



Unitarian Universalist Small Group Ministry Network Website

Taking Leave & Saying Goodbye

Starr King Unitarian Universalist Church, Hayward, CA, 22 July 2020, 7:15 PM Zoom

UNISON CHALICE LIGHTING

We seek the courage and compassion to hear with care the memories and current experiences we share with each other. We wish to be a community of understanding, hope, and support. May we find ways for our stories to enrich our connection and enhance our appreciation of each other.

OPENING WORDS (READING (IN THE ROUND))

1 min

Within the circles of our lives we dance the circles of the years, / The circles of the seasons within the circles of the years, / The cycles of the moon within the circles of the seasons, / The circles of our reasons within the cycles of the moon. / Again, again we come and go, changed, changing. / Hands join, unjoin in love and fear, grief and joy. / The circles turn, each giving into each, into all. / Only music keeps us here, each by all the others held. / In the hold of hands and eyes / we turn in pairs, that joining / joining each to all again. / And then we turn aside, alone, / out of the sunlight gone into the darker circles of return.

Wendell Berry

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 tonight's session. The second sound of the gong returns us to each other's presence.

CHECK-IN (2 ROUNDS)

40 min

Please share some thing(s) about your life since last we met. How are you managing in the face of COVIF-19? Has anything occurred that has caused you to pause and take stock of where you are in relation to where you planned to be?

INTRODUCTION

Adapted from Christine Robinson and Alicia Hawkins, *Soul To Soul*

Various ways to say good-bye. Many of them convey a blessing from God.

Godspeed (Middle English):	May God speed you on your journey.
Farewell (Middle English):	May you fare well in the world.
Auf Wiedersehen (German):	Until I see you again.
Good-bye (English):	God be with you.
Adieu (French):	I commend you to God.
Adios (Spanish):	I commend you to God.
Vaya con dios (Spanish):	Go with God.
Slan abhaile (Irish):	Safe homewards.
Shalom:	Peace.
Namaste (Sanskrit)	The divine peace in me greets the divine peace in you.

Some words mean both hello and goodbye.

Ciao (Italian).

Aloha (Hawaiian) Affection, peace, compassion, mercy.

Adapted from Wikipedia

... We all develop our own typical response to ending things. ... What you bring with you to a transitional situation is the style you have developed for dealing with endings. The product of early experience and late influence, this style is your own way of dealing with external circumstances and with the inner distress they stir up. ... Somewhere along the way, you may also have picked up somebody else's style and copied or adapted it to your situation. ... Everyone finds endings difficult ... However you learned to deal with them, endings are the first phase of transition. The second phase is a time of lostness and emptiness before "life" resumes an intelligible pattern and direction. The third phase is that of beginning anew.

*William Bridges (Transitions:
Making Sense of Life's Changes)*

QUOTES ABOUT LEAVE-TAKING AND SAYING GOODBYE

20 min

Nothing can ever happen twice. In consequence, the sorry fact is that we arrive here improvised and leave without the chance to practice. With smiles and kisses, we prefer to seek accord beneath our star, although we're different (we concur) just as two drops of water are.

Wisława Szymborska

We looked out to the future. Our future selves. You stood dead center in the globe and raised your hand to stop the scene, your palm enlarging. Then waving goodbye, we walked,... backward and away, farther and farther away—the globe still gazing on us—leaving ourselves behind to live forever in that silver room.

Elizabeth Spires

So if there is to be a place for you, for you it must not be located in plaster and tile and space, it will have to be in that other house, the one whose door you felt opening just last night when you dialed from memory and your friend picked up the phone.

Mark Halliday

I've had tough times before. Leaving Brazil when I was so young, saying goodbye to my family and friends to go to another culture, that was so difficult.

Jorginho

Apparently, my grandfather left from Cork to America without saying goodbye to his mother! The family in Longford is still not happy about that.

Peggy Johnson

I do not say 'good-bye.' I believe that's one of the bullshittiest words ever invented. It's not like you're given the choice to say 'bad-bye' or 'awful-bye' or 'couldn't-care-less-about-you-bye.' Every time you leave, it's supposed to be a good one. Well, I don't believe in that. I believe *against* that.

David Levithan

We the mortals touch the metals, the wind, the ocean shores, the stones, knowing they will go on, inert or burning, and I was discovering, naming all these things: it was my destiny to love and say goodbye.

Pablo Neruda

"I've never forgotten him. Dare I say I miss him? I do. I miss him. I still see him in my dreams. They are nightmares mostly, but nightmares tinged with love. Such is the strangeness of the human heart. I

still cannot understand how he could abandon me so unceremoniously, without any sort of goodbye, without looking back even once. The pain is like an axe that chops my heart.

Yann Martel (Life of Pi)

When I was little and running on the race track at school, I always stopped and waited for all the other kids so we could run together even though I knew (and everybody else knew) that I could run much faster than all of them! I pretended to read slowly so I could "wait" for everyone else who couldn't read as fast as I could! When my friends were short I pretended that I was short too and if my friend was sad I pretended to be unhappy. I could go on and on about all the ways I have limited myself, my whole life, by "waiting" for people. And the only thing that I've ever received in return is people thinking that they are faster than me, people thinking that they can make me feel bad about myself just because I let them and people thinking that I have to do whatever they say I should do. My mother used to teach me "Cinderella is a perfect example to be" but I have learned that Cinderella can go fuck herself, I'm not waiting for anybody, anymore! I'm going to run as fast as I can, fly as high as I can, I am going to soar and if you want you can come with me! But I'm not waiting for you anymore.

