

Milestones Circle – July 28, 2024

Sharing Our Lives Now: Even Now, a Work in Progress

Opening Words and Chalice Lighting:

We gather—
We bring our sorrows
our disappointments
our failures.

We gather for healing,
for laughter and
to rejoice.

We gather to find
new ways of loving
new ways of thinking
new ways of being.

We gather—
Yes, always we gather,
for it is in gathering

that we find our hope.

Song (TBA) The Circle Game

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 proposed Covenant Statement: *(to be read silently and discussed if there are questions or concerns.)*

- 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:

“Heads up, elders! It is time to consider the richness of elderhood! Focus on how to age well, making the best of your wisdom, spirit, and connections. Elderhood brings a gift of time for thinking and reflecting, for integrating what we bring from our deep self and our lived experience. Embracing our own wisdom will help us stay focused and connected to the preciousness of life *and* help us deal with the “fast forward” life around us. To be more than a physical body is our birthright. Each of us is also a spiritual being who deep within holds *faith, hope, and love*. Using our spiritual energy and compassionate awareness as tools, we can proudly embrace the tee shirt slogan that says, "Aging Is the Ultimate Extreme Sport."

Attitudes toward older people have varied—and continue to vary—across time and cultures. In some times and places, elders have enjoyed positive acceptance and embrace; in others, the reception has been negative. Traditional Near Eastern and Asian cultures revered their elders. The ancient Greeks valued youth most highly, but the Romans valued their elders' wisdom. The philosopher and orator Cicero lived to an old age of sixty-three and counseled his people, “To your total self, give wholesome nourishment, exercise to the body, and to the brain give reflection of your life choices.”

Life brings difficult losses and challenges. These are painful, but somehow we get through and, in time, can heal from those experiences. We can grow stronger. Our rewards are deepening inner wisdom and strength and understanding of our spiritual underpinnings and the interconnectedness of life. We seekers are part of an interconnected universe. While much about the process of living and dying is unknown, and may always remain a mystery, we can know ourselves, our journey, and the wisdom we have to offer.”

UUA Adult programming excerpt from Hindsight, Humor, and Hope

Let us give reflection to our life choices and share the wisdom we have to offer. Our agenda today is to brainstorm the topics we would like to explore together in the coming months. Please use the paper which has been distributed to you to jot down your thoughts, questions, and interests as we take the next several minutes in a quiet time.

Sharing/Listening round our Circle *We will go around our Circle to ensure that everyone gets an equal opportunity to speak. As you offer your ideas we will compile a list of topics that can be considered.*

Open Discussion/reflections *We will share additional thoughts on the topics offered, 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

Kindle New Sparks

We have basked in the warmth and beauty
of this flame and this community.

As the chalice flame is extinguished,
let us carry its glow within.

Let us kindle new sparks within these walls and beyond.

~By Debra Burrell

Next meeting will be on Sunday, August 25, 2024