

Milestones Circle: Sharing Our Lives Now

26 April 2026 Topic: Opening and Closing Doors

A covenant is a list of the ways the group agrees to be together. The idea is central to Unitarian Universalism. In our Milestones Circle we agree to engage each other in a covenantal relationship. We commit to honoring a purpose, method and format for our group meetings so that we can find meaning and connection. It is the means by which the community is held together. Therefore, we will read and reread our Covenant Statement (below) once every few months in order to remind ourselves of our promises.

Milestones Circle Purpose: The Milestones Circle is an open, drop-in small group for older adults to meet, share thoughts and concerns on a prearranged topic, and receive support and friendship in a UU setting.

Our Milestones Circle Covenant Statement: (as adopted October 26, 2025)

1. We will use “I” statements when speaking and avoid interrupting others while they are speaking. (Crosstalk will only be permitted during the Open Discussion portion of the meeting)
2. What we say in this Circle will be held in confidence so that we all will feel free to share our truth openly.
3. We will listen with compassion and empathy because we understand that all human beings are fallible and need the kindness offered in friendship.
4. We acknowledge the right to pass or not share, when that feels appropriate.
5. We will speak for ourselves and respectfully listen to others during sharing time. (This is not the time for giving advice.)
6. We will monitor the length of our speaking to ensure there is sufficient time for all to share.
7. We will fully and gladly welcome new members to the group.
8. Between meetings, we will keep each other in our thoughts and hearts, reaching out to each other as needed in tangible ways to ensure that we are a caring community for one another.

Opening Words and Chalice Lighting: attributed to Kalidasa, the great Sanskrit poet (375-415 CE)

Look to this day!

For it is life, the very life of life.

In its brief course lie all the verities and realities of your existence:

The bliss of growth, the glory of action, the splendor of beauty;

For yesterday is but a dream, and tomorrow is only a vision; But today, well lived, makes every yesterday a dream of happiness and every tomorrow a vision of hope.

Look well, therefore, to this day.

Hymn no. TBA

Check-in: Please briefly state how you are doing now. *Following the check in, if deemed necessary, the group will split into two for today's discussion.*

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Life is a series of doors, each one offering its own unique opportunities. Opening doors invite adventure. Sometimes the smallest doors lead to the most significant changes. In the act of opening doors, we might find our true strength. There's magic in the moment you decide to open a new door. Open your mind and see the doors everywhere! Embrace the change they bring.

Round 1: When you think about your life so far, what doors did you open? What changes happened that were not necessarily planned, but once made, changed your life for good or for bad?

Think about a time in your life when someone rejected you, when you missed out on something important, or when a big plan collapsed. These would be points in your life when a door closed

Round 2: Now think about what happened after: What doors opened after? What would have never happened if the first door didn't close?

Some doors are heavy. For instance, friendships can be beautiful and fulfilling, but when they become one-sided or emotionally draining, it's natural to question whether continuing them is the right choice. Sometimes, even with the best intentions, people grow apart or simply aren't compatible as friends. Every door closed can be a lesson learned. Closed doors teach resilience! Taking the step to close a door can be healthy and compassionate. It takes courage to let go of the past.

Round 3: What was a conscious decision that you made to end a habit or an addiction, a relationship, or a friendship, or a job, or a career, or an activity that was no longer serving you?

Today, we stand before the door of possibilities. There is more room to learn, more room to grow, more room to love.

Round 4: What can you imagine that might be through a doorway in your near future? Does it help to imagine possibilities? Do you have experience that you might share to help others who are facing similar opportunities or challenges?

Quiet Reflection: Take a few minutes in silence to reflect on the above reading(s), and the questions to consider. You can use the back side of this paper to jot down your thoughts.

Sharing/Listening round our Circle. *Today we will speak in no particular order. Please help to ensure that everyone gets an equal opportunity to speak. We will address each section in order before progressing to the next section. Please limit yourself to the first section before we move on to the second, etc.*

Open Discussion/reflections: You are now invited to share additional thoughts.

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

Check Out: In light of our Covenant item no. 8, this would be the time to share a last word or to make a request of the Circle friends for tangible care from one another. (If you would prefer to make a request privately, please contact the facilitator after the class.)

Closing Words and Extinguishing the Chalice: Closing Words by T. S. Eliot

What we call a beginning is often the end and to make an end is to make a beginning.
The end is where we start from.

We shall not cease from exploration and the end of all our exploring will be to arrive where we started and know the place for the first time.

Next meeting will be on Sunday, May 24, 2026 on the topic: How do you define wisdom? Do you possess wisdom that you would like to pass to the next generation?