

Unitarian Universalist Small Group Ministry Network Website
Countryside Church Unitarian Universalist, Palatine, IL
CCUU Covenant Group Session
The First UU Principle

Before this session, distribute the preparation page that is at the end of the session.

Preliminaries

Chalice Lighting and Reading

May every creature abound in well-being and peace.

May every living being, seen or unseen, those dwelling far off, those living near by, those already born, those waiting to be born,

May all attain inward peace...

Just as a mother, with her own life, protects her only child from hurt, so within yourself foster a limitless concern for every living creature.

Display a heart of boundless love for all the world in all its height and depth and broad extent,

Love unrestrained, without hate or enmity,

Then as you stand or walk, sit or lie, until overcome by drowsiness, devote your mind entirely to this: It is known as living the life divine. – *Buddha*

Check-in.

Transition Meditation

Help the group move from check-in preliminaries to silence with directed deep breathing, soft words, music, or other meditative techniques. Remind group of the topic:

We, the member congregations of the Unitarian Universalist Association, covenant to affirm and promote: The inherent worth and dignity of every person;

Meditation Reading: We Are All More Human Than Otherwise

The human race is a vast rainbow,
white, black, red, yellow, and brown
bursting into view.

Yet for all,
blood is red,
the sky is blue,
the earth brown,
the night dark.

In size and shape we are a varied pattern of
tall and short,

slim and stout,
elegant and plain.
Yet for all there are
fingers to touch,
hearts to break,
eyes to cry,
ears to hear,
mouths to speak.

In tongue we are a tower of babel,
a great jumble of voices grasping for words,
groping for ways to say love, peace, pity, and hope.

Faiths compete, claiming the one way;
saviors abound, pointing to salvation.
Not all can be right, not one.
We are united only by our urge to search.

Boundaries divide us, lines drawn to mark our diversity,
maps charted to separate the human race from itself.
Yet a mother's grief,
a father's love,
a child's happy cry, a musician's sound,
an artist's stroke,
batter the boundaries and shatter the walls.

Strength and weakness,
arrogance and humility,
confidence and fear
live together in each one,
reminding us that we share a common humanity.
We are all more human than otherwise.

--Richard S. Gilbert, "In the Holy Quiet of this Hour"

Deep Sharing/Deep Listening

1. What inspires/strengthens us to see the inherent worth and dignity of every person?
When is it difficult to hold to this attitude of respect? When have you lost your hold on this principle?

2. What enables you to respect the worth and dignity of people when they are:
irritating...boring... abusive to others...dressed shabbily...are from a different culture..look or think differently from ourselves...hold beliefs opposite to our own?

3. What social realities tend to work against the First Principle, and what can we do to actively promote the First Principle in light of these?

Check-out

Closing Reading/Extinguishing the Chalice

May we be reminded here of our highest aspirations,
And inspired to bring our gifts of love and service to the altar of humanity.
May we know once again that we are not isolated beings
But connected, in mystery and miracle, to the universe,
To this community and to each other. –Anonymous

So May We Be.

Preparation for CCUU Session: The First UU Principle

FIRST PRINCIPLE: We, the member congregations of the Unitarian Universalist Association, covenant to affirm and promote: the inherent worth and dignity of every person...

Food for Thought

1. What inspires and strengthens us to see the inherent worth and dignity of every person? When is it difficult to hold to this attitude of respect? When have you lost your hold on this principle?

2. What enables you to respect the worth and dignity of people when they are: irritating...boring... abusive to others...dressed shabbily...are from a different culture..look or think differently from ourselves...hold beliefs opposite to our own?

3. What social realities tend to work against the First Principle, and what can we do to actively promote the First Principle in light of these?

Meditation Readings

The Seven Principles of Unitarian Universalism

We, the member congregations of the Unitarian Universalist Association, covenant to affirm and promote:

The inherent worth and dignity of every person;
Justice, equity, and compassion in human relations;

Acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth in our congregations;
A free and responsible search for truth and meaning;
The right of conscience and the use of democratic process within our congregations and in
society at large;
The goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all;
Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.

