



NEW HORIZONS

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Theme Based Ministry Newsletter of the First Unitarian Congregation of Toronto

HOME

*“The ache for home lives in all of us.
The safe place where we can go as we are and not be questioned.”
— Maya Angelou*

In recent months, many of us have been spending lots of time in residence—working from home, worshipping from home, educating children from home, and the list goes on.

But have we always felt “at home” during this time?

Some people have been more comfortable than they expected, enjoying the solitude and sense of rootedness, while others have experienced loneliness and cabin fever. Many have made changes to their living spaces, to better allow for work or family life. Some have moved to new homes altogether, as new needs emerged. Virtually everyone has missed the formerly safe places that became suddenly out-of-bounds: the homes of friends and family, the beloved spaces of community.

Many wisdom teachers have suggested, though, that home is not a location or a place at all, but rather a state of mind, or perhaps a state of heart or soul. Many people feel that home is found in relationship: that it’s our loving connection with each other that creates an enduring sense of belonging and fit. Buddhist teachings suggest that home is in the present moment, and not connected with material notions of home. In Jewish history, the study of the Torah and maintaining of regular rituals allowed the community to stay strong during a long period of exile.

Perhaps, for you, home is bound up with ancestry—the roots that extend back through the generations of your family. Or it’s connected to geography: a city, region or neighbourhood that you love. Our awareness of the interdependence of all living things teaches us, too, that our personal home, and how we live in it, is inseparable from the shelter of others and the well-being of the planetary home we share.

Where do you call home? How might we support each other, in finding and sustaining our places of comfort, safety and rest? This month, we're invited to reflect on what home means to us, and how we can care for this essential living-place (however we define it) in times of significant change and challenge.

Wherever you find yourself this season, may you be welcomed home.

Love,
Lynn

Questions to Live With



1. At what times in your life have you felt most “at home” or “away from home”? What has made the difference?
2. How is this present season, in your life or in the world, affecting your sense of home?
3. How do you see the connection between your home and the homes of others?

For Inspiration

“Our True Home is in the Present Moment”
Thich Nhat Hanh

Our true home is in the present moment.
To live in the present moment is a miracle.
The miracle is not to walk on water.
The miracle is to walk on the green Earth in
the present moment,
to appreciate the peace and beauty that are
available now.

Peace is all around us in the world and in
nature, and within us;
It is in our bodies and our spirits.
Once we learn to touch this peace,
we will be healed and transformed.
It is not a matter of faith,
it is a matter of practice.
We need only to find ways to bring our body

and mind
back to the present moment so we can touch
what is refreshing, healing, and wondrous.

It was when I stopped searching for home
within others and lifted the foundations of
home within myself I found there were no
roots more intimate than those between a
mind and body that have decided to be whole.
- Rupi Kaur

Cease looking for flowers! There blooms a
garden in your own home.
While you look for trinkets, the treasure house
awaits you in your own being.
- Rumi

My people will live in peaceful dwelling places,
in secure homes, in undisturbed places of rest.

- Isaiah 32:18

“Coming Home” Mary Oliver

When we are driving in the dark,
on the long road to Provincetown,
when we are weary,
when the buildings and the scrub pines lose
their familiar look,
I imagine us rising from the speeding car.
I imagine us seeing everything from another
place,
the top of one of the pale dunes, or the deep
and nameless
fields of the sea.
And what we see is a world that cannot
cherish us,
but which we cherish.
And what we see is our life moving like that
along the dark edges of everything,
headlights sweeping the blackness,
believing in a thousand fragile and unprovable
things.
Looking out for sorrow,
slowing down for happiness,
making all the right turns
right down to the thumping barriers to the sea,
the swirling waves,
the narrow streets, the houses,
the past, the future,
the doorway that belongs
to you and me.
Hiraeth (n.) a Welsh word which mean a
homesickness for a home to which you cannot
return, a home which maybe never was; the
nostalgia, the yearning, the grief for the lost
places of your past.

“A Spiritual Journey” Wendell Berry

And the world cannot be discovered by a
journey of miles,
no matter how long,
but only by a spiritual journey,
a journey of one inch,
very arduous and humbling and joyful,
by which we arrive at the ground at our feet,
and learn to be at home.

The spiritual life is about becoming more at
home in your own skin.

- Parker J. Palmer

So the tree rustles in the evening, when we
stand uneasy before our own childish
thoughts: Trees have long thoughts, long-
breathing and restful, just as they have longer
lives than ours. They are wiser than we are, as
long as we do not listen to them. But when we
have learned how to listen to trees, then the
brevity and the quickness and the childlike
hastiness of our thoughts achieve an
incomparable joy. Whoever has learned how
to listen to trees no longer wants to be a tree.
He wants to be nothing except what he is.
That is home. That is happiness.

- Herman Hesse



Nature is not a place to visit. It is home.

- Gary Snyder

The desire to go home, that is a desire to be whole, to know where you are, to be the point of intersection of all the lines drawn through all the stars, to be the constellation-maker and the centre of the world, that centre called love. To awaken from sleep, to rest from awakening, to tame the animal, to let the soul go wild, to shelter in darkness and blaze with light, to cease to speak and be perfectly understood.

- Rebecca Solnit

We are all lost without [a] sense of home. Home is, of course, not simply a physical place. It is a sense of belonging, of remembering and being remembered, of being put back together again when our journeys into the world have fractured and fragmented our sense of self. It is the place that holds some essential piece of you in trust, waiting for you to return when you go out into other places. This is what home is: not only the place you remember, but the place that remembers you, even if you have never been there before.

- Oriah Mountain Dreamer, *The Dance*

We're staying home. Love has never asked this of us before. We're staying home, this is our gift to humanity. Let us wish each other well.

- Rev. Linda Barnes (UU)

To Watch

TED Talk: Pico Iyer – “Where is Home?”

https://www.ted.com/talks/pico_eyer_where_is_home?referrer=playlist-what_is_home

TED Talk: Taiye Selasi – “Don’t ask me where I’m from, ask where I’m a local”

https://www.ted.com/talks/taiye_selasi_don_t_ask_where_i_m_from_ask_where_i_m_a_lo cal?referrer=playlist-what_is_home

Music

“Where Do You Call Home?” – Lynn Harrison (2003)

<http://www.lynoleum.com/mp3/WhereDoYouCallHome.mp3>

(free download)

Upcoming Services

Every Sunday morning at 10:30 a.m. our worship services will be held online, via both Zoom and YouTube.

Visit the First Unitarian Toronto website (www.firstunitariantoronto.org) for links to services and other online activities.

October 4- Home, at Last (Rev. Shawn Newton) * October 11- Thanks Giving, Thanks Receiving (Rev Lynn Harrison & Rev Shawn Newton) * October 18- Extreme Home Makeover (Rev. Lynn Harrison) * October 25- When “There is No There There” (Rev. Shawn Newton)

New Horizons Editing Team: Wendy Peebles, Jeanne Van Bronkhorst, Margaret Kohr, Rev. Shawn Newton, Rev. Lynn Harrison

First Unitarian Congregation of Toronto



Seek • Connect • Serve

175 St. Clair Avenue West
Toronto, Ontario M4V 1P7
416-924-9654

