

*Unitarian Universalists Small Group Ministry Network
Website*

*Unitarian Universalist
Fellowship of the Peninsula
Fellowship Circle Facilitators' Group,
Newport News, VA*



We ourselves feel that what we are doing is just a drop in the ocean. But the ocean would be less because of that missing drop. Mother Teresa

Shared Ministry

~ ~

Tuesday December 7, 2010

Mary-Elizabeth Cotton

SHARED MINISTRY

CHECK-IN

Chalice Lighting – We light this flame as the symbol of the light that is in us, the light that *is* us.

Shared Chalice Lighting (Light individual candle each line)

It doesn't interest me what you do for a living. I want to know what you ache for; and if you dare to dream of meeting your heart's longing.

It doesn't interest me how old you are. I want to know if you will risk looking like a fool for love, for your dream, for the adventure of being alive.

It doesn't interest me what planets are squaring your moon. I want to know if you have touched the center of your own sorrow, if you have been opened by life's betrayals or have become shriveled and closed from fear of further pain.

I want to know if you can be with joy, if you can dance with wildness and let the ecstasy fill you without cautioning us to be careful, to be realistic, to remember the limitations of being human.

I want to know if you can disappoint another to be true to yourself; if you can bear the accusation of betrayal and not betray your own soul.

I want to know if you can see beauty, even when it's not pretty, every day, and if you can source your own life from its presence.

I want to know if you can live with failure, yours or mine, and still stand on the edge of the lake and shout to the silver of the full moon "Yes!"

It doesn't interest me to know where you live or how much money you have. I want to know if you can get up, after the night of grief and despair, weary and bruised to the bone, and do what needs to be done to feed the children.

It doesn't interest me who you know or how you came to be here. I want to know if you will stand in the center of the fire with me and not shrink back.

It doesn't interest me where or what or with whom you have studied. I want to know what sustains you, from the inside, when all else fades away.

I want to know if you can be alone with yourself and if you truly like the company you keep in the empty moments.

From "The Invitation" by Oriah Mountain Dreamer

Shared Readings

- *Thousands of candles can be lighted from a single candle, and the life of the candle will not be shortened.* — Buddha

- *Men do not really live for honors or for pay; their happiness is not in the taking and holding, but in the doing, the striving, the building, the **serving**.* - Harry Marsh

- *One of the most valuable things we can do to heal one another is listen to each other's stories.* - Rebecca Falls

Deep Listening

Let us listen...

Let us not rouse the intellect
But embrace the spirit

Just for a while
Let us silence our minds
And open our hearts.

If thoughts cloud the brain
May we let them pass

Just for a while
Let us listen from *within*

If replies tingle on the tongue
Let us breathe them away
silently

Listen...

Return to them later
But here...
Here in this precious time of
sharing

Not to gain knowledge
Not to formulate questions

Rather to chance upon
Sacred bonds and
Profound wisdom

Let us listen...
Let the words wash over us
And seep into a still quiet
pool

Just for a while
Let us not seek information
Or answers

Let us listen.

- *Mary-Elizabeth Cotton*

Minute of silence

=====Sharing=====

1. *"There are two ways of spreading light – to be the candle or the mirror that reflects it."* Edith Wharton

Tell us about a time when you felt especially ministered to? Where were you?

How did it feel?

2. *"It is one of the most beautiful compensations of life that no [person] can sincerely try to help another without helping him[her]self."* Ralph Waldo Emerson

Tell us about a time when you experienced a feeling that you had ministered to another. What was the situation? How did it feel?

3. *"Everybody can be great because anybody can serve. You don't have to have a college degree to serve. You don't have to make your subject and verb agree to serve...you only need a heart full of grace, a soul generated by love."* Martin Luther King, Jr.

What does "shared ministry" mean to you? Do you feel you have found your ministry? What is your ministry?

Check-out (Extinguish your candle as or after you've shared)

— How do you feel about this time we spent together?

Chalice Extinguishing

This is the true joy of life – being used for a purpose recognized by yourself as a mighty one; being thoroughly worn out before you are thrown on the scrap heap; being a force of nature instead of a feverish selfish little clod of ailments and grievances complaining that the world will not devote itself to making you happy.
(George Bernard Shaw)

We extinguish this flame –

But not the light that is us.

((Janet Goode))
