



HOPE

Greenville UU Fellowship, Greenville, South Carolina

Covenant Group Session Plan

Written by Bill Henry February 2021

Welcome, Chalice Lighting: *Here we are, together in this space. By our love and by our covenant, we make this a special 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:

Hope is the power to believe that anything is possible — a fresh start, a second chance, or to wish upon a miracle. With hope there is that window of opportunity or new light for reassurance that the possibilities are endless and as long as you believe, anything can happen!

Questions to prompt and guide discussion:

1. What does hope mean to you?
2. When was the last time you felt hopeful and how did it feel?
3. What is something that makes you feel hopeful right now?
4. How can you cultivate moments of hope in your life?
5. How can you honor your hope in small ways, even when it's hard?

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

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:

To hope is to gamble. It's to bet on your futures, on your desires, on the possibility that an open heart and uncertainty is better than gloom and safety. To hope is dangerous, and yet it is the opposite of fear, for to live is to risk.

~Rebecca Solnit, *Hope in the Dark*

Announcements/Plans

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

Extinguish the Chalice

Readings

There is no medicine like hope, no incentive so great, and no tonic so powerful as expectation of something tomorrow.

~**O. S. Marden**

The best way to not feel hopeless is to get up and do something. Don't wait for good things to happen to you. If you go out and make some good things happen, you will fill the world with hope, you will fill yourself with hope.

~**Barack Obama**

Hope springs eternal in the human breast.

~**Alexander Pope**

Do not spoil what you have by desiring what you have not; remember that what you now have was once among the things you only hoped for.

~**Epicurus**

There is a saying in Tibetan, 'Tragedy should be utilized as a source of strength.'

No matter what sort of difficulties, how painful experience is, if we lose our hope, that's our real disaster.

~**Dalai Lama XIV**

We must accept finite disappointment, but never lose infinite hope.

~**Martin Luther King Jr.**

To forgive means pardoning the unforgivable to love means loving the unlovable. Faith means believing the unbelievable. Hope means hoping when everything seems hopeless.

~ **G.K. Chesterton**

You are not here merely to make a living; you are here in order to enable the world to live more amply, with greater vision, with a finer spirit of hope and achievement. You are here to enrich the world, and you impoverish yourself if you forget the errand.

~**Woodrow Wilson**

You may not always have a comfortable life and you will not always be able to solve all of the world's problems at once but don't ever underestimate the importance you can have because history has shown us that courage can be contagious and hope can take on a life of its own.

~**Michelle Obama**

They say a person needs just three things to be truly happy in this world: someone to love, something to do, and something to hope for.

~**Tom Bodett**