

Unitarian Universalist Small Group Ministry Network Website  
Small Group Ministry Session  
**Exploring Truth**  
UU Fellowship of La Crosse, Wisconsin, Jan Jolly, April 17, 2019

**Chalice Lighting:** Here we are, together in this space. By our love and by our covenant, we make this a holy place. We light the chalice of Unitarian Universalism in honor of the light that lives in each of us, the light that shines among us, and the light we bring into the world.

**Personal Check In:** Briefly share something from your life since we last met and how you are feeling now.

**Opening Words:**

There is not much truth being told in the world. There never was. This has proven to be a major disappointment to some of us. When I was a child, I thought grown-ups and teachers knew the truth because they told me they did. It took years for me to discover that the first step in finding out the truth is to begin unlearning almost everything adults had taught me, and to start doing all the things they told me not to do. -- Anne Lamott

**Thought starters:**

- Believe those who are seeking the truth; doubt those who find it. – *Andre Gide*
- Most truths are so naked that people feel sorry for them and cover them up, at least a little bit. – *Edward R. Murrow*
- Some minds remain open long enough for the truth not only to enter but to pass on through by way of a ready exit without pausing anywhere along the route. – *Elizabeth Kenny*
- In a time of universal deceit, telling the truth becomes a revolutionary act. – *George Orwell*
- The great enemy of the truth is very often not the lie -- deliberate, contrived and dishonest -- but the myth -- persistent, persuasive and unrealistic. – *John F. Kennedy*
- “The truth,” Dumbledore sighed, “is a beautiful and terrible thing, and should therefore be treated with caution.” -- *J.K.Rowling*
- We, the member congregations of the Unitarian Universalist Association, covenant to affirm and promote: ...A free and responsible search for truth and meaning; – *4<sup>th</sup> Principle of UUA*

**Discussion questions:**

1. The words “know thyself” were inscribed on the Temple of Apollo at Delphi. How do you “know” yourself? What things have you learned about yourself that you did not know and that surprised you when you learned them?
2. Shakespeare wrote, “To thine own self be true?” Have you been untrue to yourself? What were the circumstances and the result? What did you learn?
3. Some people say that denial can be vital at times as a coping mechanism. Do you agree? Why or why not?
4. Otto Rank wrote, “With the truth, one cannot live. To be able to live, one needs illusions.” Do you agree? Have you cultivated illusions? Why? How?

5. Examples of the mechanism of self-deception are things like hidden assumptions and blind spots. Have you seen these mechanisms in others or yourself? What was the reward for self-deception? What was the cost?
6. To what extent does our society value the truth and truth telling? How do groups/organizations respond to truth-tellers and whistle-blowers?

**Extinguishing Chalice:**

We extinguish this flame but not the light of truth, the warmth of community, or the fire of commitment. These we carry in our hearts until we are together again.

Elizabeth Selle Jones