



STARR KING
UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH



Unitarian Universalist Small Group Ministry Network Website
Aging

Hayward, CA, Wednesday Evening Small Group, Kathryn LaMar, 04 April 2018

CHALICE LIGHTING

1 min

Ten thousand flowers in spring,
the moon in autumn,
a cool breeze in summer,
snow in winter.
If your mind isn't clouded by unnecessary things,
this is the best season of your life.

---*Wu-Men*

OPENING WORDS

2 min

Ever since the age of six I have had a mania for drawing the forms of objects. Towards the age of fifty I published a very large number of drawings, but I am dissatisfied with everything which I produced before the age of seventy. It was at the age of seventy-three that I mastered the real nature and form of birds, fish, plants, etc. Consequently, at the age of eighty, I shall have got to the bottom of things; at one hundred I shall have attained a decidedly higher level what I cannot define, and at the age of one hundred and ten every dot and every line from my brush will be alive. I call on those who may live as long as I to see if I keep my word.

Japanese painting master Hokusai, who lived to be ninety

SILENT MEDITATION

2 min

The first sound of the gong brings us to silence. Please take time to center yourself, and temporarily push aside whatever might be preventing you from participating fully in tonight's session. The second sound of the gong returns us to each other's presence.

CHECK-IN / FEEDBACK

40 min

Please share some thing(s) about your life since last we met.

OPENING SONG: GERITOL GYPSY (Peter Krug)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nnWmgbXqiaY>

SOME PRELIMINARY THOUGHTS ON AGING

5 min

Autumn, we know, is life en route to death.
The asters are but harbingers of frost.
The trees, flaunting their colors at the sky,
In other times will follow where the leaves have
fallen,
And so shall we.

Yet other lives will come.
So we may know, accept, embrace,
The mystery of life we hold a while.
Nor mourn that it outgrows each separate self,
But still rejoice that we may have our day.
Lift high colors to the sky! And give,
In our time, fresh glory to the earth.

Robert T. Weston

Madeleine L'Engle, whose lifetime spanned the better part of the 20th century, had much to say about time, its passing, and aging. In *A Circle of Quiet* she wrote:

I am still every age that I have been. Because I was once a child, I am always a child. Because I was once a searching adolescent, given to moods and ecstasies, these are still part of me, and always will be... This does not mean that I ought to be trapped or enclosed in any of these ages...but that they are in me to be drawn on...Far too many people...think that forgetting what it is like to think and feel and touch and smell and taste and see and hear like a three-year-old or a thirteen-year-old or a twenty-three-year-old means being grownup. When I'm with these people I...feel that if this is what it means to be a grown-up, then I don't ever want to be one. Instead of which, if I can retain a child's awareness and joy, and be fifty-one, then I will really learn what it means to be grownup."

QUOTES TO PONDER

10 min

The most important thing I can tell you about aging is this: If you really feel that you want to have an off-the-shoulder blouse and some big beads and thong sandals and a dirndl skirt and a magnolia in your hair, do it. Even if you're wrinkled.

Maya Angelou

Aging gracefully means being flexible, being open, allowing change, enjoying change and loving yourself.

Wendy Whelan

We are not victims of aging, sickness and death. These are part of scenery, not the seer, who is immune to any form of change. This seer is the spirit, the expression of eternal being.

Deepak Chopra

Aging is not uncomplicated. Creativity is an extraordinary help against destructive demons.

Ingmar Bergman

You have to age gracefully. And that's what I love about Keith Richards. That's what I love about the Rolling Stones. They are aging gracefully. They are falling apart at the seams right before our eyes, and they are doing it gracefully. And that's the most beautiful thing that we can do.

Nikki Sixx

Anytime you really take a close look at people who are dealing with the aging process, you're going to have a complicated reaction to what you're seeing and feeling. If you're in the middle of it, those emotions are going to be quadrupled. It's immediate, it's relatable, so it's good human drama.

Ron Howard

What helps with aging is serious cognition - thinking and understanding. You have to truly grasp that everybody ages. Everybody dies. There is no turning back the clock. So the question in life becomes: What are you going to do while you're here?

Goldie Hawn

If I can challenge old ideas about aging, I will feel more and more invigorated. I want to represent this new way. I want to be a new version of the 70-year-old woman. Vital, strong, very physical, very agile. I think that the older I get, the more yoga I'm going to do.

Jamie Lee Curtis

I invite you, from my sentiments, my convictions and my responsibilities, to work together in the construction of a Uruguay where being young is not suspicious, where aging is not a problem.

