

SPRING
2020

Families

WEAVE A TAPESTRY OF FAITH

THE POWER OF THE WIND

Feathers in the Wind

A RETELLING OF A EUROPEAN JEWISH WISDOM TALE

Once there was a person whom the entire village knew to be a gossip. That person could not wait to share the juiciest piece of gossip with whomever would listen. It did not matter if the stories they spread were true or not—this person never stopped to ask.

One day, after hearing the rabbi speak about the harm gossip causes, this person went to the rabbi and said, “Rabbi, I am truly sorry for all the pain I have caused by spreading stories around. I repent. I will gossip no more. Can I be forgiven?”

“Yes,” replied the rabbi, “but here is what you must do. Go home. Find a feather pillow. Open the pillow and release the feathers on the wind. Then,

come back to me.”

The person thought this a strange request, but quickly went to do as they were told. When the person returned, the rabbi said, “Now, go gather all the feathers released from the pillow.”

“But that is impossible! The feathers have flown all over the place. I do not even know where most of them have traveled!”

“So it is with words,” said the rabbi. “You cannot know all the places your gossip and rumors have traveled. Once words have been uttered, they cannot be taken back.”

The person understood. From that day on, they took great care when speaking of others, and spoke with integrity.

The Families pages are adapted from Tapestry of Faith lifespan faith development programs. uua.org/tapestry



When the air is quite still, people can easily forget about it. But when air moves around, it demands our attention, and we call it “wind.” A blowing wind can create energy, push objects around, and sometimes cause great destruction. ■ Let’s use our senses to explore the power of the wind.

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Moving Air: It’s Ours to Share

It’s important to remember that no one owns the air we share, but all life needs it to survive. Of course, you must breathe to live.

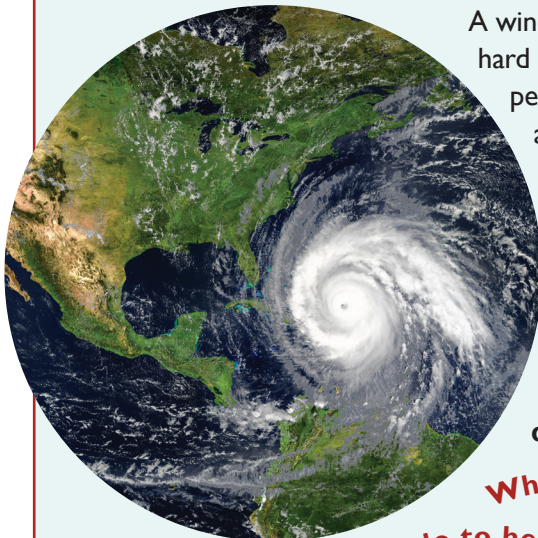
What other ways do you depend on wind and air?

When we ride in a car that uses gasoline, we are not helping the air stay clean. When our toys are made in factories, the smoke that comes out includes harmful gases.

What can you and your family do differently to be better supporters of everyone’s clean air?



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A wind that blows dangerously hard can affect the lives of many people. Hurricanes and wildfires are some of the wind’s loud voices. Even if a powerful wind has never harmed the place where you live, many communities have been disrupted.

Find out: Where in the world has the wind done damage?

What can you and your family do to help others whose lives have been turned upside down by a windy event?

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Sensing a Windy World

Next time there’s a breeze, pay attention: How do your different senses tell you about the wind? You might see a bird’s feathers ruffle or litter blowing along a sidewalk. You might feel your hair moving about. You might hear tree branches rustling or utility cables vibrating.

What direction is the wind blowing from? Moisten your fingertips and hold them up steadily to discover.



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Air Play? Fair Play!

A hill that gets some wind is a fine place to fly a kite. A rooftop or balcony is a good place to blow soap bubbles or play with a pinwheel. Indoors, a paper airplane is a way to have fun with wind (even more so, if you have an electric fan!).



Make a pinwheel from paper, a pencil, and thumbtacks.



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Harnessing a Prairie Wind

As white settlers moved in to colonize the Lakota people's windy prairie land, they built themselves churches. One congregation in Minnesota set their first church atop a small hill. However, the new building promptly got in the way of a tornado and was destroyed before the group even had a chance to worship in it.

A UU congregation now, Nora Church is mindful of its history. That is how the community knew which spot would be a perfect location to build an energy-producing wind turbine! And that is why they decided to take this action to help the planet. They know the harm that fossil fuels have brought to our earth. Wind power does not use any fossil fuels.

The congregation's wind turbine



Nora Church members gather to bless their wind turbine project.

© Photo courtesy of Nora Church

is the only one for many miles around. The Nora Church wind turbine is connected to the shared electric grid for its part of Minnesota. When the wind turbine generates power, the power is shared with other electricity users.

The wind turbine makes more power than the congregation needs. Over time, the money Nora Church spent to build it will come back to the congregation in the form of money saved on electricity bills. And, Nora Church has helped make its community less dependent on harmful fossil fuels.

