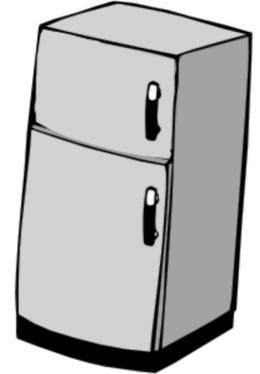




RE-Frigerator Page



We Celebrate...

Our theme for February is "Earth." Any time is a good time to celebrate our connection to our amazing planet, and to commit ourselves to caring for this world we all share.

It is also always a good time to simply enjoy the beauty of the earth and all its creatures, and to get to know the plants and animals that surround us. Even if you live in the city there are almost certainly



trees or birds or squirrels who you share your neighborhood with.

February is an interesting in-between-the-seasons time to pay attention to the world outside and notice the tiniest signs of the seasons shifting. It may still be cold or even snowy, but the days are getting longer and while branches may not have leaves on them, you might see twigs changing color or buds starting to swell.

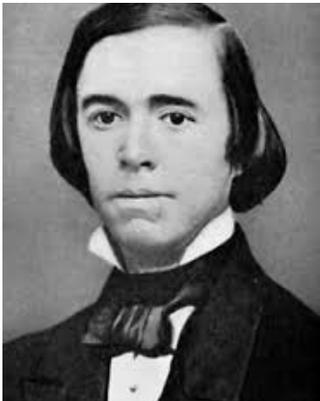
What exactly is the earth doing where you live today?

**Family Quest
of the Church of
the Larger
Fellowship**

Feb. 2018



We Honor...



Thomas Starr King is important to our UU history for a variety of reasons. He was a Universalist minister from the east coast of the United States who moved across the country to serve as minister of

the Unitarian church in San Francisco. He is widely credited with being the person who kept California in the Union during the Civil War. His accomplishments led our UU school for ministers in Berkeley, California to name the seminary—Starr Kind School for the Ministry—after him.

But Thomas Starr King was also a naturalist—someone who paid close attention to the natural beauty around him, and who wrote about it so that others would appreciate it too. He wrote a book, "The White Hills, Their Legends, Landscape and

Poetry" to share his love of the White Hills, and to give a guide to hikers who would join him in getting out and appreciating their beauty. He also wrote newspaper articles on the wonders of the natural world, inviting others to share his love of being out in nature.

Thomas Starr King shaped the world in a variety of ways, but the one that we honor this month is that he not only loved and cherished and found wonder in the world of nature, he also invited others to see and enjoy and protect that beauty.

Talk About It!

- ☺ What is your favorite animal? Tree? Flower? Bug?
- ☺ What plants and animals can you see if you step outside your door?
- ☺ What seasonal changes are happening where you live?
- ☺ What do you do to protect and care for our planet earth and the plants and animals we share it with?

Act...

There are lots of things that a person can do to act on behalf of our planet earth: recycle, plant trees, pick up garbage, use less water, bike or walk instead of getting rides, eat less meat, set the thermostat lower in winter and wear a sweater, turn off lights when not in use, etc., etc.

Those are all great things to do, but everybody needs to do them in order to have a real impact. So one of the things you can do to act on behalf of our Planet Earth is to not only take action, but also invite



others to join you.

Step one is to love and appreciate and enjoy nature yourself. Step two

is to figure out what you can do to help the health of our natural world. Step three is to invite others—friends and family and the communities around you—into that same commitment. Step four is to join broader movements of people who have already committed to joining together to achieve big goals. There are lots of these groups. Check out The Nature Conservancy, Sierra Club, World Wildlife Fund, Environmental Defense Fund, the National Resources Defense Council and/or others for ways to get involved.

Nurturing the Spirit

Just being out in nature is a way of nurturing our spirits—breathing fresh air, noticing the other beings who are part of our larger community—it's a great way to calm the mind and center the heart.

But if the weather or other circumstances are keeping you inside, you might want to nurture your spirit with this tree meditation:

Stand up with your feet about hip distance apart, or sit with your feet flat to the ground.

Take a deep breath, and imagine

that you have roots that reach down, down into the earth. Feel your roots spreading deep and wide. Notice how they entangle with the roots of other trees and plants.

Stretch your arms up and out, and imagine that you have strong branches reaching toward the sky. Breathe again. Stretch again. Notice how the wind moves through your branches, and how you are a home for birds.

Breathe again, and give thanks for the trees as you come back to human form.

Draw a scene of nature that you see outside your window.

Practicing the Principles

Our Seventh UU Principle is:

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Respect for the interdependent web of all existence, of which we are a part.  
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There are two really important concepts there. One is the crucial recognition that life is a great, interconnected web, and that the actions of every being affect the actions of every other being.

Humans aren't at the top of an evolutionary ladder, we're just one kind of creature, with lives that are tied up with all the other creatures of the world.

The other really important concept in this Principle is that of "respect." We might love or appreciate or feel compassion or pity for the non-human world, but respect means something more. It means that we really recognize that we have a mu-

tual relationship with beings who are not people, in which everyone is recognized for the person (human or otherwise) that they are.

When you treat someone with respect, you both recognize and act on the understanding that however different your lives may be, everyone's life matters and deserves to be treated fairly.

Read more about Thomas Starr King and his nature writings: <https://www.sksm.edu/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/nature.pdf>
Ideas for how children can help the environment: <http://pbskids.org/zoom/activities/action/way04.html>