



November Journal

Memory

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# What It Means to Be A People of Memory

Exploring our monthly theme.

Welcome to the second edition of the DuPage Unitarian Universalist Church Journal. Each month we will be exploring the different months themes a little deeper.



## The Root Of the Word

Memory derives from the Latin word *memor* (mindful, remembering), from Proto-Indo-European *smer-* (to remember).

The Sanskrit word *chitta* is often translated as memory. It carries the idea of consciousness or awareness, to remember is to bring to awareness.



**DuPage Unitarian Universalist Church**

November 2018 Sanctuary Journal



# Love and Gratitude

By Reverend Tom Capo

Sermon from October 28th, 2018

I want us to affirm that this church is a sanctuary, a place and a state that we create for each other that is safe, respectful and in the spirit of unity and love. Today I will share my feelings with you in this service and many of you will be talking with each other and leadership, so it is important this is the sanctuary we affirm with one another.

As most of you know, my last day as your settled minister will be December 31, 2018. Many of you, as do I, come here today with heavy hearts and lots of feelings. What is on my heart is that I have loved my time here and am grateful for all the experiences we have had together. I am very sad to be leaving this church at the end of December. Many of you have questions about how this decision was made and the Board will be available between services and after the second service to answer your questions.

I want to thank all of you who have been reaching out to Martha and I to offer us love and support during this time of change. Martha has needed and really appreciated the kind words from Jenny, Jim, and so many others. Your reaching out to her means a lot to me. And I have received so many hugs lately. I am sure they have reduced my stress, lowered my heart rate, improved my immune system function and increased my pain tolerance. And of course, as much as I love you all, I know you love me. This change has not reduced the abundant love in this community.

I have been filled with so many memories this week of my time here as your minister. I recall the second Candidating Week service when we all danced to Pharrell William's "Happy". And I remember how the choir and Art Freedman worked so hard to perform the best "All You Need is Love" by the Beatles I think I have ever heard for my installation ceremony.

I remember putting a blurb in the Newsletter asking if anyone was interested in starting a Social Justice Committee, and then going up to the Clara Barton Room, and the room being so full that most of the people had to stand; can you imagine 30 plus people fitting in that small room. So many memories, I am not able to tell you them all. Gosh, I remember the many meetings developing the SMILE Project and the celebration of all the youth of color who participated in this innovative mentorship program last summer. You invited me to tell stories during the Solstice Services. I've loved brainstorming with the I can't forget the sight of Martha, my loving wife, walking around in a Tyrannosaurus Rex Costume advertising for the Prairieview Art Invitational. So many memories.

I deeply appreciate all the opportunities I was able to pursue because I was your minister. Developing a relationship with the Proviso Township Ministerial Alliance; becoming a member of the Executive Committee of the Council of Religious Leaders of Metropolitan Chicago; starting an interfaith potluck here in Naperville. So many things I could not have experienced if I were not your minister.



**DuPage Unitarian Universalist Church**

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I found Brene Brown's writings very grounding for me during this time. She said, "Our willingness to own and engage with our vulnerability determines the depth of our courage and the clarity of our purpose." I realize that the suddenness of this decision has come as a surprise to most of you and that many of you are having a lot of feelings about this. It is normal and natural to have these feelings. It is also normal to have questions, but please do not blame or accuse anyone, doing that will only increase the community's pain. Back in June we spoke together in a Congregational meeting about the results of a congregational survey that had recently occurred. There were concerns in that survey results about the spiritual direction of Sunday Services. I shared with you at that time that I would be reflecting on my role as your minister. In these past few months I have consulted with my Spiritual Director, my coach, colleagues, many others, as well as working with the Committee On Ministry. The Board recently brought in a consultant from UUA to help them explore these issues as well. I said to you at the congregational meeting in June that I did not want to be a cause of the congregation's anxiety, and I mean that. Please trust that the Board and I did not come to this decision easily or lightly. This was a mutual decision after much consideration. Some of you feel blindsided. Some of you might wonder why the whole congregation wasn't involved in this decision. Some of you think that is the wrong decision. There is nothing easy or uncomplicated about a decision like this. And there isn't a perfect way to share it but please know it was not an impulsive decision. The decision has been made so it is not up for negotiation. There is no conspiracy here. There is no bad guy. This was a joint decision between

me and the Board. I did nothing wrong; I did not breach any ethics. And please remember that your Board are both leaders and members of this congregation. They are your friends, the members of your covenant groups, the people who attend your auction parties. We all need a lot of love and compassion right now. And I am deeply sorry that this decision has caused such grief.

