,  
small things recoil into silence,  
their senses  
eroded beyond fear.

When great souls die,  
the air around us becomes  
light, rare, sterile.  
We breathe, briefly.  
Our eyes, briefly,  
see with  
a hurtful clarity.  
Our memory, suddenly sharpened,  
examines,  
gnaws on kind words  
unsaid,  
promised walks  
never taken.

Great souls die and

our reality, bound to  
them, takes leave of us.

Our souls,  
dependent upon their  
nurture,  
now shrink, wizened.  
Our minds, formed  
and informed by their  
radiance,  
fall away.

We are not so much maddened  
as reduced to the unutterable  
ignorance  
of dark, cold  
caves.

And when great souls die,  
after a period peace blooms,  
slowly and always  
irregularly. Spaces fill  
with a kind of  
soothing electric vibration.  
Our senses, restored, never  
to be the same, whisper to us.  
They existed. They existed.  
We can be. Be and be  
better. For they existed.”

- Maya Angelou

## **Diving Deep**

Diving deep into an ocean  
Unseen surreal depths  
Confronted with a prospect so  
daunting  
As to sink without trace

To jump from dizzying heights  
Dispelling thoughts of consequences  
That may well be faced  
A choice between now or never  
No more doubts must linger  
Or time to waste

A mind that has jumped  
Into an unknown abyss  
A fast beating heart sunk  
Whilst that lump of fear caught in the  
throat  
Swallowed

As fast as eyes could blink

Descending through the air  
A weightless body splashed  
Into a watery world  
Never explored before  
Using both arms to float  
Swimming with fishes  
Breathing beneath an ocean's surface  
Guided by dolphins

Whilst blurry eyes were unable to  
clearly see  
A once cautiously reluctant soul  
Stopped being afraid  
Of whatever it may face  
Diving deep  
Into a oceanic future  
Even if it is an absolute mystery.  
- Sinclair Azubuiké

## **READINGS & EXCERPTS**

For most of us, clarity comes only fitfully, in sudden glimpses or slow revelations. Quakers refer to these insights as openings. When I first heard the term from a Friend who was counseling me about my resistance to the Vietnam War, I thought of how on an overcast day, sunlight pours through a break in the clouds. After the clouds drift on, eclipsing the sun, the sun keeps shining behind the veil, and the memory of its light shines on in the mind.

- Scott Russell Sanders

There is a part of us that is purely and essentially us. The best version of all our attributes. The blueprint, so to speak, of who we could become. The soul. Soul work is the process of bringing the essential self - the soul - out of hiding. It's a fundamental shift away from occupying the constructed self, and toward the art of living from our soul. Soul work begins with the knowledge that the soul is always trying to move us toward wholeness. When we learn the movements of the soul we can begin to deconstruct the habits of the self-we-became-instead and yield to the profound joy and wisdom of who-we-could-have-been-all-along.

- Phyllis Mathis