

Classroom News

April 2022

Monthly Theme Reflection

By: Ashley Cole

Hello everyone,

This month's theme is called a 'wild card'. The idea to include a wild card month was originally suggested by our minister, Rev. Meg Roberts. The idea of having a 'wild card' month is to invite you to explore what other sources you draw from that may not be reflected in the current sources.

What informs your Unitarian Universalist beliefs and practices? What draws you into this unique expression of community and what keeps you here? For me, a big draw has always been the amount of engagement with social justice work. From the principles to actions, the social justice work of Unitarian Universalist in the world has always inspired me.

As I shared last month, the great thing about Unitarian Universalism is that it is a living tradition, which means that as we continue to learn and grow as individuals and as communities we are able to adapt to the changing world around us. Understanding what connects us to comUUnity helps us better understand our relationship with it. What are ways you experience or practice your beliefs as part of your Unitarian Universalist community?

April Theme - alternative UU Sources

Our Unitarian Universalist beliefs come from our own experiences and interests

Head

Read the attached story *For the Love of Stars*

<https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/loveguide/session9/168798.shtml>. In the story Cecilia, inspired by her love of stars, decided to become an astronomer. Her desire to learn more about space led her to study and explore it further. Discuss with your family what inspires you. Where has your inspiration led you? Have you learned to play a new instrument or learn more about a particular subject?

Heart

Colour in the attached drawing and reflect on the ways you feel connected to Unitarian community? If you could think of a source (or starting place) for your connection into UU community, what would it be? Are there any parts of Unitarian Universalism that inspire you? What are they and why do you like them?

If you practice lighting a chalice, use these words and actions

Earth, my body (tap chest)

Water, my blood (make waves with hand)

Air, my breath and (kiss a breath of air)

Fire, my spirit (strike a match with a clap of hands)

Hands

UU Treasurer Map Think about the first time you attended a Unitarian Universalist service or program. What was it? How did you first hear about it? What made you decide to come back to other services or programs. Draw your journey with Unitarian Universalism as if it were a treasure map. Where would it start? What would be the important stops along the path? What would you recommend sight-seeing?

Tapestry of Faith (<https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry>) : **Love Will Guide Us**

(<https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/loveguide>) : **A Program for Grades 2-3 that Applies the Wisdom of the Six Sources to the Big Questions**

For the Love of Stars

Part of Love Will Guide Us (<https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/loveguide>)

By Gail Forsyth-Vail (<https://www.uua.org/offices/people/gail-forsyth-vail>)

Adapted from Stories in Faith by Gail Forsyth-Vail, a Tapestry of Faith Toolkit book (Boston: UUA, 2007). Used with permission.

Once there was a little girl named Cecilia who fell in love with the universe. She felt her heart leap with joy every time she learned something new about the world around her. She wanted to grow up to become an astronomer who studied the stars. Throughout her whole life, she studied and observed the stars, asking, "What are stars made of? How are they born? Do they die? And how do we know?" Throughout her whole life, her heart sang with each discover, each bit of new understanding about the wonders of the far-off sky.

When Cecilia was a small child in England, she saw a meteorite blaze across the sky. Her mother taught her a small rhyme so she could remember what it was:

"As we were walking home that night

We saw a shining meteorite."

She later told a friend that from that moment, she knew she would grow up to be an astronomer. She learned the names of all the constellations in the sky, picking out the Big Dipper, Orion's Belt, and others. She was naturally very observant and precise, able to remember small details. By age twelve, she had learned to measure things and to do math

problems easily. At her school, they had an interesting way of increasing the students' powers of observation. Once a week, students were required to find with their eyes (not touching) three little brass tacks scattered somewhere in the school garden. For Cecilia, always an observer, this exercise strengthened her resolve to be a scientist.

In 1912, when Cecilia was a teenager, there was very little education available for a young woman who wanted to be a scientist. She spent hours in a makeshift laboratory, which she called her chapel, where she conducted "a little worship service of her own," in awe before the magnificence of the natural world. Persistent, she found people who would teach her science at school, and she pored over her family's home library until she found two lonely science books to study: one about plants and the other containing Sir Isaac Newton's observations about gravity.

In 1919, Cecilia entered college to study botany, or plants. This was one of the fields of science permitted for women. She went through her courses, but also attended lectures in physics, where she found "pure delight." Each new bit of knowledge about physics and astronomy transformed her. Leaving botany behind, she persuaded the college to allow her to take a degree in physics: astronomy is a branch of physics.

After finishing her degree, Cecilia Payne left for the United States, where she would study as an astronomer at Harvard University. As an astronomer, she figured out that stars are primarily made of hydrogen. In today's world of satellites and computers, we know this to be true, but it was an extraordinary statement at that time. How can you possibly know what a makes a star from so far away? Because of this discovery, Cecilia was the first person, male or female, awarded a Ph.D. in astronomy.

Cecilia choice to be an astronomer was not popular, or appreciated, because she was a woman. People kept her from advancing in her carrier or just flat out didn't believe her. Nevertheless, she was right. And through it all, she held on to her love for the scientific quest, and her love for the stars.

Download all of Love Will Guide Us (Word) (https://www.uua.org/sites/live-new.uua.org/files/loveguideus_column.doc) (PDF (https://www.uua.org/sites/live-new.uua.org/files/loveguideus_column.pdf)) to edit or print.

About the Author



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Gail Forsyth-Vail is a Credentialed Religious Educator, Master Level, who served congregations for twenty-two years before serving on the UUA Ministries and Faith Development staff from 2008-2019. She is the author of a number of faith development curricula and resources....

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