

# Gathering for Universalism, Goodness, Salvation

## Words of the Day

A part of the Universalist message that resonates with me is ...

## Chalice Lighting

We light this chalice to shine on our time together. In its light we celebrate the relationships and understanding we are creating in this place and time. May our sharing be deep. (*Light chalice*)

## The Basket

## Sharing of Joys and Concerns

## Silence, holding ourselves and each other in silent support

## Shared Readings

There is no hell for any of us to fear outside of ourselves. *Quillen Hamilton Shinn*

The dominant motive ... is no longer to escape from earthly existence, but to make earthly existence as abundant and happy as it can be made. Modern religion ... must glorify, spiritualize, sanctify the world. *Clarence Russell Skinner, Universalist minister*

You may possess only a small light, but uncover it, let it shine, use it in order to bring more light and understanding to the hearts and minds of men and women. Give them not Hell, but hope and courage. Do not push them deeper into their theological despair, but preach the kindness and everlasting love of God. *John Murray, founder of Universalism in the United States*

The mission of the Universalist church has been a double one, first to contravert the one-time prevalent idea of an endless hell. This part of the mission has practically been accomplished ... But the second and more important one awaits fulfillment ... a fight which shall continue until the real, actual hells, before our very eyes, are destroyed. *Henry Clay Ledyard*

I come back to my fairly reluctant conclusion that Unitarians need Universalism a lot more than Universalists need Unitarianism. Religion is heart, essentially affection and love. It taps into deep emotions, or it doesn't work at all. *Rev. Stephen Kendrick, Universalist Church of West Hartford*

Do good under all circumstances, but with no care for any profit, or any blessedness, or any damnation, or any salvation, or any martyrdom; but all you do or omit should be for the honor of Love. *Hadewijch*

It may be thought that in our church we sometimes spoke lightly of what other churches held dear. We were not irreverent in our hearts, and we never meant to sin against the holy spirit. The mission of the Universalist church was to free the minds of [people] from the cruel prisons of dread and fear, and to help them to understand that God and life are kinder than they supposed. *Gertrude Anne Sneller*

A candle must give itself away. In the giving, the spending, the spreading, the sending, it finds itself. *John Wood*

Universalism promises us that we are forgiven, whether or not we want to be, whether or not we can forgive ourselves. *Rev. Michael Tino*

*It is love that universalism promises.*

Love that brings people together and opens their mind and hearts to new possibilities of understanding religion and faith.

So, when someone ... asks you what is Universalism?

Don't confuse them with complicated theological reasoning tell them with honesty and truth that *Universalism is LOVE.*

Love beyond colour.

Love beyond gender.

Love beyond culture.

Love beyond belief.

In the name and nature of LOVE.

Amen. *Nadir Zaman*, London,UK

## **Deep Sharing/Deep Listening**

**Round 1:** Share your reflections on and responses to Universalism and the preparation materials.

**Round 2:** Share additional thoughts or reflect on what others have shared.

## **Closing Circle**

## **Extinguishing the Chalice**

We extinguish this flame and we remember the warmth of our community, the light of our wisdom, the generosity of our sharing. We keep these in our heart until we meet again.

*(Extinguish the chalice.)*

## **Song/Chime**

## **Announcements**

### **The Covenant**

I commit myself:

- to come to meetings when I possibly can, knowing that my presence is important to the group
- to let the facilitator know if I will be absent or need to quit
- to share with the facilitator the responsibility for good group process by watching how much time I take to speak and noticing what is going on for others
- to do the reading and thinking about the topic ahead of time
- to not gossip about what is shared in the group, and tell only my own story to others
- to honor the safety of the group by listening to what others share with an open heart
- to refrain from cross-talk, judging, giving advice, or advocating a specific view
- to share as deeply as I can when it is my turn and to stay on the "I-message."