

Unitarian Universalist Small Group Ministry Network Website
Radical Hospitality
Covenant Group Topic
Unitarian Universalist Church of Washington County
Hillsboro, OR 97123
Session created by Kathryn Warrior, Covenant Group Facilitator
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Chalice Lighting:

We light this chalice to find inner peace,
love for each other, and faith in ourselves.
Also, to be welcoming to whomever we meet
and kind to all living creatures. So gather around
this light of hope as we share this time together. By [Oberlin UU Fellowship, Oberlin, OH](#)

Song: Come, Come Whoever You Are, [Singing the Living Tradition](#), pg. 188

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ImMp0OKHgTA>

Opening Words:

The Guest House

This being human is a guest house.
Every morning is a new arrival.
A joy, a depression, a meanness,
some momentary awareness comes
as an unexpected visitor.
Welcome and entertain them all!
Even if they're a crowd of sorrows,
who violently sweep your house
empty of its furniture,
still, treat each guest honorably.
[S]he may be clearing you out
for some new delight.
The dark thought, the shame, the malice,
meet them at the door laughing,
and invite them in.
Be grateful for whoever comes,
because each has been sent
as a guide from beyond.

-Rumi

Check-in/Sharing: This is a time to briefly share what's happening in your life since we last met.

Focus: Radical Hospitality

Introduction to topic:

"When we speak of hospitality we are always addressing issues of inclusion and exclusion. Each of us makes choices about who will and who will not be included in our lives...Issues of inclusion and exclusion, while personal, are not just personal. Our entire culture excludes many people. If you are in a wheelchair, for example, you are excluded because there are places you can't go. If you are very young, if you are very old, you are excluded... Hospitality has an inescapable moral dimension to it... It is an issue involving what it means to be human. All of our talk about hospitable openness doesn't mean anything as long as some people continue to be tossed aside..."

"But calling hospitality a moral issue does not tell us the whole truth about hospitality either. A moral issue can become bogged down in legalisms, and hospitality is no legalistic ethical issue. It is instead a spiritual practice, a way of becoming more human, a way of understanding yourself. Hospitality is both the answer to modern alienation and injustice and a path to a deeper spirituality." From: Radical Hospitality: Benedict's Way of Love by Father Daniel Homan and Lonni Gollins Pratt. This reading was found on the UUA website GA 2007. The reading was read by Sofia Betancourt at the beginning of Event 2070: "Will They Come Back? Radical Spiritual Hospitality"

Quotes about Hospitality:

"Hospitality means primarily the creation of free space where the stranger can enter and become a friend instead of an enemy. Hospitality is not to change people, but to offer them space where change can take place. It is not to bring men and women over to our side, but to offer freedom not disturbed by dividing lines." — **Henri J.M. Nouwen, Reaching Out: The Three Movements of the Spiritual Life**

The heart of hospitality is when people leave your home they should feel better about themselves, not better about you. -- Shauna Niequist

"Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by doing that some have entertained angels without knowing it." Paul's letter to the Hebrews, Hebrews 13:2, KJV

"True hospitality is marked by an open response to the dignity of each and every person. Henri Nouwen has described it as receiving the stranger on his own terms, and asserts that it can be offered only by those who 'have found the center of their lives in their own hearts'." — **Kathleen Norris, Dakota: A Spiritual Geography**

Hospitality is always an act that benefits the host even more than the guest. The concept of hospitality arose in ancient times when the reciprocity was easier to see: in nomadic cultures, the food and shelter one gave to a stranger yesterday is the food and shelter one hopes to receive from a stranger tomorrow. By offering hospitality, one participates in the endless reweaving of a social fabric on which all can depend--thus the gift of sustenance for the guest becomes a gift of hope for the host. Parker J. Palmer

Hospitality means we take people into the space that is our lives and our minds and our hearts and our work and our efforts. Hospitality is the way we come out of ourselves. It is the first step

towards dismantling the barriers of the world. Hospitality is the way we turn a prejudiced world around, one heart at a time. Joan Chittister

Hospitality isn't about your home, it's about your heart.—unknown

Questions for Discussion:

1. Are there any responses to topic introduction or any of the quotes?
2. Have you experienced “radical hospitality”? If so, what did that person or group do to make you feel truly welcome?
3. How can we practice radical hospitality in our daily lives?
4. How do we want to care for one another and newcomers who come into our faith community?
5. What stands in the way of practicing radical hospitality?

Wrap Up: How was this session for you? Likes/Dislikes or any Take Aways?

Closing Words:

This is the mission of our faith:
To teach the fragile art of hospitality;
To revere both the critical mind and the generous heart;
To prove that diversity need not mean divisiveness;
And to witness to all that we must hold the whole world in our hands.—William Schulz

Loving Kindness Meditation:

May we be filled with loving kindness

May we be well

May we be peaceful and at ease

May we be joyful.

I hope all of you are well.

Note: This session was inspired because our new minister, Rev. Denise Cawley, was giving a sermon on Radical Welcome the Sunday before our meeting. It was written as a follow up to the sermon.