



STARR KING
UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH



Unitarian Universalist Small Group Ministry Network Website

Being a People of Sanctuary

Hayward, CA, Wednesday Evening Small Group, Kathryn La Mar, October 2018

CHALICE LIGHTING

1 min

Come into this place of refuge.
Come into this circle of hope, holiness, and health.
Come into this sanctuary of sharing.
Come in and feel secure and comfortable,
Come in, knowing that you will be able to explore and learn and discover.
Come in, feeling that you will be heard and will be able to hear.

Rev. Helen Zidowecki

OPENING WORDS

1 min

Connect with your inner self. A beautiful sanctuary exists within you. A place of total calm. A connection to stillness. A temple of sacredness, peace, beauty, love. Once you are truly at this infinite inner place, your true home, you will be at home anywhere, at anytime, with anyone. A place where INFINITE possibility exists.

Angie Karan Krezos

SILENT MEDITATION / CENTERING

1 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 tonight's session. If you wish, consider the various places and/or people in your life where you find sanctuary. The second sound of the gong returns us to each other's presence.

CHECK-IN / FEEDBACK

36 min

Please share some thing(s) about your life since last we met. If you feel comfortable about it, mention something that caused you to think about or seek sanctuary. Did your sanctuary work? How?

INTRODUCTION TO SANCTUARY

3 min

The word "Sanctuary" comes from the Latin *sanctus* meaning "holy", a place set aside for holy worship. In modern times it also refers to "place of refuge or protection" as in a bird sanctuary. The English word "holy" is from Old English *hālig*, of Germanic origin; related to Dutch and German *heilig*, or whole. So sanctuary implies a sense of wholeness, integration.

From Wikipedia:

A sanctuary, in its original meaning, is a sacred place, such as a shrine. By the use of such places as a safe haven, by extension the term has come to be used for any place of safety. This secondary use can be categorized into human sanctuary,

a safe place for humans, such as a political sanctuary; and non-human sanctuary, such as an animal or plant sanctuary. *Wikipedia*

When I was a kid, "sanctuary" meant only one thing. It was the big room with the stained-glass windows and hard wooden benches where my family worshipped every Sunday. Church attendance was not optional for my sisters and me, so that sanctuary was where I learned to pray – pray that the service would end, and God would release me back into the wild. I also learned that not all prayers are answered, no matter how ardent. Today, after 77 years of life in a world that's both astonishingly beautiful and horrifically cruel, "sanctuary" is as vital as breathing to me. Sometimes I find it in churches, monasteries, and other sites designated as sacred. But more often I find it in places sacred to my soul: in the natural world, in the company of a trustworthy friend, in solitary or shared silence, in the ambience of a good poem or good music. Sanctuary is wherever I find safe space to regain my bearings, reclaim my soul, heal my wounds, and return to the world as a wounded healer. It's not merely about finding shelter from the storm: it's about spiritual survival. Today, seeking sanctuary is no more optional for me than church attendance was as a child. *Parker Palmer*

READING ROUND-THE-CIRCLE

1 min

We came here to find refuge • They called us refugees • So we hid ourselves in their language • Until we sounded just like them. • Changed the way we dressed • To look just like them • Made this our home • Until we lived just like them.

J.J. Bola

Sit with me • And I'll not be alone. • Hold my hand • And I'll not feel alone. • Cry with me • and I'll no longer suffer alone. *Richelle E. Goodrich*

SONG: **Dimming of The Day (Richard Thompson)**

4 min

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K56E-1bR4R4>

QUOTES TO PONDER

5 min

Sanctuary, on a personal level, is where we perform the job of taking care of our soul. *Christopher Forrest McDowell*

It is in the home that we form our attitudes, our deeply held beliefs. It is in the home that hope is fostered or destroyed. Our homes are to be more than sanctuaries; they should also be places where God's Spirit can dwell, where the storm stops at the door, where love reigns and peace dwells.

Thomas S. Monson

Family life itself, that safest, most traditional, most approved of female choices, is not a sanctuary: It is, perpetually, a dangerous place.