We Are All More Human Than Otherwise

The human race is a vast rainbow,
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reminding us that we share a common humanity.
We are all more human than otherwise.
--Richard S. Gilbert, "In the Holy Quiet of this Hour"

SCM, Countryside UU, adapted from UU Church of Washington Crossing,
Titusville, NJ 5/19/07

Unitarian Universalist Small Group Ministry Network Website
Countryside Church Unitarian Universalist, Palatine, IL
CCUU Covenant Group Session
The Second UU Principle

Before this session, distribute the preparation page that is at the end of the session

Preliminaries

Chalice Lighting and Reading

I am only one.

But still I am one.

I cannot do everything,

But still I can do something.

And because I cannot do everything,

I will not refuse to do the something that I can do.

-- *Singing the Living Tradition*, #457, Edward Everett Hale

Check-in.

Transition Meditation

Help the group move from check-in preliminaries to silence with directed deep breathing, soft words, music, or other meditative techniques. Remind the group of the topic:

We, the member congregations of the Unitarian Universalist Association, covenant to affirm and promote:

Justice, equity, and compassion in human relations.

Meditation Reading

Love cannot remain by itself—it has no meaning,

Love has to be put into action and that action is service.

Whatever form we are, able or disabled, rich or poor,

It is not how much we do,

But how much love we put in the doing;

A lifelong sharing of love with others. —Mother Teresa

Deep Sharing/Deep Listening

Today, we'll be sharing how each of us has experienced justice, equity, or compassion in our own relationships.

Facilitator questions

1. Think about a time when you or someone else spoke or acted for justice in relationship in a way that made a difference. Can you tell that story?
2. Think about a time when you strongly felt inequity or injustice, either for yourself or others. What could you or others have done to change that situation?
3. What strengthens and inspires us to feel compassion for those who are suffering from injustice or other cause of pain? Does compassion lead us automatically to, as the Buddhists say, "right action?"
4. Look at each of the three words: justice, equity, and compassion. What do they mean to you? How would you define them in your life?
5. What social realities tend to work against the Second Principle, and what can we do to actively promote the Second Principle in light of these?

Check-out

Closing Reading/Extinguishing the Chalice

Go in peace. Live simply, gently, at home in yourselves.

Act justly.

Speak justly.

Remember the depth of your own compassion.

Forget not your power in the days of your powerlessness.

Do not desire to be wealthier than your peers

And stint not your hand of charity.

Practice forbearance.

Speak the truth, or speak not.

Take care of yourselves as bodies, for you are a good gift.

Crave peace for all people in the world,

Beginning with yourselves,

And go as you go with the dream of that peace alive in your heart.

--Mark L. Belletini

So May We Be.

Preparation for CCUU Session: The Second UU Principle

SECOND PRINCIPLE: We, the member congregations of the Unitarian Universalist Association, covenant to affirm and promote: Justice, equity, and compassion in human relations.

Food for Thought

For many of us, the Second UU Principle can begin to blur with the Sixth—“the goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all.” But the two principles are not the same. In many ways, we can look at the Second Principle as “microcosm” and the Sixth as “macrocosm.” And, there are some good reasons to think we have to succeed at least in small ways with the Second Principle before we have hope of reaching the Sixth.

So, how do we stay on point when looking at these two principles separately? For this session, it would be helpful to really think about each of the words of the Second Principle as they relate to the key phrase: **human relations**. Or, more specifically, our own personal relationships with others. For now, that means keeping your thinking and meditation to your own corner of the world—not the bigger world view. In short, thinking about how you have experienced justice, equity, or compassion in your own relationships. Here are some questions that might help.

1. Look at each of the three words: justice, equity, and compassion. What do they mean to you? How would you define them in your life?
2. Think about a time when you or someone else spoke or acted for justice in relationship in a way that made a difference. Can you tell that story?
3. Think about a time when you strongly felt inequity or injustice, either for yourself or others. What could you or others have done to change that situation?
4. What strengthens and inspires us to feel compassion for those who are suffering from injustice or other cause of pain? Does compassion lead us automatically to, as the Buddhists say, “right action?”

5. What social realities tend to work against the Second Principle, and what can we do to actively promote the Second Principle in light of these?

