

**Wonder**  
UU Community Church of Santa Monica  
Small Group Ministry  
May 2014

**Chalice Lighting**

If it is language that makes us human, one half of language is to listen.  
*Silence can exist without speech, but speech cannot live without silence.*  
Listen to the speech of others. Listen even more to their silence.  
*To pray is to listen to the revelations of nature, to the meaning of events.*  
To listen to music is to listen also to silence, and to find the stillness deepened and enriched.  
- Jacob Trapp

**Sharing Silence** 3 minutes

**On Our Hearts** 20 minutes

**Covenant and Ground Rules**

I commit myself:

- to come to meetings when I possibly can, knowing that my presence is important to the group;
  - to let the leader know if I will be absent or need to quit;
  - 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, or giving advice;
  - to ask questions gently and only if necessary;
  - and to share as deeply as I can when it is my turn.
- Christine Robinson and Alicia Hawkins, *Heart to Heart* (adapted)

**Readings**

Once upon a time there was a magician who didn't know she was one because nobody ever told her she was. She lived simply and worked at her job, hard as you would expect an ordinary person to work at an ordinary job. When one day she died it was an ordinary sort of death... Some time after the funeral the magician's children discovered a diary which they did not know their mother had kept, and they opened it and a jaguar jumped out, and yards and yards of rainbow silk, desperate, beautiful, unwinding...  
- Clarke Wells, adapted

Science and religion together reveal to us a world of wonder. They make us grateful to be part of it, even in the face of the fear, pain, loss, and evil that are also part of it.  
-Helen Lutton Cohen

My first church was a field of broom grass behind my family's house in Kansas, where I spent days in self-forgetfulness. A small stream held swimmers, wigglers, skates, and floaters, along with bumps of unseen things moving under the mud. When I blurred my eyes, the sun sparkling on the moving surface turned into a living quilt of light. Later, I found a magnolia tree in Georgia that offered high, medium, or low perches, depending on how far I could climb. My fear of falling made the ascent more vivid. When I had finally settled on a branch, my arms trembling from the haul, leaning back against the trunk felt as safe as leaning against my father. The huge white flowers leaked a scent much slighter than their size. When I bent to touch one, the cool, heavy petals fell to the ground like swooning birds.

-- Barbara Brown Taylor, *An Altar in the World: A Geography of Faith*

### Questions for consideration

1. When you were growing up, was there a place you used to go that was magical to you? What was that like?
2. What experiences of wonder have you had in nature this week, or in the past? Which of the four elements – earth, air, fire, water – does your experience embody?
3. Unitarian Universalists affirm that the Living Tradition we share draws from many sources, including “direct experience of that transcending mystery and wonder, affirmed in all cultures, that moves us to a renewal of the spirit and an openness to the forces that create and uphold life.” How is the direct experience of mystery and wonder part of your spiritual life?
4. The words “awe,” “awesome,” and “awful” are all related. Has there been a time in your life when something awful became something awe-full, or vice versa?

**Sharing** 60 minutes

### Closing Activity / Reflecting On Our Time Together

Please share how you showed up in our time together. Do you wish you had said something more, less, different? How are you leaving our time together? Feeling words are ok: sad, mad, glad, peaceful, powerful, joyful.

### Closing Words

This is the wonder of time

*This is the marvel of space*

Out of the stars swung the earth

*Life on earth rose to love.*

This is the marvel of life, rising to see and to know.

*Out of your heart, cry wonder: sing that we live.*

-Terry Weston