Margaret Drabble

To seek approval is to have no resting place, no sanctuary. Like all judgment, approval encourages a constant striving. It makes us uncertain of who we are and of our true value. Approval cannot be trusted. It can be withdrawn at any time no matter what our track record has been. It is as nourishing of real growth as cotton candy. Yet many of us spend our lives pursuing it.

Rachel Naomi Remen

No one leaves home if the hurt that will come is greater than the hurt that they will leave behind. No one leaves if the ocean will swallow them up. No one leaves home, if there is peace. As a refugee there is only ever half of you in one

place; because you have left of you where you have come from, and half of you is rejected where you arrive.

J.J. Bola

Satire has been a sanctuary historically monopolized by progressives, originally used as a discreet tool against Western religious fundamentalism.

Maajid Nawaz

BREAK

10 min

GROUP REFLECTION

45 min

IDEAS FOR GROUP REFLECTION

- What can you do to create a safe environment for yourself and others?
- When did you first discover that "sanctuary" was more than a physical place?
- Who is sanctuary for you? Have you told them lately how great of a gift that is?
- What has interfered with sanctuary or safety for you?
- What if sanctuary is something we build rather than something we find?
- Some say sanctuary is not a place but "the love between us." Has that been true for you? How?
- What if sanctuary isn't a place, but that moment when you realize that you don't have to keep trying to prove yourself? What if sanctuary is the awareness that we've already "arrived"? That we're already enough?

SESSION FEEDBACK

5 min

CLOSING SONG

Safe In The Harbor (Eric Bogle)

4 min

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

CLOSING WORDS / EXTINGUISHING THE CHALICE

1 min

We are all longing to go home to some place we have never been - a place half-remembered and half-envisioned we can only catch glimpses of from time to time. Community. Somewhere, there are people to whom we can speak with passion without having the words catch in our throats. Somewhere a circle of hands will open to receive us, eyes will light up as we enter, voices will celebrate with us whenever we come into our own power. Community means strength that joins our strength to do the work that needs to be done. Arms to hold us when we falter. A circle of healing. A circle of friends. Someplace where we can be free.

Starhawk

DIMMING OF THE DAY (Richard Thompson)

This old house is falling down around my ears
I'm drowning in a river of my tears

When all my will is gone, you hold me sway
And I need you at the dimming of the day
 You pull me like the moon pulls on the tide
 You know just where I keep my better side
 What days have come to keep us far apart?
 A broken promise or a broken heart
 Now all the bonnie birds have wheeled away
 And I need you at the dimming of the day
Come the night you're only what I want
Come the night you could be my confidante
 I see you on the street and in company
 Why don't you come and ease your mind with me
 I'm living for the night we steal away
 And I need you at the dimming of the day
 Yes, I need you at the dimming of the day

SAFE IN THE HARBOR (Eric Bogle)

Have you stood by the ocean on a diamond-hard morning
 And felt the horizon stir deep in your soul?
Watched the wake of a steamer as it cut thru blue water
 And been gripped by a fever you just can't control?
 O to throw off the shackles and fly with the seagulls
To where green waves tumble before a driving sea wind
 Or to lie on the decking on a warm summer evening
 Watch the red sun fall burning beneath the earth's rim
Chorus: But to every sailor comes time to drop anchor
 Haul in the sails and make the lines fast
 You deep water dreamer, your journey is over
 You're safe in the harbor at last (2x)

 Some men are sailors, but most are just dreamers
 Held fast by the anchors they forge in their minds
Who in their hearts know they'll never sail over deep water
 To search for a treasure they're afraid they won't find
 So in sheltered harbours they cling to their anchors
 Bank down their boilers and shut down their steam
And wait for the sailors to return with the bright treasures
 That will fan the dull embers and fire up their dreams

Chorus

 And some men are schemers who laugh at the dreamers
 Take the gold from the sailors and turn it to dross
 They're men in a prison, they're men without vision
 Whose only horizon is profit and loss
So when storm clouds come sailing across your blue ocean
 Hold fast to your dreaming for all that you're worth
For as long as there's dreamers, there will always be sailors
Bringing back their bright treasures from the corners of earth

Chorus