

July 27, 2025 Milestones Circle of UUC – Anticipating Our Own Death

Opening Words and Chalice Lighting no. 433

How rare it is, how lovely, this fellowship of those who meet together. ~ Psalm 133

Song Hymn no. 170, verses 1, 2, 5, and 6 We Are a Gentle, Angry People

Check-in: State your name & briefly describe what you are dealing with in your life now.

Reviewing the Covenant of the Milestones Circle

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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Reading

When Death Comes by Mary Oliver

When death comes
Like the hungry bear in autumn;
When death comes and takes all the bright coins from his purse

To buy me, and snaps the purse shut;
When death comes
Like the measles-pox;

When death comes
Like an iceberg between the shoulder blades,

I want to step through the door full of curiosity, wondering;
What is it going to be like, that cottage of darkness?

And therefore I look upon everything
As a brotherhood and a sisterhood,
And I look upon time as no more than an idea,
And I consider eternity as another possibility,

And I think of each life as a flower, as common
As a field daisy, and as singular,

And each name a comfortable music in the mouth,
Tending, as all music does, toward silence,

And each body a lion of courage, and something
Precious to the earth.

When it's over, I want to say: all my life
I was a bride married to amazement.
I was the bridegroom, taking the world into my arms.

When it's over, I don't want to wonder if I have made of my life something particular,
and real.
I don't want to find myself sighing and frightened,
Or full of argument.

I don't want to end up simply having visited this world.

Sitting in Silence: *Take this short 2-3 minutes time in silence to reflect on the reading, and the questions to consider which are below.*

Question to Consider:

1. If you feel comfortable, share stories about the legacy of death coming through your family.
2. How do we face our own decline and death? What preparations have you made or not yet made?
3. How do we feel? Who can you speak freely with about death?

Sharing/Listening around our Circle

Speaking without interruption or crosstalk, 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 day's theme.

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:

“What is really real? We can't say. Buddhism doesn't say. It says practice, live, make your best effort, don't try to figure anything out. Release yourself to a larger, more loving space and see what happens.” ~ Norman Fischer, author

Recommended reading: Being With Dying by Joan Halifax

Thanks to Sharon Lee for today's topic, the book recommendation, and for her collaboration on the order of service

Next meeting will be on Sunday, August 24, 2025 on the topic: *Using our time and energies wisely*. The meeting will be facilitated by Jeanne Murphy

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