

APRIL MONTHLY THEME:
SUSTAINABILITY—FINDING HOPE AMIDST UPHEAVAL

For years now, the changing climate has generated calls for more sustainable ways of living in relationship with the earth and each other. Now, as the coronavirus transforms the global landscape, we are learning anew how to restructure our daily lives as well as our economic and social structures. In this time of mass disruption, what lessons might we learn to help us live sustainably for the health of our spirits, bodies, and planet? What practical lessons do we take away about travel, food systems, and more? What are we learning about how to find and sustain hope in the midst of turmoil? As we live through a time of upheaval, what sustains us? Exploring such questions now may have insight not only for the coronavirus crises but also as climate change also transforms global life.

Which question is calling to you? Where is it leading you?

1. What does it mean for something to be sustainable?
2. In what ways does hope strengthen, support, and sustain you? A community?
3. Do you have sustainable sources of hope to return to again and again?
4. What do religious traditions have to say on holding hope in times of change?
5. Why is sustainability important in a time of increased climate change?
6. In what ways does Unitarian Universalism call us to live sustainably and with accountability?

Wise Words:

Hope is definitely not the same thing as optimism. It is not the conviction that something will turn out well, but the certainty that something makes sense, regardless of how it turns out.

Václav Havel

Hope begins in the dark, the stubborn hope that if you just show up and try to do the right thing, the dawn will come. You wait and watch and work: You don't give up.

Anne Lamott

Hope is both the earliest and the most indispensable virtue inherent in the state of being alive. If life is to be sustained, hope must remain, even where confidence is wounded, trust impaired.

Erik H. Erikson

I know of no restorative of heart, body, and soul more effective against hopelessness than the restoration of the Earth.

Barry Lopez, Helping Nature Heal

We need each other. Each of us is responsible for what happens on this earth. We are each absolutely essential, each totally irreplaceable. Each of us is *the* swing vote in the bitter election battle now being waged between our best and our worst possibilities.

Leonard Peltier, American Indian activist

My vision is for a world in which we have tons of people who can respond to the things that are happening to them in a proactive way, in a sustainable way and in a way that's going to leave a sustainable world.

Adrienne Maree Brown, Black activist

This is what true revolutions are about. They are about redefining our relationships with one another, to the Earth and to the world; about creating a new society in places and spaces left vacant by the disintegration of the old; about hope, not despair; about saying yes to life and no to war; about finding the courage to love and care for the peoples of the world as we love and care for our own families.

Grace Lee Boggs, Asian American activist

Humankind has not woven the web of life. We are but one thread within it. Whatever we do to the web, we do to ourselves. All things are bound together. All things connect.

Chief Seattle, 1854

A society is defined not only by what it creates, but by what it refuses to destroy.

John Sawhill, Nature Conservancy

Sustainability is no longer about doing less harm. It's about doing more good.

Jochen Zeitz

In the end, all the struggles have the same objective: the defense of life. That is the most important, no matter where we are or what the specific goal of each fight is.

Ana Sandoval, land defender, Guatemala

To husband is to use with care, to keep, to save, to make last, to conserve. Old usage tells us that there is a husbandry also of the land, of the soil, of the domestic plants and animals - obviously because of the importance of these things to the household. And there have been times, one of which is now, when some people have tried to practice a proper human husbandry of the nondomestic creatures in recognition of the dependence of our households and domestic life upon the wild world. Husbandry is the name of all practices that sustain life by connecting us conservingly to our places and our world; it is the art of keeping tied all the strands in the living network that sustains us.

Wendell Berry

I choose to believe the end of this story will not be one of fragmentation, but one of reunion, a remembrance of what indigenous communities have always known, and are increasingly willing to share—that we are one with the land, not apart from it.

We need not lose hope, we just need to locate where it dwells.

Terry Tempest Williams, Erosion

Books:

- *The Overstory* by Richard Powers. 2019 Pulitzer Prize winning book that places trees at the center.
- *Erosion: Essays of Undoing* (2019), Terry Tempest Williams. A riveting defense of earth.
- *Resilient: Find Your Inner Strength* (2018), Rick Hanson. Draws on resources of neuroscience and psychology to chart a path for managing challenges.