



What is Truth?

Greenville Unitarian Universalist Fellowship – Greenville, South Carolina

Covenant Circle Session

Originally based on session written by Bill Peresta, Channing Memorial Church, Newport, RI, 2008. Revised by Denise Frick, October 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: Briefly share something from your life since we last met and how you are feeling now?

Opening Words: We, the member congregations of the Unitarian Universalist Association covenant to affirm and promote a free and responsible search for truth and meaning. ~4th Principle of the UUA.

Questions for Discussion:

1. What is your view of truth? Is it the same for everyone (absolute), or different depending on the situation or the observer (relative)? If truth is relative, how can people ever hope to agree on anything? How can we promote peace if everyone believes differently?
2. What has been your experience with seeking truth in your childhood?
3. How do you find or decipher truth now, as an adult?
4. What role has religion played for you in presenting, or unfolding the truth?
5. How has your search for truth and meaning connected to your ability to speak your truth?

Readings – see below

Sitting in Silence (Reflect on questions and readings)

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.

Discussion

After each person has shared once, respond to something another person said or relate additional thoughts that may have occurred as others shared. Continue to practice deep listening.

Closing reading

I imagine that an evolving faith—as ours is and I trust always will be—brings with it the possibility of faltering words, changing viewpoints, open-ended questions and answers. The challenge before us is to creatively find a means to capture our religious values and beliefs in words and symbols that others (and we) can understand.

-Rev. Barbara Wells, UU Minister

Announcements/Plans

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

Extinguish the Chalice

Readings

As a faith tradition, Unitarian Universalism makes sacred the right and responsibility to engage in this free and responsible quest as an act of religious devotion. Institutionally, we have left open the questions of what truth and meaning are, acknowledging that mindful people will, in every age, discover new insights.

~Rev. Paige Getty, UU Congregation of Columbia, Maryland

I believe that unarmed truth and unconditional love will have the final word in reality. This is why right temporarily defeated is stronger than evil triumphant.

~ Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr.

The beginning of wisdom is found in doubting, by doubting we come to the question, and by seeking the answers we may find the truth. ~Pierre Abelard

The truth will set you free, but first it will piss you off. ~Gloria Steinem

Never be afraid to raise your voice for honesty and truth and compassion against injustice and lying and greed. If people all over the world...would do this, it would change the earth. ~William Faulkner

We can disagree and still love each other unless your disagreement is rooted in my oppression and denial of my humanity and right to exist.

~Son of Baldwin (Robert Jones, Jr.)

If you do not tell the truth about yourself you cannot tell it about other people.

~Virginia Woolf

This is what I am learning, at 82 years old: the main thing is to be in love with the search for truth.

~Maya Angelou

Everything we hear is an opinion, not a fact. Everything we see is a perspective, not the truth.

~Marcus Aurelius

Anyone who doesn't take truth seriously in small matters cannot be trusted in large ones either.

~Albert Einstein

Your problem is how you are going to spend this one odd and precious life you have been issued. Whether you're going to spend it trying to look good and creating the illusion that you have power over people and circumstances, or whether you are going to taste it, enjoy it and find out the truth about who you are.

~Anne Lamott

The water in a vessel is sparkling; the water in the sea is dark. The small truth has words which are clear; the great truth has great silence. ~Rabindranath Tagore

I preach there are all kinds of truth, your truth and somebody else's. But behind all of them there is only one truth and that is that there's no truth. ~Flannery O'Connor

Tell the children the truth. ~Bob Marley