

Milestones Circle: Sharing Our Lives Now – November 24, 2024

Topic Title: Making Choices for Our Living Arrangements as We Age

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: Reading no. 484 in gray hymnal

Song no. 6 in gray hymnal: Just as Long as I have Breath

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: Why consider changing your living situation. Alternately, how to living well while living alone.

Reading: Some people are naturally happy alone. But for others, being solo is a challenge. If you fall into the latter group, there are ways to become more comfortable with being alone (yes, even if you're a hardcore extrovert).

Regardless of how you feel about being alone, building a good relationship with yourself is a worthy investment. After all, you **do** spend quite a bit of time with yourself, so you might as well learn to enjoy it.

Some people find it especially difficult to be happy while living alone. Sure, it might be a little quiet, and there's no one there to listen to you vent after work or remind you to turn off the stove.

But living solo also has its perks (naked vacuuming, anyone?). Try to take advantage of the physical and mental space that comes with living alone.

Adopting some habits and self-care practices can help you be happy while on your own. This can include finding a creative outlet and improving your coping skills.

Taken from <https://www.healthline.com/health/how-to-be-happy-alone>

While there is no specific age when it's time to leave your home, you should consider it when it becomes unsafe or uncomfortable to live alone. If you are considering a move, you can talk with your doctor, your family, your friends or community members. Health and safety are primary reasons to consider a move. Are you now independent? Do you fore see a time when that won't be possible? Finances and inability to maintain your home without undue stress would be another consideration.

Summarized from various websites (also see handout)

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)*

Use this space to make a note of questions that come to you.

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. (see handout)

Closing Words and Extinguishing the Chalice: Reading no. 701 in gray hymnal

Next meeting will be on Sunday, December 22, 2024