

All Are Called – Intimacy

Rev. Helen Zidowecki, March 2018

This is the first of two session plans based on the theme of GA 2018.

Session: All Are Called – Intimacy

Session: All Are Called -- Ultimacy

Opening Words:

The theme for the General Assembly 2018 is “All Are Called,” with this statement:

“Grounded in a deep belief that we are all prophets, Unitarian Universalists ask, “How can we faithfully meet the demands of our time?” The call to witness and act for justice in our society and in the world is clear. So, too, is the call to examine our structures and practices, dismantling and transforming those which fail to recognize the full humanity of all people and to honor the interdependent web of life. Together we dive deeply into questions of mission for our Unitarian Universalist Association, for our congregations and communities, and for each of us as individuals.” *From GA 2018 call for Networking Session proposal.*

Covenant for this session:

We value our time together and revere each person is present. We share and we are silent to accept the sharing of others. We speak from our hearts and for ourselves only, without needing to respond or give advice. We hold our sharings in confidence within our circle.

Check-in and Sharing: How is it with you today?

Topic and Activity: *“The call of our faith has a place for each of us.”*

The first Principle is the inherent worth and dignity of every person – including you and me. I have my values and ideas, and so do you. And your ideas and values and my ideas and values engage every time we meet! How we meet and how we interact creates *intimacy*, a sense of bonding, a sense of knowing, a sense of respect and trust.

Inherent worth and dignity

All are called, all have something to share and perspectives to bring.

All are prophets, with things to be said and gifts to give.

Knowing and being known, respecting and being respected, accepting and being accepted.

We come as individuals, on spiritual journey for truth and meaning.

We come into community, where our search enriches our lives and the community itself.

Imagine meeting yourself face to face or actually look at your face in a mirror as you reflect on the questions. How do you express your worth and dignity? What feelings do you have? What needs come up for you? (Have mirrors available.)

How does small group ministry enhance your sense of worth and dignity? How do you enhance the worth and dignity of others in the group?

How can the sense of worth and dignity that you acknowledge for yourself be part of interactions with other, whether you agree with them or not? How do you create and show the respect for another person?

Intimacy and relationships

Each of us reacts and interacts from our experience and cultural setting. The first principle calls us to respect the inherent worth of every person. This includes the worth of views.

Read through these questions, pause to consider, and share a reflection.

How do you handle the inclination to say, “You don’t know what you are talking about,” or “That’s not the way I see it.”?

How can you grasp another’s perspective, needs, feelings?

How can we say, “I had not thought of it that way” and take it as a new learning?

How do you converse in a way that invites opening into new answers rather than framing the question to give the answer that you would like to receive?

How do we share our perspective in a way that can be heard?

Checking out/Likes and Wishes: How was the session for you? What are you taking with you from the session?

Closing Words:

In the Spirit which draws us into honest engagement with one another, including those who may be very different from us in various ways, God calls us to wake up and learn how to love and respect one another, period. Carter Heyward (From “Encounters with Otherness,” Glenn Turner)

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Topic and Activity:

Right in the middle of the seven Unitarian Universalist principles is the fourth Principle: The free and responsible search for truth and meaning. This is *ultimacy*, or deeper meaning.

“Dr. James Luther Adams, a leading UU minister, gave a lecture at Andover Newton Theological School around 1980. In response to a question about why people come to our religious communities at all, Dr. Adams replied that they come for *ultimacy*, to wrestle with (and from time to time actually find answers to life’s ultimate questions. Who am I? In what or in whom do I trust? In what community do I belong? And they came for *intimacy* in a safe place in which they are accepted while making connections with others. “

(Bob Hill, as quoted in “The Twins: Intimacy and Ultimacy,” Helen Zidowecki)

We are all called to engage in living our values. This is an expectation of Unitarian Universalism.

We do this in different ways, different levels.

We expound from our personal, demographic, and theological and spiritual setting.

We find ourselves needing to communicate within the diversity, even within our own congregations.

General Assembly 2018 invites us to “dive deeply into questions of mission for our Unitarian Universalist Association, for our congregations and communities, and for each of us as individuals.” Take time to reflect on and respond to the questions that will be asked at GA:

Who and how are we called to **be at** this time, individually and collectively?

How are we called to **act and to live**?

How does our Unitarian Universalist **legacy** strengthen us in living out our mission? In what ways does our legacy present challenges and impediments to answering our call?

Checking out/Likes and Wishes: How was the session for you? What are you taking with you from the session?

Closing Words:

Grant us understanding, when the positions of others make our lives difficult.

Grant us compassion, when our need for compassion and understanding is so great.

Grant us the increased strength of conviction, when we could so readily lose heart.

Grant us courage as we work to include sacred values of justice and love into human institutions.

Bless our speaking and our actions. May they be with conviction but not rancor, so that the conversation continues and expands.

Bless our commitment to continuing on, realizing that love and justice in human institutions come slowly rather than quickly.

Bless our hope in the future, faith in our stand, and love that endures beyond the immediate and into infinity.

Blessed be for the strength and commitment of so many people working toward just and compassion in human relations.

From Prayer at Service after Same Sex Marriage Referendum failed in Maine, Unitarian
Universalist Community Church, Augusta, November 2009, Rev. Helen Zidowecki