

How We Remember (on Death & Loss)

First Unitarian Church of Wilmington, Delaware, by Rev. Michelle Collins, 2012

Chalice Lighting, unknown author

We light our chalice as a reminder that,

In the face of improbable odds, life's ember burns and glows,

A corner of warmth and awareness amidst the coldness of space and the indifference of time.

Check In

Reading: by Anna Russomano Broskie

We can take time to remember those who have gone before us, to name them and identify their presence in the things around us—in checkerboards and cedar chests, the curve of a cheekbone and the turn of a phrase, in spaghetti sauce and old sweaters. By spending time and paying attention, we allow things that are already there to speak to us. We can hear the voices of our ancestors in the crackling of a hearth fire or the rush of a wave upon a shore.

Discussion & Sharing Questions: (choose one or more of these types of reminders to share about)

- What are some of the ways that you go about remembering?
- *Temporal Reminders*
 - Do you have any particular times of the year or holidays that are about remembering ancestors and those who have died?
 - What are they? Who do you remember?
- *Geographic Reminders*
 - Places can also serve as reminders for those we love: these might be cemeteries, places where memorials are planted or placed, places where ashes have been scattered. Where do you go to remember the ones that you love who have died?
 - There might also be places that remind you of experiences or times with that person. Do you have any such places? Are you drawn there or do you avoid it?
- *Physical Reminders*
 - Do you have particular objects or photographs that serve as reminders for you?
 - Many cultures and religious traditions have practices that relate to these objects and other objects of remembrance, such as creating altars for one's ancestors. Do you have any similar practices of your own?
- What do you need as far as support for your remembering? From this group?

Closing Thoughts & Extinguishing the Chalice