

A Prayer for Desert Times

The journeys of our lives are never fully charted. There come to each of us deserts to cross — barren stretches — where the green edge on the horizon may be our destination, or an oasis on our way, or a mirage that beckons only to leave us lost.

When fear grips the heart, or despair bows the head, may we bend as heart and head lead us down to touch the ground beneath our feet. May we scoop some sand into our hands and receive what the sand would teach us:

It holds the warmth of the sun when the sun has left our sight, as it holds the cool of the night when the stars have faded.

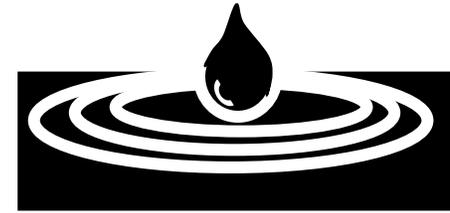
Hidden among its grains are tiny seeds, at rest and waiting, dormant yet undefeated.

Desert flowers. They endure. Moistened by our tears and by the rains which come to end even the longest drought, they send down roots and they bloom.

May we believe in those seeds, and in the seeds within us.

May we remember in our dry seasons that we, too, are desert flowers. Amen.

-- *Margaret A. Kiep*



SMALL GROUP MINISTRY

**FIRST UNITARIAN CHURCH
OF SAN JOSE**

When You Are Lost

Writing is like driving at night in the fog. You can only see as far as your headlights, but you can make the whole trip that way.

-- *E.L. Doctorow*

Not all those who wander are lost.

-- *Bilbo Baggins (J. R. R. Tolkien)*

Not until we are lost do we begin to understand ourselves.

-- *Henry David Thoreau*

Anytime I feel lost, I pull out a map and stare. I stare until I have reminded myself that life is a giant adventure, so much to do, to see.

-- *Angelina Jolie*

Preliminaries	<i>Announce upcoming church events; get a volunteer to light the chalice, and read the opening reading.</i>	Sharing/ Deep Listening	<i>Deeply listening, without response or thought of response at this time, is the gift we give and receive as we share our thoughts on the preparation for this session.</i>
Centering Practice	<i>See Leader Notes.</i>	Discussion	<i>This is a time to supportively respond to something another person said or to relate additional thoughts that may have occurred as others shared.</i>
Opening / Chalice Lighting <i>-- Nadine McSpadden (from UU WorshipWeb)</i>	During our darkest moments, still there is light. When facing our biggest challenges, still there is light. When all we can do is put one foot in front of the other, still there is light. When we can't see the way out, still there is light. When all we can do to help is hold someone's hand as they cry, still there is light. We are the light. For ourselves and for one another. Always, there is the light.	Singing <i>- Singing the Journey #1003 Sing through 2 or 3 times</i>	Where do we come from? What are we? Where are we going? Where do we come from? Mystery. Mystery. Life is a riddle and a mystery. Where do we come from? Where are we going?
Check-in	<i>Briefly share something that happened this week that contributes to your emotional temperature today.</i>	Extinguishing the Chalice <i>-- Langston Hughes, adapted</i>	Wandering in the dusk, Sometimes you get lost in the dusk — <i>And sometimes not.</i> Beating your fists against the wall, You break your bones against the wall — <i>But sometimes not.</i> Walls have been known to fall, <i>Dusk turns to dawn, and chains be gone!</i>
Reading <i>--Margaret A. Kiep (from UUA Worship Web)</i>	<i>Reading is on the back cover of the order of worship.</i>		
Sitting in Silence			