



Made for These Times

**Faith in Action
2026**

Based on

**“We Were Made for These Times”
by Kaira Jewel Lingo**

Small Group Study Guide

Spiritual Life Center

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A Word from Rev. Rick:

I have been amazed at how many people have come up to me or texted/emailed me to say that the book picked for this year's SLC Faith in Action Series is fantastic.

"Good going and good pickin', Rev. Rick," many SLCers have said.

Well, I believe that *We Were Made for These Times: 10 Lessons for Moving Through Change, Loss, and Disruption* by Kaira Jewel Lingo is the right book for what many of us are going through right now.

But I want to give the credit for finding this book to Rev. Jane Simmons, who is co-teaching and leading Unity Worldwide Ministries' wonderful Integral Ministries Program with her husband, Rev. Gary Simmons. Rev. Gary is, of course, the author of that modern New Thought classic *The I of the Storm*.

It was last spring during a conversation with Rev. Jane that I told her about SLC's Faith in Action Series, and how it isn't just about Sunday sermons. FIA includes numerous home and online study groups, Wednesday discussions at the church, creations by artists, etc.

I told Rev. Jane that I always felt that progress was essentially "five steps forward and four steps back." I said that I felt that currently in so many ways not just the United States, but almost the entire world, was going through a four step back period. "Remember when Michelle Obama said that 'When they go low, we go high,'" I asked?

"Well, lately it seems when they go low, the other side goes even lower, kicking off a downward spiral," I quipped. Nevertheless, I told her that I thought that these "four step back" periods often become the times of the most creative and positive thought. It was during these difficult times that quantum spiritual leaps are often made.

Rev. Jane then said to me that she felt a recent author, who really brings forward how we can make these positive quantum leaps during difficult times like these, is Kaira Jewel Lingo.

Kaira was very close to the late Vietnamese Buddhist monk Thich Nhat Hanh. She calls him "Thay," which is Vietnamese for "My Teacher." For many years she was an ordained Buddhist nun.

A major transition for her was to walk away from being a nun. However, Kaira has become a widely recognized teacher of mindfulness, intentionality, and how to have the grit to spiritually advance during difficult times— like these.

In this FIA series we will be dealing with some difficult issues such as: impermanence, accepting what is, strong emotional winds, and a world full of false gods— yes, gods that fail. But we will also be dealing with many incredibly positive things, such as what Kaira calls "coming home" to our real nature and essence.

In the end, I hope that you have a greater sense by coming through this FIA series that you were really "made for these times" — despite it all and even because of it all!

Many blessings,

Rev. Dr. Rick Belous
Senior Minister,
Spiritual Life Center
Sacramento, California

Study Group Shared Agreements

Purpose: The purpose of shared agreements is to create a safe and healthy environment for the group. It is important that the group reviews these guidelines and that there is consensus before beginning any spiritual group.

Confidentiality: Everything shared by group members is confidential. What is said here, stays here.

Compassion: Group members come from a place of unconditional compassionate acceptance of one another as human beings. Judgmental comments, and even unspoken thoughts, threaten the group process.

Truth and Integrity: Group members are encouraged and supported by the group to honestly and authentically be who they are. Speaking the truth involves risk and can only occur safely in a compassionate environment.

Respect: Group members show respect for each other and the group by avoiding interrupting others, arriving on time, and allowing everyone time to share their thoughts and ideas with the group. We practice sacred listening and refrain from giving advice or trying to fix or solve others' problems.

“Listen to others with inward stillness, without opinion, assent, or dissent,
without criticism; hearing through the words into the soul of the other.”

Rudolph Steiner

Sharing Time: Take space, make space. Group members demonstrate respect by avoiding interrupting others, arriving on time, and allowing everyone time to share their thoughts and ideas with the group.

Participation: Group members agree to participate in discussion and group activities; however, each person has the right to ask to sit out or to modify his or her participation.

Conflict: Whenever people come together and speak truthfully the potential for hurt feelings, misunderstanding and conflict exists. If such a situation arises, group members agree to address it within the group process or one-on-one with the facilitator. Unresolved conflict is toxic to the whole group and not just to the parties involved.

I accept these shared agreements as the foundation for a successful study group.

