

Frozen Season 2023

January 15 – March 4

Boundaries



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What does it mean to build, protect, & melt boundaries?

I feel I exist on the boundaries

Somewhere between science and art art and architecture public and private
east and west

I am always trying to find a balance between these opposing forces,
finding the place where opposites meet.

water out of stone glass that flows like water the fluidity of a rock
stopping time

existing not on either side but on the line that divides

and that line takes on dimensionality it takes on a sense of place and shape

– Maya Lin, *Boundaries*

Dear Rochester-Area Unitarian Universalist Congregants,

This month's packet is chock full of resources about one of the most challenging and rewarding spiritual aspects of our lives: Boundaries. I imagine this is going to lead to such rich and deep conversation amongst our communities.

In a spell written for Boundaries for the Living Altar oracle deck by two trans, Romani witches, Ylva Marzanna Radziszewski and Kiki Robinson, they share these words, "My values are illuminated when I prioritize the honest exploration of the most sacred terrains within myself, without judgement I allow Yes to reveal itself to my bones. Without restraint I allow No to reveal itself to my body. My boundaries are rooted in self-love, self-honor, self-respect." I am wishing more of this for you all as 2023 begins AND I sometimes struggle with what applying such beautiful words and sentiments looks like in real life. So, a bit of an example:



A couple of years ago, my 12-Step sponsor was helping me to figure out some boundaries in a tense relationship and she asked me to make a list of what I was available for and unavailable for. In relationships, what are the behaviors, conversations, and activities that I am available for? And what are the behaviors, conversations, and activities that I am unavailable for? It helped me to discern when I can be in conversations with people and when I can't. Making the list helped me to be clear about my interpersonal relationships. I'm lifting up this tool to you because I imagine you too have had a similar struggle.

Drawing boundaries interpersonally comes with all sorts of struggles – Did I hurt their feelings? Did I cause something to go poorly? And I also love that our packet this season goes into the boundaries that exist that we all must traverse as individuals and communities. Borders, divisions, opposing identities, barriers – the list of such boundaries could go on and on. For some of us, transgressing boundaries is a part of how we exist and have been forced to exist in this world. For others of us, being confronted with borders and barriers may be a rare experience. It is my hope that we can share across differences and listen to the vast experiences our communities have with individual and community boundaries. I think wrestling with these together is a part of why we come to church. Seeking nuance, enlarging our hearts, learning how to love in new and different ways – these are all part of the spiritually centered lives we endeavor to live.

I am wishing you all good discernment in community alongside more self-love, self-honor, and self-respect as we explore Boundaries together.

With Love,

Rev. Lane-Mairead
Minister, First Universalist Church of Rochester

Authors' Note: On this Packet and Boundaries

Please remember that this packet was prepared as a smorgasbord for your soul. There is a lot to consider, but NO expectation that anyone must (should) consume everything here. We hope that by including many voices, each one of you can find something that nourishes, inspires, or challenges you. Choose from among these resources with mindfulness for *your* boundaries around what's manageable for your life right now.

SPIRITUAL EXERCISES

Select one of the exercises below to try – come prepared to discuss the experience and your thoughts & feelings about it with your group.

A – Within: Garden in your Mind. In this season of seed catalogues and planning gardens, reflect on your garden – either a garden you will literally tend this year, or the ideal garden in your mind – if you could include & exclude exactly the planets & animals you wanted, which would they be? What is your current understanding of desirable plants? How does the boundary between definitions of “weeds” and “native species” impact your design? What kind of border will you establish around your garden? What will you allow in and what will you keep out? How do images of actual borders change your thinking about boundaries in your own mind?

B – Among: Do Good Fences Make Good Neighbors?

Collect 6-8 pictures of fences and other types of borders (picket, wooden, stone, falling down, etc). (You might cut them from old magazines or find them online). In a group with friends, or during your soul matters circle, use these pictures to discuss what each one means in psychological terms – what might they contain, what might they exclude. When do fences in your life need to be erected, mended, or taken down? This exercise can also be done alone, perhaps by journaling around the collected pictures.