Meditation Readings

The Seven Principles of Unitarian Universalism

We, the member congregations of the Unitarian Universalist Association, covenant to affirm and promote:

The inherent worth and dignity of every person;
Justice, equity, and compassion in human relations;
Acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth in our congregations;
A free and responsible search for truth and meaning;
The right of conscience and the use of democratic process within our congregations and in society at large;
The goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all;
Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.

The Prayer of St. Francis

Make me an instrument of peace,
Where there is hatred, let me sow love;
Where there is injury, pardon;
Where there is doubt, faith;
Where there is despair, hope;
Where there is darkness, joy.

Grant that I may not so much seek
To be consoled as to console,
To be understood as to understand,
To be loved as to love;
For it is in giving that we receive,
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned,
It is in dying to self that we are born to life

Hymnal #457, Edward Everett Hale

I am only one.
But still I am one.
I cannot do everything,
But still I can do something.
And because I cannot do everything,
I will not refuse to do the something that I can do.

SCM, Countryside UU, adapted from UU Church of Washington Crossing 6/24/07

Unitarian Universalist Small Group Ministry Network Website
Countryside Church, Unitarian Universalist, Palatine, IL
CCUU Covenant Group Session
The Third UU Principle

Before this session, distribute the preparation page that is at the end of the session

Preliminaries

Chalice Lighting and Reading

It is not the number of books you read, nor the variety of sermons you hear, nor the amount of religious conversation in which you mix, but it is the frequency and earnestness with which you meditate on these things until the truth in them becomes your own and part of your being, that ensures your growth. - *Frederick William Robertson*

Check-in.

Transition Meditation

Help the group move from check-in preliminaries to silence with directed deep breathing, soft words, music, or other meditative techniques. Remind the group of the topic:

We, the member congregations of the Unitarian Universalist Association, covenant to affirm and promote:

Acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth in our congregations

Meditation Reading (ask each member of the group to recite this in turn, then all together for the last one.)

From you I receive,
To you I give
Together we share,
And from this we live. — *Singing the Living Tradition* #402

Deep Sharing/Deep Listening

Today, we'll be sharing how each of us has experienced acceptance (or rejection) because of our beliefs, and how a community has supported us in spiritual growth.

Facilitator questions

- What was a time when you felt accepted by an individual or community in a way that was important to you?
- Was there a time when you felt rejected because of your beliefs?
- How would you describe your own spiritual growth path and how a community has best supported you in it?
- Is sharing our own personal spiritual insights a way to encourage spiritual growth in others?

Check-out

Closing Reading/Extinguishing the Chalice

A human being is a part of the whole called by us "Universe." A part limited in time and space. He experiences himself, his thoughts and feelings as something separated from the rest -- a kind of optical delusion of his consciousness. This delusion is a kind of prison for us, restricting us to our personal desires and to affection for a few persons nearest to us. Our task must be to free ourselves from this prison by widening our circle of acceptance to embrace all living creatures and the whole of nature in its beauty. -- Albert Einstein

So May We Be.

Preparation for CCUU Session: The Third UU Principle

THIRD PRINCIPLE: We, the member congregations of the Unitarian Universalist Association, covenant to affirm and promote acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth in our congregations.

Food for Thought

- What was a time when you felt accepted by an individual or community in a way that was important to you?
- Was there a time when you felt rejected because of your beliefs?
- How would you describe your own spiritual growth path and how a community has best supported you in it?
- Is sharing our own personal spiritual insights a way to encourage spiritual growth in others?

Meditation Readings

The Seven Principles of Unitarian Universalism

We, the member congregations of the Unitarian Universalist Association, covenant to affirm and promote:

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A free and responsible search for truth and meaning;
The right of conscience and the use of democratic process within our congregations and in society at large;
The goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all;
Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.

From *Spiritual Literacy*, by Thich Nhat Hanh We are here to awaken from the illusion of our separateness. Our deepest sense of community comes in mystical moments when we feel at one with all the creation. The setting maybe quite ordinary, the experience, extraordinary.