Are there wind turbines near you? Do they make energy that you can plug into at an electrical outlet close to where you are right now?

Find out how your family can become wind energy customers, like Nora Church!



Seeds A-flyin'!

Have you ever wondered how dandelions spread across a field or how tiny maple sprigs can pop up in a yard that hasn't got a maple tree at all? Maybe you have played with a fallen seed that resembles a moustache and spirals to the ground when you hold it up high.

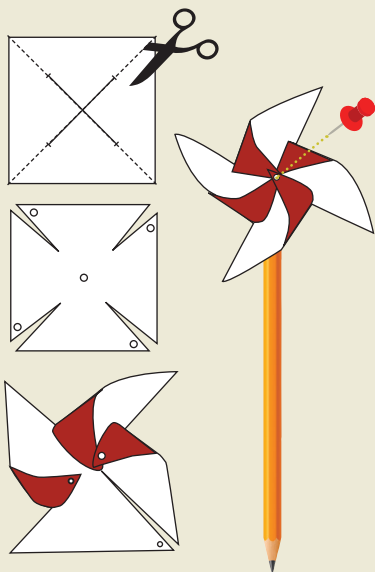
Along with gravity that causes seeds to fall and

animals that carry seeds away and then drop them, the wind plays a part in which new plants grow where. It carries the seeds of many plants from branches and stalks to new locations. If the location is suitable for that plant, the next generation will take root there.

THANK YOU, WIND!



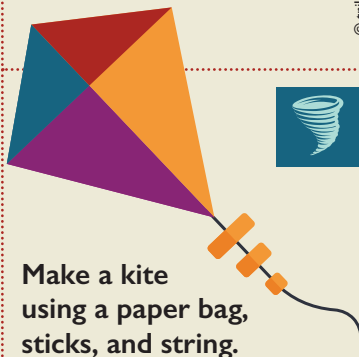
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Blow soap bubbles.



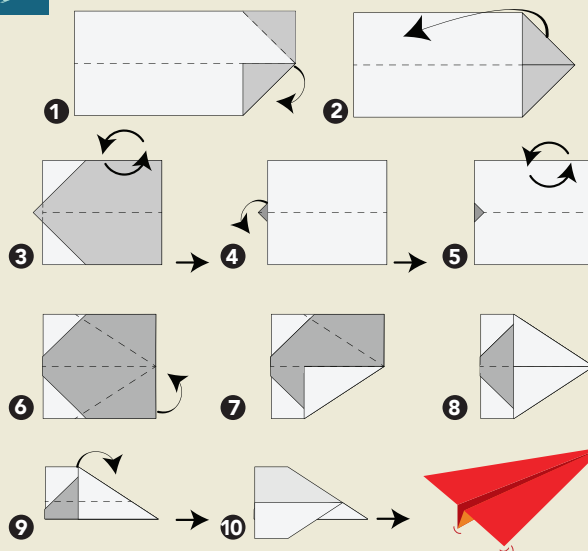
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Make a kite using a paper bag, sticks, and string.



Fold a sheet of paper to make an airplane.



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The Wind in Both Ears

by Gail Forsyth-Vail

The Universalist religious educator and minister the Rev. Angus H. MacLean (1892–1969) was a Presbyterian farm boy of Scottish heritage from Nova Scotia who grew up to become a beloved professor and dean at the Theological School of St. Lawrence University. He was fond of metaphors from rural life, such as this one:

My father sent me up from the root cellar to see about the wind. He was rechecking the winter's potatoes to remove all signs of rot and was planning on setting out nets for some fresh cod later on. Was there a steady breeze, he wanted to know. Yes, there was. "Now face it," he said, "so that the wind sings in both your ears. Then tell me where your nose points to."

MacLean goes on to say:

We wonder about truth, about all the whats and whys and whithers of life. Wondering is very important, but it should bear the fruits of faith and thought, and it should turn our faces to whatever is coming down the winds of time and circumstance.

MacLean touches on something essential to a liberal faith that seeks to remain vibrant and relevant. We must:

- Be curious; seek new perspectives and ways of understanding the world
- Pay attention to the challenges of our own day
- Explore how our values and tradition call us to response and to action

In this spirit, Unitarian Universalists name scientific discovery, the rhythms of the natural world, and wisdom from the world's religions as sources of our faith. In this spirit, we share tales that offer a fresh perspective or challenge a well-worn way. In this spirit, we embrace social action and justice-making in our faith formation programs.

How can Angus MacLean's wisdom help you guide the faith development of the children in your care?

How will you nurture young Unitarian Universalists to hear and meet the particular winds that blow in our own time?

Gail Forsyth-Vail retired in 2019 as Interim Director of the UUA's Lifespan Faith Engagement office.

FAMILIES: WEAVE A TAPESTRY OF FAITH

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