

For Further Exploration**Books**

- *Black Prophetic Fire*, by Cornel West
- *The Fifth Sacred Thing*, by Starhawk
- *Reclaiming Prophetic Witness: Liberal Religion in the Public Square*, by Paul Raszor
- *The Radical King*, by Martin Luther King, Jr.

Movies

- *Selma* (PG-13), 2014
- *Shut Up and Sing*, (R), 2006
- *Milk* (R), 2008
- *Ghandi* (PG), 1982
- *Pray the Devil Back to Hell* (NR), 2008

Articles, Videos & Podcasts

- [Prophet Muhammad: The Social Reformer](#), by Amaar Ahmad
- [Martin Luther King Was a Radical, Not a Saint](#), by Peter Dreier
- [The Prophetic Imagination](#), Walter Brueggemann on 'On Being' with Krista Tippet
- [I Have Been to the Mountaintop](#), by Martin Luther King, Jr.

Children's Books

- *The Judge: An Untrue Tale*, by Judith Viorst (Humorous picture book; light text)
- *The Honest-to-Goodness Truth*, by Patricia McKisack (Picture book)
- *The Skull of Truth*, by Bruce Coville (A chapter book set around a magic shop. The author is a U.U.)

* All available in the Norelma Walker Youth Library

January Theme

Prophecy: The Practice of Truth-Telling

January 2017

Behind the lone prophet who speaks up, there is a group...it is always a mistake to imagine that lone prophets are really alone...We should think of Jesus this way as well. It is a mistake to see him as an isolated, heroic individual. It is better to see him as the crest of a wave, the sparkling foam breaking brightly from the force of a whole ocean moving and swelling up from underneath. I sense among Unitarian Universalists these days a deep desire to affirm the ocean that is within and beneath the voices of individual conscience that we celebrate. ~ **Dr. Rebecca Ann Parker**

Avoid the bad habit of domesticating the prophet of your choice, turning him into a cheerleader for your way of thinking and way of life. Remember that all the great prophets were courageous and outrageous folks who railed against the powers-that-be, challenged self-satisfied posit, threatened the prevailing social order, and would find you falling short in some significant ways. ~ **Parker Palmer**

The task of prophetic ministry is to nurture, nourish, and evoke a consciousness and perception alternative to the consciousness and perception of the dominant culture around us. ~ **Walter Brueggemann**

To be a prophet requires living in and looking at the present, at what is really going on around you. ~ **Anne Carson**

If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. ~ **1 Corinthians 13:2**

Prophets connect the dots between the world as it is and the world as it might be. ~ **Krista Tippet**

The ones we call the prophets were the ones jailed and driven into the desert. ~ **Noam Chomsky**

Every man is hero and an oracle to somebody, and to that person, whatever

Our times ask us to exercise our capacity for prophetic witness. By Prophetic witness I mean our capacity to see what is happening, to say what is happening and to act in accordance with what we know...Prophetic witness...is the ability to name those places where we resist knowing what needs to be known. ~ **Dr. Rebecca Ann Parker**

The Prophetic role is such a tough one...It's annoying and unsettling. It points out hypocrisy and the intentional self-deception we engage in. Who wants that? Enter the comedian...~ **Pete Santucci**

We can always be sure of one thing—that the messengers of discomfort and sacrifice will be stoned and pelted by those who wish to preserve at all costs their own contentment. This is not a lesson that is confined to the Testaments. ~ **Christopher Hitchens**



he says has an enhanced value. ~ **Ralph Waldo Emerson**

This is the crime of which I accuse my country and my countrymen, and for which neither I nor time nor history will ever forgive them, that they have destroyed and are destroying hundreds of thousands of lives and do not know it and do not want to know it. ~ **James Baldwin**

What Does It Mean To Be A Community of Prophecy?

Prophets are known for their condemnation. Images of an angry bearded man shouting and predicting God's judgment come to mind. But for Unitarian Universalists, the prophetic voice has always been less about shouting "You're evil!" and more about pointing out "We're all asleep!" The prophetic message, for us, is not so much "Repent!" but "Wake up!"

Recent political events are relevant here. On election day, many of us realized we had been living in a bubble. We existed in an echo chamber but told ourselves we had a clear picture of the world. Whether it was class, condescension or comfort, something distorted many people's view.

And so if election day was about realizing we were asleep in a bubble, the question on Inauguration Day becomes, Are we ready to wake up? And let's be clear: this is not a politically partisan thing; liberals and conservatives both have a ton of waking up to do. One unemployed Michigan factory worker was quoted after the election saying, "I vote Republican because I won't vote for anyone who doesn't see and respect me." On the other side of the political fence, black, Latino, Muslim and LGBT families are struggling with real fear about what's been unleashed and what may be unleashed against them. And they are wondering if this country will wake up to and take their fear seriously.

Bottom line: we need prophetic communities now more than ever. As Rebecca Parker says, we need circles of brave and bold people who are willing "to see what is happening, to say what is happening, and to act in accordance with what they know." Which means that being a community of prophecy is not just about helping people wake up to each other's realities and fears; there is also the matter of waking up to and being wide-eyed about the need for resistance. Most of the time, holy work is about finding common ground among differing world views. But sometimes, holy work is about prophetic judgment and knowing when some views need to be opposed. As that activist said, "I am not crushed. I am awake."

So many ways to wake up. So many people who need us to do so. Sleep is no longer a luxury. In the end, maybe that is the most prophetic message of all.

~ *From the Soul Matters Sharing Circle. Author not cited.*

...sometimes,
holy work is
about prophetic
judgment and
knowing when
some views
need to be
opposed.