“Eagle Poem:” by Joy Harjo

To pray you open your whole self
To sky, to earth, to sun, to moon
To one whole voice that is you.
And know there is more
That you can't see, can't hear
Can't know except in moments
Steadily growing, and in languages

That aren't always sound but other
Circles of motion.
Like eagle that Sunday morning
Over Salt River. Circled in blue sky
In wind, swept our hearts clean
With sacred wings.
We were born, and die soon, within a
True circle of motion,

Like eagle rounding out the morning
Inside us.
We pray that it will be done
In beauty.

In beauty.

Unitarian Universalist Small Group Ministry Network Website
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CCUU Covenant Group Session
The Fourth UU Principle

Before this session, distribute the preparation page that is at the end of the session

Preliminaries

Chalice Lighting and Reading

From Mohandas K. Gandhi

“Truth resides in every human heart, and one has to search for it there, and be guided by truth as one sees it. But no one has a right to coerce others to act according to his own view of the truth.”

Check-in.

Transition Meditation

Help the group move from check-in preliminaries to silence with directed deep breathing, soft words, music, or other meditative techniques. Remind the group of the topic:

We, the member congregations of the Unitarian Universalist Association, covenant to affirm and promote:

A free and responsible search for truth and meaning

Meditation Reading

From Our Seven Principles in Story and Verse: A Collection for Children and Adults, by Kenneth W. Collier.

The fourth Principle talks about a search for truth and meaning. It is therefore also about how Unitarian Universalism is a spiritual path. When I talk about spirituality I am not talking about something hidden and dark, forbidding and grim, even meaningless. To be religious, to live a genuinely spiritual life, is to embrace a tradition and a history and to make it your own. . . . With all religious traditions or practices, to be spiritual is to follow the journey into truth and meaning, to discover the treasure and to make it real and visible in the living of our lives.”

Deep Sharing/Deep Listening

Today, we'll be sharing how each of us has experienced the search for truth and meaning in our lives, and how communities have helped or hindered that search.

Facilitator questions

1. What beliefs from your past have you given up? Were they damaging beliefs, or comforting beliefs? Were they easy to give up or hard to give up? What led you to give up those beliefs?
2. Can you name any beliefs you wish you had, but cannot bring yourself to? Why would you like to believe them? What prevents you?
3. What role have the Unitarian Universalist Principles and Purposes played in your own search for truth and meaning?

Check-out

Closing Reading/Extinguishing the Chalice

Go your ways,
Knowing not the answers to all things,
Yet seeking always the answer
To one more thing than you know.

So May We Be.

Preparation for CCUU Session: The Fourth UU Principle

FOURTH PRINCIPLE: We, the member congregations of the Unitarian Universalist Association, covenant to affirm and promote a free and responsible search for truth and meaning.

Food for Thought

In an essay in the book *Essex Conversations*, Rev. Frances Manley writes:

“In the center of the Principles, at the point where individualism and interdependence meet, is the ‘free and responsible search for truth and meaning.’ Thus, by their very structure the Principles not only affirm the search for meaning as central to the human enterprise, but also suggest that the very meaning we search for, the meaning of human existence itself, is to be found somehow in the fact that we are at once separate individuals of worth and dignity and interdependent parts of an indivisible whole. Moreover, that same structure also suggests that a ‘free and responsible’ search for truth and meaning does not mean a purely individual search because none of us is a purely individual being. Rather, it is inherently something we carry out both in the privacy of our own souls and in community with others.”

Perhaps the most important word in this principle is “responsible.” Without it, we would be free to believe whatever we want to believe. Instead, we are required to believe what a free and responsible search for truth and meaning leads us to believe. This is a much higher standard to attain.

Questions to Consider

1. What beliefs from your past have you given up? Were they damaging beliefs, or comforting beliefs? Were they easy to give up or hard to give up? What led you to give up those beliefs?
2. Can you name any beliefs you wish you had, but cannot bring yourself to? Why would you like to believe them? What prevents you?
3. What role have the Unitarian Universalist Principles and Purposes played in your own search for truth and meaning?

Meditation Readings

The Seven Principles of Unitarian Universalism

We, the member congregations of the Unitarian Universalist Association, covenant to affirm and promote:

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Acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth in our congregations;
A free and responsible search for truth and meaning;

The right of conscience and the use of democratic process within our congregations and in society at large;

The goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all;

Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.

