



Unitarian Universalist Small Group Ministry Network Website

SKUUC Wednesday SGM

Religious Literacy

Hayward, CA, Wednesday, September 28, 2022, 2 PM, SKUUC

CHALICE LIGHTING/opening words

We come together today to remind one another to rest for a moment on the incoming edge of our lives, to resist the headlong tumble into the next moment, until we claim for ourselves awareness and gratitude. Taking the time to look into one another's faces and see there communion: the reflection of our own eyes. This house of laughter and silence, memory and hope, is hallowed by our presence together.

Kathleen McTigue

OPENING SONG: CHANT FOR THE SEASONS {No. 73 in Grey Hymnal}

SILENT MEDITATION / CENTERING (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 this session. The second sound of the gong returns us to each other's presence.

CHECK-IN (2 ROUNDS)

Round 1: Please share some thing(s) about your life since last we met. When you finish, choose who goes next.

Round 2: Now is the time to respond to what others brought up in their initial sharing, or to mention anything else you've been experiencing that you're ready to share.

INTRODUCTION TO RELIGIOUS LITERACY

The following selections are from an essay/blog entry by Nadia Ahmed about the importance of religious literacy to her (Sept. 7, 2022).

Religious literacy is having knowledge of other religions in the world and their beliefs. It means to have a basic understanding of religious histories, some important scriptures and their meaning, practices and the lifestyle of diverse faiths. This will allow for open-mindedness, empathy, and

respect when engaging with people of different faiths. Many conflicts and misunderstandings could be avoided if everyone took the time to learn about religious literacy.

From my experience, religious literacy ...allows us to have honest and respectful conversations about our beliefs and helps build understanding and empathy between people of different faiths. It also helps prevent misunderstandings and conflict.

I believe that religious literacy ... can help create a more tolerant and understanding world. It can help prevent conflict, and it can promote respect and empathy between people of different faiths. It is also important for personal growth. Learning about other religions can help us better understand our beliefs and challenge us to think critically about our faith. Personally, I have found that exploring other religions has made me a more thoughtful and committed Muslim.

The best way to learn about a religion is by reading its religious scriptures and books rather than believing the misconceptions surrounding them ... A second way is to attend a place of worship or religious congregation of that religion and observe their services. ... Another way is through watching religious speeches by popular religious leaders of that faith. This can be an excellent way to learn about multiple religions in a short amount of time.

No matter what method you choose, it is important to be respectful when learning about other religions. Remember that everyone has different beliefs and practices, and there is no single right or wrong way to practice a religion. Be open-minded and curious, and try to understand why people believe what they do.

QUOTES TO PONDER

Our Constitution was made only for a moral and religious people. It is wholly inadequate to the government of any other.

John Adams

Men never do evil so completely and cheerfully as when they do it from religious conviction.

Blaise Pascal

Enlightened leadership is spiritual if we understand spirituality not as some kind of religious dogma or ideology but as the domain of awareness where we experience values like truth, goodness, beauty, love and compassion, and also intuition, creativity, insight and focused attention.

Deepak Chopra

Justice is never given; it is exacted and the struggle must be continuous for freedom is never a final fact, but a continuing evolving process to higher and higher levels of human, social, economic, political and religious relationship.

A. Philip Randolph

All major religious traditions carry basically the same message, that is love, compassion and forgiveness the important thing is they should be part of our daily lives.

Dalai Lama

I have treated many hundreds of patients. Among those in the second half of life -- that is to say, over 35 -- there has not been one whose problem in the last resort was not that of finding a religious outlook on life.

Carl Jung

Myth and fairy-story must, as all art, reflect and contain in solution elements of moral and religious truth (or error), but not explicit, not in the known form of the primary 'real' world.

J. R. R. Tolkien

I am a deeply religious nonbeliever - this is a somewhat new kind of religion.

Albert Einstein

I do put a lot of God in my music, but not because I'm super religious. There are a lot of demons in my music, too. I acknowledge both.

