

**Welcoming New Members: Hopes and Gifts**  
Countryside Church Unitarian Universalist, Palatine, IL

**Chalice Lighting and Reading:**

We come together in an attitude of openness - not knowing quite what will happen, yet daring to receive a new idea, a new experience, sustenance for our minds and our hearts.

We come with an attitude of praise, expressing our thankfulness for the good that has come into our lives.

We come with an attitude of humility, knowing how much we need one another, how alone we can be in the world, how vulnerable if we face life solely by ourselves.

We come in the spirit of love, seeking human warmth and fellowship in the hands and faces of those around us.

We come in the spirit of joy, seeking reconfirmation and renewal of life, of love, and of hope.

--Adapted from Peter Lee Scott

**Check-in.**

Ask each person to introduce themselves briefly. Name, family, how long at Countryside, etc. As an interesting twist, ask current members to introduce each other.

**Transition**

Help the group move from preliminaries to silence with directed deep breathing, soft words, music, or other meditative techniques.

**Deep Sharing/Deep Listening**

You were asked to spend some time thinking about being a member of this Covenant Group. Now we'll share the fruits of that thinking with one another, following the deep sharing/deep listening format. Here's the question:

**For new members** – Think about why you decided to join the group, and your hopes and expectations for participating in the group. Why a Kinship Circle rather than another type of Covenant Group? Do you have any wishes, concerns, or questions you would like to share about the group?

**For current members** – Think about what the group has meant to you so far, and why you continue to be a member of the group. Why a Kinship Circle rather than another type of Covenant Group? Do you have any wishes or concerns you would like to share about the group?

## Check-out

### Closing Reading/Extinguishing the Chalice

Things change.

We change.

Our lives never stand still.

There is always something new.

We are always making transitions,

from one thing to another

one experience to another

one stage of life to another

one challenge to another.

Some transitions are easy,

Some are hard

Some seem almost impossible

Some are exciting and joyful,

Some are painful and frightening.

We change cities and homes.

We change jobs and activities.

We change commitments.

We even change our minds

At this moment, as we extinguish the chalice,

We pause to give thanks for this place

Where our transitions make a difference.

Spiritual life is always in transition.

Beloved community is community in transition.

[Unison]

**Together we embrace future transitions.**

**New people.**

**New ideas.**

**New beginnings.**

-- Thomas Mickelson & Rev. Jory Agate, adapted

Modified by Janeane Weprin 11-05-08 from First Unitarian Church of San Jose