



Unitarian Universalist Small Group Ministry Network Website
Individuality In Community

Hayward, CA, Wednesday Evening Small Group, Kathryn LaMar, 15 August 2018

CHALICE LIGHTING

1 min

To be human is to be religious. To be religious is to make connections. To lead a meaningful life among the many competing forces of the 21st century, each of us need support in making meaningful re-connection to the best of our global heritage, the best in each other and the best in ourselves.

John Buehrens

OPENING WORDS

1 min

Each of us brings a separate truth here, We bring the truth of our own life, our own story. We don't come as empty vessels ...But rather we come as full people – people who have a story and our own truth. We seek to add to our stories. This room is rich with truth, rich with experience. All manner of people are here: Needy...joyful...frightened...anxious...bored. We all bring our truth with us. May we all recognize the truth and the story in everyone's life. And may we hear and honor the truths that we all bring as we gather together. Together we have truths. Together we have a story. Together we are a community.

Penny Hackett-Evans

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 / FEEDBACK

36 min

Please share some thing(s) about your life since last we met.

INTRODUCTION TO INDIVIDUALITY IN COMMUNITY

2 min

We deceive ourselves if we think we can be grasped by life's meaning, or a sense of the holy, before we find and are found by our fellow human beings. There is no sense of the sacredness of life, no sense of the holiness of sheer existence that does not come first through another person. Human encounter is common: human acceptance is rare. Religious community is people reaching through all the facades people carefully place around them, people embracing people where they live and struggle, what Henry Nelson Wieman calls 'creative interchange.' The most radical contribution religion can make to human living is that it enables people to experience community as starkly as hunger ... Where life has a chance, we are in caring and in mutual need. When we are most alive, we are in the presence of someone or something intensely with us ... Nothing is experienced except in relation. It is participation in a religious community that stabs our consciousness into this awareness in the midst of a society that knows nothing about it.

Raymond Baughan

READING ROUND-THE-CIRCLE

5 min

The following is adapted from Richard S. Gilbert's *What We Share*:

Let us celebrate the common rituals that make us kin: ● The poignancy of welcome and farewell, ● The

anguish of defeat, ☺ The tender touch of those who call us friend; ☺ The exuberant joy of birth, ☺ The empty space in our hearts when a loved one dies, ☺ The warm embrace of comrades who welcome us to the celebration of life; ☺ The questions that persist and perplex and do not yield to our needs for answers, ☺ The shining moments when the sun slants across our dim meandering path and illuminates the way, ☺ The helplessness we feel in a world that sometimes presents only problems, ☺ The high joy when some small victory for humanity is won and we have helped it happen; ☺ In all our moments of doubt and despair, of problem and pain, ☺ Let us remember the common lot shared by our human kin. ☺ In all our times of truth and triumph, of faith and fortitude, ☺ Let us celebrate what we share. We are, after all, in this together.

The following is adapted from Martin Buber:

We enter into relation. ☺ We mingle. ☺ We want to confirm one another in genuine conversation. ☺ We imagine the real, each imagining what another is at this very moment wishing, feeling, perceiving, thinking, and not as a detached content but in the other's very reality, as a living process in this person. ☺ We each, perhaps secretly and bashfully, watch for a 'yes' that allows each to be and that comes from one person to another. ☺ Our heavenly bread of self-being is passed from one person to another. ☺ We want to let no dishonesty arise between ourselves and the other. ☺ To resist dishonesty is our essential courage. ☺ The will to be what we really are and nothing else is stirred. ☺ We practice directness. ☺ As we hear the other speak, we hear the voice of our own suppressed longing. ☺ We regard the other as who the other is, aware of our differences, affirming the person with whom we speak. ☺ Mutuality in speech arises between us. ☺ With the most intensive stirring of our being, we imagine the real, becoming whole and unique and aware of the other's wholeness and uniqueness. ☺ Each says what each has to say. ☺ Here is a partnership, a genuine meeting, a communion, a community.

SONG: **He Ain't Heavy, He's My Brother** **4 min**
<<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i7bVQXG10-w>>

QUOTES TO PONDER **5 min**

We Unitarian Universalist have always united more on the basis of what Channing called "practical religion" rather than we have on any particular metaphysic or doctrine. By practical we mean supporting one another in our spiritual and ethical living, attempting to bear witness to our highest values in our everyday lives, and in that way having an influence on community life.

