



Aging

Covenant Group Session Plan

Greenville Unitarian Universalist Fellowship, Greenville, SC

Revised from previous session by Denise Frick. May 2019

Welcome and Chalice Lighting: Here we are together in this space. By our love and by our covenant, we make this a holy place. We light the chalice of Unitarian Universalism in honor of the light that lives in each of us, the light that shines among us, and the light we bring into the world.

Personal Check In: Share something from your life since we last met and how you are feeling now.

Opening Readings

We ask for long life, but 'tis deep life, or noble moments that signify. Let the measure of time be spiritual, not mechanical. ~*Ralph Waldo Emerson*

How does one keep from 'growing old inside'? Surely only in community. The only way to make friends with time is to stay friends with people.... Taking community seriously not only gives us the companionship we need, it also relieves us of the notion that we are indispensable.

~*Robert McAfee Brown*

Questions for Sharing and Discussion:

1. How were elders treated in your family as you were growing up? How has your family ethnicity influenced your attitudes and behaviors regarding aging?
2. How have you changed as you have aged?
3. Who has served as a model for you regarding ways to grow older? What do you admire about them? What have they taught you? What qualities do you want to emulate?
4. What discrimination have you experienced because of your age, or as an older person?
5. What goals and dreams do you have for the years left to you? How do you want to live the rest of your life?

Readings – see below

Sitting in Silence

Sharing - This is a time to speak without interruption and for deep listening. Deep listening means no interrupting, no fixing, no saving, no advising, and no setting each other straight. Please share one or more responses to the session questions.

(This is a good time to take a brief break – breathing, bathroom, snack, etc.)

Open Discussion - This is a time to respond to something another person said about the topic or to relate additional thoughts that may have occurred as others shared their thoughts on this topic. Continue to practice deep listening.

Closing Words:

The shorter we think our lives will be, the more likely we are to do things that are meaningful and give us pleasure. Awareness of death catapults us toward joy and reflection.

~ Mary Pipher, *Women Rowing North: Navigating Life's Currents and Flourishing As We Age*

Announcements/Plans**Personal Check Out:**

As we close our meeting today, how are you feeling now?

Extinguish the Chalice

Readings

As I get older I realize that the thing I value most is good-heartedness.

~*Alice Walker*

We are always the same age inside.

~*Gertrude Stein*

There are opportunities even in the most difficult moments.

~*Wangari Maathai, Unbowed*

How old would you be if you didn't know how old you are?

~*Leroy (Satchel) Paige*

My idea of Hell is to be young again.

~*Marge Piercy*

As we advance in life it becomes more and more difficult, but in fighting the difficulties the inmost strength of the heart is developed.

~*Vincent van Gogh*

None are so old as those who have outlived enthusiasm.

~*Henry David Thoreau*

You can judge your age by the amount of pain you feel when you come in contact with a new idea.

~*Pearl S. Buck*

Those who love deeply never grow old; they may die of old age, but they die young.

~*Sir Arthur Pinero*

Though no one can go back and make a brand new start, anyone can start from now and make a brand new ending. ~*Carl Bard*

He who is not busy being born is busy dying. ~*Bob Dylan*

We live in a youth-obsessed culture that is constantly trying to tell us that if we are not young, and we're not glowing, and we're not hot, that we don't matter. I refuse to let a system or a culture or a distorted view of reality tell me that I don't matter. I know that only by owning who and what you are can you start to step into the fullness of life. Every year should be teaching us all something valuable. Whether you get the lesson is really up to you.

~*Oprah, O, the Oprah Magazine, May 2011*

Inspired by these Small Group Ministry sessions:

1. Aging. Starr King Unitarian Universalist Church, Hayward, CA, April 2018. Kathryn LaMar.
2. Aging. Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Stony Brook, NY. March 2015. Rev Margie Allen and Rev Dr. Linda Anderson.