Photo cred: pxfuel - free images

C – Among: Negotiating Agreements. Covenants are agreements among individuals in a particular group. With others, review your Church's Congregational Covenant – or review your Soul Matter's group covenant. What does it mean to you now? Are there parts that are easier or harder to live with? How does the group require accountability in living the covenant? How does the group collectively respond to a break in the covenant? Would you suggest any changes?

D – Beyond: Understanding This Place. Visit the “At the Western Door” exhibit at the Rochester Museum and Science Center with your group or alone. <https://rmsc.org/exhibits/at-the-western-door/> Reflect on the concept of boundary as the Haudenosaunee understood it, and then what happened when the present-day boundaries were drawn by colonialists. How does seeing the changing nature of boundaries influence your understanding of boundaries in your own life? What boundaries are helpful and what are harmful? Given current boundaries on Haudenosaunee land, what might you do to further encourage community and cooperation? For a visual map & explanation of what currently remains as Haudenosaunee territory, see this website: <https://www.standwithseneca.com/2022/06/about-seneca-nation.html>

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Pick one or two question(s) that interest (or bother) you most and let it lead your soul where it wants/needs to go. Sometimes questions lead not to answers, but more questions...

1. When have you felt it difficult to enforce your own established boundaries? How do you let others know what those boundaries are? How do you balance the needs of the relationship, the other person, and your own boundaries? For more, read the *Golden "No,"* (link below in UU resources) and reflect on the issues Rev Erika Hewitt raises.
2. Have you ever felt you are living in two worlds or compartmentalizing parts of your life or experiences? How do you navigate that boundary? Producer & journalist, June Cross, writes about "walking on the razor's edge" as a biracial person in her book, *Secret Daughter*. (See her presentation in our resources on page 9.)
3. Whether lines on a map or private policies to keep some people in and others out, boundaries can have far-reaching consequences. What boundaries have you experienced with respect to places in your life? If these boundaries were softened or made more permeable, what would change? You may find the video, *The Unattainable Dream*, on page 9 in our resources, helpful in thinking about this topic.
4. Imbolc (St. Brigid's day or Groundhog's Day, Feb 2) is the half-way point between winter solstice & spring equinox. You might think of it as akin to the last hour of sleep in the morning – the boundary between the deep hibernation of darker hours and the brighter, more active daylight. How do you spend that last hour before it's truly morning? Rise early and get a jump on the day? Roll over and sleep more, perhaps dreaming vividly? Float half awake in the grey light – maybe giving in to worries for the day or future?
5. Many Christians prepare themselves for Easter through the practices of Lent, starting with Ash Wednesday (Feb 23 this year). Before Ash Wednesday comes Mardi Gras, often called "Fat Tuesday," a day of revelry before the month of deprivation. How do you set healthy boundaries on both pleasure seeking & sacrifice in your life?
6. You may have experienced difficult family relationships, especially if there were few healthy boundaries. In a difficult relationship, have you held unspoken boundaries that helped you cope? How might setting and enforcing boundaries verbally be risky or soften/change the relationship?
7. How has the concept of "Quiet Quitting" impacted you or people you know either recently or in the past? Work/Life balance has been a place where personal boundaries are often tested and strained – even if work is unpaid volunteer work. Why is setting & enforcing boundaries important in this area of life? (See *NYer* article on page 10 in Resources.)
8. Personal boundaries, whether physical or emotional, are often ingrained at an early age, without being explicitly spelled out. Watch the TED Talk found in Resources (page 10). How does Yasmine Cheyenne's experience – learning boundaries in her grandmother's kitchen and rethinking *her* boundaries as an adult – resonate with you? When you feel depleted of your time, energy, resources, how are you able to shift to accommodate *yourself* and others?



Photo: pxfuel - free images

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES
LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We acknowledge with respect the Seneca ([Onöndowa'ga:'](#)) Nation, Keepers of the Western Door and part of the [Haudenosaunee](#) People, on whose ancestral land First Unitarian Church of Rochester, First Universalist Church, and the Unitarian Universalist Church of Canandaigua now stand.

