



NEW HORIZONS

*Theme Based Ministry Newsletter of
the First Unitarian Congregation of Toronto*

May 2021

Vol 9 Issue 9

TRUTHS & LIES

We now live in what is sometimes called “The Information Age.” At our fingertips, with the help of Google, we can find the answer—or, more accurately, *an* answer—to many if not most of the questions that occur to us. That is, at least for the questions that pertain to facts and figures. No generation in the history of the world has ever had such access to so much human knowledge.

It can also be said that we are increasingly living in an Age of Disinformation. It’s not just propaganda and conspiracy theories. It’s the aggressive marketing that bombards us at every turn with promises of magical elixirs and secret keys to happiness. It’s our politicians bending the truth as they settle into patterns of non-stop campaigning, even when the next election is still years away. It’s the erosion of trust in once-esteemed institutions that ushers in not just a healthy skepticism, but wave upon wave of cynicism. None of this can be good for us.

This month, as we turn to the theme of “Truth & Lies,” we take up the quest embedded in our Fourth Principle: the “free and responsible search for truth and meaning.” What does this search mean in our time? How can we best balance freedom with responsibility, as we seek to understand what is true, whether we spell it with a capital or lower-case “t”?

May your reflections over the coming month clarify your conception of truth and deepen for you the call to a life of integrity.

In faith and love,
Shawn

Questions to Live With



1. How has your understanding of truth (or lies) changed over time?
2. What is most true for you at this point in your life? Why?
3. Are you living true to your values? What do you want or need to be more honest with yourself about?
4. What truth does the world need right now?
5. If these questions don't resonate with you, what is your question about truths and lies?

For Inspiration

Believe those who are seeking the truth. Doubt those who find it.

- Andre Gide

Lying is the most simple form of self-defence.

- Susan Sontag

The truth springs from arguments among friends.

- David Hume

The most erroneous stories are those we think we know best—and therefore never scrutinize or question.

- Stephen Jay Gould

The capacity to tolerate complexity and welcome contradiction, not the need for simplicity and certainty, is the attribute of an explorer.

- Heinz Pagels

Truth does not change according to our ability to stomach it.

- Flannery O'Connor

Let's tell the truth to people. When people ask, 'How are you?' have the nerve sometimes to answer truthfully. You must know, however, that people will start avoiding you because, they, too, have knees that pain them and heads that hurt and they don't want to know about yours. But think of it this way: If people avoid you, you will have more time to meditate and do fine research on a cure for whatever truly afflicts you.

- Maya Angelou, Letter to My Daughter



Truth can be a powerful agent for change, and when we release it into the world we must do so with accuracy and care. What we say to others is one of the gifts that derive from spirit, even if our message at times is necessarily unpalatable. Not to be aware of the impact of our words would be an arrogance, a failure of empathy. To give truth excessive emphasis or to let it out too quickly can sometimes be just as regrettable as neglecting to tell the truth at all.

- Mike George, Discover Inner Peace

Danger has been a part of my life ever since I picked up a pen and wrote. Nothing is more perilous than truth in a world that lies. Nothing is more perilous than knowledge in a world that has considered knowledge a sin since Adam and Eve.

- Nawal El Saadawi

I speak the truth, not so much as I would wish, but as much as I dare; and I dare a little more, as I grow older.

- Michel de Montaigne

We are hard on each other
and call it honesty,
choosing our jagged truths
with care and aiming them across
the neutral table.

The things we say are
true; it is our crooked
aims, our choices
turn them criminal.

- Margaret Atwood



We make ourselves real by telling the truth. We can hardly forget that we need to know the truth, for the instinct to know is too strong in us to be destroyed. But we can forget how badly we also need to tell the truth. We cannot know truth unless we ourselves are conformed to it. We must be true inside, true to ourselves, before we can know a truth that is outside us. But we make ourselves true inside by manifesting the truth as we see it.

- Thomas Merton

“Let me keep my distance, always,
from those who think they have the answers”

Truly, we live with mysteries too marvelous
to be understood.

How grass can be nourishing in the
mouths of the lambs.

How rivers and stones are forever
in allegiance with gravity
while we ourselves dream of rising.

How two hands touch and the bonds
will never be broken.

How people come, from delight or the
scars of damage,
to the comfort of a poem.

Let me keep my distance, always, from those
who think they have the answers.

Let me keep company always with those who say
“Look!” and laugh in astonishment,
and bow their heads.

- Mary Oliver

The pure and simple truth is rarely pure and never
simple.

- Oscar Wilde



Join a Journey Group

Journey Groups are the best way to go deeper with our monthly theme by sharing with a small group of people for a couple of hours each month. Groups meet online on Zoom and are scheduled at different times during the month.

For more information, visit our website <https://firstunitariantoronto.org/journey-groups/>, or look for the link in First Light.

Upcoming Monthly Themes

June: Time



Upcoming Services

Sundays at 10:30

May 2 – The Free and Responsible Search
Rev. Shawn Newton

May 9 – True Stories
Rev. Lynn Harrison

May 16 – Truthiness
Rev. Shawn Newton

May 23 – Honest to God
Rev. Shawn Newton

May 31 – Moments of Truth
Rev. Shawn Newton

New Horizons Editing Team: Wendy Peebles, Jeanne Van Bronkhorst, Margaret Kohr, Josée Thibault, 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

