

Friendship

Reverend Ian's sermon on January 9th "We Are How We Treat Each Other and Nothing More," focused on the richness and lovingness of our relationships. This month we'll delve into what makes friendships rich and loving. How have our friendships influenced the ways we treat others?

Chalice Lighting

Becoming Present: Guided Meditation and Movement

Opening Reading

When we honestly ask ourselves which person in our lives means the most to us, we often find that it is those who, instead of giving much advice, solutions, or cures, have chosen rather to share our pain and touch our wounds with a gentle and tender hand. The friend who can be silent with us in a moment of despair or confusion, who can stay with us in an hour of grief and bereavement, who can tolerate not knowing, not curing, not healing and face with us the reality of powerlessness. – Henri Nouwen

Covenant

These are the personal promises we make to each other – Please read out loud or silently.

I will make a sincere effort to attend all sessions.

I will notify the facilitator if I have to be absent.

I will be considerate of my fellow members by arriving, starting and ending on time.

I will respect the confidentiality of the group.

I will speak from personal experience and refrain from giving advice.

I will participate and also self-moderate so that others may speak.

I will present my truth, refraining from challenging others' truth or trying to convince others of my truth.

I will honor the desire of anyone "to pass."

I will be responsible for keeping the discussion "on track."

I will strive to listen fully.

I will let the group know if I choose to leave the group.

I will do my best, with the help of everyone in the group, to assure that this Covenant is followed and affirmed in order to maintain a safe environment.

Check In: What is the state of your heart?
 What choices are you making to care for yourself during this rapid spread of the omicron virus? How is it affecting you emotionally?

Readings

.....the ultimate touchstone of friendship is not improvement, neither of the other nor of the self, the ultimate touchstone is witness, the privilege of having been seen by someone and the equal privilege of being granted the sight of the essence of another, to have walked with them and to have believed in them, and sometimes just to have accompanied them for however brief a span, on a journey impossible to accomplish alone. - David Whyte, *Consolations*

“Don’t walk in front of me... I may not follow. Don’t walk behind me... I may not lead. Walk beside me... just be my friend” - Albert Camus

I’ve heard it said that people come into our lives for a reason
Bringing something we must learn.

We are led to those who help us most to grow, if we let them, and we help them in return.

Well, I don’t know if I believe that’s true, but I know

I’m who I am today because I knew you....

Who can say if I’ve been changed for the better?

Because I knew you, I have been changed for good. – “For Good” from the musical *Wicked*

Moment of Silence

Is there a line or phrase that speaks to you in one of the readings?

Sharing and deep listening: Questions for contemplation. Take a moment to review these questions. You may choose to answer any of these questions or create and answer your own question.

1. What makes a relationship with another a “friendship”? Do you have a “range” of friends?
2. How are you a good friend?
3. What do you look for in your friends?
4. How has your experience of friendship changed over your life?
5. How do you set and maintain your boundaries in a friendship? Have you ever experienced an unhealthy friendship?
6. What helps or stands in the way of making friends? How do you nurture and protect your friendships?
7. Does how you feel about yourself play a role in your being friends with others?
8. These are challenging times, how are you drawing on your friends for support?
9. How important is maintaining your friendships to your spiritual practice as a UU?

Check out

How did today’s sharing work for you?

Next Chalice Circle – February

Closing Words:

“Oh, the comfort, the inexpressible comfort of feeling safe with a person, having neither to weigh thoughts nor measure words but pouring them all right out – just as they are – chaff and grain together, certain that a faithful hand will take away and sift them, keep what is worth keeping, and with the breath of kindness, blow the rest away.” Dinah Marie Mullock Craik

Extinguish the Chalice