

Listening

UU Community Church of Santa Monica Heart to Heart Circles
February 2015

Welcome and Orientation 10 minutes

This is a time when your facilitator/s introduce themselves and go over housekeeping details such as parking, meeting space, nametags, and confirming your contact information.

Chalice Lighting

We come together in an attitude of openness—not knowing quite what will happen, yet daring to receive a new idea, a new experience, sustenance for our minds and our hearts.

We come with an attitude of humility, knowing how much we need one another, how alone we can be in the world, how vulnerable if we face life only by ourselves.

We come in the spirit of love, seeking human warmth and fellowship in the hands and faces of those around us.

-Peter Lee Scott

Sharing Silence 3 minutes

We open our time together with shared silence for about three minutes. This can be a time to meditate if that is part of your spiritual practice, reflect on your transition from where you have been during the day to where you are now, or to just be. If you are accustomed to silence, three minutes may feel short. If you are not, it may feel long.

On Our Hearts 5 minutes

Please share your name, where you live, and anything/anyone on your heart today.

Covenant 20 minutes

Our covenant includes a description of how we want to be with each other, ground rules for our time together, and our expectations for members of the group.

Adapted from *Heart to Heart* by Christine Robinson and Alicia Hawkins

I commit myself:

- to give attendance at meetings a real priority knowing that my presence is important to the group;
- to let the leader know if I will be absent or need to quit;
- to participate with my group in two service projects, one for our church community, and one for the wider community
- to share with the leader the responsibility for good group process by watching how much time I take to speak and noticing what is going on for others;
- to not gossip about what is shared in the group, and tell only my own story to others;
- to honor the safety of the group by listening to what others share with an open heart;
- to refrain from cross-talk, judging, problem solving, or giving advice;
- and to share as deeply as I can when it is my turn.

Readings

There is a reason we have two ears and only one mouth.

- Anonymous

Listen softly. A bird is singing. A dog is barking; further away a dog barks in response. Listen gently, with your entire body. Listen with your individual cells. Listen for what your fellow human being needs to say. Listen for what you need to hear, and at the same time, surrender all your needs. Listen with your heart.

-Jillian Brasch

We have begun to learn about a method of deep listening. As we already know, we have to practice before we can listen deeply. Sometimes we can also translate “deep listening” as compassionate listening, that is, to listen with compassion, or to listen with love. We hear with one aim only; we don’t listen in order to criticize, to blame, to correct the person who is speaking or to condemn the person. We listen with one aim, and that is to relieve the suffering of the one we are listening to.

-Thich Nhat Hanh

I believe we can change the world if we start listening to one another again... Simple, truthful conversation where we each have a chance to speak, we each feel heard, and we each listen well.

- Margaret Wheatley

Questions for consideration:

1. Describe a person in your life now, or in your past, who is a good listener. What is this person like? How did you feel around this person?
2. Describe a time when you did not feel heard or listened to. What was that like?
3. How is listening, or being listened to, part of your spiritual life?
4. Do you agree that we can “change the world” by listening? How?

Sharing 60 minutes

Reflecting On Our Time Together

Closing Words

As we now part from one another, let these be our thoughts:

If that which is most holy lies within the human person, and if the greatest power in the world shines flickering and uncertain from each individual heart, then it is easy to see the value of human associations dedicated to nurturing that light: the couple, the family, the religious community.

For the power of good in any one of us must at times waver. But when a group together is dedicated to nurturing the power of good, it is rare for the light to grow dim in all individuals at the same moment.

So we borrow courage and wisdom from one another, to warm us and keep us until we’re together again. - Eileen Karpeles