"That's what life is about; about daring greatly, about being in the arena." Brene Brown has that right; my friends, get in the arena of what is happening in this church community; be willing to be vulnerable with one another, engaging in sometimes difficult conversations; dare greatly. This congregation has a lot to do and the leadership needs you. I know there is a lot to process, and so I asked the church's pastoral ministers and some past and present church leaders to be here for you today. And they will continue to be available after today. They will listen to your feelings and help you process, so that you can stay engaged in this community and do the work necessary for this congregation to thrive and grow. There are some important questions to be asked now. How did this congregation come to this point? What can this congregation do to prevent this from happening again? What holds this community together? And most importantly today what are the ways you can express love and compassion to one another through this change? However, asking how can we stop this change from happening will only result in more pain for this congregation. I have a strong belief in this community's ability to come together, united, to work toward a positive future.

Life brings changes. Ministers will come and go. This is your church. These are





not alternate facts. They are the reality of being a church community. That may be hard to hear right now, but I know you have faced changes. You have had many ministers, some who have were here for a long period and some for a short period, and I know that you can run this church. One of the qualities that brought me here in the first place was that you run this church, not me, not any minister, you. You do not wait around for a minister to lead you to do things around here; you take the initiative and do what needs to be done. You built this sanctuary, not for a minister, but for yourselves, so you would have space. You were cramped in the Learning Center and needed space for all the people who were joining you on Sunday mornings. You wanted solar panels on this church because it was the ethically right thing to do, and so a group of you worked and researched and planned, and now we have solar panels supplying a good portion of the electricity for this church. You know that this is your church and you are responsible for its future. That my friends is a huge compliment, because not all church communities can say that. I want to share something else that Reverend Nieuwejarr wrote, though next time I find something important I want to say I will try to find a quote by someone whose name is easier to pronounce. Anyway, she wrote: "In a lecture at General Assembly in 1994, Cornel West, the acclaimed scholar of African American studies, said, 'I'm not an optimist, I'm a man of hope.' He explained that optimists are those who think things will improve if they simply keep on doing what they're doing, but people of hope see possibilities and commit themselves to actions that will improve things. Affirming hope as a foundational core of our faith, we affirm that we are agents of change and

goodness for the world. Hope draws us into action, but action may also draw us to hope." I know this is not the theme this month, but I encourage you to be people of hope, finding possibilities in the changes you face and committing yourselves to actions that will improve things.

Over the next couple of months, I will still be here. I will be working with leadership to help this church prepare for the journey ahead. Feel free to come by my office during this time. We can talk, share some feelings and memories, and say our goodbyes. Blessings All.

## Meditation or Prayer

Reverend Tom offers this prayer by Unitarian Universalist minister Rev. Audette Fulbright Fulson. Fulson offers that remembering those whose shoulders we stand on is important, but also that work that they started is not finished. We are called to do in the world still needs to be done.

Holy Spirit, God of Ages and so many names, we gather once again to rejoice in the light offered to the world by the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

His walk on this earth was a gift to generations, and today we give thanks for that gift.

We know that we are called together today not simply to rejoice and be glad that such a man was given to us for a time, but rather to heed the calls he made to us—the same calls that reverberate now, as they did when he was alive; the same calls You have made time and time again, in a voice of justice that calls us throughout the ages.

We are called to hear that same Word of truth that Dr. King spoke: that the hungry and poor are with us still.





It is not enough to march and remember. The work we are called to do is to feed hungry children and to wipe the tears from our siblings' eyes.