Sign: _____ Date: _____

STUDY GROUP PRAYERS

Suggested Opening: The Co-Creator's Prayer

Loving Presence, with grateful hearts we join together as co-creators and friends. We come together to support each other as we learn, share, and explore how to live life more intentionally. We open our minds to receive your wisdom. We open our hearts to express your love. We open our souls to radiate your light.

May each of us hear what we are meant to hear and speak as you direct us. Now may each of us speak your intention or prayer for this gathering.

(Intention or short prayer from each who wishes to speak them.)

We now enter into sacred agreement with each other to honor our intentions as we support each other in our spiritual growth. We listen to others with inward stillness, without opinion, assent or dissent, without criticism, hearing through the words into the soul of the other.

Thank you, God, for your loving presence with us and within us; may all we say and do be in harmony with you. Thank you, God!

Suggested Closing Prayer

Thank you, God, for your loving presence that has guided and directed us in this session. We honor each person in this group and trust in the process of each other's unique spiritual journey. We hold in sacred trust the personal matters we have shared in this gathering.

We go forward in positive expectancy of ever-increasing good as we remain ever mindful of your presence, power and love within us.

We thank you, God. Amen.

Faith in Action Weekly Colors

SLC uses Chakra colors each week as we journey toward greater awareness and aliveness.

Chakras, as an ancient spiritual system, show the path of integration of mind, body, and spirit leading to enlightenment.

The SLC community joins together during this seven-week period and wears the color of the week on Sundays to show their commitment to the journey.

On the next page, you will find the weekly affirmations ready for color printing to cut out and post at your desk, refrigerator, mirror or anywhere else. These are reminders of the current stage of this book study journey we are all taking together.

Blessings!

WEEKLY AFFIRMATION CARDS:

Your next page can be printed out in color (on cardstock if you like) as a means to create affirmation cards for each week of the Faith in Action program.

Print this page of Faith in Action Affirmations in color, cut out weekly, and enjoy:

Week One	Faith in Action 2026	Spiritual Life Center	slcworld.org	In this moment I come home to myself. Being present for myself, I know I am always safe.
Week Two	Faith in Action 2026	Spiritual Life Center	slcworld.org	Trusting is my true nature. I rest and await my deep life questions to emerge in resolution.
Week Three	Faith in Action 2026	Spiritual Life Center	slcworld.org	Opening to my experience, I accept this moment as it is. I practice being with what is here and now.
Week Four	Faith in Action 2026	Spiritual Life Center	slcworld.org	I recognize my emotions and the wisdom they hold. Embracing how I feel, I allow insight to arise.
Week Five	Faith in Action 2026	Spiritual Life Center	slcworld.org	Facing the truth of impermanence, I am free to live more deeply and transform fear. I treasure all my relations.
Week Six	Faith in Action 2026	Spiritual Life Center	slcworld.org	Accepting the ups and downs of life, I know I am more than life's challenges. I am centered and balanced.
Week Seven	Faith in Action 2026	Spiritual Life Center	slcworld.org	I find my happiness here and now, nurturing the good with gratitude. I am made for these times.

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Faith in Action Fall 2026
We Were Made for These Times
By Kaira Jewel Lingo



“My friend, do not lose heart...Especially do not lose hope. Most particularly because the fact is we were made for these times. Yes. For years, we have been learning, practicing, been in training for and just waiting to meet on this exact plain of engagement.”

Clarissa Pinkola Estes
"Letter to a Young Activist During Troubled Times"

Faith in Action Song

Moving at the Speed of Love

by Paula Mandella

Tho' I may see ten thousand joys
And ten thousand sorrows
I'll forever remember
This time is only borrowed
From the One Eternal Source
To which all must return
And whatever life may bring
I am all ways, perfectly
Divinely guided, to the next right thing

Moving at the speed of love
I'm moving at the speed of love

I still my mind, open my heart
Listen without hurry
I release and let go of
The rush and the worry
In the all knowing wisdom
In this peace that I find
I give all I have to give
I relax and step into
The grace and the mercy
Of a life well lived

3x

I am, I do, and I have enough...Thank you God!

