

July 24, 2016

Outside of a dog, a book is a boy's best friend. Inside of a dog, it's too dark to read! - Mark Twain

Welcome and Announcements

Prelude: The Imperial March - John Williams

Chalice Lighting:

Rise up O Flame

By thy light glowing

Show to us Beauty, Vision, and Joy

Opening Book Recommendation from Sheena Morris:

When Sparrow initially asked me to do the opening words for today, I said no. I was simply too scared. People scare me. But upon further reflection, and my Mom putting it very plain I decided I needed to do these opening words and face my dementors. As you may know I am a huge Harry Potter fan. I stayed up way too late many times helping Harry with his homework, dancing at the Yule Ball, and crying over my favorite character's death. JK Rowling gave me a wonderful escape from my life into a new world. Without knowing it, JK Rowling helped my mom to raise me. I learned that it was preposterous to shun a person because they were a werewolf taking potions to manage their disease, or the believe a witch or wizard was inferior simply because their parents were muggles. I mean my mom was a muggle (at least I thought so when I was 8) but I knew once I got to Hogwarts I could at the very least be better than Ron, maybe not Hermione, as she was my hero and no one could be as good as her! Oh the tears I cried on my 11th birthday when I didn't get my letter from Hogwarts. Which I then rationalized that of course Hogwarts wouldn't send the letter in February! We'd loose it, and the owl may not make it in all that snow! So come July I watched the sky, waiting for my owl. It never came. So unfortunately today as I stand here I do not have a wand from Olivander's to help me cast a patronous charm to fight off the dementors. But I don't need it. JK Rowling taught me how."

Hymn #38 Morning Has Broken

Story for All Ages: The Storyteller's Art

Offertory: Yoda's Theme - John Williams

Joys and Concerns: Joys shared are multiplied. Burdens shared are lessened.

Hymn # 123, Spirit of Life.

Readings As You Like It, II vii, William Shakespeare read by Bob Riccio

JAQUES All the world's a stage,
And all the men and women merely players;
They have their exits and their entrances,
And one man in his time plays many parts,
His acts being seven ages. At first, the infant,
Mewling and puking in the nurse's arms.
Then the whining schoolboy, with his satchel
And shining morning face, creeping like snail
Unwillingly to school. And then the lover,
Sighing like furnace, with a woeful ballad

Made to his mistress' eyebrow. Then a soldier,
Full of strange oaths and bearded like the pard,
Jealous in honor, sudden and quick in quarrel,
Seeking the bubble reputation
Even in the cannon's mouth. And then the justice,
In fair round belly with good capon lined,
With eyes severe and beard of formal cut,
Full of wise saws and modern instances;
And so he plays his part. The sixth age shifts
Into the lean and slippered pantaloon,
With spectacles on nose and pouch on side;
His youthful hose, well saved, a world too wide
For his shrunk shank, and his big manly voice,
Turning again toward childish treble, pipes
And whistles in his sound. Last scene of all,
That ends this strange eventful history,
Is second childishness and mere oblivion,
Sans teeth, sans eyes, sans taste, sans everything.

For our entertainment, your bulletin insert includes a side-by-side comparison of the most famous developmental theories in the cognitive, personality, moral, and faith fields of human study. (find the chart at the end of this document)

Jean Piaget's theory of cognitive development was born in the 1930s and was refined over the next fifty years of his career.

Erik Erikson's and Lawrence Kohlberg's theories are products of the 60s and 70's, and Jim Fowler - a Methodist minister - wrote his seminal work in 1981.

This chart is only the barest outline of intricate, mature theories. Every age line on that chart is actually a Very Fuzzy Line. Each theory is the product of its decade and of its while male author, but was the best available at the time of publication, influencing researchers ever since. We do the best we can with the best we know, and when we learn better, we do better.

And here's as interesting thing: the first two theories say that the stages come in order and as long as you make it through the previous stage, you'll start working on the next one. Not so for the stages of Moral and Faith Development.

These are the theories which are most relevant to our discussions here in church, of course. So, here's the whole picture - the stages pretty much come in order... and the 'next stage' doesn't necessarily come at all. The lines you see are

the *earliest* that a developmental stage might be reached, AND it's perfectly possible for a functioning, happy, ethical adult to be working with the skills from only the first two stages of moral development. "It's right because I want it" is an ethical decision-making skill that serves me well in all situations having to do with chocolate and "Mother taught me to behave this way" as well as "I will do the good-girl thing" can cover just about everything else. This stage does not rely on analyzing the situation, not even really of understanding it. It relies on pattern recognition and action, and the folks with these skills are going to do fine.