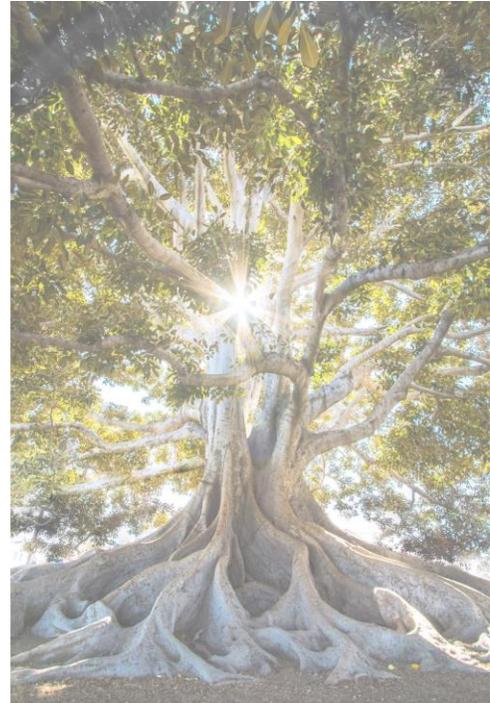
It is not enough to sing a joyful song; we must also build the houses that will give shelter to every adult and child, and allow them full security and dignity.

We are called today to be remember that we are not to judge one another by the color of our skins, but by the content of our character. In a world where our families are knit ever more tightly together past old ideas of color and race, we know that the tyranny of fear and hatred still exists in our hearts; we know that racism still lurks like a viper around unexpected corners.

And so, we gather again to renew our promise to one another: that we will be vigilant. We will be warriors and peacemakers of a new world, a world that is always dawning—the Kingdom of God, which is always at hand among people who work and pray and give thanks together.

Holy Spirit, on this day of remembrance we do give thanks, and we are joyful that for a time we had our brother and father, our pastor and leader, Dr. King, with us. But we do not forget that the mantle he wore for a time has been passed now to us—to each of us here gathered—and it is in our efforts, in our faithful struggle, and in our generous witness to a better world becoming, that we make our most powerful prayer of thanksgiving.

Thank you, Gracious One, for this day, and for all our many gifts. In a spirit of remembrance and a spirit of gratitude and hope, we set forth once again, with your guidance and strength, to make the world anew. Amen.





# Remembering Values

By Steve Cooper  
Director of Religious Education

Welcome to November's theme on "What Does It Mean to be a People of Memory?!" As I turned to this month's theme, my mind went to an African American children's book. It introduces us to the concept of Sankofa. Here's a simple description of what Sankofa means:

*"Sankofa is a word in the Twi language of Ghana that translates to "Go back and get it" (san - to return; ko - to go; fa - to fetch, to seek and take) and also refers to the Asante Adinkra symbol represented either with a stylized heart shape or by a bird with its head turned backwards while its feet face forward carrying a precious egg in its mouth.*



*Sankofa is often associated with the proverb, "Se wo were fi na wosankofa a yenkyi," which translates as: "It is not wrong to go back for that which you have forgotten."*

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sankofa#cite\\_note-1](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sankofa#cite_note-1)

For me this boils down to the idea that we should reach back and gather the best of what our past has to teach us,

so that we can achieve our full potential as we move forward.

Whatever we have lost, forgotten, forgone, or been stripped of can be reclaimed, revived, preserved, and perpetuated.

After the term made its way to the United States, African-American scholars embraced Sankofa to structure and inspire their work. In fact, in our own UU culture, the "[Sankofa Special Collection](#)" at Meadville Lombard Theological School tells the story of UU's of color.

This month, we are using this idea of reaching back to structure our worship and religious education lessons. All four are about reclaiming and remembering of things of great value:

- Reclaiming an honest history
- Remembering those who have gone before and the guidance they have for us today
- Remembering and noticing all of life's gifts that lay all around us
- Remembering our values in a world where buying stuff is more important than being good people.

It is our hope that this helps us reclaim and remember many of your own stories and treasures (and maybe even parts of yourself) long forgotten. Thanks for letting us partner with you in remembering the stories which build wholeness for all.

Steve Cooper  
Director of Religious Education





# Gratitude

By Mary Law, Congregational Life Coordinator

I am forever grateful for Reverend Tom for offering me the interim position of what was then called Membership Director in March of 2015. I would have never gone for the position myself. I did have a Customer Service background and had enjoyed helping people in the past, but the thought of helping people at a church sounded extremely daunting to me.

My internal dialog when Rev. Tom asked if I would help and be interim Membership Director went something like this: I can't even spell Unitarian Universalism correctly! I haven't remembered the 7 Principles by heart. How can I teach it or talk about it if I'm still not sure what they are?

