**Prayer**

Greenville UU Fellowship

Covenant Group Session Plan

**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

**Opening Reading**

I am a Unitarian, and we pray to “Whom It May Concern”.

~Adlai Stevenson II, American Politician and Diplomat

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

**Readings (Words from the Common Bowl: Quotes/Readings)**

**Questions to prompt and guide discussion.**

1. Did prayer have a place in your previous religious or spiritual experiences?
2. How did your past experience, or lack of experience, with prayer influence your view of it now?
3. Do you ever pray? If so, why? What form do your prayers take?
4. How do you understand prayer or meditation, and what experiences have contributed to this understanding? What does prayer mean to you?
5. In the face of conflict, crisis, grief, and perhaps even despair, has prayer or meditation found a place in your coping and recovery? If so, how?
6. In the wake of great relief or celebration, has prayer or meditation found a place in your affirmation of what has happened?
7. What room, if any, do you see for prayer, meditation or contemplation in your UU faith?

**Silence**

**Sharing:** (Deep listening--no cross talk) 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:** (Cross talk allowed) This is a time to respond to something another person said or to relate additional thoughts that may have occurred as others shared.

**Announcements/Plans**

**Personal Check Out:**

*How would you like to be held in heart and mind before we meet again?*

**Closing Reading:**

Go in the trust that your prayers are heard, even if they are never uttered. Go in the trust that your prayers are answered, even if all you receive is an echo. Go in the trust that prayer can both empty you and fill you. Go empty. Go full.

~Rev. Jan Carlsson-Bull, UU Minister

**Extinguish the Chalice**

**Readings**

Prayer invites God to be present in our spirits and in our lives. Prayer cannot bring water to parched land, nor mend a broken bridge, nor rebuild a ruined city, but prayer can water an arid soul, mend a broken heart, and rebuild a weakened will.

~Abraham J. Heschel, Polish-born American rabbi and one of the leading Jewish theologians and Jewish philosophers of the 20th century.

The best prayer I know is “Thank You, Thank You, Thank You.”

~Annie Lamott, American novelist and non-fiction writer

I have given each being a separate and unique way of seeing and knowing and saying that knowledge. What seems wrong to you is right for him. What is poison to one is honey to someone else. Purity and impurity, sloth ad diligence in worship, these mean nothing to me. I am apart from all these.

~ Rumi, 13th-century Persian poet, jurist, Islamic scholar, theologian, and Sufi mystic.

When the mind knows, we call it knowledge. When the heart knows, we call it love. When the being knows, we call it prayer.

~ Osho, Indian mystic, guru and spiritual teacher.

Lord, we ain’t what we ought to be

And we ain’t what we want to be

And we ain’t what we gonna be, but Thank God

we ain’t what we were.

~Traditional prayer

The prayer of our souls is a petition for persistence; not for the one good deed, or single thought, but deed on deed, and thought on thought, until day calling unto day shall make a life worth living.

~W. E. B. Du Bois, American sociologist, historian, civil rights activist, Pan-Africanist, author and editor.