



Worldview Talks

Catalog



Unitarian Universalists in Covenant
Greensboro's Downtown UU Church

This document details the six series of sermons delivered by Rev. F. Nelson Stover to the congregation at the Unitarian Universalists in Covenant over the period of 2017-2022. Emerging Ecology is exploring options for supporting and promoting the preparation of these for wider distribution as **Worldview Talks** on YouTube and other social media. 22 of the talks are currently available on YouTube as shown by links in the following paragraphs.

Each of these talks is designed for a 21st Century global audience of people who care deeply and are actively involved in shaping the future. The themes are presented in ways that are:

Ecologically Conscious: The active role that the human species plays both in learning from and creatively influencing all aspects of Planet Earth are highlighted in these talks.

Gender Neutral: Gods and mystical powers are attributed to both genders; human civilization includes all gender orientations.

Religiously Ecumenical: No religious tradition is promoted in preference of another; saints, founders and leaders of specific religions are not prioritized.

Scientifically Responsible: Natural processes and long-term history are characterized by understandings consistent with the best understandings of contemporary scientific wisdom.

Transformationally Empowering: People who are self-consciously engaged in the task of fostering long-term, grassroots social change are energized by their foundational Worldview. These talks each offer a vitalizing vision and deal with the profound human issues encountered on the journey of social change.

Themes of Worldview Talks

(Year by year)

During 2017, Rev. F. Nelson Stover delivered a series of sermons focusing on **Opportunities** open to covenanted groups of religious liberals and covenanted groups of care filled individuals. Each sermon focused on a way that such a congregation might make substantial contributions to the enhancement of the quality of life for its individual members and of the larger community of which they are a part. This series drew on the work of Emerging Ecology's Worldview Salons especially the "[Human Adventure](#)" journey chart which began as a tool for use during the trips of Guilford College students to India in 2016 and 2017. All 11 of these presentations have been converted into YouTube videos; they were originally recorded on an audio-only recorder. Links to each is provided on-line on a webpage, [F Nelson Stover - Emerging Ecology](#), which is currently not accessible through the main menu structure.

- 1. Why Us** (February 5, 2017): The unique characteristics of a covenanted congregation of religious liberals (and other groups of Those Who Care) put such a group in an advantageous position to make a positive contribution to the enhancement of the quality of life for its individual members and of the larger community of which they are a part. When a liberal and open-minded approach is taken to traditional religious wisdom, past spiritual understandings have the possibility of empowering contemporary living. When individuals take seriously their covenant with each other, the world can see an embodiment of compassion in action. (On YouTube at: <https://youtu.be/8qK3AvtuuIU>).
- 2. Standing Between Yesterday and Tomorrow** (March 5, 2017): Sometimes individuals and groups become aware that they are standing in a twilight zone between habits and patterns of yesterday that are no longer adequate and understandings and convictions that enable a full participation in an unfolding future. Members of liberal religious communities draw on their spiritual depths to sense the direction of history and to build fresh interpretations and patterns of living. (On YouTube at: <https://youtu.be/ZOd1hqz15oE>.)
- 3. The Thoughtful Decision** (April 2, 2017): Working together in covenant raises to self-consciousness the decision-making processes at the individual and collective level. In the 21st Century, the human species' decisions are having increasing impact on the entire Planetary systems in ways never imagined in earlier times. This sermon will examine how a covenanted congregation functions as a portent of possibility for the larger society and its relationship to the Planet. (On YouTube at: <https://youtu.be/w6njMkuY7Fk>.)
- 4. Beyond Beyond and Back** (May 7, 2017): Individuals, and whole communities, occasionally experience beauty, awe and wonder in ways that far exceed the normal conditions of daily living. The contemporary challenge centers on finding ways to share these experiences with others, to find a relevant language (both verbally and artistically) for communicating with others on a similar journey. Furthermore, after people have these deep experiences, they must return to the real world of everyday living – but they come back a changed person. Here again, congregations like the Unitarian Universalists in Covenant have the possibility of making significant contributions to the contemporary dialogue which may include relating to spiritual experiences. (On YouTube at: <https://youtu.be/BBYAjbUa7fE>.)