Oh no! I have to teach the new member class. I'm still learning about UUism myself, how can I teach it to others? I calmed my anxiety by thinking if Rev. Tom has some faith in me maybe it will work out.

If it wasn't for Rev. Tom, I wouldn't have thought that a job at a church would be something that would actually enjoy. Being a Congregation Life Coordinator is the first job that I have had that I have felt a sense of pride in and find this position extremely rewarding.

If it wasn't for Rev. Tom, who knows if I would have found my place in the world. And for that, I am incredibly grateful.





# 2nd Saturdays!



## UUs IN ACTION

*social justice education & action for everyone.*

2nd SATURDAYS EACH MONTH @ DUPAGE UU CHURCH



**November 10<sup>th</sup>**  
**4 p.m.**

**What Does a Socially  
Just World Look  
Like?**

Public Witness  
will be our  
action project  
for the day.



Join us each month at UUs in Action where we will explore social justice topics, share a meal, and spend some time joyously connecting as a community.

**From 4-6pm** adults will explore a foundational social justice topic and there will be separate programming for children grades 1-5 and 6-8, exploring these themes as well.

Childcare will be provided for our youngest guests.

**6-7pm** Share a meal, which will be provided. A small donation of \$5 per person, or \$15 per family is requested, but not required.

**7 - 9pm**, stay to play games, listen to music or just visit at our DUUC Coffeehouse, where you can enjoy coffee and tea.

Come for the class, come for dinner, come for Coffeehouse or come for all three...let's gather and create our beloved community.



**DuPage Unitarian Universalist Church**



*The following resources are being used for our small groups at DUUC and may be helpful for you to use to think about what it means to be a people of and a person of sanctuary. If you are interested in learning more about Covenant or other small groups, contact Mary Law at [membershipduuc@gmail.com](mailto:membershipduuc@gmail.com).*

# Find Memories

## The Memento That Matters

We all have one: a memento that holds one of our favorite memories. The physicality of these objects somehow gives our memories more “substance” and staying power. But they also have a way of getting knocked off the mantle or tucked away in a dusty closet. We lose them. And in doing so, we forget.

So you are invited this month to spend some time dusting off one of your treasured “memory objects” and getting it back into clear view. What value, relationship, aspiration needs to return to the center of your life? What object symbolizes this for you? Maybe it’s a picture of your family that needs put back on your office desk to remind you that your heart lies somewhere other than that desk. Maybe it’s the peace sign t-shirt from your “radical days.” Maybe it’s that old pair of pointe shoes that used to hang by your dresser. Maybe it’s that old train car—the first one your dad bought for you and soon became part of that miniature railroad you and he built together. Whatever it is. Find it and return it to its central place, so it can return those memories back to you.

Bring your memento to the group and be ready to share what surprised you most about the adventure of finding it once again.

### *Some inspiration to help you along your way...*

- Six tips for using mementos to keep happy memories vivid: <https://gretchenrubin.com/2008/04/tis-wednesday-2/>
- Childhood Mementos You Should Keep: <https://lifestyle.allwomenstalk.com/childhood-mementos-you-should-keep>
- What is your favorite family memento? <https://www.wikitree.com/g2g/597107/question-of-the-week-what-is-your-favorite-family-memento>



## Ten Things to Remember

From a spiritual perspective, memory is not just about holding pictures of the past in our head; it’s also about holding on to our core values. There’s a reason we say, “I need to remember who I am.” Indeed, this has long been the way UUs think





about church. Church, for us, is the place where we come to remember who we are.

To honor and engage this, you are invited to spend some time this month “reminding yourself who you are” by making a simple list of “10 Things to Remember.” Think of it as self-talk. As your better self-helping your forgetful self-return to your center. Pull out a sheet of paper or pull up a document on your computer and type out a list numbered 1-10. Then spend the month filling it in with 10 pieces of wisdom or advice that are important to you but that you also often forget.

Bring this “spiritual reminder list” with you to your group and be ready to share the 3 items on the list that were most surprising or engaging.

