

The Sources of Our Faith 2. Prophetic Words

Chalice Lighting

Sharing of Joys and Sorrows

Silence, holding ourselves and each other in silent support.

Shared Readings:

The living tradition we share draws from many sources:

- Direct experience of that transcending mystery and wonder, affirmed in all cultures, which moves us to a renewal of the spirit and an openness to the forces which create and uphold life;
- Words and deeds of prophetic women and men which challenge us to confront powers and structures of evil with justice, compassion and the transforming power of love;
- Wisdom from the world's religions which inspires us in our ethical and spiritual life;
- Jewish and Christian teachings which call us to respond to God's love by loving our neighbors as ourselves;
- Humanist teaching which counsel us to heed the guidance of reason and the results of science, and warn us against idolatries of the mind and spirit.
- Spiritual teachings of Earth-centered traditions which celebrate the sacred circle of life and instruct us to live in harmony with the rhythms of nature

Hate evil, love good, and establish justice. Amos

Prophecy is a moment of unshrouding, an opening of the eyes, a lifting of the curtain. Such moments are rare in history. Abraham Heschel

I will be truthful. I will suffer no injustice. I will be free from fear. I will not use force. I will be of good will to all men. Mahatma Gandhi

Love cannot remain by itself - it has no meaning. Love has to be put into action and that action is service. Mother Teresa

Justice is the civic or political form of love. Reinhold Niebuhr

Hatred does not cease by hatred, but only by love. Buddha

Love is not concerned with whom you pray or where you slept the night you ran away from home. Love is concerned that the beauty of your heart should kill no more. Alice Walker

Justice for black people will not flow into society merely from court decisions nor from fountains of political oratory. Nor will a few token changes quell all the tempestuous yearnings of millions of disadvantaged black people. White America must recognize that justice for black people cannot be achieved without radical changes in the structure of our society. Martin Luther King

We think we need an enemy...Our daily lives have the most to do with the situation of the world. If we can change our daily lives, we can change our governments and change the world. Thich Nhat Hanh

Deep Sharing/Deep Listening

Group Business

Closing Words and Song "Go Now in Peace"

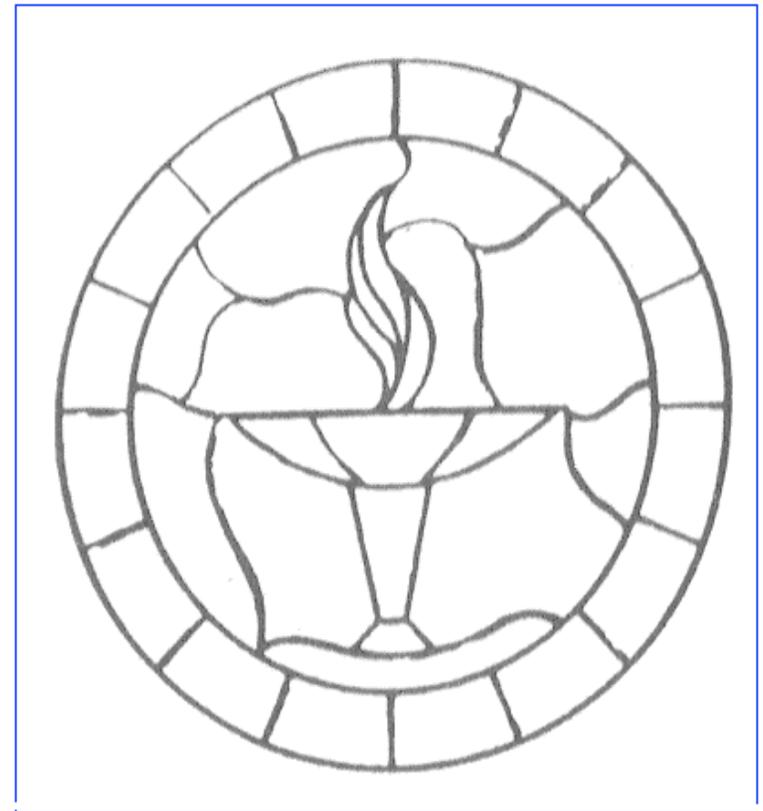
The Covenant

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 goodbye if I need to quit.
- 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

Prophetic Words



Leader's Notes for Prophetic Words

Chalice Lighting: Light the chalice using words of your choosing.