Week One: Coming Home to Our True Self

Preface and Chapter 1 Pages 1 - 16

Our personal challenges are not disconnected from the larger challenges that the world is facing right now...we'll learn ways of finding freedom and stability right in the midst of this, so that we can meet whatever life brings us with an open heart, a balanced mind, and committed action. (pg. 5)

Preface

1. What have been your most significant life transitions?
2. Do you identify with parts of Kaira Jewel Lingo's story? Which parts?
3. Have you learned to be happy? How?
4. What personal challenges or larger world challenges and disruptions are bothering you now?

Chapter 1

You already are what you want to become. - Master Lin Chi

1. What has been your experience of your true home? Describe what it feels like.
2. What helps you to find your way to your true home?
3. In what ways have you received richness and wisdom from times of great disruption?
4. What support would you need to visit your true home on a regular basis?

If there is time before closing, you may wish to share the Chapter 1 Meditation on p. 12 - 15.

Week Two: Trusting the Unknown

Chapter 2 Pages 17 - 26

Instead of living in a state of chronic tension, and clinging to all sorts of things that are falling with us because the world is impermanent, be like a cat. - Alan Watts

Chapter 2

1. What happens when you try to figure out the answer to a question by thinking it over again and again?
2. Share a time in your life when you asked your deeper consciousness to take care of a deep and troubling question, and let go of thinking and worrying about it. What happened? How long did it take?
3. What have you found is the best way for you to get out of worry and fear?
4. Have you ever let yourself hang out in the place of not knowing? How did it feel? Did it resolve?

5. What physical practice might you use to help you rest in the unknown?

6. Is there a significant life question that you have in your mind-heart that you are trying to resolve?

If there is time before closing, you may wish to share the Chapter 2 Meditation on p. 23 -25.

Week Three: Accepting What Is

Chapters 3 & 4 Pages 27 - 50

Chapter 3

We need to be aware of the suffering, but retain our clarity, calmness, and strength so we can help transform the situation. The ocean of tears cannot drown us if karuna [compassion] is there. That is why the Buddha's smile is possible. - Thich Nhat Hahn

1. Share about a time in your life when you resisted the changes happening. Did it work out?
2. Have you had experience with not judging disruption in your life as good or bad? Tell us about this, how it felt and how it resolved.
3. What does this mean, when Thich Nhat Hanh says, "We need suffering in order to see the path...If we are afraid to touch our suffering, we will not be able to realize the path of peace, joy, and liberation."?
4. What beings are supporting you and those around you in the present moment?
5. In what way can you let go of fighting the challenges in your life? What might you be pushing away that you can soften toward and accept right in this moment?

Chapter 4

I must undertake to love myself and to respect myself as though my very life depends upon self-love and self-respect. - June Jordan

1. Describe a time when you stayed through an uncomfortable experience or time in your life. What helped you stay through this time?
2. What does Kaira Jewel Lingo's idea of *non-fear* mean?
3. Did you practice the belly breathing or mindful moving meditations? Which one could you access most readily to help you in stormy times?
4. Practice together the Belly Breathing meditation on p. 42-44.

If there is time, you may wish to share Chapter 3 Meditation on p. 34 - 36 before closing, or Chapter 4 meditation p. 42 -44 or p. 45 - 47 sometime during your session.

Week Four: Dealing with Strong Emotions

Chapter 5 Pages 51 - 62

Chapter 5

"We have to learn how to embrace and cradle our own suffering and the suffering of the world, with a lot of tenderness." -Thich Nhat Hanh

1. What is the difference in Buddhist "store consciousness" and the western idea of the unconscious?
2. Describe how expressing our mental states (such as anger or mindfulness) affects the seeds in our store consciousness.
3. How does mindfulness help us to transform our painful emotions?
4. Have you experienced transforming your emotions through mindfulness? What was your process and what were your feelings?

5. What general category of strong emotions do you find yourself faced with most in this time of transition and challenge?

Frustration, anger

Sadness, despair

Confusion, ambivalence

Anxiety, fear

Something else

- a. What is your habitual response to this strong emotion?

- b. Take a moment to embrace it, recognize it, care for it. Can you transform this emotion? Approach it with kindness and friendliness?

- c. What insight arises, if any?

If there is time, you may wish to share Chapter 5 Meditation on p. 56 - 59 before closing.

