

Milestones Circle 2023 December 31

Sharing Our Lives Now: Not Dead Yet!

Opening Words and Chalice Lighting:

Excerpt from Backwaters Woods by Mary Oliver

To live in this world
you must be able
to do three things:
to love what is mortal;
to hold it
against your bones knowing
your own life depends on it;
and, when the time comes to let it go,
to let it go.

Song (TBA)

Reading

“I cannot pretend I am without fear. But my predominant feeling is one of gratitude. I have loved and been loved; I have been given much and I have given something in return; I have read and traveled and thought and written. I have had an intercourse with the world, the special intercourse of writers and readers. Above all, I have been a sentient being, a thinking animal, on this beautiful planet, and that in itself has been an enormous privilege and adventure.”

- Oliver Sacks

Welcome & Introductions: The what, who, and why of the Milestones Circle. Older adulthood is a time to take stock of one's journey and to affirm that which is of most importance. It can be a rich time in the lives of adults- a time when we are often open to new learning and discovery, a time of deepening friendships and relationships, a time of theological reflection as we explore questions of meaning and purpose. The Milestones Circle is an open, drop-in small group for older adults to meet, share thoughts and concerns, and receive support and friendship in a UU setting.

Our Covenant Statement:

- We will use “I” statements when speaking and avoid interrupting others while they are speaking.
- What we say in this Circle will be held in confidence so that we all will feel free to share our truth openly.

- We will listen with compassion and empathy because we understand that all human beings are fallible and need the kindness offered in friendship.
 - We acknowledge the right to pass or not share, when that feels appropriate.
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Check-in: State your name and briefly describe where you are in your life now.

Reading: Poem – When Death Comes by Mary Oliver (handout)

Sitting in Silence: *Take this time in silence to reflect on the reading, and the questions to consider which are below. (It is recommended that the song be repeated here.)*

Question to Consider:

1. If I have regrets, can I do anything about them now?
2. My future on earth may be shorter than my past but nevertheless, how can I think of the remaining time in a positive light?
3. Do I have a way to express my creativity? Are there new ways to explore that in my life?
4. Although death may be the end of my personal life story, where can I see that I have made a difference?

Sharing/Listening round our Circle *We will first go around our Circle to ensure that everyone gets an equal opportunity to speak. You may wish to address one of the questions above or you may wish to offer your own unique thoughts on the theme of “Sharing our lives now.”*

Open Discussion/reflections *We will share additional thoughts on our theme, this time in no particular order.*

Last thoughts/Check Out *As time allows, we are invited to give expression to appreciations on the sharing that has been offered or offer our own final thoughts.*

Closing Words and Extinguishing the Chalice: Let me seek then, the gift of silence and solitude, where everything I touch is turned into a prayer: where the sky is my prayer, the birds are my prayer, the wind in the trees is my prayer. - Thomas Merton

Next meeting will be on Sunday, January 28, 2024