



STARR KING
UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH



Unitarian Universalist Small Group Ministry Network Website
Gratitude

Hayward, CA Wednesday Evening Group, 01 November 2017, Kathryn LaMar

CHALICE LIGHTING

(1 min)

Who can make an accounting of gratitude? For the universe we give thanks, an expanse of life to stretch us with wonder...For the earth we give thanks, fragment of the stars that is our home...For life we give thanks, the burning of stars ordered and tempered here allowing us life and breath...For growth we give thanks, for the heritage of the spirit, for all the forces past our knowing, power past our control...For the ages which follow us, for the eternity of days, in which life is ever renewed and fulfilled, we give thanks.

adapted from Kenneth Patton, *Hymns for the Celebration of Life*

SILENT MEDITATION

2 min

The first sound of the gong brings us to silence. Please take time to center yourself, and temporarily push aside whatever might be preventing you from participating fully in tonight's session. The second sound of the gong returns us to each other's presence.

CHECK-IN:

36 min

How is your heart, in this moment?

CHECK-IN FEEDBACK:

5 min

OPENING WORDS

2 min

How many of us go through our days parched and empty, thirsting after happiness, when we're really standing knee-deep in the river of abundance? Let's choose today to quench our thirst for 'the good life' we think others lead by acknowledging the good that already exists in our own lives. We can offer the gift of our grateful hearts. A French proverb reminds us that 'Gratitude is the heart's memory.' Begin this day to explore and integrate this beautiful, life-affirming principle into your life, and the miracle you have been seeking will unfold to your wonder and amazement.

Sarah Ban Breathnach

READINGS / QUOTES ON GRATITUDE

10 min

Gratitude unlocks the fullness of life. It turns what we have into enough, and more. It turns denial into acceptance, chaos to order, confusion to clarity. It can turn a meal into a feast, a house into a home, a stranger into a friend. Gratitude makes sense of our past, brings peace for today and creates a vision for tomorrow.

Melody Beattie

At times our own light goes out and is rekindled by a spark from another person. Each of us has cause to think with deep gratitude of those who have lighted the flame within us.

Albert Schweitzer

Sometimes we should express our gratitude for the small and simple things like the scent of the rain, the taste of your favorite food, or the sound of a loved one's voice.

Joseph B. Wirt

One looks back with appreciation to the brilliant teachers, but with gratitude to those who touched our human feelings. The curriculum is so much necessary raw material, but warmth is the vital element for the growing plant and for the soul of the child.

Carl Jung

We learned about gratitude and humility - that so many people had a hand in our success, from the teachers who inspired us to the janitors who kept our school clean, and we were taught to value everyone's contribution and treat everyone with respect.

Michelle Obama

Gratitude is the inward feeling of kindness received. Thankfulness is the natural impulse to express that feeling. Thanksgiving is the following of that impulse.

Henry Van Dyke

We are constituted so that simple acts of kindness, such as giving to charity or expressing gratitude, have a positive effect on our long-term moods. The key to the happy life, it seems, is the good life: a life with sustained relationships, challenging work, and connections to community.

Paul Bloom

I write about the power of trying, because I want to be okay with failing. I write about generosity because I battle selfishness. I write about joy because I know sorrow. I write about faith because I almost lost mine, and I know what it is to be broken and in need of redemption. I write about gratitude because I am thankful - for all of it.

Kristin Armstrong

Perhaps nothing helps us make the movement from our little selves to a larger world than remembering God in gratitude. Such a perspective puts God in view in all of life, not just in the moments we set aside for worship or spiritual disciplines. Not just in the moments when life seems easy.

Henri Nouwen

The dominant characteristic of an authentic spiritual life is the gratitude that flows from trust - not only for all the gifts that I receive from God, but gratitude for all the suffering. Because in that purifying experience, suffering has often been the shortest path to intimacy with God.

Brennan Manning

Have gratitude for the things you're discarding. By giving gratitude, you're giving closure to the relationship with that object, and by doing so, it becomes a lot easier to let go.

Marie Kondo

I really had no great love for shoes. I was a working First Lady; I was always in canvas shoes. I did nurture the shoes industry of the Philippines, and so every time there was a shoe fair, I would receive a pair of shoes as a token of gratitude.

