

USG SGM
Radical Hospitality
June, 2017

Chalice Lighting

Hospitality means primarily the creation of free space where the stranger can enter and become a friend instead of an enemy. Hospitality is not to change people, but to offer them space where change can take place. It is not to bring men and women over to our side, but to offer freedom not disturbed by dividing lines.

~ Henri J.M. Nouwen, *Reaching Out: The Three Movements of the Spiritual Life*

Check-in

Share briefly what's been on your mind lately or your highs and lows since we last met. We will listen to each other without asking questions or offering advice to allow people the safety to share what's in their hearts.

Quotes for Inspiration/Readings

Hospitality consists in a little fire, a little food, and an immense quiet.

~ Ralph Waldo Emerson

Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.

~ Hebrews 13:2

The stranger next door, and at our door, is particularly frightening...People have been hurt by strangers...When we speak of the depth of hospitality, we are proposing something scary and radical. But it's worth the risk. Unless we find a way to open ourselves to others, we will grow even more isolated and frightened. If we do not find and practice ways of hospitality, we will grow increasingly hostile. Hospitality is The Answer To Hostility.

~ *Radical Hospitality: Benedict's Way of Love* by Daniel Holman and Lonni Collins Pratt

Hospitality involves accepting responsibility to care for the strangers, the ones at our gate, but also those a world away. The biggest obstacle to hospitality is not the state of the world. It is the state of our minds and hearts.

~ Lonni Collins, journalist and author

Some of us need to be challenged and supported to connect with those of whom we are rightly afraid and of whom we are wrongly afraid. This is not easy. It is risky. To be homes of truly powerful personal transformation, we must also risk our safety some times by meeting those who are different and by listening well and intentionally to who they truly are. We may be surprised to find new friends and learn more about our selves.

~ Gretchen Woods, UU Minister

We are all wanderers, passing through, guests of the universe, and our job as a religious clan is to share earth's bounty and to set a warm, inviting place for one another.

~ Carolyn and Tom Owen-Towle, UU Ministers

When we create a life surrounded by people just like ourselves, it is a very narrow life... A spirituality centered in such a life will drift into laziness to settle for easy answers based solely on personal experience. Letting ourselves believe that our experience constitutes normality and that other ways of doing life are abnormal is delusional and dangerous.

~ Father Dan Holman

Spiritual Exercises

1. Think about a person you wish you could separate from or not have to deal with. For the next month, spend a little time, a few minutes or more, sending loving wishes to this person. Send them love and light. Imagine them happy, healthy, full of good things. Pay attention to the effect of this on you and your relationships in general and maybe on your relationship with the person in question.
2. Go out of your comfort zone to offer hospitality. For example: give food or money to anyone who asks, start a conversation with someone you don't know who is standing or sitting alone, welcome someone to your neighborhood. Think about what is outside your comfort zone and then give it a try.
3. Have a conversation with someone who is not a UU about Radical Hospitality. Think about what Radical Hospitality means to you and act upon it. Read this sermon on Radical Hospitality by Marilyn Sewell for inspiration:
<http://www.uua.org/worship/words/sermon/radical-hospitality>

Questions

Adapted from the UU SGM Network, Covenant Group Session Series: Radical Hospitality, Session 1, by Jolinda Stephens, © 2007

- Think of a time when you were invited in. How did you experience that relationship?
- Does hospitality offer a valuable spiritual practice?
- Is it helpful for you to view the people who cross your path as having a message for you?
- What stands in the way of opening yourself to the stranger? Is it worth the risk?

Sitting in Silence

Take a few moments to sit quietly and reflect upon your thoughts.

Sharing/Deep Listening

Respond with your thoughts/experiences with the topic.

Reflection

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

Singing *Draw the Circle Wide*

<https://spiralwound.wordpress.com/2015/05/11/draw-the-circle-wide/>

Draw the circle, Draw the circle wide.
Draw the circle, Draw the circle wide.
No one stands alone. We'll stand side by side,
Draw the circle, Draw the circle wide. X2

Draw the circle wide, draw it wider still.
Let this be our song. No one stands alone.
Standing side by side. Draw the circle, draw the circle wide. (many times on video)

Extinguishing the Chalice

Radical hospitality is based on listening to and acceptance of the other and on the conviction that every life is sacred. But acceptance is not synonymous with condoning all about the other or agreeing with the other. It is about receiving rather than judging. Radical hospitality challenges our sense of what is "normal" or "acceptable." (It) is a challenge for living communities. We are called to make room for the marginalized, the excluded, the disenfranchised.

~Daniel Horman and Lonnie Collins Pratt