

“Thank You for Your Loving Hands”

Thank you for your loving hands, your loving heart,
your loving ways—

Thank you for the gifts you bring into the world each day.

And if you ever doubt yourself, remember us, who love you
well—

We know all the gifts you bring into the world each day.

So thank you for your loving hands, your loving heart,
your loving ways,

Thank you for the gifts you bring into the world each day.

—by Judy Fjell and Lisa Bregger

The Covenant

I commit myself:

- to come to meetings when I possibly can, knowing that my presence is important to the group
- to honor the group by letting the leader know if I will be absent, and to come to the group one last time and say good-bye if I need to quit
- to avoid cross talk, giving feedback or trying to fix anyone
- to share with the leader the responsibility for good group process by watching how much time I take to speak and noticing what is going on for others
- to not gossip about what is shared in the group, and not tell other people’s stories
- to listen to what others share with an open heart, and to share deeply in my turn

Covenant Groups

Service



Service

Chalice Lighting

Share your love, your wisdom, and your wealth and serve each other as much as possible. Live in harmony with one another and be an example of peace, love, compassion, and wisdom.

—*Lama Thubten Yeshe*

Sharing of Joys and Sorrows

Silence

Silence, holding ourselves and each other in silent support.

Shared Readings

I am larger and better than I thought . . . I did not think I held so much goodness.

—*Walt Whitman*

I'm not always all that sure how to "be of service." All I know is that when I hear of others' pain I feel compelled to act. But what if the best and only thing I can do is to listen—and even then only if they ask? So, then, really the only thing I can do is to make myself available.

—*posted by Terri Dennehy Pahucki*

Life's most urgent question is: What are you doing for others?

—*Martin Luther King, Jr.*

No one is useless in this world who lightens the burdens of another.

—*Charles Dickens*

I slept and dreamt that life was joy. I awoke and saw that life was service. I acted and behold, service was joy.

—*Rabindranath Tagore*

Instead of sacrificing for others, it is our task to take those things which delight us and figure out how to use them to help others. Then our joy will encourage us to persist.

—*Mary Morell*

Deep Sharing and Deep Listening

Round 1: Share a time when you admired the service done by someone known to you.

Round 2: Have you found joy in service (as mentioned in Tagore's quote)?

Round 3: Share anything the discussion has brought up for you.

Closing Words

If I can stop one heart from breaking,

I shall not live in vain.

If I can ease one life the aching,

Or cool one pain,

Or help one fainting robin

Unto his nest again,

I shall not live in vain.

—*Emily Dickinson*

Closing Song

"Thank You for Your Loving Hands"

Group Business

Homework for the next meeting.

Homework: Service

Service seems like a basic, simple concept—we help someone or some group. But it is actually quite complex spiritually, emotionally, and culturally—for both the server and those being served. Just think of all the meanings around the word “servant” and you begin to sense the larger issues.

Doing for others. Giving back. Altruism. Self-sacrifice. Giving rather than receiving. Responsibility. Duty. Gift. Guilt. Helping hands. “Other” focused. Unselfish. The list of thoughts, feelings, and states of being goes on and on when you try to describe what it means to “serve” others. Our UU principles proclaim the inherent worth and dignity of every person, and call for justice, equity, and compassion in human relationships. Our own congregational covenant promises that we will strive together toward these principles through worship, study, and service.

Without deep reflection one knows from daily life that one exists for other people, and only a life lived for others is a life worthwhile.

—Albert Einstein

There is nothing to make you like other human beings so much as doing things for them.

—Zora Neale Hurston, *Dust Tracks on a Road*

[The] notion of “servant leadership” was made popular by the management consultant, Robert Greenleaf. He was especially inspired by Herman Hesse’s novel, *The Journey to the East*, which depicts a mythical pilgrimage undertaken by a group of spiritual adventurers. The main character in the novel is a man named Leo, who accompanies the group, humbly performing menial tasks and sustaining them with his spirit and his song. All goes well until Leo mysteriously disappears one night. Without his quiet guiding presence, the group quickly dissolves into chaos, and the expedition comes to an end. Later on, members of the group discover that the man they had treated as a mere servant was, in fact, the powerful head of the organization that had sponsored their trip. The one who served had been their leader all along.

—Rev. Bruce Johnson

You must be the change you wish to see in the world.

—Mahatma Ghandi

Joy can be real only if people look upon their lives as a service and have a definite object in life outside themselves and their personal happiness.

—Leo Tolstoy

We work on ourselves in order to help others, but also we help others in order to work on ourselves.

—Pema Chödrön

Never worry about numbers. Help one person at a time, and always start with the person nearest you.

—Mother Teresa

We are in this world to make it better, to lift it to a higher level of enjoyment and progress, and there is indeed a certain amount of responsibility resting upon each one of us from the least to the greatest.

—Florence Spearing Randolph

Questions to Ponder

- When in your life have you felt served? What was the service and what did it feel like?
- Think about times in your life when you have served others. Consider the pleasure you received in pleasing or helping others. When did you do something good in order to avoid having a bad feeling, or so others wouldn’t think badly of you?
- Do you believe there’s such a thing as “pure” motivation? Give an example.
- Sometimes people resent being helped. When has someone resented your help? When have you resented someone’s attempt to help you?
- In the UU tradition, there is no authority telling us that we must be charitable “or else.” So why is service so important to UUs?

Leader's Guide: Service

Service seems like a basic, simple concept—we help someone or some group. But it is actually quite complex spiritually, emotionally, and culturally—for both the server and those being served. Just think of all the meanings around the word “servant” and you begin to sense the larger issues.

Chalice Lighting (2 min)

Ask someone to read the chalice lighting reading found in the bulletin as you light the chalice.

Share your love, your wisdom, and your wealth and serve each other as much as possible. Live in harmony with one another and be an example of peace, love, compassion, and wisdom.

—Lama Thubten Yeshe

Sharing of Joys and Sorrows (10 min)

Ask group members to check in, telling in one or two sentences how they are doing this week. Share information about absent members.

Silence (3 min)

Give your group the gift of three minutes of silence. Time it if you would like.

Shared Readings (5 min)

Have each person in turn read from the shared readings found in the bulletin until all the readings are finished.

Deep Sharing and Deep Listening (65 min)

Do three rounds of deep sharing and deep listening. Pay close attention to the time allotted each person to ensure that everyone gets a turn to share.

Round 1 (10 min): Share a time when you admired the service done by someone known to you.

Round 2 (40 min): Have you found joy in service (as mentioned in Tagore's quote)?

Round 3 (15 min): Share anything the discussion has brought up for you.

Closing Words (1 min)

Read or ask someone to read the closing words.

If I can stop one heart from breaking,

I shall not live in vain.

If I can ease one life the aching,

Or cool one pain,

Or help one fainting robin

Unto his nest again,

I shall not live in vain.

—Emily Dickinson

Closing Song (1 min)

“Thank You for Your Loving Hands”

Group Business (5 min)

Pass out the homework for next time.