

Unitarian University Small Group Ministry Network Website
Chalice Circle Session - **PRAISE**
Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Newark, DE, Rev. Andrew Weber, May 2015

Chalice Lighting

I did my best, it wasn't much
And even though it all went wrong
I'll stand before the Lord of Song
With nothing on my tongue but Hallelujah
- Leonard Cohen, *Hallelujah*

Check-In: What's going on in your life? How do you understand the word praise?

Readings:

The more you praise and celebrate your life, the more there is in life to celebrate.
- Oprah Winfrey

Anything in any way beautiful derives its beauty from itself and asks nothing beyond itself. Praise is no part of it, for nothing is made worse or better by praise.
- Marcus Aurelius

It is a joy to give thanks to the Eternal,
to sing thy praise, O thou Most High,
to proclaim thy goodness in the morning
to the sweet music of the lyre.
I sing joy at all that thou hast done.
- Psalm 92 (#423 in *Singing the Living Tradition*)

There is no person on earth so bad that he does not have something about him that is praiseworthy. Why is it, then, that we leave the good out of sight and feast our eyes on the unclean things?
- Martin Luther

Walk as if you are kissing the Earth with your feet.
- Thich Nhat Hanh

Questions:

1. What spoke to you (or didn't speak to you) from the readings?
2. Have you done the spiritual practice yet? How has it gone for you?
3. What things in your life do you find praiseworthy?
4. Is praise something you do with your body or your mind?
5. When was the last time you offered yourself praise?
6. Can you remember a time in your life when offering praise changed you? Changed someone else?

Check-Out: One sentence on "likes and wishes" from the session.

Closing:

Praise not merely expresses, but completes the enjoyment. It is not out of compliment that lovers keep on telling one another how beautiful they are; the delight is incomplete till it is expressed. It is frustrating to have discovered a new author and not to be able to tell anyone how good she is.

-

C.S.

Lewis

Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Newark
Spiritual Practice - **PRAISE**
May 2015

When I first thought of the Ministry Theme for this month, I was a bit taken aback. I thought that “Praise” was only for an otherworldly being who sits on a golden throne in heaven. A vision of people praying together in praise of a common deity came to mind. And this vision does not hold up in our Unitarian Universalist faith. But then I got to thinking, praise is so much more than just worshipping a god or gods. There are multiple and varied aspects of praise - Praise of Beloved Community; Praise of Self; Praise of Others and Praise of Divine.

Praising ourselves and others brings me to the spiritual practice. During the month of May, we are all encouraged to write a letter of praise to someone. This could be a letter to someone who deserves praise but rarely gets it. Or maybe it's a letter to yourself. As with all our spiritual practices, this is an action which may come easily for you or be more difficult. I encourage you to engage with the practice and see where it takes you. For some more thoughts on how to offer sincere and memorable praise, see this site: <http://tinyurl.com/givingpraise2015>.