



SMALL GROUP MINISTRIES

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Unitarian Universalist Small Group Ministry Network Website

## Gratitude

Starr King Church, Hayward, CA, Bev Powell

Wednesday afternoon group

12 Noon – 2 PM, September 27, 2017

### Opening and Chalice Lighting (1 min)

*For the beauty of the earth,  
For the splendor of the skies,  
For the love which from our birth,  
Over and around us lies,  
We raise our grateful praise.* - From a hymn by F.S. Pierpoint

### Sharing/Check-In (30 min – 3 min ea.)

*Take this time to share how you are spiritually, psychologically, emotionally, and physically. We want to know how you are in this moment. Include if you can something, someone or some experience that you feel grateful for.*

### Quiet Reflection (1 min)

*If you open yourself to insight,  
you are at one with insight  
and you can use it completely.  
If you open yourself to loss,  
you are at one with loss  
and you can accept it completely.*  
- Lao Tzu

### Topic Readings (10 min)

Give thanks for unknown blessings already on their way.  
- Native American Prayer

Everything has its wonders, even darkness and silence, and I learn, whatever state I may be in, therein to be content. - Helen Keller

If the only prayer you ever say in your entire life is 'thank you,' it will be enough. - Meister Eckhart

It is the wise person who sees near and far as the same,  
Does not despise the small or value the great. - Chuang Tzu

Gratitude unlocks the fullness of life. -Melodie Beattie

Gratitude is heaven itself. - William Blake

The fundamental religious attitude, as has been pointed out by all kinds of people, is simply that of gratitude. Ultimately, the religious person is distinguishable from the irreligious person on the basis of thankfulness being their fundamental stance toward life. - Ron Trojcek

*Topic Readings continued on next page*

To be grateful is to recognize the Love of God in everything. Every breath we draw is a gift of love, every moment of existence is a grace, for it brings with it immense graces. Gratitude therefore takes nothing for granted, is never unresponsive, is constantly awakening to new wonder and to praise of the goodness of life and the divine. For the grateful person knows that God (or life) is good, not by hearsay but by experience. And that is what makes all the difference. - Thomas Merton

**Break/ Quiet  
Contemplation (5 min)  
Sharing/Deep  
Listening  
(40 min – 4 min ea.)**

*Speak about this topic in any way that is comfortable to you. If you choose to use the questions, focus on just one or two, as this will allow you to explore the topic in more depth.*

- When do you find yourself feeling grateful? Are there particular times, situations, places, people that elicit feelings of gratitude for you?
- Does gratitude have to be taught, or does it come naturally to people?
- Gratitude is often about an open mind. It is about not being 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?

**Open Reflection  
(10 min)**

*This is a time to supportively respond to something another person said or to relate additional thoughts that may have occurred as others shared. Please try to respond to others without judgment. In your comments and thoughts, attempt to include everyone in the conversation.*

**Review of Covenant;  
Consideration of  
Discussion Topics;  
Selection of First  
Service Project  
(20 min)**

*Let's take a few moments to consider our promises to each other and our group dynamics.*

*We also can make time to select topics we agree on for future meetings.*

*Let's also cover questions and concerns about service projects ideas and how to schedule them.*

**Likes & Wishes  
(5 min)**

*What did you appreciate about today's session– in yourself, in others, in the gathering as a whole? What would you like to see change in the future?*

**Announcements (1 min) Next session October 11, 2017 – Friendship**

*Gratitude can be about thanking those around us. During this coming week, consider thanking someone who deserves but rarely gets your thanks. If you are interested in other ideas of embodying thankfulness in your life and cultivating an "attitude of gratitude" here is a link with additional practices:  
<https://stratejoy.com/2013/03/9-unusual-ways-to-practice-gratitude/>*

**Closing Reading/  
Extinguish Chalice  
(1 min)**

*It is heaven itself to take what is given, to see what is plain, what the sun lights up willingly. We offer gratitude and reverence to the things that sustain us...the earth, our community, the mysteries of the Universe, our good fortune in the miracle of life. From **Daisies** by Mary Oliver*