From Lao Tzu

“The highest truth cannot be put into words. Therefore the greatest teacher has nothing to say. He simply gives himself in service and never worries.”

From the Christian Scriptures—John 8:32

“You shall know the truth, and the truth shall set you free. “

From Rabbi Harold S. Kushner

“I cannot accept the idea that true religion ever asks us to turn off our moral judgment and critical intelligence.”

From Anais Nin

“There is not one big cosmic meaning for all. There is only the meaning we all give to our lives, an individual meaning.”

From Mohandas K. Gandhi

“Truth resides in every human heart, and one has to search for it there, and be guided by truth as one sees it. But no one has a right to coerce others to act according to his own view of the truth.”

*SCM, Countryside UU, adapted from UU Church of Washington Crossing and
First Unitarian Church of San Jose 9/04/07*

Unitarian Universalist Small Group Ministry Network Website
Countryside Church Unitarian Universalist, Palatine, IL
CCUU Covenant Group Session
The Fifth UU Principle

Before this session, distribute the preparation page that is at the end of the session

Preliminaries

Chalice Lighting and Reading

Hymnal #436, from David C. Pohl

We come to this time and this place:

To rediscover the wondrous gift of free
religious community;

To renew our faith in the holiness, goodness,
and beauty of life;

To reaffirm the way of the open mind and full heart;

To rekindle the flame of memory and hope; and

To reclaim the vision of earth made fair,
with all her people one.

Check-in.

Transition Meditation

Help the group move from check-in preliminaries to silence with directed deep breathing, soft words, music, or other meditative techniques. Remind the group of the topic:

*We, the member congregations of the Unitarian Universalist Association, covenant to affirm and
promote:*

**The right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregation and in
society at large.**

Meditation Reading

From Rev. Rosemary Bray McNatt, address to CMwD, 2005

How prepared are we, in these days of hostility to all things liberal, to truly witness to the liberal spirit in religion, to remember who we are, to resist the plethora of enticements in this post-modern world, including the enticement of cynicism that masks itself as sophistication.

How prepared are we to adopt for ourselves a stance of openness, of curiosity and appreciation of those unlike us—ethnically, economically, spiritually? How prepared are we to give voice to the gracious and generous message of hope and courage that is ours to transmit? I submit we

cannot do it through scorn and ridicule. It will take something more difficult, perhaps more painful for us than we are prepared to acknowledge. It will take radical consistent engagement by Unitarian Universalists, not only radical engagement in conversation, which we are fairly good at, but radical reformation of our own religious lives together.

Deep Sharing/Deep Listening

Today, we'll be sharing how each of us has experienced acceptance (or rejection) because of our beliefs, and how a community has supported us in spiritual growth.

Facilitator questions

- What was a time that you spoke out on an issue of conscience, or were moved by someone else doing this? How did you feel?
- Did you bring some words about how it feels when you're in the majority? What about the minority?
- Without a firm commitment to the right of every individual to freedom of thought and expression, democracy itself and degenerate into a tyranny of the majority. Have you seen this happen? Have you ever been a victim of this, or victimized others, even unwittingly? What did it feel like?
- Is democracy ALWAYS the right way to govern or make decisions?

Check-out

Closing Reading/Extinguishing the Chalice

If we agree in love, there is no disagreement that can do us any injury, but if we do not, no other agreement can do us any good.

Let us endeavor to keep the unity of the spirit in the bonds of peace.—*Hosea Ballou*

So May We Be.

Preparation for CCUU Session: The Fifth UU Principle

FIFTH PRINCIPLE: We, the member congregations of the Unitarian Universalist Association, covenant to affirm and promote the right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregation and in society at large.

Food for Thought

- What was a time that you spoke out on an issue of conscience, or were moved by someone else doing this? How did you feel?
- Share some words about how it feels when you're in the majority (i.e. Safe? Powerful? Boring? Responsible?) Jot some down and bring them with you to the meeting.
- Share some words about how it feels when you're in the minority (i.e. Insecure? Powerless? Exciting? Frightening?) Jot some down and bring them with you to the meeting.
- Without a firm commitment to the right of every individual to freedom of thought and expression, democracy itself can degenerate into a tyranny of the majority. Have you seen this happen? Have you ever been a victim of this, or victimized others, even unwittingly? What did it feel like?

