



At the Year's End

Covenant Group Session Plan

Greenville Unitarian Universalist Fellowship, Greenville, South Carolina

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Welcome, 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: Briefly share something from your life since we last met and how you are feeling now.

Opening Words:

Look to this day!

For it is life, the very life of life.

In its brief course lie all the verities

And realities of your existence:

The bliss of growth

The glory of action,

The splendor of beauty;

For yesterday is but a dream,

And tomorrow is only a vision;

But today, well lived, makes every yesterday

A dream of happiness

And every tomorrow a vision of hope.

Look well, therefore, to this day.

~attributed to Kalidasa, Hindu dramatist and poet

Questions to prompt and guide discussion:

We're about to enter a new year and this is the time when many people make resolutions. Before doing that—or instead of doing that—we invite you to spend time looking back over the past year and focus on what has been in your life in 2020.

1. What are you proud of? Which accomplishments stand out?
2. Share something about a challenge that you overcame. What were some valuable lessons you learned?
3. What positive changes did you make in your life?
4. Who helped you make changes, overcome obstacles or just stay the course? Were you able to express your gratitude?
5. Could these changes or events of 2020 have good implications for your life in 2021?
(Note: We aren't asking you to make resolutions, just to reflect on how things might be different going forward.)

Sitting in Silence (Reflect on questions just posed as you prepare to hear readings)

Readings- Words from the Common Bowl: Quotes/Readings – see below

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 usually a good time to take a brief break)

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 reading:

We are caught in a web of stars,
cradled in a swaying embrace,
rocked by the holy night,
babes of the universe.
Let this be the time
we wake to life,
like spring wakes, in the moment
of winter solstice.

~Rev. Dr. Rebecca Parker, excerpt from her poem *Winter Solstice*

Announcements/Plans

Check out: As we close today, how are you feeling now?

Extinguish the Chalice

Readings

The things that matter will not crowd and clutter your life. The things that matter will enlarge the orbit of your being until you are large enough to contain all that is worthy of being welcomed.

~Albert Perry

Doesn't everything die at last, and too soon?

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

~Mary Oliver, excerpt from her poem *The Summer Day*

I asked a friend what her New Year's resolution would be. She thought very seriously for a while and then replied "Breathing."

~Lionel Wijesiri

I once listed all the good things I did over the past year, and then turned them into resolution form and backdated them. That was a good feeling.

~Rev. Robert Fulghum

What if 2020 isn't cancelled?☐

What if 2020 is the year we've been waiting for?☐

A year so uncomfortable, so painful, so scary, so raw — that it finally forces us to grow.☐

A year that screams so loud, finally awakening us from our ignorant slumber.☐

A year we finally accept the need for change.☐

Declare change. Work for change. Become the change. A year we finally band together, instead of☐ pushing each other further apart.☐

2020 isn't cancelled, but rather the most important year of them all.

~ Leslie Dwight

The quality of light by which we scrutinize our lives has direct bearing upon the product which we live, and upon the changes which we hope to bring about through those lives.

~Audre Lorde

Hard times require furious dancing. Each of us is proof.

~Alice Walker, *Hard Times Require Furious Dancing: New Poems*