

Milestones Circle: Sharing Our Lives Now – August 25, 2024

Volunteering Work In Our Precious Time

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.

As an experiment, we have agreed that if our group exceeds 12 in number we will try splitting into 2 groups for the discussion and coming back together for our sharing of final thoughts. We hope that this move satisfies our goal of allowing enough time for everyone to thoroughly express their personal points of view on the topics.

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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Opening Words and Chalice Lighting: *Gathering in*

Come. Gather.

We need to be together. We yearn for connection.

We hunger for the familiar faces of friends,
the sound of shared voices proclaiming who we are; where we are going;
that which resonates with our hopes, our dreams, our values.

Come. Gather.

We are here, in this moment.

~ Jeff May

Song: Hymn no. 188 - *Come, Come, Whoever You Are*

Check-in: Participants are invited, as we go around our circle, to state your name and to share something important in your life currently. Because we are a community of care, also indicate if there is anything that you might expressly need from this group to address what you have shared. *We might need to take a significant amount of time in our check in with the goal of becoming known and knowing our fellow participants. (approx 20 -30 minutes)*

Following the check in, if necessary, the group will split into two for today's discussion.

Today's topic: Ideas for/about volunteer work

Reading: Excerpt from the website happiness.com/magazine

So, why the interest in volunteering? The Greek philosopher Aristotle once said that the essence of life is “to serve others and do good,” and it seems an increasing number of us are starting to wake up and see why volunteering is important. People are starting to understand how serving and helping each other and different communities benefits not just others but ourselves, too.

Volunteering is important as it offers essential help to worthwhile causes, people in need, and the wider community. Of course, the benefits of volunteering for those receiving help are clear.

But did you realize just how important volunteering could be for the person doing it? In fact, volunteering is beneficial to the doer for a whole host of reasons, including stress reduction, combating depression and providing a sense of purpose.

It's clear the benefits of volunteering are huge – improved physical and mental health, new friends and avoiding loneliness, a sense of purpose and deeper self-confidence. In turn, *all* of these things will help to boost your overall happiness: a win-win situation for all involved.

Have you ever or do you still volunteer now? What are the benefits for you? What did you enjoy most about it?

Questions: You are invited during this time to verbalize the questions in your heart and mind that may spark discussion on our monthly theme. Participants may speak in no particular order. *The facilitator will attempt to record your questions for our consideration. (approx. 10-15 minutes)*

Quiet Reflection: Take a few minutes in silence to reflect on the reading, and the questions to consider which have been expressed. Use the back side of this paper to jot down your thoughts. (2-5 minutes)

Sharing/Listening round our Circle We will first go around our Circle to ensure that everyone gets an equal opportunity to speak. *Please be mindful to allow time for everyone to share. (approx. 20 minutes)*

Open Discussion/reflections We will share additional thoughts on our theme, this time in no particular order. (approx 10 minutes)

Returning together: *We invite each group to provide a synopsis from your separate discussions. (approx. 10 minutes)*

Possible further information? As time allows, please share your recommendations of books, movies, writers, websites, etc. that offer more on today's theme.

Closing Words and Extinguishing the Chalice:

We Are One

Never has it been more true than now:
We extinguish this flame,
But the sparks within us remain alight.
From each of us, in our supposed solitude,
The signals buzz and hum, sparkling through space one to another,
Connecting us invisibly
But palpably.

We are one.
And from every window,
Our light shines.

~Amy Zucker Morgenstern

Next meeting will be on Sunday, September 22, 2024