So at the beginning of school, some folks might add the moral decision making skills or faith formation skills of the next stage to their toolbox - or any time after, if at all.

One of our jobs as a congregation is to encourage everyone to work on the next set of challenges and skills when they're ready. As Maria Montessori would say, we prepare a rich environment where it is safe to explore and exciting to learn. In other words, we put a library in our meetinghouse, fill it with shelves and books and librarians who would love to make a recommendation, we sit at the big table for book discussions and writing groups. We have an annual books and music sale at which I've never seen a kid have to pay more than what was in their pocket. We have stories for all ages every week, we have story based Religious Ed for children.

We're doing really well... and I love my job.

Our task today is to look at some of the developmental patterns of tweens and teens and talk about some of the books we know and love - or newly written ones - that support these kids through the hard work of coming of age.

The list of every book and story I'm about to mention can be found at the end of this document.

Let's pick up where we left off in April, near the end of Elementary school. Faith formation happens through stories, what we do, who we are, the choices our faith community and individuals have made. As Unitarian Universalists, we're known for embracing and honoring folks of all faiths - so when a hero we want to lift up is a UU, by all means mention it - Dorothea Dix, Albert Schweitzer, James Reeb - but let's offer the kids the stories of everyone whose life inspires us.

The world grows large at this time. Rules-based thinking becomes laws-based thinking and it is our job to show the whole world, to reflect it in our discussions, our art, and the literature we choose. Let the stories be from all the world's wisdom and people.

Snow Treasure by Marie McSwiggan, *Number the Stars*, *Matty Doolin*
We are lifting up heroes.

Don't limit yourself to biographies. Heroes in novels get to demonstrate heroism, altruism, courage in a world that is clearer and easier than this one we are standing in. It's a really good way to wrap our heads around 'what does heroism look like in its pure state, unalloyed by the complexities of human stupidity...'

The Ranger's Apprentice series by John Flanagan are my favorite recommendations for this age - the characters are teens, but the story and reading level are younger without treating the readers like idiots and without the adults abandoning the kids who are the heroes.

Tamora Pierce, *Song of the Lioness Quartet*

Stories of physical courage are understandable earlier than stories of moral courage. That's why I suggest beginning the Harry Potter books in elementary school, with courage of the facing-the-monster and facing-your-fears sort coming earlier in the series... and stretching them out so that facing ethical choices comes sometime in Middle School.

Star Wars. Episodes 4, 5, and 6 are epic heroic fantasy and every family needs to include it in Cultural Literacy Night. Any episodes which include midi-chlorions are dead to me - not because its a stupid literary device... but it's a stupid literary device because it robs the audience of imagining that they could be Jedi.

Robin Hood.

Project Gutenberg!

Friends, Project Gutenberg is the free-to-all collection of out-of-copyright texts, mostly in English, but certainly not all. Librivox, by the way, is the companion web site for audiobooks of the same materials. Both sites are an excellent use of your volunteer hours if you're not so fit at the moment that you can't lift the fallen tree out of the Family Place back parking lot. They need proofreaders at Project Gutenberg and voice actors at Librivox, and an hour of volunteering at one or the other makes an excellent Christmas gift for the friend who has everything.

So, on Project Gutenberg's web site, search on Howard Pyle. *Robin Hood*. *Men of Iron*. *Otto of the Silver Hand*.

You will also find the Sherlock Holmes corpus, Frankenstein, Lewis Carroll, Swiss Family Robinson, Treasure Island! These older works are Eurocentric with mostly male heroes, so we need to diligently balance these stories with some

character diversity... but... did you hear the part about free books? Let the congregation say, "Amen."

What happens when Adam and Eve's son finds a wife in the next valley over? That's a problem to solve! Around Junior high school, our brains develop "formal operations" - the ability to perceive and wrestle with these seeming conflicts from the outside and to search for the deeper meaning behind them.

It's our job to provide Junior Youth with a rich variety of material and a place and the skills to conduct the inner and the interpersonal discussions to prompt this growth.

Jill Canillas Daley, the NH School Librarian of the Year, says "There are a lot of good books out there right now (for junior high readers). Many on Japanese Internment that I personally like because kids, especially in this presidential campaign year, need to know the truth of where we have been so we don't repeat history!"