READINGS FOR CHALICE LIGHTING

In Our Circle Again

By [Rev. Shari Woodbury](#)

Settled minister
First Unitarian Church of Omaha

Here we are
in our circle again.

A circle of vision
and reflection,
A forum for deciding
and empowering.

Here we are
at the base of another bridge,
another space spanning
the shores of today and tomorrow.
Beckoning us to cross the chasm,
one day at a time.

Here we are
gathered again at the cusp
of the future,

at the boundary
that holds community together.

We are here,
in a circle of love and trust,
brought to this moment
by a series of choices and promises...
by hope and gratitude...
by our own shadows, faced
and befriended.

With a servant's heart,
with a leader's listening,
with a parent's love, truer
than all our inner trembling,
let us model the health we seek for all
and lean into community.

Somewhere out there,
all we dream is possible.
Somewhere in here,
we are sowing the seeds.

Prayer

By [Rev. Erika Hewitt](#), UUA Minister of Worship Arts

"Trickster God who teaches us to say yes to life and yes to love, teach us also how, and when, to say no: the golden "no" that preserves boundaries in the face of mistakes and nonsense, so that the interdependent whole is cared for."

CHALICE EXTINGUISHING

Crossing Borders

By [Rev. Stephen M Shick](#), Minister Emeritus of the Unitarian Church of Marlborough & Hudson

Spirit of my longing and lonely heart, help me travel through the barren borderlands that separate me from others. Teach me to willingly explore relationships with those who frighten or threaten me, grant me the courage to risk confidently my own comforts, that I might make others more comfortable. And when I am burdened by the isolating choices I have made, grant me the wisdom to invite a stranger to travel with me. Open my heart to my new companion's needs and desires until I relax my defensiveness and become a calming presence. As we travel, grant me the vision to notice how each step we take together moves us closer to the promised land, where all souls grow in hope and the resilience of love.

Outside/Inside

By [Rev. Laura Bogle](#), formerly of Foothills UU Fellowship

Outside

The flags fly
Down the highway, hanging on to the back of large trucks
or the chest of a man.

Outside

There is grabbing and taking
A staking and restaking
Of territory claimed
The roads cut, the oil burned, blockades erected, and walls
built

Outside

The borders between us are made visible in noise, colors, ballots.
Signs and signals.

Inside resides

The breath of common ancestors
The child who plays with no thought of malice
The heart tuned toward suffering
The taste of figs ripening in the lingering autumn heat
The sliver of an orange moon low in the evening November sky.

Inside, begins something you might call a prayer

Let us kneel down.

Not to God or nation or ideology

But to what is inside. A feeling, a connection

A welling like the waters at the very beginning of time

Unpolluted and gently flowing.

Sweet and dark and healing.

Let us kneel down to the persistent possibility that the life and love within prevail.

Let us release what is inside outward in beauty, spilling towards each other, until all merges.

Unstoppable well of knowing that we will only ever be saved by one another.



Photo: United Church of Christ flickr: Standing Rock

QUOTATIONS



Photo: NASA

“Our separation from each other is an optical illusion. When something vibrates, the electrons of the entire universe resonate with it. Everything is connected. The greatest tragedy of human existence is the illusion of separateness.”

– [Albert Einstein](#), German physicist

“You carry Mother Earth within you. She is not outside of you. Mother Earth is not just your environment. In that insight of inter-being, it is possible to have real communication with the Earth, which is the highest form of prayer.”

– [Thich Nhat Hanh](#), Buddhist monk & author

“Boundaries are the distance at which I can love you and me simultaneously.”

– [Prentis Hemphill](#), Embodiment coach, writer, and healing practitioner

“Strong fences make good neighbors.” – [Robert Frost](#), American poet (1874-1963)

“All too often [people] believe it is a sign of commitment, an expression of love, to endure unkindness or cruelty, to forgive and forget. In actuality, when we love rightly we know that the healthy, loving response to cruelty and abuse is putting ourselves out of harm’s way.”

