

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.

Brief Explanation of Your Chalice Circle

Introduce facilitators & note any special features or considerations for your group. We will meet regularly, using an order of service that follows the themes of the Sunday church service in a predictable format with chalice lighting, song, check-in, readings, sitting in silence, and time for sharing without crosstalk or interruption.

Chalice Lighting - by Shari Woodbury

The flame we gaze upon is held aloft
in a cup of communal covenant.
It calls us all to a relational way of being,
in which issues are communicated with care,
are received with grace, and are resolved in keeping
with our values of mutual respect and accountability.
In this spirit we meet one another
and begin.

(Optional) Song: #188 from *Singing the Living Tradition* "Come, Come, Whoever You Are" ([LINK](#))

Come, come, whoever you are,
wanderer, worshiper, lover of leaving.
Ours is no caravan of despair.
Come, yet again come.

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.

Tentative Covenant

- We agree to make attendance at the Circle a priority in our lives, and to let the others know 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 speak from the heart as well as the intellect and monitor the length and frequency of our speaking to ensure there is sufficient time for everyone to share.
- Between meetings, we will keep each other in our thoughts and hearts, reaching out to each other as needed to ensure that we are a caring community for one another.
- We fully and gladly welcome new members into the group when the group is not at capacity.
- When it is time to leave the group, we will let the group know and allow the group to say goodbye.
- 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.

Question to Consider

Is this covenant something we can all agree to uphold? Do you have any questions or suggest any changes to the covenant?

Sitting in Silence

We will sit in silence for 3 minutes. Take this time to center yourself, and think about what it means to enter into a covenant with this chalice circle.

Adopting the Covenant

Please listen fully to others & share your own thoughts and feelings about entering a covenant with this group. Please ensure everyone has an opportunity to formally adopt the covenant.

Reading 1

It is
 It is good
 It is good to be
 It is good to be here
 It is good to be here together
 It is good to be here together today

UCC Worship Arc 2026-2027

"You are here.
 We are here."

Purpose: Re-locating ourselves, in a time of disorientation.
 Re-rooting ourselves in earth and place.

Theological touchstones: The sacredness of every place and person.
 The aliveness of the whole world.
 Deeper time and clearer attention.

Reading 2

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

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 about the planned Worship Arc for the 2026-27 year? What might it mean to believe in the sacredness of every place and person?
3. When/Have you been 'able to give voice to the truth of [your] life'? When/Have you been able to do 'listening that holds still long enough to let the truth be told'? What can we learn about ourselves and each other by speaking and listening in this way, without interruption, advice or judgement?
4. In the past, chalice groups have provided service to the church & the broader community. Do you have ideas about how our group could fulfill this component?

Sitting in Silence

We will sit in silence for 3 minutes. Take this time to center yourself, and think about what it means to enter into a covenant with this chalice circle.

Sharing/Deep Listening

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

Announcements & Chalice Business

Our next meeting will be ...

Checkout: How are you feeling now as you leave the circle? Or, what is one thing you are taking with you into the weeks ahead?

Extinguishing the Chalice - by Craig Rowland

As we extinguish this flame,
Let us carry its glow into the choices ahead.
Happiness grows not from comfort,
But from connection,
From feeling valued to ourselves and others,
From enlarging our sympathies,
From embracing a life of affection and purpose.

We go forward not alone,
But as companions in covenant,
Tending to the common good
With hope, with humor, and with heart.