



Being of Service

Greenville UU Fellowship - Greenville, South Carolina

Covenant Group Session

Revised by Denise Frick, September 2020

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: Share something from your life since we last met & how you are feeling now.

Opening Reading

I am only one, but still I am one. I cannot do everything, but still I can do something. And because I cannot do everything I will not refuse to do the something that I can do.

~ Edward Everett Hale

Questions to prompt and guide discussion:

1. How is service a part of the way you live your beliefs?
2. What does it mean to be of service to others and not lose yourself in the process?
3. Share an experience of service you have had when you realized that you benefited and / or changed in an unexpected way.
4. Think of a time when you had a strong positive or negative experience with volunteering. Share how that experience has influenced your current choices of offering service.

Silence (Reflect on questions as you prepare to hear the readings)

Readings from the Common Bowl (see end of session plan)

Sharing: This is a time to speak without interruption and for deep listening. Please share one or more of your responses to the session questions.

Sitting in Silence: Breathe together in silence for two minutes.

Open Discussion: This is a time to respond to something another person said or to relate additional thoughts that may have occurred as others shared.

Closing Reading:

Commitment

People say, what is the sense of our small effort. They cannot see that we must lay one brick at a time, take one step at a time. A pebble cast into a pond causes ripples that spread in all directions. Each one of our thoughts, words and deeds is like that. No one has a right to sit down and feel hopeless. There is too much work to do.

~Dorothy Day (#560, *Singing the Living Tradition*)

Announcements/Plans

Personal Check Out: As we close today, what ways of service are you drawn to after our discussion?

Extinguish the Chalice

Readings

The fragrance always remains on the hand that gives the rose. ~ Gandhi

Great opportunities to help others seldom come, but small ones surround us daily. ~ Sally Koch

I believe we become more fully human with any gesture of generosity, any time we reach out to another rather than withdraw into our individual suffering. To become fully human, we need to keep opening our hearts, no matter what. At this time when suffering and anxiety continue to increase, when there is always reason to weep for some unbearable tragedy inflicted by one human on another, I try to remember to keep my heart open. ~ Rev. Glenn H. Turner

We don't set out to save the world;
We set out to wonder how other people are doing
And to reflect on how our actions affect other people's hearts.
~ Pema Chodron

Every religious tradition teaches the value of giving service as an end in itself. Even Twelve Step Programs and secular psychologies have discovered the profound effect that doing good for others has on oneself.
~ Erik Walker Wikstrom

I don't know what your destiny will be, but one thing I know. The only ones among you who will be truly happy will be those who have sought and found how to serve. ~ Albert Schweitzer

To (serve) is to tell the truth about who I am. If I did not (serve), it would say that I was a person who had nothing to give, a person who had received nothing from life. A person who did not matter to the larger society or whose life's meaning was in providing for his own needs alone. But in fact, who I am is the opposite of all these things. I am a person who has something to give. I am a person whose presence matters in the world and I am a person whose life has meaning because I am connected to and care about many things larger than myself. If I did not (serve), I would lose track of these truths about myself. ~ Rebecca Parker

Each of us is here for a purpose. Not an idea, not something we invent, but something we discover. If each of us answers this unique call, somehow it will all get done. For some of us, our purpose might express itself through standing up against racism or sexism. For others, it's about caring for a family. We may live our purpose through community service, through art, or through business. As one who trains activists, I believe my job is to help each person find a true and powerful expression of that authentic purpose.
~ Robert Gass, Utne Magazine interview, Jan-Feb 2006

...Real service does not happen unless both people are being served. At an installation ceremony at the Zen Centre, a student asked the abbot, "What can the Dharma teach me about serving others?" The abbot answered, "What others? Serve yourself!" The student persisted, "How do I serve myself?" To which the abbot responded, "Take care of others."
~ Frank Ostaseski

Helping, fixing, and serving represent three different ways of seeing life. When you help, you see life as weak. when you fix, you see life as broken. When you serve, you see life as whole. Fixing and helping may be the work of the ego, and service the work of the soul.
~ Rachel Naomi Remen