

*Unitarian Unitarian Small Group Ministry Network Website*

**Evil: Coping with Evil**

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

**Chalice Lighting, by Author**

We affirm the beauty of nature and the entire universe.

We affirm the closeness and love of the human family.

We affirm the joy of work and play -- and of living.

Even amidst what chaos and evil that we find, we choose life.

**Check In**

**Reading: Coping with Evil, by Michelle Collins**

The good guys and the bad guys. The heroes and the villains. Epic battles of good versus evil and also smallish skirmishes of the good and the no-so-good. It's easier to identify and deal with the evil that we find in stories than that in real life. In the real world, evil is usually harder to identify, more dependent on perspectives and contexts, and often impossible to resolve, at least for an individual like ourselves. Instead we have to be able to find ways to cope with the evil that is there, to be resilient in the face of it, in order to live our lives. This might mean seeking to understand facts and processes behind it, questioning it theologically, finding ways to take action to counter feelings of helplessness, making spaces that are removed and safe from the evil, or leaning into joy and our own personal resilience. Strategies are different for everyone and will vary for each of us. But we do need something to help us to get through. After the rise of Voldemort in the Harry Potter saga, Harry gives his entire tournament winnings to his friends who wanted to start up a joke shop. We're gonna need some laughs, he said.

**Discussion & Sharing Questions:**

- What is your first reaction after hearing about some awful event or action? (like 9/11 or the Knoxville or Newtown shooting) How did things unfold for your experience of it?
- Can you think of a cataclysmic event of some sort that you may have perceived to be the result of some evil act, one that you coped with successfully? What were some of the strategies that you used?
- How do you go about trying to make sense of events and evil actions?
- What are some actions that you have taken in the past that countered feelings of helplessness?
- How would you assess your resilience to be?

**Closing Thoughts**

**Extinguishing the Chalice**