

Unitarian Universalist Small Group Ministry Network Website
SMALL GROUP SESSION
“OPEN TO THE SKY OF THE ETERNAL”
By the Rev. Glenn H. Turner

OPENING WORDS & CHALICE LIGHTING:

"The Thread" by Denise Levertov

Something is very gently,
invisibly, silently,
pulling at me - a thread
or net of threads
finer than cobweb and as
elastic. I haven't tried
the strength of it. No barbed hook
pierced and tore me. Was it
not long ago this thread
began to draw me? Or
way back? Was I
born with its knot about my
neck, a bridle? Not fear
but a stirring
of wonder makes me
catch my breath when I feel
the tug of it when I thought
it had loosened itself and gone.

"A Walk" by Rainer Maria Rilke

My eyes already touch the sunny hill,
going far ahead of the road I have begun.
So we are grasped by what we cannot grasp; it has its inner light, even from a distance -

and changes us, even if we do not reach it, into something else, which, hardly sensing it,
we already are; a gesture waves us on, answering our own wave...
but what we feel is the wind in our faces.

"A Man Lost by a River" - Michael Blumenthal

There is a voice inside the body.

There is a voice and a music,
a throbbing, four-chambered pear
that wants to be heard, that sits
alone by the river with its mandolin
and its torn coat, and sings
for whomever will listen
a song that no one wants to hear.

But sometimes, lost,
on his way to somewhere significant,
a man in a long coat, carrying
a briefcase, wanders into the forest.

He hears the voice and the mandolin,

he sees the thrush and the dandelion,
and he feels the mist rise over the river.

And his life is never the same,
for this having been lost -
for having strayed from the path of his routine, for no good reason.

CHECK IN: (40 - 50 minutes)

What you share may be about your physical or spiritual health, cares or concerns for loved ones, issues you are facing.

Each person in the group speaks uninterrupted, if time remaining, general response and conversation is welcome. Confidentiality.

FOCUS: "OPEN TO THE SKY OF THE ETERNAL"

"To worship is to stand in awe under a heaven of stars, before a flower, a leaf in sunlight, or a grain of sand. To worship is to be silent, receptive, before a tree astir with the wind, or the passing shadow of a cloud. . . .

Worship is the mystery within us reaching out to the mystery beyond. It is an inarticulate silence yearning to speak; it is the window of the moment open to the sky of the eternal."

--Jacob Trapp

Denise Levertov expresses "a stirring of wonder" as she feels the subtle pull of an invisible thread - a connection. Rilke speaks of being grasped by what we cannot grasp and how it changes us. Blumenthal strays from the path of the routine and hears a voice and a mandolin, sees a thrush and a dandelion, and feels the mist rise from the river and is never the same. Trapp speaks of reaching out to the mystery beyond. Is this our experience as well?

Discussion:

-- when, if ever, has "the window of the moment" been "open to the sky of the eternal" in your life?

-what did it feel like? (if you have)

-- do you experience similar moments as just an appreciation of the beauty of the natural world or something more?

-- how does it change you and what does it mean about how you should live/change your life?

LIKES AND WISHES

How did this session go for you? Is there anything you'd like to call particular attention to?

CLOSING WORDS:

"domestic poem" - Eileen Moeller

nightfall I sink
into diswash meditation
steaming china prayer wheels
crystalline bells fo the lost horizon
crockery mandalas
chanting din and lull of running water
breathing slows
moist heat muscles soften
zen poems drip from silverware
my air humming out
in a cleansing melody

washing the frantic stew of a whole day
down the drain
along with the suds
those transient rainbow things
with the thin skin of
a passing instant