C. JoyBell C.

I wanted a perfect ending. Now I've learned, the hard way, that some poems don't rhyme, and some stories don't have a clear beginning, middle, and end. Life is about not knowing, having to change, taking the moment and making the best of it, without knowing what's going to happen next.

Gilda Radner

There is a wind that comes up, strong at moments, as if to say whatever is now is only for the moment. Everything will change. Everything is as it always was. Nothing is permanent. Not rain, not sun, not light, not silence . . . We begin here. We end here. Neither beginning nor ending is permanent, yet both are eternal.

Ruth Rudner

Don't cry because it's over. Smile because it happened.

Dr. Seuss

I've become more comfortable as time has gone on with saying goodbye because... I've been having so many conversations about the cyclical nature of life. It just keeps going.

Brie Larson

When I got sober, I thought giving up was saying goodbye to all the fun and all the sparkle, and it turned out to be just the opposite. That's when the sparkle started for me.

Mary Karr

I drew the last image ever of Opus at midnight while Puccini was playing and I got rather stupid. Thirty years. A bit like saying goodbye to a child--which is ironic because I was never, never sentimental about him as many of his fans were.

Berkeley Breathed

I was listening to one of my favorite songs that Phil wrote and had an extreme emotional moment just before I got the news of his passing. I took that as a special spiritual message from Phil saying goodbye. Our love was and will always be deeper than any earthly differences we might have had.

Don Everly

It was hard saying goodbye to that oblivion they call childhood.

Saqib Saleem

All endings, in a way, remind us of the finality of our own.

Steven Winn

READING IN THE ROUND:

On Leaf-Taking and Leave-Taking: As frost and wind take leaves from trees / Stripping them naked and bare / For discontentful Winter / So also does a goodbye / Leave the parters unclothed / And comfortable for a time. / But, as sure as Spring, / There will be buds / And new comings-together, / With time enough to grow.

Charles William Conaway

SONG: LET THERE BE MORNING (Perishers)

3.5 min

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

PREPARATION FOR GROUP REFLECTION 1 min

Read the questions for reflection, one by one.

BREAK 10 min

GROUP REFLECTION / FEEDBACK 40 min

Two rounds. Take a moment of silence and consider your response to one or more of the following questions.

REFLECTIONS ON YOUR PARTICIPATION IN THIS SGM GROUP AS WE CHANGE

- What was a challenging ending or leave-taking you experienced in the past, and how did that transition evolve for you?
- To what extent has this SGM group fulfilled the expectations and hopes that you had when the group began or when you joined?
- To what extent has this SGM group fulfilled your hopes of what you wanted to get and what you were willing to give to the SGM group experient?
- What makes it easy or difficult for you to say goodbye in this or similar situations in your life (loss of a leader)? What helps or supports you in letting go when you must—for example, a belief, a faith, a practice, a perspective, past experience; the example of someone you admire, something or someone to look forward to, something else?
- Did any of the quotes especially resonate with or surprise you? How and why?
- What are the insights and gifts of wisdom discovered while the Castles' tenure as our co-facilitators?
- What reflections and/or wisdom sayings would you like to leave with the Castles??
- As the group moves forward, what commitments or recommitments are you making to the group or to yourself?

ANNOUNCEMENTS, FUTURE SESSIONS 1 min

SESSION FEEDBACK 1 min

How did the session go for you? Speak especially with regard to doing the session via ZOOM. Do we need to make any format changes to make it more useful to you?

SONG: IT'S A PLEASURE TO KNOW YOU (by Karl Williams; performed by Sally Rogers and Howie Bursen) 5 min

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oIWme0wAUfs>

EXTINGUISH CHALICE / CLOSING WORDS 1 min

We are changed, you and I. / Just as before, countless times in cycles that never quite repeat. / We are changed. But this time it is different. / For we have shared the sacred gift of knowing one another, of trusting one another. / And so I say to you: go forth boldly; you are not alone; you carry with you a part of all of us. / And so I say to you: go forth, in peace.

Andrew C. Backus



LYRICS FOR SONGS USED IN SESSION 66: TAKING LEAVE & SAYING GOODBYE

LET THERE BE MORNING

Writer(s): O.L Kluff , T.C.C. Hedlund , R.P.A. Astrom, M.N. Gustafsson

Now the end is drawing near
I can't believe it's finally here
Take some time to pray for me
For what will be

Let the sun rise, let the birds sing,
Let there be light, let there be morning.
I don't know how I made it till now
Let there be light, let there be morning.
Let there be morning.

Hello future, goodbye past
Now each breath can be my last
Will I see another dawn?
Will I be reborn?

Let the sun rise, let the birds sing,
Let there be light, let there be morning.
I don't know how I made it till now,
Let there be light, let there be morning.

X3

Let there be morning

IT'S A PLEASURE TO KNOW YOU

Karl Williams

Chorus:

It's a pleasure to know you, a pleasure to see you smile
A comfort to know we'll share the road awhile
Pleasure is fleeting, and comforts are far between
It's a pleasure to know you and the comfort you bring.

1. I came to your city after I'd left my home
And I was a stranger, dressed up in stranger's clothes
Favors I needed, but charity's out of style--
Rare as the beauty in the face of a trusting child.

2. Now they say life's a journey, a highway from birth to death
Mapped in despair, and traveled in hopelessness.
Well they may believe it, but just between you and me
The trick to the travelin' is all in the company.

3. Now lovers may leave you, lovers may turn away.
Children may scorn you--you know that they will someday,
Seasons are fickle, and fate isn't known as kind
But friendship's the diamond, and trouble's the diamond mine.