Sharing of Joys and Concerns: Remind your group that the Sharing of Joys and Concerns is an opportunity for each person to EITHER contribute a one-word description of how they are feeling at the moment, OR to share something that presses on them, good or bad, which they want the group to know. If someone is absent, they will (hopefully) have called you and you can share the reason for their absence in the group.

Silence: Give your group the gift of three minutes of silence.

Shared Readings: Remind your group that 6 of the themes this year will come from this document they see as a reading, "The Sources of our Living Tradition". Go around your group, letting each person in turn read a sentence of the document. Continue around the circle to read the quotes that follow.

Deep Sharing/Deep Listening: Do your rounds of deep sharing/deep listening. Ask for second thoughts as time allows. In a second "round" everyone who wishes to add second thoughts or thoughts sparked by what was shared may do so. It is not appropriate to ask questions about what someone else shared, only to reflect on what the sharing sparked in oneself.

Discussion: if time

Group Business: Pass out homework for next time

Closing words: Invite people to hold hands around the chalice and say one or two words about an insight they have had this evening.

Sing: Go Now in Peace

Homework - Prophecy

We look at the second source of our Living Tradition: words and deeds of prophetic men and women which challenge us to confront powers and structures of evil with justice, compassion, and the transforming power of love.

In the modern vernacular, to prophesy is to foretell the future. The prophet is one who does so. But the prophecy referred to in our second principle has a much broader and at the same time, specific meaning. It refers to the "prophetic tradition" of Western religion, and especially to the Hebrew or "Old Testament" prophets. Our principle captures their role pretty well, for their primary function was to challenge the Israelite Kings and their people to "confront powers and structures of evil with justice, compassion, and the transforming power of love."... Now, prophets were not your average nice guys in gray, flannel suits. As Abraham Joshua Heschel says, they were some of "the most disturbing people who have ever lived." Linda Hoddy, UU Minister

The prophet's ear perceives the silent sigh. Abraham Heschel

The time of prophets/priests is over. Now the poets have taken that role. Thomas Merton

Men and women who have dreams, who see visions, and who then have the audacity to prophesy in word and deed have been described by the sustainers of the status quo of every age as being drunk...We are reminded through the death of Dr. Martin Luther King that a man or woman who demonstrates faith, in a faithless age is certain to be misunderstood and liable to be attacked and abused. Gilbert Caldwell

The prophet is not only a prophet. He is also poet, preacher, patriot, statesman, social critic, moralist. Abraham Heschel

It is not I who speaks but the wind. Wind blows through me. Long after me, is the wind. Marge Piercy

It's not the words and lives of the prophets in themselves that are important. Their importance lies in their inspiration to get us involved and activated in changing the world. Rev. Ricky Hoyt, UU minister

The prophet is one who, although a part of the community, chooses to live on the edge or the margins of the community. He is able to imagine an alternative vision to the culture, which is oppressive and needs to be changed. The prophet is willing to take the message to the masses, to 'cry out in the streets' articulating the alternate vision. Lastly, the prophet truly believes that the alternative vision is possible. Brueggeman

1. What of this tradition of prophecy is meaningful to you today? Are there people who hear a special call – the silent sigh – ministers, poets, politician, social critic, moralist?
2. Who speaks of justice, compassion and the transforming power of love in a way that resonates with you?
3. What areas would you rather NOT hear about and would prefer to turn away?
4. Where are you a prophet? What is so clear to you that seems foggy or unseen to others?
5. Can you remember a time that you took a prophetic stand and paid a price for it?
6. You might want to bring in a short poem or song which seems prophetic to you.