5. ***Establishing Mutually Enhancing Relationships*** (June 4, 2017): When societies move beyond consumptive lifestyles, new possibilities arise for establishing mutually enhancing relationships between the human and the non-human realms. Throughout most of the 20th Century, much of western civilization was driven by the perceived need to acquire goods and materials; many people have begun to see through this objective as the driving force in their lives. However, a clearly stated alternative purpose remains elusive. Part of the work of a covenanted religious community involves embodying ways of living which others might follow. (YouTube: <https://youtu.be/1--nVNy7d-Q>.)
6. ***Living in an Eco-Futuric Community*** (July 2, 2017): As the nation celebrates the formation of a country dedicated to freedom and independence, let's take a moment to ask what new paradigms of community are needed in the 21st Century. Beyond self-determination, a covenanted group of religious people who understand themselves in a profound relationship with each other and the natural world provide a model of what might be called an "eco-futuric" community. Elements of this pattern of being and working together might benefit other groups of individuals throughout the social spectrum. (YouTube: <https://youtu.be/cvvWB9630NI>.)
7. ***Embodying Interspecies Jubilation*** (August 6, 2017): The earliest religious celebrations centered on balancing human activities with the natural planetary forces. More recently, religious celebrations and cultural commemorations focused on historical events. Moving forward, care filled people are becoming aware of the need to reconnect, profoundly, with the natural world while acknowledging the on-going journey of civilization. An openness to new forms of ritual, song and symbolic activity provides a fertile ground for group experimentation. (On YouTube at: <https://youtu.be/zDhp7jVtG-g>.)
8. ***Demonstrating Ecological Responsibility*** (September 3, 2017): The effects of the human presence on the planet have reached a level attained by no other species in history. Self-conscious religious communities are uniquely positioned to create new motivating stories and practical guidelines for daily living that enhance rather than diminish the environment in which we live. In so doing, responding to issues centered on environmental justice changes from a burden to an opportunity. (On YouTube at: <https://youtu.be/ICs1Om73SHg>.)
9. ***Initiating Sociological Rebalancing*** (October 1, 2017): In our local community and at a global scale, the disparities between the haves and the have nots continue to widen. Covenanted communities have the potential for developing creative structures to care for their own members in ways that provide examples for the larger society. Through these actions, clues for addressing the larger questions of economic justice can be made visible. (On YouTube at: <https://youtu.be/lvX63WhCQ7k>.)
10. ***Affirming Individual Diversity*** (November 5, 2017): Spurred on by electronic interconnectivity, global mobility and population expansion, global society and most groups and organizations are experiencing increasing levels of diversity. Liberal religious communities have the capacity for including diverging opinions and lifestyles in ways that can demonstrate a way forward for others. Doing so requires heightened attention

to personal authenticity and interpersonal affirmation skills. (On YouTube at: <https://youtu.be/Wp8Z9cFOOdQ>.)

- 11. *The Greatest Gift*** (December 3, 2017): The rhythm of the cycles of the seasons overlays the ever-unfolding journey of the Planet into the future. As the year comes to an end, a covenanted group like us can reflect on its journey to acknowledge the gifts that have been given to it in the past year. In addition, this sermon will explore ways to recover gift-giving as an art of enhancing individuals' journey into the uncharted tomorrows so that we can all have a happy holiday.

The 2018 sermon series at the Unitarian Universalists in Covenant church in Greensboro focused on enabling people to tell the story of their personal journey in the light of the 14-billion-year journey of the Universe. Rev. F. Nelson Stover delivered a series of sermons entitled ***Our Common Journey*** focusing on major events in the journey of the cosmos and explored how those illumine our individual lives and collective experiences. The topics of each sermon were based on readings from *The Universe Story* by Thomas Berry and Brian Swimme. Each month, a pair of worship services was dedicated to one aspect of the journey. The first sermon in each pair will provided an overview of the universal dynamics at play; the second service of the month allowed congregants more time to share and reflect on their own life experiences in the larger context. Five of these sermons are currently available as YouTube videos on the same page as the 2017 series. The [Universe Story Walk](#) is available on the Stover's property at 5911 Western Trail, Greensboro, NC and is promoted as a program of Emerging Ecology.

- 12. *Newness From Nowhere*** (January 21, 2018): Fourteen billion years ago, the Universe as we know it began its journey from chaos to consciousness. Time separated from space and particles of matter coalesced out of the intensely hot plasma. Wild uncertainty and confusion often precedes the emergence of clarity, focus and direction at the beginning of any journey of a person or group. Available on YouTube at: <https://youtu.be/YeMfc7rjnJA>.
- 13. *Building Bonded Commitments*** (February 11, 2018): Early in the life of the Universe, electrons and protons formed bonded pairs which could survive the bombardment of otherwise destructive radiation. An important step on many people's journey involves making long-term commitments. This sermon will explore the significance of changing one's source of significance from individual betterment to building cooperative ventures. Available on YouTube at: <https://youtu.be/ZRJmZc9VxCw>.
- 14. *Facing Internal Pressures*** (March 4, 2018): After several billion years, large clouds of gas began to squeeze together. Under these intense internal pressures, the clouds finally burst into fires we now see in the sky as stars. Often in life, intense pressure and friction ignite flames of wild creativity. Learning how to live through these kinds of times builds interior resilience. (Not available on YouTube due to technical difficulties.)
- 15. *Through Destructive Transformation*** (April 1, 2018): Eventually, many stars consume the basic elements which have fueled their fiery luminescence. The unbearable pressure leads to a collapse which then explodes into a supernova. This destructive transformation spreads heavier elements throughout the surrounding space creating the seeds of future suns and planets. Organizations and individuals, too, sometimes collapse into chaos and confusion. Even these

events sow the seeds of creativity for tomorrows yet to come. (Not available on YouTube due to technical difficulties.)