She suggests:

- *Red Berries, White Clouds, Blue Sky* by Sandra Dallas
- a memoir about a Cuban/American girl: *Enchanted Air: Two Cultures, Two Wings: A Memoir* by Margarita Engel
- *A Night Divided* by Jennifer Nielsen. while the other two might not attract as many male readers, she says that this one will appeal to boys- the adventure of a girl caught in East Berlin when the wall was built

She emphasizes books for her students which gets kids to share minds with a lead character very different from themselves. In encouraging 12, 13, 14-year old readers to look out at the world through Japanese-American eyes or to experience vicariously the insecurity, wonder, and pains of immigration, Jill serves up the heart of religious education -

For the survival of our ever-so-great grandparents on the savannah, it is probably instinctual - hard-wired - to divide the world into Us and Them. It is our job to make the circle of "Us" include everyone.

"He drew a circle that shut me out-

Heretic, rebel, a thing to flout.

But love and I had the wit to win:

We drew a circle and took him In!

At puberty, as the neurology of those years is laid in, it becomes possible - not for everyone, but for many - to make moral choices based on what will maintain society.

The individuals have to identify themselves as belonging to society. In the great Where's Waldo mosaic of our culture, they have to see their place.

They belong where they have relationships with peers

They belong where they receive appropriate initiations and recognitions of their meaningful role within the society...

And everyone else belongs, too.

Am I part of society? Or did I hear a presidential candidate disparage me and my family like a piece of garbage?

Am I part of society? Or did my parents kick me to the curb for telling the truth about myself?

Am I part of society? Or do my eyes, my skin, my native language, my last name make me the butt of jokes?

I have a recommendation from Katalena Hernandez Cowles: *In the Sea There Are Crocodiles: Based on the True Story of Enaiatollah Akbari* by Fabio Geda. She says, "Everyone over the age of eleven should read it, full stop, no qualifiers. The story, of a young boy refugee escaping the Taliban in Afghanistan, is eye-opening, heartbreaking and uplifting in equal measure."

A recommendation from Grace - *The Hero and the Crown* by Robin McKinley -The story of Aerin, the King's daughter, who feels useless because the Gift that shows itself in every member of the Royal Family never shows up in her. So what do you do in such a situation? Go out and slay a big ol' huge dragon, of course, and bring its head home on a platter.

If I am not part of society, I will not care about maintaining it. I will not develop the moral decision making habit which preserves the wholeness of the community. If I am the outsider, I truly do not care if I throw five gallons of gasoline and a lighter on the In Group. The In Group is *Them* to me: at best, competition; at worst, other, not human.

But if I step into church and I see dark skin and light skin and musicians and runners and chemists and teens and grandfathers and the food is carrot sticks and the food is chicken wings and the building itself is flying the pride flag and a huge banner says "Welcome, Wanted, Cherished, Celebrated"... then maybe I can see myself here, see that *I* am welcome and wanted and already part of this society, wanted and welcome even before they knew my name.

If I step into a story and the storyteller can make me see dark skin and light skin (*Wizard of Earthsea* by Ursula K. LeGuin)(yeah, everything by Ursula K. LeGuin) and musicians and runners and chemists and Vulcans and wheelchairs and a gravity-free work environment where I don't need a wheelchair ("ABCs in Zero G" a short story by Elizabeth Moon; *Falling Free* by Lois McMaster Bujold) (also Everything by Lois McMaster Bujold) - then maybe I can welcome a chemist into my circle of Us, or a Vulcan, or a kid in a wheelchair, or the folks with whom we make first contact...

Star Trek. Every single week we find out again that Everyone is Us, no matter if they have pointy ears or a violent culture or an overabundance of port decelles.

Little Fuzzy by H. Beam Piper. "Omnilingual" by H. Beam Piper. "Nodsaunce" by H. Beam Piper - I'm having an H. Beam Piper summer. And all his work is out of copyright - free for the download on Project Gutenberg.

This is one of the great strengths of science fiction - exploring "what if" safely in a book *all about culture clash, misunderstanding, and terrifying levels of weaponry*.

I just finished a book I'd like to suggest, *Airborn* by Kenneth Oppel - male teen hero, strong female sidekick; it's in the steampunk genre - *what if* our technology were still based on steam and our clothing based on button-up boots? Well... what if?

Folks facing puberty *can* find themselves in the In Group in a book - and they have the power to open up that In Group to include a wider and wider world. The needs of the many outweigh the needs of the few. And so we tempt ourselves toward the levels of decision making and ethical thinking and faith identity which we have the neurology to master in high school.

The most recent neurological research that I'm aware of has affirmed that teens' brains really do go through a big system crash and re-boot - blossoming into the hugely complex, interdisciplinary, all-cross-indexed neural net where we can really think globally, tie those thoughts to present, local actions, and see the value in passing on whatever we have learned to our fellow travellers of every age.