What are your truth-telling goals for 2017? About what are you feeling called to show up with Prophetic Witness? So much of what we are called to do is slow, long-term work for which we need to be prepared to have patience when we don't see immediate results. What are the small things you can do to contribute to the larger picture? Doodle here!



Kids' Corner

'This month at church our theme is Prophecy. Prophecy means to predict or forecast the future, kind of like a fortune teller. Did you know that you have the power to shape the future? The choices and changes you make help create the future. There is a New Year's tradition to make resolutions. Resolutions are promises you make to yourself about who you want to be. As Unitarian Universalists, we believe each person is important and that we should work for a peaceful, fair, and free world. Resolutions are one way to remind us to believe in ourselves and let your lights shine. When we sing the song, 'This Little Light of Mine', we are singing about the power within each of us to make ourselves and the world a better place. Sing this song, and then say, 'I believe in the light inside of myself.' Then draw a picture here about ways that you want to shape the future — how you want to make a difference.



Prop Up a Prophet

We owe prophets much. They inspire us, guide us, and keep us on track. In short, they prop us up. So, this month, in gratitude, why not return the favor and prop them up? We need to remember that they regularly feel cast into the desert and fear being pelted, sometimes literally. We need to remind them that they are appreciated and not alone. This is especially true of the everyday prophets. The ones protesting when the rest of us stop showing up with our signs. The ones who challenge those who intimidate women walking into Planned Parenthood clinics. The ones who devote their lives to keeping homeless shelters going and challenging the rest of us to not forget the forgotten. The vegetarians and vegans who remind us that eating is a spiritual practice. The neighbors who forego dinners or vacations so they can put solar panels on their house or afford the electric car, reminding us that it is possible to live in a new world now.

There are so many ways to prop these prophets up: Donate in their name. Send a letter of appreciation. Follow their lead and tell them you wouldn't have done it if not for them. Volunteer along side them for a weekend. Pick up your sign once again and stand by their side. Show up and tell them you did it because of them.

We all need everyday prophets in our lives. This month, let's remember that they need us too. Find your own unique way of appreciating and propping them up!

Personal Reflection

Don't treat these questions like "homework" or a list that needs to be covered in its entirety. Pick the one question that "hooks" you most and let it lead you where you need to go. The goal of these questions is not to help you analyze what story means in the abstract, but to figure out what a deeper awareness of story means for your daily living. So, which question is calling to you? Which one contains "your work"?



Who has been a prophetic oracle to you? Whose voice has influenced, and thus, predicted your future? Is it still doing so? (Every man is hero and an oracle to somebody, and to that person, whatever he says has an enhanced value. ~ Ralph Waldo Emerson)

What are you willing to be driven into the desert for? (The ones we call the prophets were the ones jailed and driven into the desert. ~ Noam Chomsky)

How is Beauty calling you to a new future? (Beauty is the oracle that speaks to us all. - Luis Barragan)

Have you domesticated your prophets? Is your "cloud of prophetic witnesses" really just an echo chamber? (Avoid the bad habit of domesticating the prophet of your choice, turning him into a cheerleader for your way of thinking and way of life. ~ Parker Palmer)

Which Martin Luther King Jr. do you celebrate? (Martin Luther King Was a Radical, Not a Saint: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/peter-dreier/martin-luther-king-was-a-1_b_6498740.html)

Are your New Year's resolutions too small? Are they really big enough to bring down your bully? What New Year's resolution will make life feel like a playground again? (The best way to [predict] any future is to cause one... The future isn't a pattern laid out to abuse and bully you. The future is a beautiful playground... - L. Ron Hubbard)

On Inauguration Day, what would it take for you to believe in "maybe"? (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OXOOARBqBp0>)

How has the election of President-Elect Trump "mugged you with truth"? ("You can tell the future?" "More like the future mugs me from time to time....The oracle spirit kind of hijacks me once in a while, and speaks important stuff." ~ Rick Riordan)

Is your prophetic engagement with or without love? (If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. - 1 Corinthians 13:2)

What's your question? Your question may not be listed above. As always, if the above questions don't include what life is asking from you, spend the month listening to your days to hear it.

All contents adapted from the Soul Matters Sharing Circle resource materials for January 2017.

2672 E Alluvial Ave
Fresno, CA 93720
www.uufresno.org
559.322.6146



Unitarian Universalist
Church of Fresno

Justice Corner

Inauguration Week Ministry

This month, in the wake of the inauguration, as we wrestle with finding ways to uphold and promote our Unitarian Universalist values and principles, join us in a series of opportunities to 'stand on the side of love' and hold Prophetic witness to resist the outward hate that some are trying to call our new norm. Find ways to plug yourself in and take your faith in action to a new level of practice.

- Monday, January 16 — Martin Luther King Day March - Meet at City Hall at the UU Church of Fresno Banner at 9:45. March together for progressive values, human rights, justice, and equity.
- Wednesday, January 18 — Film: Defying the Nazi's: The Sharp's War 10:00 AM and 6:30 PM Learn how two Unitarians defied hate and demagoguery during WWII. Discussion to follow film.
- Thursday, January 19 — Interfaith Prayer Vigil & Testimonials. 6-7pm at the First Congregational Church, 2131 N Van Ness Blvd, in Fresno.
- Sunday, January 29 — Moving Forward Together - Panel and Discussion 12:30 PM How do we live with our new reality? How do we hold the new administration accountable? How do we become a community of sanctuary and resistance?

** Check for additional events on the website.



FAITH
IN ACTION