- 16. *Organizing for Creativity*** (May 6, 2018): About 5 billion years ago, after countless supernova in the outer parts of the Milky Way galaxy, our solar system began to form. Everyone lives within the dynamics of systems – sometimes a person may be the stable center, sometimes an orbiting satellite, sometimes a periodic passer-by or a distant outlier. Each role contributes to the cosmic and planetary dance. Each is vital and unique. Available on YouTube at: <https://youtu.be/t5wmYAWu7h4>.
- 17. *Into Vitality*** (June 3, 2018): Sometime, somewhere, about 4 billion years ago matter crossed the threshold into life. Some say life is lightening embodied. Like every living cell, individuals also possess the possibility of embodying self-determined creativity. This sermon pair will explore the awakening that occurs when the threshold from stasis to vitality is crossed. Available on YouTube at: <https://youtu.be/3yJeL-sST8o>.
- 18. *Beyond Disaster*** (July 1, 2018): Early life-forms' very acts of survival created conditions which eventually signaled their own demise. They consumed the nutrient rich waters and eventually learned to harvest the sunlight. They filled the atmosphere with corrosive oxygen until they discovered ways of respiration. Likewise, individual actions and social patterns repeated over and over, sometimes, eventually become counterproductive. Navigating these times evokes creativity and collective ingenuity. Available on YouTube at: <https://youtu.be/g-XjeKHUvIw>.
- 19. *Enlivening Something Bigger*** (August 5, 2018): Over several billions of years, single-celled creatures had learned to respond to one another and to thrive in clusters and masses. One day, something new happened – a group got an idea. A new multi-celled creature appeared such that creative power shifted from the cell to the collective. In the current century, the human species has arrived at a similar point of inflection. Figuring out how to thrive in community in ways which include the human and non-human realms provides the central challenge for caring citizens. Available on YouTube at: <https://youtu.be/RPQUwZdOFa0>.
- 20. *Stepping into the Unknown*** (September 2, 2018): About the time the colliding continents lifted the Appalachian Mountains, some life-forms dared to venture out of the sea and on to the land. They invented the wood cell to combat the pressures of gravity and to allow the storage and movement of water within their bodies while moving beyond the oceans. This talk focuses on the interior resolve and strategic prowess required for stepping beyond comfortable surroundings and exploring new vistas.
- 21. *Joining the Flourishing*** (October 7, 2018): The disappearance of the giant ferns and the eventual demise of the dinosaurs set the stage for the rise of mammals and the appearance of colorful flowers with nutritious seeds and trees that produced fruit and nuts. As old life-forms disappear, new possibilities arise and co-exist with dying forms. The lessons of past times of wild new creativity provide wisdom and insight for times like the present when the new is unfolding though the old has not yet receded.

- 22. *Embracing Symbolic Consciousness*** (November 4, 2018): The human species' presence on Planet Earth began about two million years ago. Empathy with the daring steps taken to cross into symbolic consciousness by our not-to-distant ancestors provides clues that may embolden people today to take the next steps on the Universe's journey from wild chaos to profound consciousness.
- 23. *Gifting Tomorrow*** (December 2, 2018): The future, for all generations of all species, depends on the decisions and actions of all of everyone alive today. Finally, each individual and group has the opportunity of deciding its gift to the future. After a year of following in the Universe's footsteps, the next step belongs to those of us alive today. What gifts will we give to the future?

The 2019 sermon series at the Unitarian Universalists in Covenant Church in Greensboro focused 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 delivered a series of sermons focusing on ways to understand and enhance the unique properties of each space. Each month, a pair of worship services were dedicated to one aspect of the journey through the **Interior Mansion**. The first sermon in each month's pair provided an overview of the particular characteristics of the unique space; the second service of the month allowed congregants time to share and reflect on their own life experiences in the larger context. Three of these are currently available online. This series worked through the expanded set of triangles that Emerging Ecology calls "[All That Is](#)". The talk called "[The Whole Enchilada](#)" touches on all aspects of the diagram that plays a foundational role in Emerging Ecology's work.