We who love and support our teens hold the backups. Hang on to their Harry Potter books. Maintain family traditions and habits. And for goodness sake, set up the world so they can get nine or ten hours of sleep at night! That's actually far more valuable to this delicate, intricate neurological growth spurt than staying up until midnight working on schoolwork.

When thinking about Young Adult fiction, I see things like *The Maze Runner*, *The Hunger Games*... and I cringe, why would we encourage kids to read dystopias?? Isn't the world filled with enough horror?

I asked Dr. Amy Sturgis, literary historian, what books she would suggest for teens and she wrote, "I always recommend Young Adult dystopias... for their moral choices/challenges."

Oh. Safely in a book, where even the best written horrors are contained in a two-dimensional page, explore *what if*.

Dr. Sturgis recommends to us *Life As We Knew It & The Dead and the Gone* by Susan Beth Pfeffer. They tell the same story from 2 very different points of view - one privileged, one struggling, from different cultures... Sturgis' recommendation fully supports what optimizes teens bootstrapping themselves through the growth of moral decision making possible for them.

Sure, there's *Twilight* out there. Have you read it? The ideas are pretty silly to most adults - but have you read it? The writing is fantastic!

Tangent! Do you know Sturgeon's Law? Someone once said to Theodore Sturgeon, a fabulous science fiction writer, that "95% of science fiction is crap!" He replied, "95% of *everything* is crap."

So. Sturgeon's Law, in the face of self-publishing and fan fiction, means that we raise Librarians to heroic status! We double their salaries! We beg them to find the 5% and curate it for us and point us and our teens at it! And *Twilight* is really good writing and really accurate portrayal of being sixteen.

Being sixteen *is* a dystopia. And vampires are real. If you managed to attend high school in a category that didn't garner lascivious looks at your new sweater or comments about your people being good at X or verbal and physical taunts about your sexuality, then you still endured the we're-all-harassing-each-other-because-we-have-been-taught-it's-funny. Vampires are real - micro aggressions that chip away at our self worth, our drive to live, are real and deadly.

Joss Whedon is a writer, director, producer who placed Sunnydale High School - the school of a cheerleader named Buffy Summers - over a Hellmouth - a portal to the world of demons and evil. And every high school student nods their head and says, "Yeah, high school is over a Hellmouth."

And then he made Buffy ... the Vampire Slayer. She's martially capable, strong, backed up by solid friends and an adult mentor, she grows in problem solving and expands her thinking to include compassion and solutions that lift everyone up. He doesn't write books, but I want to include pretty much

everything Joss Whedon ever produced in my list of Things Everyone Should Experience. When asked, “Why do you keep creating these really strong female characters?” he replied, “Because you keep asking that question.”

(I checked the time at this point in the sermon and chose to skip over two pages of recommendations from Grace, but she really is my Chief Book Recommender, so I’m leaving these pages in the web version of the service)

The Curse of Chalion and especially its sequel, *Paladin of Souls*, by Lois McMaster Bujold. Grace writes, “They are extraordinary, and the protagonist of the second one is a very human middle-aged woman with extraordinary ethics and courage. *Paladin of Souls* is really extraordinary; I have only read it once, and partly I have waited in order to savor it again, because it is one of the best books I have ever read.” I did mention read everything ever by Lois McMaster Bujold, right? In order.

The Darwath Series, by Barbara Hambly:

The Time of the Dark

The Walls of Air

The Armies of Daylight

Why Grace likes it: it’s a universe-crossover setting which includes more than one person from our world. It has a kick-ass female protagonist who becomes good with a sword through good instruction and hard training, and who models using techniques of modern historical research to answer the question of why the fantasy world is facing ruin. Her dissertation presentation is a fantastic scene which I have never seen replicated elsewhere in fantasy. One of my all-time favorites.

The Ladies of Mandrigyn, by Barbara Hambly Why Grace likes it: kick-ass female protagonist, along with a lot of other good female characters, and good male characters. Gritty heroism where hard work and dedication pays off. One of my all-time favorites.

The needs of the many outweigh the needs of the few - “The Cold Equations” by Tom Godwin

But then we have another shift coming.

The needs of the few are of tantamount importance to the survival of all because our richness, our survival is in our diversity.

But that's not the whole shift. That's for folks who are, quite human-ly - doing their best to survive on the savannah. The thing of it is... there *is* enough food for everyone.

The needs of the few are of tantamount importance... because they are the needs of fellow beings, and all are valuable just by being. "The Ones Who Walk Away From Omelas" by Ursula K. LeGuin.

