

Unitarian Universalist Small Group Ministry Network Website

Unitarian Universalist Small Group Ministry of La Crosse, Wisconsin

“IT MIGHT HAVE BEEN OTHERWISE”

Developed by Phyllis Beckman, January 2020

for educational purposes only

OPENING WORDS & CHALICE LIGHTING:

“Discomfort may be a doorway; don’t run from it.” ---Joseph Deitch, *Elevate: An Essential Guide to Life*

MOMENTS OF SILENT REFLECTION

CHECK-IN (30 -40 minutes)

FOCUS: “IT MIGHT HAVE BEEN OTHERWISE”

Brief discussion of songs and poems (at end of session format)

DISCUSSION:

- 1) What abilities or interests no longer are possible because of physical or mental disabilities or shortcomings?
- 2) Are you a good Samaritan?
- 3) Who is your brother?
- 4) What are you waiting for?
- 5) Who will do the task, if not you?

CLOSING WORDS:

Taking turns, say a word or two about how or if this study suggested how you may be of use or provide a service to another, friend or not.

EXTINGUISHING OF CHALICE

If time remains, further discussion may take place.

Otherwise by Jane Kenyon

I got out of bed
on two strong legs.
It might have been
otherwise. I ate
cereal, sweet
milk, ripe, flawless
peach. It might
have been otherwise.
I took the dog uphill
to the birch wood.
All morning I did
the work I love.
At noon I lay down
with my mate. It might
have been otherwise.
We ate dinner together
at a table with silver
candlesticks. It might
have been otherwise.
I slept in a bed
in a room with paintings
on the walls, and
planned another day
just like this day.
But one day, I know,
it will be otherwise.

Get Together by The Youngbloods

Love is but a song to sing
Fear's the way we die
You can make the mountains ring
Or make the angels cry
Though the bird is on the wing
And you may not know why

Come on people now
Smile on your brother
Everybody get together
Try to love one another
Right now

Some may come and some may go
We shall surely pass
When the one that left us here
Returns for us at last
We are but a moment's sunlight
Fading in the grass

Come on people now
Smile on your brother
Everybody get together
Try to love one another
Right now
Come on people now
Smile on your brother
Everybody get together
Try to love one another
Right now

Come on people now
Smile on your brother
Everybody get together
Try to love one another
Right now

If you hear the song I sing
You will understand (listen!)
You hold the key...
Come on people now
Smile on your brother
Everybody get together
Try to love one another
Right now

Come on people now
Smile on your brother
Everybody get together
Try to love one another
Right now

I said, come on people now
Smile on your brother
Everybody get together
Try to love one another
Right now
Right now
Right now

Times They Are A-Changin' Bob Dylan

Come gather 'round people
Wherever you roam
And admit that the waters
Around you have grown
And accept it that soon
You'll be drenched to the bone
If your time to you
Is worth savin'
Then you better start swimmin'
Or you'll sink like a stone
For the times they are a-changin'

Come writers and critics
Who prophesize with your pen
And keep your eyes wide
The chance won't come again
And don't speak too soon
For the wheel's still in spin
And there's no tellin' who
That it's namin'
For the loser now
Will be later to win
For the times they are a-changin'

Come senators, congressmen
Please heed the call
Don't stand in the doorway
Don't block up the hall
For he that gets hurt
Will be he who has stalled
There's a battle outside
And it is ragin'
It'll soon shake your windows
And rattle your walls
For the times they are a-changin'

Come mothers and fathers
Throughout the land
And don't criticize
What you can't understand
Your sons and your daughters
Are beyond your command
Your old road is
Rapidly agin'
Please get out of the new one
If you can't lend your hand
For the times they are a-changin'

The line it is drawn
The curse it is cast
The slow one now

Will later be fast
As the present now
Will later be past
The order is
Rapidly fadin'
And the first one now
Will later be last
For the times they are a-changin'

Alive Together by Liesel Mueller

Speaking of marvels, I am alive
together with you, when I might have been
alive with anyone under the sun,
when I might have been Abelard's woman
or the whore of a Renaissance pop
or a peasant with not enough food
and not enough love, with my children
dead of the plague. I might have slept
in an alcove next to the man
with the golden nose, who poked it
into the business of stars,
or sewn a starry flag
for a general with wooden teeth.
I might have been the exemplary Pocahontas
or a woman without a name
weeping in Master's bed
for my husband, exchanged for a mule,
my daughter lost in a drunken bet.
I might have been stretched on a totem pole
to appease a vindictive god
or left, a useless girl-child,
to die on a cliff. I like to think
I might have been Mary Shelly
in love with a wrong-headed angel,
or Mary's friend. I might have been you.
This poem is endless, the odds against us are
endless,
our chances of being alive together
statistically nonexistent;
still we have made it, alive in a time
when rationalists in square hats
and hatless Jehovah's Witnesses
agree it is almost over,
alive with our lively children
who--but for endless ifs--
might have missed out on being alive
together with marvels and follies
and longings and lies and wishes
and error and humor and mercy
and journeys and voices and faces
and colors and summers and mornings
and knowledge and tears and chance.