

Unitarian Universalist Small Group Ministry Network

For After a Tragedy

First Unitarian Church of Wilmington, Delaware, by Rev. Michelle Collins, 2013

Chalice Lighting, by Carter Heyward

Love is the willingness to participate with others in the healing of a broken world and broken lives. Love is the choice to experience life as a member of the human family, a partner in the dance of life, a lighter of torches of hope.

Check In:

How are you feeling right in this moment?

How is your sense of connection with others that are dear to you?

Reading: A Blessing by John O'Donohue (from *To Bless the Space Between Us*)

Now that you have entered with an open heart into a complex and fragile situation,
Hoping with patience and respect to tread softly over sore ground, in order
That somewhere beneath the raw estrangement some fresh spring of healing might be coaxed
To release the grace for a new journey, beyond repetition and judgment,
And have achieved nothing of that, but emerged helpless, and with added hurt.

Withdraw for a while into your own tranquility, loosen from your heart the new fester.
Free yourself of the wounded gaze that is not yet able to see you.
Recognize your responsibility for the past, but don't allow your sense of yourself to wilt.
Draw deep from your own dignity. Temper your expectations to the other's limits,
And take your time carefully, learning that there is a time for everything
Hurting first, and then for healing too, but that time may not be quite yet.

Discussion & Sharing Questions:

- What were your initial reactions and feelings upon hearing the news about this tragedy?
- What are some of the questions bubbling up for you?
- What impacts does it have on your life, and that of your family and friends?
- In what ways do your faith and this community and group help you to live with the reality of vulnerability, uncertainty, and fear, like what might be triggered now?
- Is there any action that you are feeling called to right now?

Closing Thoughts

Extinguishing the Chalice