- 24. *The Whole Enchilada*** (January 6, 2019): 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.
- 25. *My Interior Mansion*** (February 3, 2019): 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>.
- 26. *Listening in the Silence*** (March 3, 2019): 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.
- 27. *Acting Before Doing*** (March 31, 2019)– 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.

- 28. *Great Escapes*** (May 12, 2019): 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. Available on YouTube at: <https://youtu.be/XJDlygHnYCM>.
- 29. *Willingly Letting Go*** (June 2, 2019): 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.
- 30. *Radical Engagement*** (July 7, 2019): 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.
- 31. *Willing One Thing*** (August 4, 2019): 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.
- 32. *The Great Ah-Ha*** (September 1, 2019): 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.
- 33. *The Transformative Presence*** (October 6, 2019): 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.
- 34. *Peace that Passes Understanding*** (November 3, 2019): 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.
- 35. *In But Not Of*** (December 1, 2019): 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.

The 2020 sermon series, entitled "A Fresh Perspective", focused on developing the socio-spiritual framework that fosters creative engagement in shaping the future of our emerging Universe. During a year when social media, the public air waves and personal conversations

were filled with debates over alternative solutions to pressing social issues, this sermon series explored ways of responding to these concerns from the perspective of a peaceful heart. Each month, a pair of worship services was dedicated to one particular issue and the deeper journey into the world of Spirit that is evoked. The first sermon in each month's pair provided an overview of the two dynamics; the second service of the month allowed congregants time to share and reflect on their own life experiences in the larger context. [Note: once the Covid-19 pandemic restrictions went into effect, the sermons were recorded from the Zoom broadcasts and thus the raw data includes both audio and video.]

This series draws heavily on the research work done by the Institute of Cultural Affairs on *The Other World*, a realm that gives meaning and purpose to those who openly and honestly face the challenges and opportunities that arise when facing the world as it continually unfolds. For background information about the Institutes' work on *The Other World* visit <https://icaglobalarchives.org/collections/exploring-inner-life/the-otherworld/>. The Other World categories are held on the "All That Is" diagram in the pink oval below the triangles. A reading for each month was adapted from a document prepared by the Institute during the Summer '72 Research Assembly. All of these adaptations, and other writings, have been compiled in a volume entitled "[To All and Back](#)" which is available on the Emerging Ecology website.

The Covid-19 interlude of 2020 heightened many peoples' awareness of the pressing economic, social, and ecological issues which confront communities and nations on a global level. This global awareness was compounded by sensitivities to individuals' physical and emotional health concerns. This increased compassion and awareness, however, often led to confusion and frustration about what to do. Both individually and collectively the overwhelming scope and complexity of the situation seemed to stifle creativity, impede action, and intensify interior anxiety.

36. *Two Worlds* (January 5, 2020): Societal, ecological, and interpersonal dynamics present creative opportunities and raise persistent challenges for individuals' lives and groups' well-being in *This World*. *The Other World* also manifests itself in our daily lives. In *The Other World*, Mystery, Consciousness, Care and Tranquility infuse every moment with meaning and transparency. When individuals and organizations connect to *The Other World*, new opportunities and perspectives enshroud the daily activities of *This World*. Both worlds constantly intertwine in everyone's lives. This sermon is available on YouTube at <https://youtu.be/S5K1QeY4RtE>.

37. *Climate and Compassion* (February 9, 2020): When Care without limits engulfs us, then the well-being of the trees and needs of future generations become opportunities for creativity rather than unbearable burdens. Getting beyond the fear of disaster and predictions of doom occurs when unbounded Care becomes our daily mode of existence. Even though the urgency seems overwhelming, the act of acknowledging our care allows us freedom to begin necessary forward-looking reformations. [*Care-X*]

38. *Guns and Profound Acceptance* (March 8, 2020): As society embraces ever larger communities – from tribes to cities to a planetary community – the need for self-sufficiency becomes transformed from physical protection to psychic well-being. Protecting self and community require new skills and foundational understandings.