Tabare Vazquez

The thing about aging is all your old lovers, pretty much if they were really friends, become your family. It's great. You have those terrible feelings of possessiveness and uncertainty go out the window. You have what you shared. You know you would help each other in times of trouble no matter what.

Gloria Steinem

Being here allows me to make the case that not all aging, narcissistic movie actors whose children could be mistaken for their grandchildren necessarily act with the same motivation.

Warren Beatty

The problems of aging present an opportunity to rethink our social and personal lives in order to ensure the dignity and welfare of each individual.

Daisaku Ikeda

In Henry Adams, I discovered not only the prototype of the modern thinker but also someone who is more interesting: a viper-toothed, puling, supercilious crank, thwarted in ambition, aging gracelessly, mad at the cosmos, and ashamed of his own jejune ideals. He is nevertheless very dear to me.

P. J. O'Rourke

The fact that doctors tend to treat people as individuals, guided by the need to ensure patient confidentiality, can reinforce this pattern of seeing the changes and challenges aging brings on through our heads and our bodies, rather than as a shared experience.

Chuck Norris

With aging comes physical and emotional challenge. We cannot seem to get as much done in an hour as we did in youth. And it is harder to be patient with others, and they seem more demanding.

Henry B. Eyring

The Boomers will eventually have to accept that it is not possible to stay forever young or to stop aging. But it is possible, by committing to show up for others in community after community, to earn a measure of immortality.

Eric Liu

The aging process is totally minimizing. Life in general is pretty minimizing because you have a lot of big ideas, and you have to battle the mistaken delusions and instability that come with youth.

Natasha Lyonne

What we know for sure from our work and from others' is that mice have a life span of 1,000 days, dogs have 5,000 days, and we humans have 29,000 days. Recognizing that the duration is limited, and aging is inevitable, focus the attention on enhancing the quality of the days you have.

S. Jay Olshansky

BREAK

10 min

GROUP REFLECTION

40 min

- ◆ How were elders treated in your family when you were growing up? How was aging regarded? Has your family ethnicity influenced your attitudes and behaviors regarding aging?
- ◆ How have you changed as you've aged?
- ◆ What do you fear about getting older? What do you look forward to? Have your feelings about aging changed as you have gotten older? How have societal attitudes influenced how you respond to your own aging?
- ◆ Do you think of yourself as any particular age? If so, what is it? Did anything special or noteworthy happen in that year of your life?
- ◆ If you could be any age you choose, what would it be? Why?
- ◆ What goals and/or dreams do you have for the years left to you? How do you want to live the rest of your life?
- ◆ How can we approach aging in a life-affirming way?

SESSION FEEDBACK

3 min

What went well for you, this time or in general. How can we improve the sessions? Are there any reasons to revisit our covenant?

CLOSING SONG

OLD MEN AND CHILDREN (Frank Hennessy)

4 min

<https://soundcloud.com/search?q=%22old%20men%20and%20children%22> (lyrics below)

CLOSING WORDS

1 min

Look to this day!
 For it is life, the very life of life.
 In its brief course lie all the verities
 And realities of your existence:
 The bliss of growth
 The glory of action,
 The splendor of beauty;

For yesterday is but a dream,
 And tomorrow is only a vision;
 But today, well lived, makes every yesterday
 A dream of happiness
 And every tomorrow a vision of hope.
 Look well, therefore, to this day.
 - *attributed to Kalidas, Hindu dramatist and poet*

Old Men And Children(Frank Hennessy)

Chorus	And those old dreams come drifting back again Old hopes and visions keep tumbling round my brain And the years have blown away like grains of sand Old men and children understand
Verse 1	I could have been a great explorer finding countries strange and new Roaring down the rapids in an old dug-out canoe But all my hopes and visions fell upon hard times Though I crossed the wild Antarctic in my mind I could have been a song-and-dance man performing on the stage Years ago when I was young that stuff was all the rage But I was just a dreamer, got lost among my thoughts So I became a carpenter of sorts
Verse 2	Now me and my old lady we don't talk much I suppose But I'm there if she should need me i'n'it funny how life goes Our son is an accountant and he's living far away Sometimes he lets the children come and stay So I take them to the magic woods where a fairy we might see Tell them all my hero's tales of me in Germany Coming home we march along pretending we're a band 'Cause old men and children understand
Verse 3	We go to church on Sunday - it's really not that far She goes home to check the roast while I call in the bar Coming home I pass the car park where our old house used to stand Then it's home for lunch - oh Lord ain't Sundays grand Last week I met Jack Davies - my God did he look old When I went to shake his hand his fingers felt so cold He lives alone and some folks say he talks to the T.V. But my wife says he's not as old as me