Full circle. When asked for her recommendation for people approaching that place of synthesizing universal principles for all beings, Dr. Dmitra Fimi suggested *The Little Prince*. "But then," she went on, "I recommend *The Little Prince* for everyone."

And let the congregation say, "Amen."

Hymn #29 Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee

For all who see God, may God go with you.
For all who embrace life, may life return your affection.
For all who seek a right path, may a way be found...
And the courage to take it, step by step. -Robert Mabry Doss

We extinguish this flame but not the
Light of truth
The warmth of love
The fire of commitment
These we carry in our hearts until we meet again.

BOOK LIST - from the sermon, from Sparrow, from Grace, from the Book
Discussion attendees

Snow Treasure by Marie McSwiggan

Number the Stars

Matty Doolin

Jenny Nimmo's *Snow Spider Trilogy*.

The Ranger's Apprentice series by John Flanagan

Tamora Pierce, *Song of the Lioness Quartet*

Star Wars. Episodes 4, 5, and 6

Howard Pyle:

Robin Hood.

Men of Iron.

Otto of the Silver Hand.

the Sherlock Holmes corpus,

Frankenstein, Lewis Carroll,

Swiss Family Robinson,

Treasure Island!

Red Berries, White Clouds, Blue Sky by Sandra Dallas

Enchanted Air: Two Cultures, Two Wings: A Memoir by Margarita Engel

A Night Divided by Jennifer Nielsen

In the Sea There Are Crocodiles: Based on the True Story of Enaiyatollah Akbari by
Fabio Geda.

The Hero and the Crown by Robin McKinley

Wizard of Earthsea by Ursula K. LeGuin

everything by Ursula K. LeGuin

"ABCs in Zero G" a short story by Elizabeth Moon;

Falling Free by Lois McMaster Bujold)

Everything by Lois McMaster Bujold

Star Trek.

Little Fuzzy by H. Beam Piper.

"Omnilingual" by H. Beam Piper.

"Nodsaunce" by H. Beam Piper -

Life As We Knew It & The Dead and the Gone by Susan Beth Pfeffer.

everything Joss Whedon ever produced

The Curse of Chalion and especially its sequel, *Paladin of Souls*, by Lois
McMaster Bujold.

The Vorkosigan Saga by Lois McMaster Bujold.

The Darwath Series, by Barbara Hambly

The Ladies of Mandrigyn, by Barbara Hambly

“The Cold Equations” by Tom Godwin

“The Ones Who Walk Away From Omelas” by Ursula K. LeGuin.

The Little Prince

The Evolution of Calpurnia Tate by Jacqueline Kelly

The Girl Who Circumnavigated Fairyland in a Ship of Her Own Making by

Catherynne M. Valente

Vivian Apple at the End of the World by Katie Coyle

Speaker for the Dead by Orson Scott Card

everything by Agatha Christie, but especially the mysteries solved by that strong female protagonist Miss Jane Marple

Thoughts from the Book discussion

- what do we do with good authors who are not admirable human beings?

- is science fiction our mythology?

	Piaget: Cognitive	Erikson: Psychosocial	Kohlberg: Moral	Fowler: Faith
Infancy: Sounds	Object permanence, learning by senses and motor skills	Trust vs Mistrust	Right: what I want	Trust, courage, hope, and love
Toddlerhood: Language	Language, symbols, egocentrism.	Autonomy (“me do it!”) vs. Shame		Imitating family’s faith habits
Preschool	Imagination, Point of view	Initiative (play, cooperation) vs. Guilt (fearful, hangs back)	Right: what Mommy says; also the desire to be a good child	
Primary Grades: WE LEARN TO READ!	Concrete operations, conservation of concrete, measurable things	Industry (teamwork and self discipline) vs Inferiority (doubts self, doubts the future)	Right: what the rules say (small group)	Learning through stories of our tradition
Elementary Grades			Right: what the laws say (society); important to maintain society as a whole	
Tweens		Identity Clarification (Who am I? choosing positive values; sexual identity) vs. Identity Diffusion (conformity, peer pressure)		Identify by belonging - relationships with peers and by initiation
Puberty				
Teens	Symbols relating to abstract concepts (achieved by 35% of high school grads)		Right: the principles and values which make the good society (the needs of the many outweigh the needs of the few);	Embrace or reject tradition through relationship with authority figures
Adulthood	This theory does not speak to further cognitive development	This theory speaks to development throughout the lifespan	Universal Ethical Principles	Seeking faith; seeking universalizing principles for all beings