– [bell hooks](#), American author & scholar, from *All About Love: New Visions*

“Visible and mobile, my body is a thing among things; it’s caught in the fabric of the world and its cohesion is that of a thing. But because it moves itself and sees, it holds things in a circle around itself.” – [Maurice Merleau-Ponty](#) (1908-1961), French philosopher, existentialist, leftist

“The greatest hazard of all, losing one’s self, can occur very quietly in the world, as if it were nothing at all. No other loss can occur so quietly; any other loss – an arm, a leg, five dollars, a wife, etc. is sure to be noticed.” – [Søren Kierkegaard](#), (1813-1855), Danish author & philosopher

FROM UNITARIAN UNIVERSALISM

We Would Be One,

Singing the Living Tradition

Music - "Finlandia" by Jean Sibelius,

Words - Samuel Anthony Wright

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2rqwC5_KMuU

“We would be one
as now we join in singing
our hymn of love
to pledge ourselves anew
to that high cause
of greater understanding
of who we are
and what in us is true ...”

Answering the Call of Love

Singing the Journey

By [Jason Shelton](#)

(permission to stream: Christian Copyright Solutions)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ixtXqUSgwdY>

“... Sometimes we build a barrier
to keep love tightly bound.
Corrupted by fear, unwilling to hear,
denying the beauty we’ve found.
We are answering the call of love
Hands joined together, as hearts beat as one ...”

Borders and Bridges, #216, "Lifting Our Voices"

By [Gina Valdés](#)

Hay tantísimas fronteras
que dividen a la gente,
pero por cada frontera
existe también un puente.

There are so many borders
that divide people,
but for every border
there is also a bridge.

Adapted from "Copla #1," *Puentes y fronteras/Bridges and Borders*, translated by Katherine Callen King.

The Golden "No" (excerpt)

By [Rev Erika A. Hewitt](#)

“... I hate to be a goody-goody (actually, I’m kind of a goody-goody), but I feel disoriented when I’m in a new place or situation and can’t figure out whether the rules are real or imaginary. I don’t just mean “masks required” stores that don’t enforce the mask rule. I also mean other mixed messages sent when a boundary is accompanied by its simultaneous breaking—like when I visited an out-of-town gym right before lockdown and, while working out, noticed that underneath a sign saying “NO FOOD” someone had placed a plate of cookies.



Photo: depositphotos, free images

Boundaries can be uncomfortable. Upholding boundaries? More uncomfortable. On the other hand, belonging—to an apartment building, a gym, a community, a congregation—doesn’t mean you can do anything you want.

If a boundary is important enough for you to establish, then I figure you’d best prepare yourself to name it out loud when someone violates it ... That accountability isn’t inherently unkind. If anything, it’s an expression of care for everyone else in the picture, because a system—a people; a community—is only as healthy as the boundaries it agrees to keep....”

POETRY, PODCASTS, SONGS, ARTICLES, FILMS, & BOOKS

Complaint of El Rio Grande (excerpt)

by Richard Blanco, from *How to Love a Country* (2019).

<https://catalogplus.libraryweb.org/?section=resource&resourceid=1486132024>

“I was meant for all things to meet:
to make the clouds pause in the mirror
of my water, to be home to fallen rain
that finds its way to me, to turn eons
of loveless rock to lovesick pebbles
and carry them as humble gifts back
to the sea which brings life to me...

Then countries - your invention - maps
jigsawing the world into colored shapes
caged in bold lines to say: you’re here
not there, you’re this, not that, to say:
yellow isn’t red, red isn’t black, black is
not white, to say: mine, not ours, to say
war, and believe life’s worth is relative...”

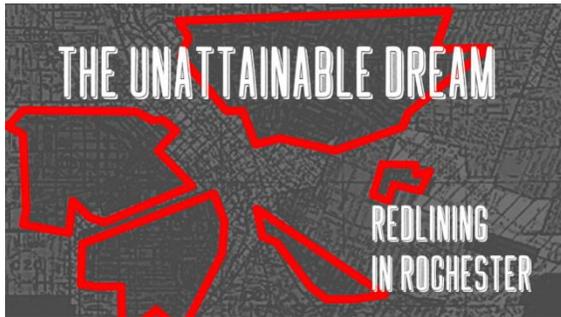


Rio Grande photo - pxfuel - free images

The Book of Hygge, Louisa Thomsen Brits (2017). Hygge (hoo-gah) is the Danish practice of bringing comfort to oneself and/or one’s loved ones. Nestling down solo or sharing a warm mug of spiced cider. Enjoying the sauna, alone or with a group. The very essence of semi-permeable boundaries - this is hygge. Library via Libby

