

**Love is a verb.**

It's February, and many people's minds gravitate to love, romance, perhaps chocolate. Reverend Ian's sermon on February 13, 2022, explores how people build relationships and connect. Drawing upon the sermon, we will consider love as a verb. What do you do to sustain and nurture love?

**Chalice Lighting**

**Becoming Present: Guided Meditation and Movement**

**Opening Reading**

The word "love" is most often defined as a noun, yet all the more astute theorists of love acknowledge that we would all be better if we used it as a verb.

A meaningful definition of the word "love" is from M. Scott Peck's classic *The Road less Traveled*. Echoing the work of Erich Fromm, he defines love as "the will to extend one's self for the purpose of nurturing one's own or another's spiritual growth." Explaining further, he continues: "Love is as love does. Love is an act of will - namely both an intention and an action. Will also implies choice. We do not have to love. We choose to love." (Bell Hooks, *All About Love*)

**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

Love is not about getting; it is about giving.

Love is not about selfishness; it is about sacrifice

Love is not about being on top of the charts; it is about humility, the willingness to serve.

Love is not about bragging; it is about doing things for the other without advertising.

Love is not about covering up evil; it is about being transparent and living in the light.

Love is not about falsehood; it is about speaking the truth.

(from A Short Speech on Love,

<https://medium.com/@adefemioluwatobi13/a-short-speech-on-love-cf8ffe896189>)

To love without knowing how to love wounds the person we love. To know how to love someone, we have to understand them. To understand, we need to listen. (Thich Nhat Hanh)

Power without love is reckless and abusive, and love without power is sentimental and anemic. Power at its best is love implementing the demands of justice, and justice at its best is power correcting everything that stands against love. (MLK, Jr.)

### 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. Does love as a verb resonate with you? Does love require:
  - a. giving?
  - b. sacrifice?
  - c. wiliness to service, with humility?
  - d. being transparent?
  - e. speaking the truth?
  
2. What actions do you undertake to foster love of spouse? Family? Community?

3. How do loved ones in your life demonstrate their love for you?
4. Is social justice a form of love? What actions can you take to foster beloved community?
5. Is love in action an important part of your UU spirituality?

**Check out**

How did today's sharing work for you?

**Next Chalice Circle – March**

**Closing Words:**

Because love is not a one-time thought or feeling. . . . Love is a verb. Love is looking at someone and deciding that you want to love them even when they mess up, even when they fall down, even when they're not the same person, even when they fight with you or make you cry.

(from Love is a Verb, Marisa Donnelly).

**Extinguish the Chalice**