

Unitarian Universalist Small Group Ministry Network Webiste
SMALL GROUP MINISTRY
Eulogize Me Now
Main Line Unitarian Church, Devon, PA

Opening Words & Chalice Lighting:

Now welcome every living hour;
Delight in every newborn day.
Life is our fame; death has no power
Unless our fear gives death away.

- Rev. Kenneth Patton, UU minister

Check-in: *What experience did you have this month that was especially meaningful to you?*

Focus Reading:

In a cemetery once, an old one in New England, I found a strangely soothing epitaph. The name of the deceased and her dates had been scoured away by wind and rain, but there was a carving of a tree with roots and branches (a classic nineteenth century motif) and among them the words, "She attended well and faithfully to a few worthy things." At first, this seemed to me a little meager, a little stingy on the part of her survivors, but I wrote it down and have thought about it since and now I can't imagine a more proud or satisfying legacy.

"She attended well and faithfully to a few worthy things."

Every day I stand in danger of being struck by lightning and having the obituary in the local paper say, for all the world to see, "She attended frantically and ineffectually to a great many unimportant, meaningless details."

- Rev. Victoria Safford, UU minister

So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.

- Psalm 90:12

Focus Questions:

What kinds of things have you heard in eulogies that were meaningful and true about the person?

What would you like to have said about you when you die?

What epitaph would you write for your own tombstone?

Check-out/Likes & Wishes: *Has this session changed your perception of/the way you think about _____?*

Closing Words & Extinguishing Chalice:

A few amusing epitaphs...

In a Ribbesford, England, cemetery:
The children of Israel wanted bread
And the Lord sent them manna,
Old clerk Wallace wanted a wife,
And the Devil sent him Anna.

Playing with names in a Ruidoso, New Mexico, cemetery:
Here lies
Johnny Yeast
Pardon me
For not rising.

In a Silver City, Nevada, cemetery:
Here lays Butch,
We planted him raw.
He was quick on the trigger,
But slow on the draw.

In a Georgia cemetery:
"I told you I was sick!"

On Margaret Daniels grave at Hollywood Cemetery Richmond, Virginia:
She always said her feet were killing her
but nobody believed her.

Anna Hopewell's grave in Enosburg Falls, Vermont has an epitaph that sounds like something from a Three Stooges movie:
Here lies the body of our Anna
Done to death by a banana
It wasn't the fruit that laid her low
But the skin of the thing that made her go.

In a Thurmont, Maryland, cemetery:
Here lies an Atheist
All dressed up
And no place to go.