

2023 February Chalice Circle: Interconnection

Opening Words and Chalice Lighting

"We light this chalice with a flame that draws us together. With this flame, we cut through the darkness of isolation and are warmed by the fires of our interconnection.

For this moment, this radical moment, we find a certainty within the knowable bonds of love and community." - Amy Williams Clark

Song

[LINK](#) to the music; end at 30 sec for the first verse

Well it looks like it might be a hard road but I'm gonna walk it with you
And I know that you might have a heavy load but I can carry some too
I will lift you up when they push you down, I will raise my voice and stand my ground
Well it looks like it might be a hard road but I'm gonna walk it with you

Reading 1

"Cosmos is a Greek word for the order of the universe. It is, in a way, the opposite of Chaos. It implies the deep interconnectedness of all things. It conveys awe for the intricate and subtle way in which the universe is put together." - Author: Carl Sagan

Check-in: Without crosstalk or interruption, briefly describe where you are in your life now, and notice what needs to be shared in order to be fully present in our circle.

Reading 2

"This piece of paper I am holding in my hand is something that exists right now. Can we establish a time and place of birth for this paper? That is very difficult to establish, impossible actually because before it manifested as a piece of paper, it was already here in the form of a tree, of the sun, of a cloud. Without the sun, without the rain, the tree would not have lived, and there would have been no piece of paper, I touch the sun. When I touch this piece of paper, I also touch the clouds. There is a cloud floating in this piece of paper. You do not have to be a poet to see it." — Thich Nhat Hanh

Reading 3

The delicate, flapping wings of a butterfly have the power to set molecules of air in motion, in turn moving more molecules of air—a tiny act that is eventually capable of affecting weather patterns on the other side of the planet. This notion comes from a concept within Chaos Theory called the Butterfly Effect. Simply, the Butterfly Effect refers to a phenomenon in our world in which a small change in one place can result in equal or greater changes elsewhere. This may seem crazy—a tiny butterfly changing global weather -patterns? Not only is the Butterfly Effect a real scientific theory but it's also an intriguing philosophical idea. I say all this because the Butterfly Effect affects the way I live my life and the decisions that I make in a way that no ideas about God ever have.

I'm no meteorologist, nor am I well versed in entomology, but ever since learning about the Butterfly Effect, I have been attracted to it because it demonstrates an important principle that is often forgotten. Namely, each of our actions has effects that are more profound than we think. Interconnection is a major theme found in nearly all of the world's religious and philosophical traditions. The interconnectedness of our universe is also one of the most significant revelations of physics: All components of matter are interconnected, interrelated, and interdependent. As Unitarian Universalists, we affirm and promote our responsibility to remain aware of interconnection through our seventh Principle: respect for the interdependent web of all existence.

Attention to interconnectivity reminds me, despite the many sociopolitical forces that work to divide us

from one another, that I'm never alone in this world. It reminds me that each decision or action I make has reactions, and that those reactions reverberate as waves moving back and forth across our globe. This compels me to live my life aware of the consequences of my daily actions, from the purchases I make to personal inter-actions with others. I certainly do not always succeed, but I try. My awareness of interconnectivity and efforts to work against the illusion of division remain my most significant spir-it-ual practice.

This spiritual practice also gives me the ability to stand in awe of interconnection, in awe of the Butterfly Effect and the power that comes with it. On rare occasions, I am reminded to stop and appreciate the divinity of interconnectivity revealed before my very eyes. This to me is awe-inspiring. This to me is divine. - By Dana Capasso

Questions to Consider

1. What does interconnection mean to you?
2. How and with whom/what do you feel and experience interconnection in your life?
3. What gets in the way of feeling interconnected for you? What facilitates it?

Sitting in Silence: We will sit in silence for 5 minutes. Take this time to reflect on the readings, questions, and theme. Center yourself and consider what you want to share with the group.

Sharing/Deep Listening: Please share your own experiences and thoughts about the topic/readings with no crosstalk or interruption.

Additional Thoughts/Crosstalk: As time allows, after listening to others, do you have additional thoughts to share?

Reading 4

"My brother asked the birds to forgive him: that sounds senseless, but it is right; for all is like an ocean, all is flowing and blending; a touch in one place sets up movement at the other end of the earth. It may be senseless to beg forgiveness of the birds, but birds would be happier at your side – a little happier, anyway – and children and all animals, if you yourself were nobler than you are now. It's all like an ocean, I tell you. Then you would pray to the birds too, consumed by an all-embracing love in a sort of transport, and pray that they too will forgive you your sin." — Fyodor Dostoyevsky, *The Brothers Karamazov*

Checkout: How are you feeling now as we leave this circle?

Closing Words/Extinguishing the Chalice

"God [great spirit that connects us], please help us recognize the threads of love that connect us to our ancestors and to sew new threads for future generations. May we know how lovingly interconnected we are with you and each other." - Nathan Ryan