

Response and Call

Chalice Lighting

Sharing of Joys and Concerns

Silence, holding ourselves and each other in silent support.

First Round of Sharing

Shared Readings:

Return, return to the deep sources, nothing less
Will teach the stiff hands a new way to serve,
To carve into our lives the forms of tenderness
And still that ancient necessary pain preserve.

We must go down into the dungeons of the heart,
To the dark places where modern mind imprisons
All that is not defined and thought apart.
We must let out the terrible creative visions.

Return to the most human, nothing less
Will teach the angry spirit, the bewildered heart,
The torn mind, to accept the whole of its duress,
And pierced with anguish, at last act for love.

May Sarton, *Santos: New Mexico*

The Weighing

The heart's reasons
seen clearly,
even the hardest
will carry
its whip-marks and sadness
and must be forgiven.

As the drought-starved
eland forgives
the drought-starved lion
who finally takes her,
enters willingly then
the life she cannot refuse,
and is lion, is fed,
and does not remember the other.

So few grains of happiness
measured against all the dark
and still the scales balance.

The world asks of us
only the strength we have and we give it.
Then it asks more, and we give it.

~ Jane Hirshfield ~

Deep Sharing / Deep Listening

Discussion, if time

Group Business

Closing and sing Go Now In Peace

Great ideas, it has been said, come into the world as gently as doves. Perhaps then, if we listen attentively, we shall hear amid the uproar of empires and nations, a faint flutter of wings, a gentle stirring of life and hope.

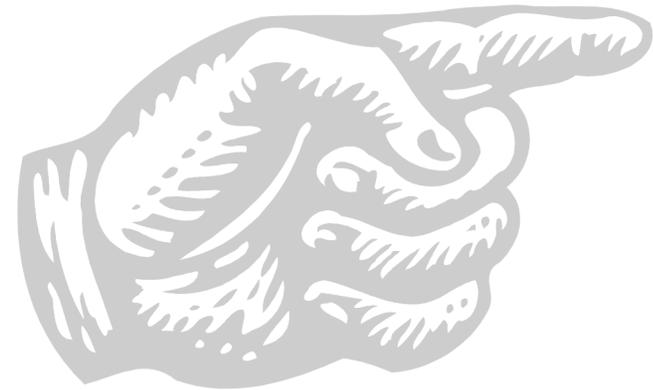
Some will say that this hope lies in a nation; others, in a man. I believe rather that it is awakened, revived, nourished by millions of solitary individuals whose deeds and works every day negate frontiers and the crudest implications of history.

As a result, there shines forth fleetingly the ever-threatened truth that each and every man, on the foundation of his own sufferings and joys, builds for all.

Albert Camus

Covenant Groups

Response and Call



Leader Notes: Response and Call

This is a pretty straight-forward session, using a pattern which should now be familiar to us all!

As people come in, recruit two people to read each of the poems in the bulletin and have them look them over.

Light the chalice. Share joys and concerns, including the sharing of the whereabouts of absent group members.

Ask group members to use the front of their bulletin to make some notes as you suggest questions.

What are some ways you have given to other individuals?

To whom or what have you given money?

If you had a million dollars and could give it to one organization, what would it be?

What are three of your favorite skills?

When the group has finished, ask them to compose a sentence about themselves that uses at least two answers...

Then do your rounds of sharing.

End with the third poem.

Homework for Response and Call

Tell me, what do you plan to do with your one
wild and precious life? Mary Oliver

A Pastoral Letter from Bill Sinkford:

Moral values are not just particular opinions on "hot button" topics in a divisive election year. Moral values grow out of our calling as religious people to work to create the Beloved Community. Moral values instruct us to "love our neighbors as ourselves" and always to ask the question, "Who is my neighbor?" They are fundamentally inclusive rather than exclusive, and they call on generosity of spirit rather than mean spiritedness.

In this post election season, let me express some of the moral values held dear by the Unitarian Universalist community, which I lead, and by many other progressive people of faith:

- * We believe that feeding the hungry and clothing the naked are moral duties, and we will continue to work on behalf of economic justice.
 - * We believe that ensuring equal civil rights for gay and lesbian families is our moral duty, and we will continue to work for Marriage Equality nationwide.
 - * We believe that serving as stewards of the earth is a moral duty, and we will continue to do everything in our power to protect the environment.
 - * We believe that safeguarding a woman's right to choose is a moral duty, and we will vigorously oppose any efforts to eliminate or significantly compromise reproductive freedom.
 - * We believe that providing affordable health care for all Americans is a moral duty, and we will continue to advocate for medical rights for the young, the old, the frail, and all of those in need.
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Vocation

It comes from the Latin vocare, to call, and means the work a person is called to by God. There are all different kinds of voices calling you to all different kinds of work, and the problem is to find out which is the voice of God rather than of Society, say, or the Superego, or Self Interest.... (The kind of work you are called to) is the kind of work (a) that you most need to do and (b) that the world most needs to have done. If you really get a kick out of our work, you've presumably met requirement (a) but if your work is writing TV deodorant commercials, the chances are you've missed requirement (b). On the other hand, if your work is being a doctor in a leper colony, you have probably met requirement (b) but if most of the time you're bored and depressed, the chances are that you have not only bypassed (a) but probably aren't helping your patients much either. Neither the hair shirt nor the soft berth will do. The place God calls you to is the place where your deep gladness and the world's deep hunger meet.

—Fredrick Buechner