<https://catalogplus.libraryweb.org/?section=resource&resourceid=964930756>

Boundaries (2018). Comedy written and directed by [Shana Feste](#)
Hot mess Laura (Vera Farmiga) sets boundaries with her son, boss, ex-boyfriends, and father (Christopher Plummer), but she never enforces them – not even with herself about the number of stray animals she can take in. It's easy to see where she's flailing – can you relate?
Warning: Rated R for language, drugs, violence, & sexual content. DVD available from MCLS - <https://catalogplus.libraryweb.org/?section=resource&resourceid=1352620268¤tIndex>

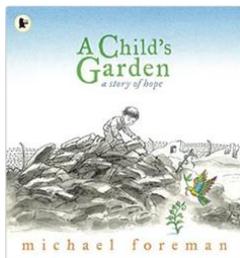


The Unattainable Dream: Redlining in Rochester, NY (Aug 5, 2022)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KkPt8dWQILk>
Students from Edison Career & Technology High School wrote, filmed, edited, & produced a documentary on governmental and societal oppression elements, such as redlining. Their efforts earned the Philip Seymour Hoffman "Best of Fest" award & was among the top 10 films at the 2022 Rochester Youth Film Festival.

Secret Daughter: A Mixed-Race Daughter and the Mother Who Gave Her Away, by journalism professor and TV producer, [June Cross](#) (2007). She recounts how she was kept a secret by her white mother, because revealing her black father could have dashed the show-biz careers of her mother & new stepfather. She lived a life straddling a border between two homes, two sets of rules & expectations, and two definitions of love.
See her presentation on Youtube at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H48ZvvB1Yyo>

Boundaries, by Maya Lin (2000).
A visual/verbal sketchbook produced by Maya Lin, the architect who created the Vietnam Memorial in Washington DC, filled with stories, poems, & photographs about her work.
Monroe County Library link:
<https://catalogplus.libraryweb.org/?section=resource&resourceid=18815514>

How to Set Healthy Boundaries & Build Positive Relationships, by Jo Nash (2018), PositivePsychology.com. "Boundaries differ from person to person and are mediated by variations in culture, personality, and social context. Boundaries appropriate in a business meeting would seem irrelevant in a nightclub with old friends! Setting boundaries defines our expectations of ourselves and others in different kinds of relationships."
<https://positivepsychology.com/great-self-care-setting-healthy-boundaries/>



A Child's Garden: A Story of Hope, by Michael Forman (2009). A child in a war-ravaged world coaxes a vine to grow over the border wall, leading to human connection. A gentle tribute to the human spirit. MCLS link:
<https://catalogplus.libraryweb.org/?section=resource&resourceid=3757766>



Illustration by Liam Eisenberg

The Year in Quiet Quitting, by Cal Newport, The New Yorker (12/29/22)

<https://www.newyorker.com/culture/2022-in-review/the-year-in-quiet-quitting>

The concept of quiet quitting is that people are doing the bare minimum – performing the basic duties required of a job, but nothing more. And, while it may seem like a phenomenon unique to this year, it builds upon a long history of work. Author, Cal Newport, looks at how people, beginning with the baby boomers, have

conceived of the purpose of work. How does the adage to “follow your passion” shape millennials working today? And why has the call to action – or inaction – finally arrived?