***Here are some example reminders to get you thinking:***

1. Remember that failure stings but regret haunts.
2. Remember that assuming good intentions is not only correct but also often creates good intentions.
3. Remember to “want what you have.”
4. Remember you always have a choice.
5. Remember you’ve already received a death sentence.
6. Remember that everyone is carrying pain, even if you can’t see it, so we must be kind, in every single case.
7. Remember to always buy the good chocolate and good beer. There

will be other ways to balance the budget.

8. Remember that grace and goodness don’t always win, but they also can’t ever be completely erased. They linger in the corners, so never stop looking.
9. Remember that you’re not the only one that feels like an imposter. They only look like they have it all together.
10. Remember that you’ve already “made it” and you’re already enough. So you can put the striving and the proving down whenever you want.



*Listen*

We have a [Memory playlist](https://open.spotify.com/playlist/0yy3ZcZAOi7A0YNWU1SJXp) on Spotify. Go to the DuPage UU Church October playlist here <https://open.spotify.com/playlist/0yy3ZcZAOi7A0YNWU1SJXp>





## PODCASTS

### Looking Back: Reflecting On The Past To Understand The Present - Hidden Brain

<https://www.npr.org/2018/06/14/607757718/looking-back-reflecting-on-the-past-to-understand-the-present>

“So often we get stuck in the past, rehashing what we should have done, and what we no longer have. But researchers say our obsession with the past can tell us something important about our future.”

### TED talk by Aaron Huey about America’s Native Prisoners of War

[https://www.ted.com/talks/aaron\\_huey](https://www.ted.com/talks/aaron_huey)

A tough, heartbreaking talk about white privilege and Native Americans. *In honor of Native American History Month and the hope of retrieving a more accurate memory of our history.*

### In Honor of Transgender Day of Remembrance on November 20th.

- Trans Women Share What Transgender Day of Remembrance Means  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UgWpGLB-QKI>
- The T Word: Full Documentary - MTV  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mDyODhfuxfi>

## Articles & Books

### Messing with Your Mind

Pat Murphy & Paul Doherty

<http://www.exploratorium.edu/memory/messingwithyourmind/index.html>

“It is easy to think of yourself as the sum of your memories--the end product of all that you've ever experienced. But after doing research into memory, we find that it makes sense to reverse that statement... Who you are is shaped by your memories, and your memories are shaped by who you are...”

### Memento Mori — How Remembering Your Mortality Improves Your Life

<https://medium.com/@Jos91/memento-mori-how-remembering-your-mortality-improves-your-life-b056036b76db>

### Time Does Not Heal All Wounds - On Being Reflection

<https://onbeing.org/blog/omid-safi-time-does-not-heal-all-wounds/>

### The Black Hole in the White UU Psyche - UU World Magazine

Rev. Mark Morrison-Reed

<https://www.uuworld.org/articles/black-hole-white-uu-psyche>

The consequences of excluding black UU history from our faith’s memory and the hope of constructing a more honest and complete remembrance.

### The Empowerment Tragedy - UU World

Rev. Mark Morrison-Reed

<https://www.uuworld.org/articles/empowerment-tragedy>

### Ten Things to Remember: Anti-Racist Strategies For White Radicals

<http://www.soaw.org/resources/anti-opp-resources/108-race/491>





## Movies

### **Big Fish**

[https://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/1127787\\_big\\_fish?](https://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/1127787_big_fish?)

“The story of a braggart and exaggerator, Edward Bloom, and his son, William, who--after a long estrangement--returns home only to learn his father is dying of cancer. Desperate to possess true memories of this complicated man before it's too late, William sets out, trying to unravel fact from fiction.”

### **Vertigo**

<https://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/vertigo>

“Alfred Hitchcock’s Vertigo remains one of the great films about memory’s dangerous allure. Its spiral-shaped narrative concerns detective Scottie Ferguson, who, haunted by a series of failures, makes an idol of memory and becomes imprisoned by the past.”

### **Inside Out - Family Movie**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pecha-7QOV0>

### **Coco - Family Movie**

[https://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/coco\\_2017/](https://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/coco_2017/)

“Coco’s rich visual pleasures are matched by a thoughtful narrative that takes a family-friendly -- and deeply affecting -- approach to questions of culture, family, memory, life, and death...”

Engages Day of the Dead - Oct.31 - Nov. 2