Imelda Marcos

I'm a guy who has problems with moderation. All or nothing. Binge and purge. Kill or be killed. Gray is not a color I wear well. I should be dead. I know that. I should not be successful. I know that too. My daily existence is a toss of the coin - one side, fear, the other side, gratitude.

Kurt Sutter

I seriously feel like the best days are ahead, and I like the idea of getting to do everything I did before but with more knowledge, experience, and street smarts. There's a certain love, appreciation, and gratitude that you have at 40 that you don't have when you're younger, and it makes every accomplishment feel so much better.

Jennifer Lopez

Often people ask how I manage to be happy despite having no arms and no legs. The quick answer is that I have a choice. I can be angry about not having limbs, or I can be thankful that I have a purpose. I chose gratitude.

Nick Vujicic

If future generations are to remember us more with gratitude than sorrow, we must achieve more than just the miracles of technology. We must also leave them a glimpse of the world as it was created, not just as it looked when we got through with it.

Lyndon B. Johnson

I'm happy to say that at 62, I think I've reached that point where stuff doesn't bother me as much, and my gratitude level has gone way up, especially having gone through the loss that I've had, and losing so many of the great artists that I was close to. They taught me how to see it with a grain of salt and a lot of humor and perspective.

Bonnie Raitt

Let us rise up and be thankful, for if we didn't learn a lot today, at least we learned a little, and if we didn't learn a little, at least we didn't get sick, and if we got sick, at least we didn't die; so, let us all be thankful.

Buddha

I truly believe we can either see the connections, celebrate them, and express gratitude for our blessings, or we can see life as a string of coincidences that have no meaning or connection. For me, I'm going to believe in miracles, celebrate life, rejoice in the views of eternity, and hope my choices will create a positive ripple effect in the lives of others. This is my choice.

Mike Ericksen

BREAK

10 min

SHARING ABOUT GRATITUDE:

(6 min

Please share whatever you would like the group to know about how you make room in your life for gratitude. Use the following questions as a guide, if you wish.

Questions

- If you have a spiritual practice involving gratitude, describe it for us.
- What does gratitude feel like?
- What gets in the way of experiencing gratitude?
- How do you cultivate a thankful heart?
- How do we stay aware of that in life which is sheer blessing?
- Gratitude is about keeping an open mind It is about not having your mind so set on an apple, that you can't be grateful when given a luscious pear. How have you found ways to be grateful for the ways that life turned out, rather than the ways you expected it to be?
- Have you found ways to be grateful for difficult people or circumstances?

DISCUSSION/FEEDBACK ON GRATITUDE

5 min

CHOOSING TOPICS FOR FUTURE (see attached list)

10 min

CLOSING SONG: THANKSGIVING EVE BY BOB FRANKE

4 min

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PagE2v4_XY4> Lyrics at end

CLOSING WORDS

1 min

For the sun and the dawn which we did not create;
For the moon and the evening which we did not make;
For food which we plant but cannot grow;
For friends and loved ones we have not earned and cannot buy;
For this gathered company which welcomes us as we are, from wherever we have come;
For all our free churches that keep us human and encourage us in our quest for beauty, truth & love;
For all things which come to us as gifts of being from sources beyond ourselves;
Gifts of life and love and friendship we lift up our hearts in thanks this day.

Richard M. Fewkes

Lyrics to Thanksgiving Eve, by Bob Franke

It's so easy to dream of the days gone by
So hard to think of the times to come
And the grace to accept every moment as a gift
Is a gift that is given to some

CHORUS:

What can you do with your days But work and hope
Let your dreams bind your work to your play
What can you do with each moment of your life
But love 'till you've loved it away Love 'till you've loved it away.

There are sorrows enough for the whole world's end
There are no guarantees but the grave
But the lives we have lived and the times we have spent
Are a treasure too precious to save

CHORUS

[Third verse, not recorded]

As it was so it is, as it is shall it be
And it shall be while lips that kiss have breath
Many waters indeed only nurture Love's seed
And its flower overshadows the power of death

CHORUS