

*Unitarian Universalist Small Group Ministry Network Website*

## **Broken Open**

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

### **Chalice Lighting**

May we carry our lamp into dark places;  
For we too have been lonely, and without a light.

### **Check In**

#### **Reading: from *Broken Open: How Difficult Times Can Help Us Grow*, by Elizabeth Lesser**

Everything can change in a moment; we have little control over the outer weather patterns as we make our way through the landscape of a life. Joseph Campbell said, “What all myths have to deal with is transformations of consciousness. You have been thinking one way, you now have to think a different way. Consciousness is transformed either by the trials themselves or by illuminating revelations. Trials and revelations are what it's all about.”

When we have been through a trial and survived it—or better still, transformed its terrors into revelations—then we begin to approach other adversities with a different attitude. Change and loss may still knock us off the horse, but soon we are back in the saddle, stronger and wiser than ever. As life progresses, and we continue to transform and refine our consciousness, we gain more insight and humility, greater strength of character, and deeper faith in the meaningfulness of life. But how do we do this? How do we transform terror into revelations? How do we stay sane and courageous in the midst of a trial? The process of transformation [is] a journey of brokenness leading to openness, descent to rebirth, fire to Phoenix.

#### **Discussion & Sharing Questions:**

- What do the words “broken open” mean to you? What does it mean to be broken open?
- What are some features of journeys of brokenness? What might these journeys look like?
- When have you faced a journey of brokenness or some other trial of adversity or challenge, that you would be comfortable sharing with the group? (*important to give everyone a chance to share here and for everyone to share – the goal of this session is reminding us of the transformation and resilience we gained from our experiences*)
- How did it finish for you, or how is it now for you? What helped you to get through it?
- What are some ways that you are different because of your experience? How has this experience affected how you face other challenges? How did it transform you?

### **Closing Thoughts**

#### **Extinguishing the Chalice**