Meditation Readings

The Seven Principles of Unitarian Universalism

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The goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all;
Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.

From Erich Fromm

“. . . truth-sayers are deeply hated even when they do not constitute a real threat to the established order. The reason lies, I believe, in that by speaking the truth they mobilize the [psychological] resistance of those who repress it. To the latter, the truth is dangerous not only because it can threaten their power but because it shakes their whole conscious system of

orientation, deprives them of their rationalizations, and might even force them to act differently. Only those who have experienced the process of becoming aware of important impulses that were repressed know the earthquake-like sense of bewilderment and confusion that occurs as a result. Not all people are willing to risk this adventure, least of all those people who profit, at least for the moment, from being blind."

- Carl G. Jung, in the introduction to Frances G. Wickes' "Analysis der Kinderseele" (The Inner World of Childhood), 1931.

"Observance of customs and laws can very easily be a cloak for a lie so subtle that our fellow human beings are unable to detect it. It may help us to escape all criticism, we may even be able to deceive ourselves in the belief of our obvious righteousness. But deep down, below the surface of the average man's conscience, he hears a voice whispering, "There is something not right," no matter how much his rightness is supported by public opinion or by the moral code."

Singing the Living Tradition #705, from Hosea Ballou

If we agree in love, there is no disagreement that can do us any injury, but if we do not, no other agreement can do us any good.

Let us endeavor to keep the unity of the spirit in the bonds of peace.

Singing the Living Tradition #569, from Olympia Brown

Stand by this faith. Work for it and sacrifice for it.

There is nothing in all the world so important as to be loyal to this faith which has placed before us the loftiest ideals.

Which has comforted us in sorrow, strengthened us for noble duty and made the world beautiful

Do not demand immediate results, but rejoice that we are worthy to be entrusted with this great message.

That you are strong enough to work for a great true principle without counting the cost

Go on finding ever new applications of these truths and new enjoyments in their contemplation, always trusting in the one God which ever lives and loves.

From Rev. Rosemary Bray McNatt, address to Central Midwest District, 2005

How prepared are we, in these days of hostility to all things liberal, to truly witness to the liberal spirit in religion, to remember who we are, to resist the plethora of enticements in this post-modern world, including the enticement of cynicism that masks itself as sophistication. How prepared are we to adopt for ourselves a stance of openness, of curiosity and appreciation of those unlike us—ethnically, economically, spiritually? How prepared are we to give voice to the gracious and generous message of hope and courage that is ours to transmit? I submit we cannot do it through scorn and ridicule. It will take something more difficult, perhaps more painful for us than we are prepared to acknowledge. It will take radical consistent engagement by Unitarian Universalists, not only radical engagement in conversation, which we are fairly good at, but radical reformation of our own religious lives together.

SCM, Countryside UU, adapted from UU Church of Washington Crossing 10/07

Unitarian Universalist Small Group Ministry Network Website
Countryside Church Unitarian Universalist, Palatine, IL
CCUU Covenant Group Session
The Sixth UU Principle

Before this session, distribute the preparation page that is at the end of the session

Preliminaries

Chalice Lighting and Reading

“May we be reminded here of our highest aspirations,
And inspired to bring our gifts of love and service to the altar of humanity.

May we know once again
That we are not isolated beings,
But connected, in mystery and miracle,
To the universe, to this community, and to each other.—*Anonymous*”

Check-in.

Transition Meditation Help the group move from check-in preliminaries to silence with directed deep breathing, soft words, music, or other meditative techniques. Remind the group of the topic:

We, the member congregations of the Unitarian Universalist Association, covenant to affirm and promote:

The goal of World Community with Peace, Liberty, and Justice for all.