Week Five: Impermanence

Chapter 6 Pages 63 - 72

Chapter 6

It is the responsibility of free [people] to trust and to celebrate what is constant--birth, struggle, and death are constant, and so is love, though we may not always think so--and to apprehend the nature of change, to be able and willing to change. - James Baldwin

1. How challenging is the idea of impermanence to you?
 - a. How do you find yourself resisting the idea of impermanence most? (For example having a hard time letting go of possessions, denial of aging and death, etc.)
 - b. Does one of the Five Remembrances resonate with you more than others? Is there one that you feel more uncomfortable with?
2. What does this mean, that our actions are our only true possessions?
3. How does facing the truth of impermanence free us up to live our lives more deeply and transform our deepest fears?

4. Describe how you see this idea of impermanence in the world around us.
5. What comes up for you when you contemplate impermanence and the Five Remembrances? Do any of the following responses resonate with you?

I feel discomfort and shock, even though logically I know they are true
I really don't want to go there: I numb out or find this depressing
I can open to this reality somewhat though it is still uncharted territory
I am comfortable reflecting on impermanence and find it liberating

*If there is time, you may wish to share the Chapter 6 Meditation on p. 67
- 71 before closing.*

Week Six: The Eight Worldly Winds

Chapters 7 & 8 Pages 73 - 98

Chapter 7

At the center of our being is a point of nothingness which is untouched by illusion, a point of pure truth, a point or spark which belongs entirely to God... -Thomas Merton

1. How can we face the ever-changing reality of our lives more gracefully knowing that the worldly winds don't blow in response to our actions, that they are not necessarily deserved?
 - a. Contrast this idea with the concept of Karma.
2. How does the mantra "You are partly right" help us in life?
3. How does the non-reliance on external sources of approval bring us into our center?
 - a. How much do you rely on external sources of approval? Which ones are most important to you?

4. Not-self means we are empty of a separate self, but full of everything else. We are made up of all those who have influenced us and helped shape us in some way. Who and what has shaped you?

5. Which of these pairs of the eight worldly winds is most relevant to what you are going through at this moment, or which has been a significant issue for you in your life?

Pleasure and pain

Gain and loss

Praise and blame

Fame and disrepute

- a. In the midst of these ups and downs, how might you dwell in the space at the center of the wheel?

- b. What support might you need for this and how might you get it?

Chapter 8

When the whole world is your friend, fear will find no place to call home. And when you make the mind your friend, you'll know what trust really means. -Marty Weingast

1. Do you remember a weeble? What is it that makes this toy so appealing? Can you imagine yourself as a weeble?
2. Discuss the idea that inclusivity means the ability to see everything, from all sides.
3. Have you had an experience when being physically or mentally relaxed produced a better outcome?
4. How does equanimity, accepting all of life, help us?
 - a. Is it possible to have this consciousness and also practice Unity's 3rd Principle? This is currently expressed as "We co-create our experiences through the activity of our thinking."

There is a lot to discuss in these chapters! Still, if there is time, you may wish to share the Chapter 7 or 8 Meditation before closing.

Week Seven: Made for These Times: Grace in Gratitude

Chapters 9 & 10 Pages 99 - 122

Chapter 9

At some point in life, the world's beauty becomes enough.
-Toni Morrison

1. Have you experienced being happy in the midst of suffering? What was it like?

2. Which of the Five Happinesses do you regularly practice? Which would you like to include?

3. What does it mean, to live our lives in such a way that we create a beautiful past?
 - a. Why would we want to do this? Is it bypassing?

Chapter 10

All that we do now must be done in sacred manner and in celebration. We are the ones we've been waiting for.

- Elders of the Hopi Nation

1. Kaira Jewel Lingo believes we are each called to continue the work of the young people of the Civil Rights Movement in new ways to bring about even deeper freedom and greater awakening so that we can truly live harmoniously and altruistically with each other, our world, and all its species. How do we continue this work?
 - a. Where or how are you inspired to engage with situations that you care about in the world?
2. Do you trust your intuition or your inner voice? What is it telling you?
3. Where is your true home? What makes it your true home?
4. What stood out to you most from this book? What was your key takeaway?
 - a. How do you experience in yourself that you were made for these times?

I encourage you to leave time to end our sessions with part or all of the Meditation p. 115-119 in Chapter 10.