



**CERG - The Central East Region of the Unitarian Universalist Association**

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*“We are not human beings on a spiritual journey. We are spiritual beings on a human journey.”  
~Stephen Covey*

The Rev. Kendall Gibbons has done some exciting work articulating “qualities of spiritual maturity” and one of those is “fluency in the use of metaphor.” Can we take our ideas and experiences out of the realm of the tangible and factual and rest for a moment in a place where meaning comes in shades and is open to many interpretations, based on the unique lens of our individual experience? Leaders, elders, youth, and yes, even children can think creatively and figuratively about their faith and go beyond words to express what their faith journey looks and feels like.

As I go about my work of engaging in conversation with my fellow UU’s on the topic of faith development, I have a favorite exercise that I often use. First I ask people to meditate on their life’s personal journey, wherever they are, and then invite them to create an image of faith development – metaphorically speaking. The responses are often amazing and wonderful and instructive.

Let me share some examples with you. As I’ve done this exercise, I’ve heard faith development likened to a flower opening, a river flowing to the sea, a maze or labyrinth, a ship sailing on the ocean, a seedling emerging from the ground, a snake shedding its skin (over and over), a road –straight and flat, a road – hilly, bumpy and riddled with potholes and detours, a map, a turtle, and a treasure chest, just to name a few! I invite you to take a moment on think about your own metaphor.

Being part of a covenantal faith community affords us the opportunity to grow in spirit using our heads, hearts and hands. If we aren’t growing in faith, or even think we aren’t, hope may be hard to find. A colleague of mine once coined the phrase “*faith development is all we do.*” I believe it – do you?

Many blessings on your journey, particularly in this season of light and celebration!

*Pat*