

Unitarian Universalist Small Group Ministry Network

Fear

First Parish Church of Stow and Acton, MA

November 2025

Opening Words and Chalice Lighting

... we are drawn together

By a belief, that how we are in the world,

Who we are together

Matters.

We light this chalice,

together in the knowledge

That love, not fear, can change this world — *Jennifer Gracen*

Check-in/Sharing: Let's each take a couple minutes to check in with how we are feeling and anything we would like to share.

Topic: Fear

Many of us have experienced situations when we have acted out of fear, perhaps because of insecurity, anxiety, anger, or simply feeling overwhelmed. If we live in an environment driven by fear, new situations can evoke extra strong reactions. Sometimes having an immediate fight, flight, or freeze response can save us from a dangerous situation. Alternatively, we might wish we were able to step back and choose a thoughtful response rather than reacting immediately.

Imagine living in an environment driven by compassion and support. Would that give us hope — that we could get help, that we could learn to cope and that things would be ok?

Let's explore ways we have each found to cope with anxiety and stress, to recognize and face our fears, and to make decisions out of love rather than out of fear.

"All decisions are based in either love or fear. So many of us choose our path out of fear disguised as practicality." — *Jim Carrey*

"Choose the great adventure of being brave and afraid at the exact same time" — *Brené Brown*

"Anything that's human is mentionable, and anything that is mentionable can be more manageable. When we can talk about our feelings, they become less overwhelming, less upsetting, and less scary." — *Fred Rogers*

"Worry never robs tomorrow of its sorrow; it only saps today of its strength."
— *A.J. Cronin*

"The best use of creativity is imagination. The worst use of creativity is anxiety." — *Deepak Chopra*

Possible Questions for Discussion

- Could you share some of your fears? What strategies do you use to combat your fears?
- What clues do you have that you are stressed, tense or anxious and what might trigger those responses for you?
- Can you describe any situations where fears have driven you and you wish you had made a different choice?
- Are there choices you have made where you overcame fears or concerns, and you are pleased with what you chose?
- What tools or people help you to deal with situations you find stressful?
- If you have you ever been in a fear-driven environment, how did you deal with it? Have you ever helped to create a more supportive environment and if so, how?

Wrapping Up: How did you like this topic and session?

Closing Words

"May your choices reflect your hopes, not your fears." — *Nelson Mandela*