Diana Kraveva/Getty Images

Celebrating Imbolc with Kids

On Feb 2, in the northern hemisphere, winter is beginning to wind down, but it might be cold & snowy; spring is imminent, but not *quite* here. In some Celtic Pagan traditions, this is the season of the goddess Brigid (or St Brigid), who keeps the hearth fires burning – watching over domestic life & the home. In this celebration of fire & hearth, snuggle down with loved ones or gather in the kitchen for snacks, singing, & hot cocoa. Similar to the Danish tradition of hygge, we can create a place of comfort & anticipation for warmer temperatures on the way. This website also has some fun crafts & activities:

<https://www.learnreligions.com/celebrating-imbolc-with-kids-4118557>

Or, check out this list of Imbolc activities for adults (alone or with friends): <https://www.patheos.com/blogs/johnbeckett/2019/01/8-things-to-do-for-imbolc-as-a-solitary-pagan.html>

I Can Say NO, by Jenny Simmons (2020) “Learning to say “no” without feeling guilty or needing to explain themselves gives children the power to protect their boundaries, energy, convictions, and time. Saying “no” also allows them to create space for saying “yes” to the things that matter most.” For the author’s synopsis, see: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sZHAts-7aq8> or to find the book at MSLS:

<https://catalogplus.libraryweb.org/?section=resource&resourceid=3412177647>

How Boundaries Make Space for the Sweet Things in Life.

TEDx Talk, by Yasmine Cheyenne. How do we learn about boundaries and later employ them in our adult lives? Yasmine Cheyenne is the author of *The Sugar Jar: Create Boundaries, Embrace Self-Healing, and Enjoy the Sweet Things in Life*. Watch her TEDx Talk on Healthy Boundaries here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bykexO9iYmE>



Yasmine Cheyenne • TEDxRutgersCamden

Like (118)

Tools for Setting Personal Boundaries, Therapist Aid, by Woody Schuldt, LMHC
Setting and enforcing personal boundaries can be a struggle and require some time to evaluate your current boundaries, decide whether changes are needed, and work out a plan to incorporate those changes. This may be a fluid plan, with individual boundaries differing & shifting in different relationships. A boundary may be a broad agreement with yourself about accepting responsibilities – or negotiated with other individuals or groups in your life. As Rev. Lane-Mairead pointed out, ask yourself what you are available for and what you are not ... TherapistAid.com, created by Woody Schuldt, a Licensed Mental Health Counselor, has a list of questions to ask yourself as you walk through this process. Schuldt has some [definitions](#) of personal boundaries and ideas about rigid, porous, & healthy boundaries that might also be helpful – although you may want to adjust these guidelines to fit your own beliefs and situation.

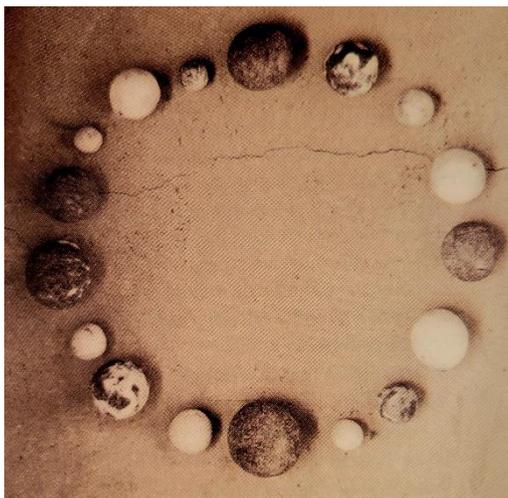


Photo: The Hygge Circle by Susan Wells

With Gratitude: This packet was prepared by Amy Stockwell & Mary Hammele, with the input & assistance of Suzy Farrell, David Fortuna, Rachel Schek, from our Covenant of UU Pagans (CUUPS) group, Rev Lane-Mairead Campbell, Rev. AJ van Tine, Shelia Schuh, and the support of the Worship Teams of all three area congregations (First Universalist, UU Church of Canandaigua, and First Unitarian) and the Packet Writers Team.

Access to books:

1. Here's a tutorial on using the Monroe Country Library system's website & your library card to find a book and request that it be sent to a library near you:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cQvhFRW6JaQ>
2. Some Tips for Accessing Books or Audiobooks from Libby or Hoopla Apps for Free:
 - You'll need to have a library card number from your local library
 - You can download either app from Google Play or the Apple Store
 - Here are some youtube tutorials to get you started on each of the Apps:
 - Libby: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bc3e3oR2_bE
 - Hoopla: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4-f37DAd6Ng>