

**“Stewardship: How Will We Love This World”**

Covenant Group Session, Rev. Maj-Britt Johnson, Chapel Hill, NC, September 2009

OPENING WORDS & CHALICE LIGHTING

Zora Neale Hurston said fear is the greatest emotion and I said, ‘No my dear sister.’  
Fear will make us move to save our own skins. Love also makes us save ourselves, but  
it will make us move to save others as well. – *Sonia Sanchez, poet and activist*

We light this chalice as a reminder of the transformative power of love that burns  
brightly at the center of our faith.

CHECK IN - (for the two hour covenant groups)

What you share may be about your physical or spiritual health, cares or concerns for  
loved ones, issues you are facing.

Each person in the group speaks uninterrupted for approximately \_\_\_\_ minutes.  
Comfort and care can be offered after the group session.

FOCUS - How will we love and care for this world?

Read the poem through once slowly, ask people to notice which word or phrase  
jumps out at them.

READING

What I loved in the beginning, I think, was mostly myself.  
Never mind that I had to, since somebody had to.  
That was many years ago.  
Since then I have gone out from my confinements,  
through with difficulty.  
I mean the ones that thought to rule my heart.  
I cast them out, I put them on the mush pile.  
They will be nourishment somehow (everything is nourishment  
somehow or another).  
And I have become the child of the clouds, and of hope.  
I have become the friend of the enemy, whoever that is.  
I have become older and, cherishing what I have learned,  
I have become younger.

And what do I risk to tell you this, which is all I know?  
Love yourself. Then forget it. Then, love the world.

~ Mary Oliver ~

Then read it a second time

**Sharing** – How does this poem, or the question, “How will we love this world?” speak to your life today?

**Guidelines for Sharing** – (leader reads these guidelines, or has another person do it)

We’ll each speak for about \_\_\_\_ minutes, with no cross talk or interruptions. Cross talk means advice giving, blaming or fixing another person. It is wise to speak in the first person, “I think, I feel...”

When we are listening: Try to listen to each other as if you were listening to, or watching, your own thoughts. Let others’ words simply fall down into your heart. It is not necessary to give the person reassurances that they are being heard, such as nodding or eye contact. By simply listening together we create a holding space for each speaker. That is enough.

When it is your turn to speak it is not necessary to respond to the persons who have gone before you, though you may find yourself building on what has been shared already. Find out what your own inner wisdom wants to say. Together we create a quilt of wisdom, the design is a surprise.

**After everyone has shared...**

**Likes and Wishes** – (If there is time, briefly) What did you like about this session? What would you wish to be different if anything?

**Extinguishing the chalice and closing words**

*Love is a relationship-founded on the realization that we are all connected, that everyone matters, that every single person is precious. True love does not stop at feeling; it cannot stop at feeling. Love acts.* – Peter Morales, UUA president