

Milestones Circle: Sharing Our Lives Now

DATE: Sept. 27, 2026 Surviving the midterm election cycle.

Facilitated by Kathie Bergman and Steve Mudrick

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: In this Time of Uncertainty

We gather in this time of uncertainty, full of unknowns, as angst closes in upon us.

We light this chalice with a flame that draws us together.

With this flame, we cut through the darkness of isolation and are warmed by the fires of our interconnection.

For this moment, this radical moment, we find a certainty within the knowable bonds of love and community.

By Amy Williams Clark

Check in: Without cross-talk, please state briefly how you are doing now.

Song: Hymn no. 155 –Circle ‘Round for Freedom

Reading #1: *From Our Minister - Sept. 2024 Milestones materials:* “It is a fearful time in the world, in this country, in this ever-weakening democracy. I am reminded of the words of trauma expert Gabor Maté: “Safety is not the absence of threat; it is the presence of connection.” It seems clear that tensions will only continue to heighten in our public life between now and the (Presidential) election in November. It is natural for us to be feeling anxious and even afraid. Amid all of the sound and fury, the most grounding thing we can do is lean into connection, remembering that whatever happens, our safety and thriving comes most powerfully from each other. When you feel yourself getting activated, think about how connection can soothe you: can you spend centering time with a loved one, with a pet, with the earth, with your congregation or other communities, and/or with your own deepest self? From that connected place, we can turn away from the noise and turn back to building the resilient, loving, liberationist communities that know and live the truth that all of us need all of us to make it.”

Reading #2: “Don’t mourn- organize!” Do something, don’t just think about the negatives.

From a Deathpenaltyaction.org email Sept. 7, 2026, a quote: I’ll close by quoting Joe Hill, a labor organizer arrested in Utah for a murder he always denied committing. Convicted on controversial, largely circumstantial evidence and executed by a firing squad in 1915, he famously sent a final telegram to a fellow organizer, writing “Don’t waste any time in mourning – organize.”

Reading #3: “Learn the details about the issues and candidates on the ballot, so you are confident when you vote. Make sure you can vote; that you are registered and you know how and where your voting place is located so there won’t be any surprises on election day. After you’ve made your plan try to ignore all the “noise” you will hear between now and the election. Take long walks, listen to soothing music, play with kids and/or pets, distract yourself! Finally, encourage others to prepare and to vote!”~~Stephen Mudrick

Questions to consider:

1. Are you or are you not feeling anxious with this election season?
2. How are you coping currently with any anxieties regarding the election? Can you share your strategies?
3. After the election, do you have ways that you can cope with any disappointment?
4. Can you suggest reliable and unbiased sources for information about candidates and issues?

Meditation/Quiet Reflection: We will take a few minutes in silence to reflect on the readings, and on the questions to consider. If you wish, use the back side of this paper to jot down your thoughts.

Sharing/Listening round our Circle. Choose one or more questions to answer or choose to speak on a related topic. We will first go around our Circle to ensure that everyone gets an equal opportunity to speak. Please be cognizant that this is not the time for “crosstalk.”

Sharing part 2: Thoughts and Questions: You are invited during this time to *verbalize the questions or comments* in your heart and mind that may spark discussion on our monthly theme. Participants may speak in no particular order and respond to each other, respectfully.

Sharing part 3: 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: This is the time to share a last word or to make a request of the Circle friends for tangible care from one another.

Closing Words and Extinguishing the Chalice:

Take courage friends.

The way is often hard, the path is never clear,
and the stakes are very high.

Take courage.

For deep down, there is another truth:
you are not alone.

By Wayne B. Amason, UU minister

Next meeting: Oct. 25, 2026 How to understand the impact of AI in our lives?

Facilitated by Barbara Boshard