

Journey
UU Community Church of Santa Monica
Heart to Heart Circles
March 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, and nametags.

Chalice Lighting

At times our own light goes out and is rekindled by a spark from another person. Each of us has cause to think with deep gratitude of those who have lighted the flame within us.

- Albert Schweitzer

Sharing Silence

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 20 minutes

Please share your name and anything/anyone that is on your heart today.

Covenant

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

In the long way that we take, in our growing up, in the vicissitudes of life by which we are led into its meaning and its mystery, there are established for us, for each one of us, certain landmarks. They represent discoveries sometimes symbolizing the moment when we became aware of the purpose of our lives; they may establish for us our membership in the human frailty; they may be certain words that were spoken into a stillness within us the sound thereof singing forever through all the corridors of our beings as landmarks; yes, each one of us has our own. No communication between people is possible if there is not some mutual recognition of the landmarks.

- Rev. Dr. Howard Thurman, *The Inward Journey*

Yesterday I was clever, so I wanted to change the world.

Today I am wise, so I am changing myself.

- Rumi

One day you finally knew
what you had to do, and began,
though the voices around you
kept shouting
their bad advice--
though the whole house
began to tremble
and you felt the old tug
at your ankles.
"Mend my life!"
each voice cried.
But you didn't stop.
You knew what you had to do,
though the wind pried
with its stiff fingers
at the very foundations,
though their melancholy
was terrible.
It was already late
enough, and a wild night,
and the road full of fallen
branches and stones.
But little by little,
as you left their voices behind,
the stars began to burn
through the sheets of clouds,
and there was a new voice
which you slowly
recognized as your own,
that kept you company
as you strode deeper and deeper
into the world,

determined to do
the only thing you could do--
determined to save
the only life you could save.
- Mary Oliver, *The Journey*

Questions for consideration:

1. Describe a time in your life when you went on a journey. What was that like? How did your journey change you?
2. Is there a person who has been a companion on your journey? What are they like?
3. How do you prepare to go on a journey? What are some things you do when you come back home?
4. What are some of the landmarks in your life journey so far? How are those landmarks the same or different for your spiritual journey?

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