Meditation Reading

From Rev. Rosemary Bray McNatt, address to CMwD, 2005

“Who, then, is our neighbor, in this deeply wounded world?
Not just the hungry, not just the homeless, not just the prisoner, not just the lonely heart. Our neighbor is the brother—like my own brother-- who is a born-again Christian. Our neighbor is the mother, like my own mother-- who is a member of an evangelical church. Who is our neighbor? Our neighbor is the co-worker who leaves tracts on your desk; our neighbor is the family who won't let your children play with their children because they are not saved. Who is our neighbor? Our neighbor is the protestor who claims that God hates faggots; our neighbor is the evangelist who declares women should be silent in the churches; our neighbor is the neighbor who invites you to prayer meeting and encourages you to leave that place you say is a church but she knows is really a cult. All these people

are our neighbors: not just the ones we like, or feel good about talking to, or have hopes will one day see the light of liberal faith. We cannot create the radical change in the world that liberal religion is meant to create if we are only hanging out with one another; we cannot offer a healing alternative to the religiously injured, lying half dead on the road of life, by keeping our faith a private pleasure. We can create radical change only with radical engagement, only with the radical faith modeled in the ministries of so many faithful prophets and sages and wise people. Jesus is one, but there are so many others. All of them are ours to claim and to embrace. All of them lift up the patterns of memory, resistance and hope that give shape to the renewal of our faith in these days.”

Deep Sharing/Deep Listening

Today, we'll be sharing how each of us has experienced acceptance (or rejection) because of our beliefs, and how a community has supported us in spiritual growth.

Facilitator questions

- Can you tell of a time when someone reached out to you with true justice and peace and it lifted you up? Or a time when you stepped in on behalf of someone else in a spirit of justice?
- Have you had the opportunity to dialogue in a loving way with people of other faiths?
- Who is your neighbor? When have you stepped into the shoes of Jesus of Nazareth on behalf of a stranger? A colleague at work? A homeless person? A criminal? A family member? An illegal immigrant? A rich man?
- What is justice?

Check-out

Closing Reading/Extinguishing the Chalice

“The central task of the religious community is to unveil the bonds that bind each to all. There is a connectedness, a relationship discovered amid the particulars of our own lives and the lives of others. Once felt, it inspires us to act for justice.” —*Mark Morrison-Reed*

So May We Be.

Preparation for CCUU Session: The Sixth UU Principle

SIXTH PRINCIPLE: We, the member congregations of the Unitarian Universalist Association, covenant to affirm and promote the goal of World Community with Peace, Liberty, and Justice for all.

Food for Thought

- Can you tell of a time when someone reached out to you with true justice and peace and it lifted you up? Or a time when you stepped in on behalf of someone else in a spirit of justice?
- Have you had the opportunity to dialogue in a loving way with people of other faiths?
- Who is your neighbor? When have you stepped into the shoes of Jesus of Nazareth on behalf of a stranger? A colleague at work? A homeless person? A criminal? A family member? An illegal immigrant? A rich man?
- What is justice?

Meditation Readings

The Seven Principles of Unitarian Universalism

We, the member congregations of the Unitarian Universalist Association, covenant to affirm and promote:

The inherent worth and dignity of every person;
Justice, equity, and compassion in human relations;
Acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth in our congregations;
A free and responsible search for truth and meaning;
The right of conscience and the use of democratic process within our congregations and in society at large;
The goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all;
Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.

“The central task of the religious community is to unveil the bonds that bind each to all. There is a connectedness, a relationship discovered amid the particulars of our own lives and the lives of others. Once felt, it inspires us to act for justice.” —*Mark Morrison-Reed*

“Love thy neighbor as thyself.”—*Hebrew Scriptures*

“May we be reminded here of our highest aspirations,
And inspired to bring our gifts of love and service to the altar of humanity.

May we know once again
That we are not isolated beings,
But connected, in mystery and miracle,
To the universe, to this community, and to each other.—*Anonymous*”

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neighbor is the mother, like my own mother-- who is a member of an evangelical church.
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are ours to claim and to embrace. All of them lift up the patterns of memory, resistance and
hope that give shape to the renewal of our faith in these days.” --*Rev. Rosemary Bray
McNatt, address to CMwD in 2005*

SCM, Countryside UU 11/07

Unitarian Universalist Small Group Ministry Network Website
Countryside Church Unitarian Universalist, Palatine, IL
CCUU Covenant Group Session
The Seventh UU Principle

Before this session, distribute the preparation page that is at the end of the session

Preliminaries

Chalice Lighting and Reading

“Love all Creation

The whole of it and every grain of sand

Love every leaf

Every ray of God’ s light

Love the animals

Love the plants

Love everything

If you love everything

You will perceive

The divine mystery in things

And once you have perceived it

You will begin to comprehend it ceaselessly

More and more everyday

And you will at last come to love the whole world

With an abiding universal love.