The journey from physical protection to interpersonal growth provides a framework for devising new systems of safety for ourselves and one another. [*Consciousness-VII*]

- 39. Immigration and Comprehensive Responsibility** (April 5, 2020): When the whole Planet has been populated and there is nowhere else to go, everyone becomes our neighbor. When individuals and groups understand themselves as responsible for every part of the whole, questions about the presence of outsiders become answerable in fresh ways. Fear transforms into acceptance when *us* and *them* merge into *all of us*. [*Care-XI*]
- 40. Jobs and Individual Inventiveness** (May 3, 2020): When individuals awaken to the possibilities that lie within themselves, new opportunities for sustenance arise. As the expansive power of the economic engine fueled by consumption wanes, new economically viable possibilities emerge for individuals and organizations. [*Consciousness-VI*]
- 41. Taxes and Structural Care** (June 7, 2020): The Universe is on a journey toward complexity-consciousness. In the 21st Century, this is experienced through the emergence of ever-larger societies bound together through the laws and structures they create and maintain. In this context, taxes (and offerings) become a vital part of balancing resource distribution throughout the entire society. This process also ensures the wherewithal to maintain the relationships and services essential for a healthy society. [*Care-XII*]
- 42. Health and the Inescapable Mystery** (July 2020): No one lives forever; sometimes the awareness of finitude becomes inescapable. Social systems of care which acknowledge the spiritual aspects of terminal illness raise deeper questions about living and dying. Health care includes both ways to maintain vitality and processes to support individuals to die with dignity. Available on YouTube at: https://youtu.be/q1eqNkHx_bA. [*Mystery-II*]
- 43. Diversity and Being Hopelessly Enamored** (August 2, 2020): When you find yourself hopelessly enamored with Being, everything and everyone becomes loveable. Diversity, what's the problem? Generally, however, sameness seems safer. Finding contemporary ways of moving beyond the comfort of conformity requires ingenuity and compassion. Available on YouTube at: <https://youtu.be/hASpR5whp-A>. [*Mystery-IV*]
- 44. Terrorism and Problemless Living** (September 6, 2020): When life seems full of problems, lashing out is one response. Living beyond problems is another possible response to every moment. It's a choice everyone makes every day. Finding ways to enable individuals and groups to move beyond the immediacy of their anger to find the wonder of daily living provides a challenge to caring communities everywhere. [*Tranquility-XIV*]

- 45. *Social Media and Perpetual Certitude*** (October 4, 2020): Social media provides boundless information from all perspectives. The question becomes: how do you know what is right and wrong, what is true or false? Resolving this uncertainty beckons a person beyond the rational, beyond conventional ways of thinking. Finally, a person acts from this broader perspective. Voting requires a decision, finally you just decide, for yourself and for the Planet. Available on YouTube at: <https://youtu.be/WhlwsScvS6E>. [*Tranquility-XIII*]
- 46. *Education and Deep Awareness*** (November 8, 2020): Familiarity with facts provides important life benefits; knowing beyond the surface opens even more doors of possibility. Both are important yet require different modes. Finding ways to include and support both aspects of human growth expands the context of the on-going dialogues. [*Consciousness-V*]
- 47. *Beckoning Beyond*** (December 1, 2020): Religious people and the congregations of which they are a part only have one gift to give – the gift of authentic life. What clues do we have for beckoning others to authentic life and how do we demonstrate the structures and practices which enhance the journey to profound living?

Rev. F. Nelson Stover's 2021 sermon series entitled "Care Like It Matters" focused on the interior work which fosters and enhances creative action and healing in the direction of building a future that enlivens people and Planet. Nelson drew on his own personal experiences of direct involvement in grassroots social change for five decades. These served as springboards for reflecting on the practices, principles and poetry that sustain people who deeply care, and who act out that care in ways that foster a society in which everyone can thrive.

The outline for this series of sermons follows the outline of *The Saviors of God: Spiritual Exercises* by Nikos Kazantzakis. This description of the journey of a person committed to profound, transformative care proved helpful to Rev. Stover and countless others who travelled a similar road. These sermons brought this wisdom into a 21st Century framework.

- 48. *The Cost of My Care*** (January 6, 2021): This year's series of sermons will focus on the interior journey of people who care. The times we live in have heightened many people's awareness of social and ecological inequities both locally and globally. Doing something, anything, often raises fears, doubts, and feelings of inadequacy. How do we prepare ourselves to respond effectively? We will look at this together by examining 11 steps or phases evoked by responding to an awareness of the urge to care.
- 49. *Affirming the Inescapability of Contingency*** (February 7, 2021): The first step on the long journey of compassionate care arises with the awareness of the perpetual dance between life and death, success and failure, joy and sorrow and pleasure and pain. Both partners in each dichotomy play essential roles in the on-going process of conscious living – neither can be eliminated, the tension never disappears. Seeing this, a person may decide to set out on a journey into the Emerging Not Yet which ascends by affirming these inescapable dichotomies. A full life also awaits those living fully aware of their contingency in the Linger No Longer.

