

## **Simplify Busy Lives**

Main Line Unitarian Church, Devon, PA, February 2003

### **Opening Words & Chalice Lighting:**

“Voluntary simplicity involves both inner and outer condition. It means singleness of purpose, sincerity and honesty within, as well as avoidance of exterior clutter, of many possessions irrelevant for the chief purpose of life. It means an ordering and guiding of our energy and our desires, a partial restraint in some directions in order to secure greater abundance of life in other directions. It involves a deliberate organization of life for a purpose. Of course, as different people have different purposes in life, what is relevant to the purpose of one person might not be relevant to the purpose of another... The degree of simplification is a matter for each individual to settle for himself.” (from Richard Gregg quoted in *Voluntary Simplicity* by Duane Elgin)

### **Check in/Sharing** (approximately 30 minutes)

(The facilitator should briefly remind the group of confidentiality/anonymity, that this is not the time for cross conversation, etc.)

### **Focus Reading:**

“Why should we live in such a hurry and waste life? We are determined to be starved before we are hungry. I wish to live deliberately, to front only the essential facts of life. I wish to learn what life has to teach, and not, when I come to die, discover that I had not lived. I do not wish to live what is not life, living is so dear, nor do I wish to practice resignation, unless it is quite necessary. I wish to live deep and suck out all the marrow of life, I want to cut a broad swath, to drive life into a corner, and reduce it to its lowest terms. If it proves to be mean, then to get the whole and genuine meanness of it, and publish its meanness to the world; or if it is sublime, to know it by experience, and to be able to give a true account of it.” (Henry David Thoreau)

### **Focus Questions:**

Many of us would like to live more simply, to simplify our lives. But not many of us are likely to follow Thoreau’s example and build a cabin in the woods. Take a few minutes to answer individually the following questions: What are the demands in my life that keep me busy? What needs or forces in me keep me too busy? What do it push aside? What would I be willing to give up? Take time to share as a group. As a closing question ask: What one thing are you willing to try before our next meeting that will move your life closer to your own goals for a simpler and more meaningful life?

### **Checkout/Likes and Wishes**

(This is the time for facilitators to ask participants what they liked about this meeting and what they might wish for future meetings. This is also the time for any discussion of logistics.)

### **Closing Words & Extinguishing Chalice:**

“May the light around us guide our footsteps, and hold us fast to the best and most righteous that we seek. May the darkness around us nurture our dreams, and give us rest so that we may give ourselves to the work of our world. Let us seek to remember the wholeness of our lives, the weaving of light and shadow in this great astonishing dance in which we move.” (Kathleen McTigue)