


Grace

Starr King Unitarian Universalist Church, Hayward, CA (Castro Valley), Bob Britton, 2016

 <p>SMALL GROUP MINISTRIES</p>	<p>Grace /grās/ Middle English: via Old French from Latin gratia, from gratus ‘pleasing, thankful’; related to grateful. In Christian belief, the free and unmerited favor of God, as manifested in the salvation of sinners and the bestowal of blessings. – Oxford Dictionary</p>
<p>Opening and Chalice Lighting (1 min)</p>	<p>This is the light of faith and hope and love, which shines in our lives even in the darkest times. This is the light of the gathered community, which holds us and comforts us when we grieve. This is the light of our ongoing search for truth and meaning, which gives a path even through loss. We light this light and invoke the light that illumines life and death and shines beyond both. Christine Robinson – UU Minister</p>
<p>Check-in (25 min)</p>	<p>Take this time to share how you are spiritually, psychologically, emotionally, and physically.</p>
<p>Sharing (5 min)</p>	<p>Take time to respond to what you have just heard while being non-judgmental and refraining from giving advice.</p>
<p>Quiet Reflection (1 min)</p>	<p>When grace moves in . . . guilt moves out. - Max Lucado</p>
<p>Topic Readings (5 min)</p>	<p>The defining theology of Universalism is universal salvation; Universalists believe that the God of love would not create a person knowing that that person would be destined for eternal damnation. They concluded that all people must be destined for salvation. - Wikipedia</p> <p>Grace is an ability to give as well as to receive and be thankful. C. JoyBell C.</p> <p>As swimmers dare to lie face to sky and water bears them, as hawks rest upon air and air sustains them, so would I learn to attain freefall, and float into Creator Spirit’s deep embrace, knowing no effort earns that all surrounding grace. Denise Levertov</p> <p>Grace means to get something that you do not deserve; unmerited favor. Mercy means you do not get a punishment that you deserve; compassion, forbearance. - Pamela Rose Williams</p> <p>Virtue and genuine graces in themselves speak what no words can utter. William Shakespeare</p> <p>The oceans of this world are pushed and pulled by tides the moon controls. Out of the vastness of the deep they roll and all the seas give way before them. But there are tides that sweep the land as well. A flaming sun draws them north and upward and south until all the land gives way before them and the earth is drenched with the bright green</p>

	<p>waters of spring. There are tides of the sea and tides of the land, and to know them and to feel them is to find peace that passes understanding. For the tides move to a rhythm and an order and a harmony the soul of man is hungry for. Stand out upon a moonlit night and watch the seas of spring around you—and feel the tide come in. - from “<i>The Tides of Spring</i>” by Waldemar Argow, Jr. UU Minister</p> <p>We let go into this grace. It’s something we fall into, like when we fall into the arms of another, or we put our head on the pillow to go to sleep. It’s a willingness to relax, even in the midst of tension. It’s a willingness to stop for just a moment, to breathe, to notice that there’s something else going on other than the story our mind is telling us. In this moment of grace, we see that whatever might be there in our experience, from the most difficult emotional challenges to the most causeless joy, occurs within a vast space of peace, of stillness, of ultimate well-being. - Adyashanti</p>
Break (5 min)	
Sharing/Deep Listening (50 min)	<p>GRACE - Speak about this topic in any way that is comfortable to you. You may use these questions if they are helpful.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What does grace mean to you? • Have you experienced grace in your life? • Think of a time when something positive happened to you unexpectedly, or when a reward or opportunity came to you that you didn’t think you deserved. • As UUs we often feel uncomfortable with the notion of grace – divine love and protection bestowed freely, seemingly unmerited. Why is that?
Open Discussion (15 min)	This is a time to supportively respond to something another person said or to relate thoughts that may have occurred as others shared.
Today’s session?	What worked well, less well in the session today?
Service Projects? (10 min)	Sunday Coffee Hour April 17 and another broader project?
Announcements (2 min)	Next session – Wednesday March 9, 2016
Closing Reading/ Extinguish Chalice (1 min)	<p>For the sun and the dawn which we did not create, <i>For the moon and the evening which we did not make;</i> For food which we plant, but cannot grow; <i>For friends and loved ones we have not earned and cannot buy;...</i> For all things which come to us as gifts of being from sources beyond ourselves; <i>Gifts of life and love and friendship</i> <i>We lift up our hearts in thanks this day.</i> Richard Fewkes, UU minister</p>