

## Milestones Circle: Sharing Our Lives Now

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**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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## December 22, 2024 Gratitude

**Opening Words and Chalice Lighting:** For the beauty of the earth, for the splendor of the skies, for the love which from our birth over and around us lies: Source of all, to thee we raise this, our hymn of grateful praise.

**Song #346 Come, Sing a Song with Me (first 2 verses only)**

**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: What I Am Thankful For and Why

#### Reading 1:

Gratitude unlocks the fullness of life.

It turns what we have into enough, and more.

It turns denial into acceptance, chaos to order, confusion to clarity.

It can turn a meal into a feast, a house into a home, a stranger into a friend.

Gratitude makes sense of our past, brings peace for today and creates a vision for tomorrow.

By Melody Beattie

**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)*

*If time allows, the Planned Giving Team has provided the following material for Milestones Circle members to consider on the theme of Giving and Receiving:*

**Reading 2:**

Gracious acceptance is an art—an art which most never bother to cultivate. We think that we have to learn how to give, but we forget about accepting things, which can be much harder than giving.... Accepting another person's gift is allowing that person to express feelings for you.

– Alexander McCall Smith

**Reading 3:**

If nature has made you a giver, your hands are born open, and so is your heart; and though there may be times when your hands are empty, your heart is always full, and you can give things out of that—warm things, kind things, sweet things—help and comfort and laughter—and sometimes gay, kind laughter is the best help of all. – Frances Hodgson Burnett

1. Many find it easier to give than receive. What do each mean to you? What are your feelings about each?
2. What messages did you receive from the adults in your family or others close to you about the concepts of giving and receiving? What behaviors were modeled?
3. What are your thoughts about giving to charitable organizations or your church community? Is it important, easy to do, an obligation difficult to do?

**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-**

**Responsive Reading #515 We Lift Up Our Hearts in Thanks**

Next meeting will be on Sunday, January 26, 2025

Topic: Do we need to find a new purpose in our life? How to do that?