John Buehrens

The greatness of a community is most accurately measured by the compassionate actions of its members.

Coretta Scott King

Sometimes our light goes out but is blown into flame by an encounter with another human being. Each of us owes the deepest thanks to those who have rekindled this inner light.

Dr. Albert Schweitzer, member, Church of the Larger Fellowship, Unitarian Universalist

If you want to become healthy, you have to surround yourself with a group of people that are getting healthy, and you have to be connected to a community that is doing what you want to do.

Henry Cloud

A true community is not just about being geographically close to someone or part of the same social web network. It's about feeling connected and responsible for what happens. Humanity is our ultimate community, and everyone plays a crucial role.

Yehuda Berg

Modern storytellers are the descendants of an immense and ancient community of holy people, troubadours, bards, griots, cantadoras, cantors, traveling poets, bums, hags, and crazy people.

Clarissa Pinkola Estes

That's how we do it in the black community; we give back to the people who made us who we are. We never forget that.

Snoop Dogg

The way to change the world is through individual responsibility and taking local action in your own community.

Jeff Bridges

No child can escape her community. The life of the community flows about her, foul or pure; she swims in it, goes to sleep in it, and wakes to the new day to find it still about her. He belongs to it; it nourishes him, or starves him, or poisons him; it gives them the substance of their lives.

Anonymous

We cannot seek achievement for ourselves and forget about progress and prosperity for our community... Our ambitions must be broad enough to include the aspirations and needs of others, for their sakes and for our own.

Cesar Chavez

If you want to experience joy in your life, you have to be able to step outside yourself and become part of a cause that is much larger than you; one that brings a greater good to a greater community.

Srikumar Rao

You have tremendous flexibility in defining both the greater good and the greater community. If you don't succeed in this, then you will continue to pull that heavy wagon up the mountain, and despite the fact that you are pulling it, it will somehow run over your own foot.

Srikumar Rao

One trend I see is the rejection of growth for self-discovery and the pursuit of authentic community. So we keep whittling our spiritual community to a smaller and smaller and more exclusive inner circle. The problem is if the diagnoses are wrong, so will be the cure.

Erwin McManus

We must become bigger than we have been: more courageous, greater in spirit, larger in outlook. We must become members of a new race, overcoming petty prejudice, owing our ultimate allegiance not to nations but to our fellow men within the human community.

Haile Selassie

Don't underestimate the power of your vision to change the world. Whether that world is your office, your community, an industry or a global movement, you need to have a core belief that what you contribute can fundamentally change the paradigm or way of thinking about problems.

Leroy Hood

A strange necessity has been laid upon me to devote my life to the central concern that transcends the walls that divide and would achieve in literal fact what is experienced as literal truth; human life is one and all [people] are members of one another. And this insight is spiritual and it is the core of religious experience.

Howard Thurman

The need for connection and community is primal, as fundamental as the need for air, water, and food.

Dean Ornish

The common elements in affiliating with a community ... are the impetus toward belonging: toward associating with those sharing a common heritage, belief, and way of life, and toward the human need to share. Although it may not be reached, the ideal embodied in community is the movement toward unity and union with others: community and communion.

Maria Harris,

BREAK

10 min

GROUP REFLECTION

36 min

IDEAS FOR GROUP REFLECTION

- How do you want to be in this community? How do you want others to be?

IDEAS FOR GROUP REFLECTION

- How would you define the “greater good” and “the greater community” served by SKUUC?
- What do you need to know about me; what do I need to know about you?
- What connections do you seek in being a part of a community?
- How has this community supported you in your spiritual and ethical living?
- What disappointments have you had in this community? How have you reacted to them?

SESSION FEEDBACK

5 min

DISCUSSION OF FUTURE TOPICS

CLOSING SONG

Common Thread (Pat Humphries)

4 min

<<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IOU0w17PRco>>

CLOSING WORDS / EXTINGUISHING THE CHALICE

1 min

Take courage friends. The way is often hard, the path is never clear, and the stakes are high. Take courage. For deep down, there is another truth. You are not alone.

Wayne Arnason