- 50. Rejoicing in a Calm Mind** (March 7, 2021): Once on the road of compassionate care, three disciplines will prepare the traveler for the long journey. The first step involves calming, yet disciplining, the Mind which wants to name, organize, and control everything. While the active Mind of each individual offers a particular contribution of the Human Species, wise people learn how to calm its eagerness and acknowledge encountering its limitations.
- 51. Embracing an Impassioned Heart** (April 4, 2021): The Heart points to places where injustice and opportunity lie, often beyond the rational bounds of even the wisest mind. Learning ways to let the passions of the heart inform and transform action stabilizes the foundation of the second step in the preparation for embarking on the long Journey of Transformative Care.
- 52. Stepping Beyond Hope's Temptations** (May 2, 2021): The third great step in preparation for the Journey of Transformational Care focuses on abandoning the temptation that if "I hope (really hard) for a better world, it will come". Finally, the future is shaped by the actions of the members of the present moment. Our actions, those of each and every one of us, do matter.
- 53. Heeding the Impassioned Cry** (June 23, 2021): Sometimes when a lucid and aware individual begins to realize the importance of their own role in shaping tomorrow, they hear an unmistakable Cry that beckons them onward. First, one must listen – both in the silence of the night and amid the noise of daily living – for the unique challenge being addressed to you. Second – the aware individual must step out amid ambiguity and self-doubt. This marks a great turning point on the Journey of Care.
- 54. Claiming the Greatness of My One Life** (July 4, 2021): Like our predecessors who dumped tea into Boston Harbor or fired a shot across the bridge between Lexington and Concord, each of us – by our actions and presence – contribute to the unfolding of the Universe. Making these decisions involves daily commitment and interior resolve. Having self-consciously stepped into the Emerging Not Yet, the individual has opportunities to find their deepest self, their most unique contribution to every moment, without being bound by previous conventions and expectations.
- 55. Participating in the Long Sweep of History** (August 1, 2021): When reflecting on the present situation, on the choices at hand and the urgency of the moment, one realizes that throughout time our ancestors have felt similar frustrations and envisioned glorious futures. Furthermore, one sees that the actions of today will have lasting impacts on future generations and civilizations around the Planet. While these realizations may become paralyzing, they also serve as motivation to act and provide a mammoth context for making decisions.
- 56. Sharing in Nature's Unfolding** (September 12, 2021): In some moments, an even larger arena of responsibility and interconnectedness opens up – a person realizes that they are connected to the very fabric of the Planet Earth. All the plants and animals, the rocks and the rivers – not only those around us today but all those who came before and are yet to walk onto the stage of history – touch our being and influence our lives. Each of us influences every other manifestation of existence and together we all participate in the unfolding processes which form the tomorrow which has not yet arrived. This reality, too, can become our friend.

- 57. Seeing Through the Mundane** (October 10, 2021): Once in a while, on the journey of transformative care, a person sees through all of the practical concerns and personal perspectives to grasp a broad, encompassing and enlivening vision of an all-inclusive future. The individual then realizes that all of history – past, present and future – relies on the actions being taken in the moment. The thrill of excitement and the awe of responsibility unite within to empower every aspect of daily life. The vision challenges the beholder to embody its complexity.
- 58. Living in an Interconnected Web** (November 7, 2021): Setting out to give form and embodiment to the comprehensive vision which enlivens those who have journeyed this far on the road of Care awakens new senses of profound relationship to All That Is – to the Deep Mystery of Life, to the intertwined relationships with all of humanity and to the expansive interconnected web of existence. Each moment of daily life is filled with beauty, awe and wonder in ways unimaginable to one who has not traveled this far on a long journey.
- 59. Hearing the Cacophonous Silence of Illuminated Darkness** (December 5, 2021): The Journey of Transformative Care has no end for one who has heeded the Cry of the oppressed and seen a vision of a thriving wholeness. Yet, there comes a time when a profound Silence settles over daily existence; when the darkness of defeat and despair, in and of itself, becomes a moment of enlightenment. The dark nights of winter provide a metaphor for this interior state of being. The celebrations of the holiday season and the coming of the new year provide clues to affirming this important phase on the Journey of Care.

Rev. F. Nelson Stover's 2022 sermon series focused on the unique understandings and perspectives that the various members of the congregation, or any group of caring people, bring that enrich and enliven their daily living, worship and service. Some members look at reality through the [portal of the natural world](#); they help all of us see a wild, emerging, and numinous reality from the outer reaches of the Universe to the most miniscule cells. Some members look at life through the [portal of their deepest self](#); they help us stand in awe of the profound, creative potential they behold. Finally, other members focus on the [portal of human community](#); they see the beauty of mutually enhancing relationships and empower new levels of social complexity and heightened consciousness.

