



Unitarian Universalists in Covenant Greensboro's Downtown UU Church

2019 Sermon Series

Enriching the Interior Mansion

By Rev. F. Nelson Stover

The 2019 sermon series at the Unitarian Universalists in Covenant Church in Greensboro will focus on individuals' interior life. By imagining that everyone has an interior realm with numerous rooms in which various activities, practices and experiences occur, the sermon series will foster expansion and enrichment of these capacities. This series focuses on equipping and empowering individuals to work together to take an effective and active role in shaping the future of Planet Earth.

The Unitarian Universalists in Covenant meet for worship each Sunday from 11:00 to noon at Scuppernon Bookstore, 304 S. Elm St., Greensboro, NC. Check the UUs in Covenant website (www.UUCovenant.org) to confirm the themes for each Sunday of the month including which services will focus on this series.

Enriching the Interior Mansion

2019 Sermon Series

The 2019 sermon series at the Unitarian Universalists in Covenant Church in Greensboro focuses on developing the personal practices and perspectives that foster creative engagement in shaping the future of our emerging Universe. Using the image of interior space with a variety of different rooms, Rev. F. Nelson Stover will deliver a series of sermons focusing on ways to understand and enhance the unique properties of each space. Each month, a pair of worship services will be dedicated to one aspect of the journey through the Interior Mansion. The first sermon in each month's pair will provide an overview of the particular characteristics of the unique space; the second service of the month will allow congregants time to share and reflect on their own life experiences in the larger context. Links to YouTube versions of the first sermon in each series will be available on the UUs in Covenant website in a timely fashion.

The Whole Enchilada (January 6 and 20) – As new inventions and social activities proliferated during the 20th Century, ways to comprehend an integrated framework often seem illusive and confusing. By looking at *All That Is* in a comprehensive way, the unique functions of the interior mansions can be understood in a 21st Century context. Available on YouTube at: https://youtu.be/Hc11_N0cCqA.

My Interior Mansion (February 3 and 17) – In every age, reflective people build images of their interior spaces. The current generation faces the task of envisioning this landscape in the context of actively participating in building a future in which the human and the non-human realms interact in mutually enhancing ways. Both scientific knowledge and traditional spiritual understandings need to be blended into a seamless tapestry. Available on YouTube at: <https://youtu.be/jlpierUWbaw>.

Listening in the Silence (March 3 and 24) – One room in everyone’s Interior Mansion is dedicated to listening to the voice of silence, of heeding the wisdom of the ages and getting beyond the noise and chatter of the mundane. Historical traditions have specific practices to suggest, modern experience has contemporary validation; both inform us today.

Acting Before Doing (March 31 and April 21) – Forethought, reflectivity and intuition enable humans to play a unique role in affecting the future. Becoming self-conscious of these skills promotes a sense of worth, value and effectiveness in personal development and social responsibility.

Great Escapes (May 12 and 19) – Life Itself beckons each individual to capitalize on all their past experiences, to actively participate in shaping the future, to affirm all their idiosyncrasies and to tap into the deep well of awesome power. Often these opportunities seem overwhelming and we choose to escape from Life’s possibilities. Some escape routes involve active retreat, other times we just turn a blind eye. Becoming self-conscious of these responses marks another step on the journey of humanness.

Willingly Letting Go (June 2 and 16) – Like the next two rooms, this one builds capacities for working closely with others. While each individual’s ideas and perspectives are vitally important, it’s sometimes necessary to set aside personal well-being for the larger good. This requires both care and courage.

Radical Engagement (July 7 and 21) – The long sweep of history is shaped by the efforts and wisdom of each individual. Stepping into the fray, taking a stand on contemporary issues and participating in the on-going transformative process often call forth unexpected capacities and passions.

Willing One Thing (August 4 and 18) – Faced with undaunting possibilities and overwhelming opportunities, each person must find a focus, a center of attention, to inform their living and being. In the mansion of the interior, a space dedicated to primary purpose, to overall objective, provides stability and clarity in turbulent times.

The Great Ah-Ha (September 1 and 15) – The last three rooms in the Interior Mansion provide space and practices for letting the integral fullness of life itself shine through our daily lives. Sometimes all the bits and pieces fall into place exposing the larger whole. Sometimes more than meets the eye becomes apparent; sometimes we can help others see the unseen.

The Transformative Presence (October 6 and 20) – When everyday actions shift from the practical business of staying alive to manifestations of care and compassion, individual lives change from sustenance to transformation. People who heed the call to move beyond daily necessities provide a social leavening essential for growth and vitality of the larger human and planetary community.

Peace that Passes Understanding (November 3 and 17) – A special room in everyone’s Interior Mansion provides a portal to the deep underlying wholeness of reality. Many people never visit this room or leave in confusion or with a sense of being overwhelmed. Learning how to live and function (and thrive) in this space provides a deep and lasting stability.

In But Not Of (December 1 and 15) – People who have explored all the rooms of their Interior Mansions and learned to maintain creative vitality in each, provide an enthusiastic and enriching presence to all of society. These people live in the world around them in ways that transform each moment into opportunities for creativity and wholeness.

Unitarian Universalists in Covenant

Greensboro's Downtown UU Church

We are brave, curious, and compassionate thinkers and doers. We are diverse in faith, ethnicity, history and spirituality, but aligned in our desire to make a difference for the good. We have a track record of standing on the side of love, justice, and peace.

We have radical roots and a history as self-motivated spiritual people: we think for ourselves and recognize that life experience influences our beliefs more than anything.

We need not think alike to love alike. We are people of many beliefs and backgrounds: people with a religious background, people with none, people who believe in a God, people who don't, and people who let the mystery be.

Mission: To enable the search for meaning from a peaceful heart, living lives of integrity and service.

Vision: In this fellowship we call UUs in Covenant, we have gathered seeking a higher purpose and deeper life than we might find alone. We are grateful for everyone who joins us in our service and in our covenant. Our covenant reflects our values statement. We seek to enable all who join us to live the life idealized through our covenant with each other. We pledge to listen deeply and respond with open hearts and minds. We embrace membership in the community as a gift and a commitment. The relationships we form here are based on the needs of the soul, needs that render us vulnerable and dependent on each other's grace, mercy, and generosity of spirit. We pledge to be guardians of each other's spirit, to enable you on your spiritual journey, and to always believe in every person's worth and dignity.

About Rev. F. Nelson Stover

Rev. Stover completed his BSc in Computer Science at Purdue University and received a BDiv from Chicago Theological Seminary. His dissertation was entitled “New Directions for Religious Communities”; it focused on the church’s role in social change. In 1970, he was ordained by the United Church of Christ in Michigan and encouraged to pursue a social ministry.

Working with the Ecumenical Institute and the Institute of Cultural Affairs, Nelson conducted human development training programs for individuals at all levels of society for the next two decades. During this time, he spent five years in India and extensive periods in Australia, Belgium and Egypt. For another two decades, he designed and implemented computer software solutions for professional associations in North Carolina working on the staff of a Greensboro-based systems integration company.

Nelson is now President of Emerging Ecology (www.EmergingEcology.org), a non-profit organization committed to *promoting a worldview for the next generations’ solutions*. His lectures and writings focus on foundational principles and practical actions relevant for developing a mutually enhancing relationship between the human and non-human worlds.

Nelson lives in Greensboro, North Carolina with his wife, Elaine. He may be contacted at StoverN@Bellsouth.net. Many of his personal writings, previous sermons and presentations are available for download at www.EmergingEcology.org/FNS.