-- Fyodor Dostoyevsky

Check-in.

Transition Meditation

Help the group move from check-in preliminaries to silence with directed deep breathing, soft words, music, or other meditative techniques. Remind the group of the topic:

We, the member congregations of the Unitarian Universalist Association, covenant to affirm and promote:

Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.

Meditation Reading

Deep Sharing/Deep Listening

Today, we'll be sharing how each of us has experienced acceptance (or rejection) because of our beliefs, and how a community has supported us in spiritual growth.

Facilitator questions

1. What was a time that you deeply felt connected with the interdependent web of the universe, and what impact did this experience have on you?
2. To acknowledge the interdependent web of all existence means that we live in the midst of mystery. . .every one of us is part of a much larger story than we can comprehend from our own limited perspective.
 - How do you define that web and that mystery?
 - Assume that you, like George Bailey in "It's a Wonderful Life," were given the opportunity to see how the lives of others—or of any part of the web—have been affected by your conscious or unconscious actions. What do you see and how do you feel about it?

Check-out

Closing Reading/Extinguishing the Chalice

"May my feet rest firmly on the ground
May my head touch the sky
May I see clearly
May I have the capacity to listen
May I be free to touch
May my words be true
May my heart and mind be open
May my hands be empty to fill the need
May my arms be open to others
May my gifts be revealed to me
So I may return that which has been given
Completing the great circle."

-- The Terma Collective

So May We Be.

Preparation for CCUU Session: The Seventh UU Principle

SEVENTH PRINCIPLE: We, the member congregations of the Unitarian Universalist Association, covenant to affirm and promote respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.

Food for Thought

The Seventh Principle is often viewed primarily in terms of ecology: our place on the earth, and the ways in which all living things are interdependent. However, it is also a description of humanity's interdependence; in addition to being individuals, we are all members of communities and of society. And finally, the "interconnected web of all existence" has come grown in our tradition to include the metaphysical, the mystical, our understanding of and connection to Other. For our discussion, you might think about these questions:

1. What was a time that you deeply felt connected with the interdependent web of the universe, and what impact did this experience have on you?
2. To acknowledge the interdependent web of all existence means that we live in the midst of mystery. . .every one of us is part of a much larger story than we can comprehend from our own limited perspective.
 - How do you define that web and that mystery?
 - Assume that you, like George Bailey in "It's a Wonderful Life," were given the opportunity to see how the lives of others—or of any part of the web—have been affected by your conscious or unconscious actions. What do you see and how do you feel about it?

Meditation Readings The Seven Principles of Unitarian Universalism

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The goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all;
Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.

“When one tugs at a single thing in nature, he finds it attached to the rest of the world.”

-- John Muir

“I searched for God and found only myself. I searched for myself and found only God.”

--Sufi Proverb

“We are all on a journey together. . .

To the center of the universe. . .

Look deep

Into yourself, into another.

It is to a center which is everywhere

That is the holy journey. . .

First you need only look:

Notice and honor the radiance of

Everything about you . . .

Play in this universe. Tend

All these shining things around you:

The smallest plant, the creatures and

Objects in your care.

Be gentle and nurture. Listen. . .

As we experience and accept

All that we really are. . .

We grow in care.

We begin to embrace others

As ourselves, and learn to live

As one among many. . .”

--Anne Hillman

“Love all Creation

The whole of it and every grain of sand

Love every leaf

Every ray of God’ s light

Love the animals

Love the plants

Love everything

If you love everything

You will perceive

The divine mystery in things
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So I may return that which has been given
Completing the great circle.”

-- The Terma Collective

SCM, Countryside UU 1/08 with inspiration from First UU San Jose