Each month during 2022, Rev. Stover lead two worship services. The first one will include a typical sermon based on the topics that were the topics of the chapters of his book *Through Three Portals*. During the second service each month, Rev. Stover lead the congregation in a guided reflection relevant to the individuals' personal lives in the context of the theme of the sermon.

The twelve sermons in this series follow the overall design laid out in Rev. Stover's book *Through Three Portals: Helping Tomorrow Unfold – A Systematic Approach to Theology in the 21st Century*. The diagram of these themes comprises the back cover of this catalog. Copies of the book can be [purchased on-line](#) or at Scuppernon Bookstore in Greensboro.

- 60. Emergent Reality** (January 1, 2022): New modes of knowing and 21st Century perspectives on the emergent Universe which are now available to residents of the entire Planet call for a contemporary cosmology that integrates day-to-day experience and current scientific wisdom. People who look through the portal of the natural world bring countless examples of ways that all realms participate in shaping

the common destiny of Planet Earth. These modes of understanding provide a solid foundation for concerted, intentional action among diverse populations including the non-human realm. [Natural World #1]

- 61. Communing Subjects** (February 13, 2022): Individuals who begin to care about each other soon realize that the entire planetary family thrives in a single interconnected web of existence. Whatever their cultural background, deeply caring citizens evoke parallel language forms to describe the reality that all modes of existence have within them a subjectivity, that all life is a community of subjects, not a collection of objects. From this perspective, people on this journey of consciousness begin to discern an unfolding purpose for themselves and their species. Finding fulfillment in mission, communal action provides a doorway to meaning and purpose and the individual and community levels. [Community #5]
- 62. Decisive Self** (March 13, 2022): Silence, introspection and personal reflection open a third pathway toward deep understanding. For some, awakening to self begins an expansive journey toward profound awareness. People on this pathway bring their gifts of enlivened solitude to all their relationships. Deeply confident of their own self-hood, they are not afraid when separation or silence is embodied in groups or when individuals experience the fractured confusion of contemporary existence. Their own calm centered being allows directional focus in their own lives, this often permeates to those around them. [Depth of Self #9]
- 63. Patterned Growth** (April 3, 2022): When in-depth focus on the natural world provides a platform for understanding life experiences, the presence of the creative self arises in countless ways. To the sensitive eye, the life urge permeates the smallest creatures and the most expansive societies. Beyond the facticity of this drive for creativity and vitality, a sense of the profoundly holy, the awesomely wonderful, arises. Gazing at the long arc of history, one sees that it bends toward complexity-consciousness and that each individual's actions have the possibility of contributing to this universal drive. [Natural World #2]
- 64. Structured Relationships** (May 1, 2022): While striving to meet the needs of society as a whole, those who care also understand the need for fostering uniqueness, for beckoning each individual to become their greatest self. By seeing through the particular frustrations and often baffling details of each moment, those committed to building human community see possibilities with fresh eyes and discern possibility even amidst darkness. Sometimes when the social fabric is coming apart, care filled individuals realize opportunities for new social forms to be created. Those shaping tomorrow find common ground from which to provide others with a foundation for revitalizing society locally and globally. [Community #6]
- 65. Centered Creativity** (June 5, 2022): When the reflective individual becomes aware of their ever-present interconnectedness to the emerging Planet and all its inhabitants a new vitality arises from deep within. The Self begins to reinvent itself to play a unique role within the planetary community. While the pain of coming out of comfortable isolation never goes away, the resolve to add to the on-going creative processes empowers every experience and perception. [Depth of Self #10]