J. Cole

My concern with religion is that it allows us by the millions to believe what only lunatics or idiots could believe on their own. That's not to say that all religious people are lunatics or idiots. It's anything but that.

Sam Harris

Religious wars are not caused by the fact that there is more than one religion, but by the spirit of intolerance ... the spread of which can only be regarded as the total eclipse of human reason.

Montesquieu

Malaysia is a country unlike any other: Full of promise and fragility. Its history, cultural and religious diversity make it a rich, compelling and surprising land.

Tariq Ramadan

Virtue is its own reward, and brings with it the truest and highest pleasure; but if we cultivate it only for pleasure's sake, we are selfish, not religious, and will never gain the pleasure, because we can never have the virtue.

John Henry Newman

The whole religious complexion of the modern world is due to the absence from Jerusalem of a lunatic asylum.

Thomas Paine

The first duty of a government is to maintain law and order so that the life, property, and religious beliefs of its subjects are fully protected by the State.

Muhammad Ali Jinnah

Everybody has a job to do. There are people in Iraq on both sides of this war who do what they do for religious reasons, and they feel with God on their side. Some people are good at annihilating people. Maybe that's their gift.

Denzel Washington

If God is the mystery of the universe, these mysteries, we're tackling these mysteries one by one. If you're going to stay religious at the end of the conversation, God has to mean more to you than just where science has yet to tread.

Neil deGrasse Tyson

It is often said by religious people that without its framework, there is no sense of right or wrong. My view is that religion comes after ethics.

Salman Rushdie

Responsibility and respect of others and their religious beliefs are also part of freedom.

Horst Koehler

I haven't been baptised. My dad's not in the church and is not a religious person. My mum is more spiritual - she does Thai-chi and goes to Stonehenge and things like that. I'm proud to be pagan. Finland is not really a religious country. I'm still looking for my god.

Ville Valo

Religious freedom is one of the most fundamental of human rights because religious freedom comes from the dignity of the human being as God's creature.

Suharto

Religion must mainly be a matter of principles only. It cannot be a matter of rules. The moment it degenerates into rules, it ceases to be a religion, as it kills responsibility which is an essence of the true religious act.

B. R. Ambedkar

COMMUNITY SINGING: Although Our Life is But A Wraith (No. 85 in Grey Hymnal)

PREPARATION FOR GROUP REFLECTION

Read the Group Reflection topics, one by one.

BREAK

GROUP REFLECTION / FEEDBACK

Two rounds, or respectfully discuss each participant's ideas AFTER they have finished. Take a moment of silence and consider your response to one or more of these questions.

REFLECTIONS ON YOUR OWN RELIGIOUS LITERACY

- ◆ Talk about your early experiences with people of faiths different from the one you were brought up in.
- ◆ If your early (childhood) experiences were NOT UU, talk about when, why, and how you became dissatisfied with that faith, and how you ended up here. Do those experiences still color your worldview, and how do you cope with those feelings today?
- ◆ If you were brought up UU, describe your experiences exploring other

faiths, and how you decided to remain or return to UUism?

- ◆ Has your knowledge of another faith ever allowed you to understand better the perspective of a person with whom you disagreed? Tell us about it.
- ◆ Do you consider yourself a person of many faiths? How did you arrive at that conclusion?
- ◆ Which quotes resonated with you the most, positively or negatively?

GROUP SINGING: Building Bridges (No. 1023 in Teal Hymnal)

Suggestions for topics to be reflected upon at our fourth-Wednesday meetings?

Plans for second-Wednesday meal sharing and discussions—Restaurants, discussion topics.

SESSION FEEDBACK

What changes could we make to the session to make it more meaningful for you?

Is it time to revisit our covenant?

EXTINGUISH CHALICE / CLOSING WORDS

Be ours a religion which, like sunshine, goes everywhere: its temple, all space; its shrine, the good heart; its creed, all truth; its ritual, works of love; its profession of faith, divine living.

Theodore Parker