

Covenant Setting for the New Chalice Year

What a Chalice Circle is intended to be

- A way to deepen our spirituality through a shared practice.
- A way to share our thoughts on life's big questions.
- A way to connect across age, gender, ethnic, economic and other differences.
- A way to be engaged, included, and heard in a safe, nurturing environment.
- A way to bring together the newer and the longtime members in our community.
- A way to deepen our practice of shared UU principles.
- A way to practice service from within a small community.
- A way to develop our connections with the rest of the congregation.

Chalice Lighting

In the spirit of community and a sense of purpose in our ministry:
Let us commence the discovery of our strengths, our concerns, our grief and our joy.
Let this journey be one of love, authenticity and reverence.
Let us shape our lives, our work and our days as an expression of that joy,
that love and of our commitment to service and to each other.

~ By Laurie Saint

Check-in & Introductions

Without crosstalk or interruption, please introduce yourself, describing where you are in your life now, noticing what needs to be shared in order to be fully present in our circle this year.

Song: "May You Know In Your Bones" [LINK](#)

May you know in your bones
that this earth is your home.
May you feel in your soul
you are worthy and whole.
May you know in your bones
that this earth is your home.
May you feel
that you belong.

Meditation: Center Yourself

Come back to center, that place in you that is still, calm, quiet, and connected.

Your center is a place you can trust. It connects the body, mind, heart, and soul. It connects truth, your inner voice, and the Divine. Your best work comes from there. Your most loving times come from there. Your insights, awarenesses, and guidance come from being there, at that place. Your best decisions and finest moments come from that place.

Your center is a place that is quietly confident, unassuming, spontaneous, and free. It is gentle and kind, but it has the power to defend instinctively against attack.

Your center is a place that is naturally joyful and at peace. It is accepting, nonjudgmental, and it channels the voice of your heart. It knows perfect timing. It knows the rhythm of the universe, the rhythm of all creation, and it delights in its connection to that rhythm.

If you must leave your center to learn a lesson, feel a feeling, or experience something new, do that. Take all the side trips you are called to. But come back to your center when you're done.

And go to your center first, before you go anywhere else.

~ Excerpt from *Journey to the Heart* by Melody Beattie

Reading #1

There is a quality of listening that is possible among a circle of human beings, who by their attentiveness to one another create a space in which each person is able to give voice to the truth of his or her life. There is the miracle of authentic narrative, made possible by listening that holds still long enough to let the truth be told. Where there is this kind of listening and speaking, a new kind of community is born - a community of life.

~ Rebecca Parker, Unitarian theologian

Reading #2 - Tentative Covenant

- We agree to make attendance at the Circle a priority in our lives, and to let the others know by email if we will not be able to attend a meeting.
- We will start and end on time. If we come in late, we will quietly enter and join the Circle in progress.
- What we say in the Circle will be held in confidence. This allows us to be open and share deeply.
- We acknowledge the right to pass or not share if that feels appropriate.
- During sharing time we will practice appreciative listening, without questioning, commenting, cross talk or advice. We will listen non-judgmentally.
- We will use "I" and "my" and "mine" when speaking, owning our own experience.
- We are all responsible for good group process and the character of the Chalice Circle.
- We will do our best to abide by our covenant, but know that we are fallible human beings, and be kind and forgiving with one another if we at times step out of line.

Questions to Consider:

1. What are your hopes for our chalice circle as we enter this new church year together?
2. What do you think makes a small group successful? What might get in the way of connection?
3. In the past, chalice groups have provided service to the church & the broader community. Is this something you think is important for us to continue to do? Do you have ideas about how our group could fulfill this component?
4. Is this covenant something we can all agree to uphold? Do you think any parts of it will be easier or harder to abide by?

Sitting in Silence

We will sit in silence for 5 minutes. Take this time to center yourself, and think about what it means to enter into a covenant with this chalice circle, considering what you would like to share with the group.

Sharing/Deep Listening

Please listen deeply to others & share of your own experience and thoughts on the readings, questions, or theme without crosstalk or interruption. Please ensure everyone gets an equal opportunity to participate.

Second Sharing/Crosstalk

As time allows, after listening to others, do you have additional thoughts to share?

Announcements & Chalice Business

Our next meeting will be ...

Extinguishing the Chalice

As we come to the end of service, may you depart from our time together

Buoyed by the Spirit of Life, delighted by the warmth of our gathering, and renewed in soul and mind.

As we extinguish the flame of our chalice,

may its lingering spark be carried in your heart until we are together again.

~ By Rebekah Savage