- 66. Embodied Differentiation** (July 3, 2022): Crash, Crack, Kaboom – throughout all of time and space and within the life of every individual and entity, newness appears in three ways. Sometimes two things crash into each other forming something novel; sometime old structures fall apart into distinct entities; sometimes large things blow apart scattering elements of creativity throughout their surroundings. All these times appear messy at the moment they occur; each has the potential to create unimaginable and wonder-filled newness.
- 67. Enhancing Community** (August 7, 2022): After taking seriously their role as shapers of tomorrow, care-filled individuals embark on a self-conscious journey of corporateness, of learning how to work with others toward common objectives. At a deeper level, these change agents begin to focus not only on actions but on underlying images, worldviews and paradigms which inform these actions. On these expanded foundations individuals, groups and societies grow to meet the challenges of their times. [Community #7]
- 68. Fulfilled Being** (September 4, 2022): When individuals move beyond their own particular needs and begin to relate to the larger universe around them, they find a level of empowerment unknown in previous experiences. They become a fount of energy not only in their own existence but also in every situation in which they participate. Sometimes when amazed at themselves, a kind of reductionism tempts them to move back into a safer shell of protectionism. Getting beyond their fears, radiance becomes manifested in every moment. [Depth of Self #11]
- 69. Unfathomable Numinosity** (October 2, 2022): As a counterpoint to reducing life to a mechanistic meaninglessness, those looking through the Portal of the Natural World finally understand that their experience lies beyond rationality, beyond words. Instead of focusing their attention on the stuff of matter, they shift their focus to the spaces and energy that lies between the isness. When they begin to work to give a name to the experience of participating in the creative process of the Universe itself, they can celebrate wonder of All that Is. [Natural World #4]
- 70. Enlivening Energy** (November 6, 2022): Amidst the trend toward ossified social structures, those who care deeply, look for ways of breaking through to new levels of complexity-consciousness. Their experience of time shifts from a moment-to-moment existence to an expanded sense of a Now which engulfs the generation of which they are a part. Their awareness of community intensifies to include both the human and non-human realms. Finally, they are overwhelmed by the urge to celebrate the empowerment which fills every being. [Community #8]
- 71. Transforming Presence** (December 6, 2022): When moving beyond self-centered indulgences those looking deeply within experience the catalytic power of transformative change which lies within them and every other being. This empowering center touches the very essence of Being Itself. From this point, an outpouring of energy flows through every fiber of their own creatureliness and into the world around them. Everyday existence is transformed, each breath provides an opportunity to bask in radiance of awe and wonder. [Depth of Self #12]

Additional Resources

Talks 1-11 draw heavily on the work of Emerging Ecology's Worldview Salons that were held in 2015 and 2016. Specifically, the talks follow the "[Human Adventure](#)" journey chart which began as a tool for use during the trips of Guilford College students to India in 2016 and 2017.

Talks 12-23 were based on *The Universe Story* by Thomas Berry and Brian Swimme. The [Universe Story Walk](#) is available on the Stover's property at 5911 Western Trail, Greensboro, NC and is promoted as a program of Emerging Ecology. A study guide for "The Great Work" by Thomas Berry [is available](#) on the Emerging Ecology website. Additional resources toward telling the story of the emerging Universe are included in a collection of poems and monographs entitled "[Voices from a Walk Through Time](#)".

Worldview Talks 24-35 worked through the expanded set of triangles that Emerging Ecology calls "[All That Is](#)". The talk called "[The Whole Enchilada](#)" touches on all aspects of the diagram that plays a foundational role in Emerging Ecology's work. The initial work on these triangles was done by the Institute of Cultural Affairs and the Ecumenical Institute in the 1970's. Beginning in 1999, the ICA @ Greensboro consolidated the Institutes' work and expanded its scope to include the natural world.

Talks 36-47 are grounded in the research work done by the Ecumenical Institute and the Institute of Cultural Affairs on *The Other World*, a realm that gives meaning and purpose to those who openly and honestly face the challenges and opportunities that arise when facing the world as it continually unfolds. For background information about the Institutes' work on *The Other World* visit <https://icaglobalarchives.org/collections/exploring-inner-life/the-otherworld/>. The Other World categories are held on the "[All That Is](#)" diagram in the pink oval below the triangles. Beginning with talk 36, a reading for each month's talk was adapted from a document prepared by the Institute during the Summer '72 Research Assembly. All of these adaptations, and other writings, have been compiled in a volume entitled "[To All and Back](#)" which is available on the Emerging Ecology website.

Talks 48-59 follow the progress of the spirit journey laid out by Nikos Kazantzakis in his book "Saviors of God: Spiritual Exercises".

Talks 60-71 are based on the 12 sections of "Through Three Portals: Helping Tomorrow Unfold" by F. Nelson Stover. The chart on the following page shows the interrelation of these themes.

The electronic version of this document with live links to other documents is available at: www.EmergingEcology.org/FNS.

12 Gifts of Effulgent Life to the 21st Century



Diagram from: *Through Three Portals: Helping Tomorrow Unfold*
by F. Nelson Stover. Morgan Deniz Press, 2014.

About Rev. F. Nelson Stover

Rev. F. Nelson Stover completed his BSc in Computer Science at Purdue University and received a B.Div. from Chicago Theological Seminary. His dissertation focused on the church's role in social change. In 1970, he was ordained by the United Church of Christ in Michigan; by mutual agreement, he pursued a social ministry.

Working with the Ecumenical Institute and the Institute of Cultural Affairs (ICA), Nelson conducted human development training programs for individuals at all levels of society for the next two decades. During this time, he and his wife, Elaine, spent five years in India and extensive periods in Australia, Belgium and Egypt.

His lectures and writings focus on foundational principles and practical actions relevant for developing mutually enhancing relationships between people and Planet. Nelson may be contacted at NStover@EmergingEcology.org.