

UUCChalice Circles - September 2026
Theme: Toes in the Water at Grindstone Creek
Flow, Letting Go, Unfolding, Allowing

“You are here. We are here.”
Relocating 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.

Chalice Lighting

We light this chalice as a symbol of reunion.
We reunite in this sacred space to share the flow of our hearts with one another.
We gather together in ritual
to celebrate our fountains of joy
to hold each other through storms of grief
to guide one another through rapids of transformation
to rest together on ponds of stillness.
Together, we honor the spirit of water, its many forms, and its life-giving essence.

By Katie Sivani Gelfand

Song

A Water Hymn
By Milck

Water be my teacher;
Water carry me.
Teach me transformation;
Take me to the sea.
Show me how you break through rock,
Flow around what tires to block.
Water be my teacher;
Water carry me.

Hear the song at this link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WF_cZfQ3r_g

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 today.

Readings:

1. First Lesson

by Philip Booth

Lie back, daughter, let your head
be tipped back in the cup of my hand.
Gently, and I will hold you. Spread
your arms wide, lie out on the stream
and look high at the gulls. A dead-
man's-float is face down. You will dive
and swim soon enough where this tidewater
ebbs to the sea. Daughter, believe
me, when you tire on the long thrash
to your island, lie up, and survive.
As you float now, where I held you
and let go, remember when fear
cramps your heart what I told you:
lie gently and wide to the light-year
stars, lie back, and the sea will hold you.

2. Selected quotations from Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi [say “Me-High Cheek-Sent-Me-High”], *Flow: The Psychology of Optimal Experience*

“A joyful life is an individual creation that cannot be copied from a recipe.”

“I developed a theory of optimal experience based on the concept of flow — the state in which people are so involved in an activity that nothing else seems to matter; the experience itself is so enjoyable that people will do it even at great cost, for the sheer sake of doing it.”

“Flow is being completely involved in an activity for its own sake. The ego falls away. Time flies. Every action, movement, and thought follows inevitably from the previous one, like playing jazz.”

“Flow helps to integrate the self because in that state of deep concentration consciousness is unusually well ordered. Thoughts, intentions, feelings, and all the senses are focused on the same goal. Experience is in harmony.”

“The best moments in our lives, are not the passive, receptive, relaxing times— although such experiences can also be enjoyable, if we have worked hard to attain them. The best moments usually occur when a person’s body or mind is stretched to its limits in a voluntary effort to accomplish something difficult and worthwhile.”

“Optimal experience is thus something that we make happen. For a child, it could be placing with trembling fingers the last block on a tower she has built, higher than any she has built so far; for a swimmer, it could be trying to beat his own record; for a violinist, mastering an intricate musical passage. For each person there are thousands of opportunities, challenges to expand ourselves.”

“If one has failed to develop curiosity and interest in the early years, it is a good idea to acquire them now, before it is too late to improve the quality of life. To do so is fairly

easy in principle, but more difficult in practice. Yet it is sure worth trying. The first step is to develop the habit of doing whatever needs to be done with concentrated attention, with skill rather than inertia. Even the most routine tasks, like washing dishes, dressing, or mowing the lawn become more rewarding if we approach them with the care it would take to make a work of art. The next step is to transfer some psychic energy each day from tasks that we don't like doing, or from passive leisure, into something we never did before, or something we enjoy doing but don't do often enough because it seems too much trouble. There are literally millions of potentially interesting things in the world to see, to do, to learn about. But they don't become actually interesting until we devote attention to them."

"Lost in Antarctica or confined to a prison cell, some individuals succeed in transforming their harrowing conditions into a manageable and even enjoyable struggle, whereas most others would succumb to the ordeal. Richard Logan, who has studied the accounts of many people in difficult situations, concludes that they survived by finding ways to turn the bleak objective conditions into subjectively controllable experience. They followed the blueprint of flow activities. First, they paid close attention to the most minute details of their environment, discovering in it hidden opportunities for action that matched what little they were capable of doing, given the circumstances. Then they set goals appropriate to their precarious situation, and closely monitored progress through the feedback they received. Whenever they reached their goal, they upped the ante, setting increasingly complex challenges for themselves."

Sitting in Silence

We will sit in silence for 3 minutes. Take this time to center yourself, and think about the readings and your reaction to them. Consider the following questions:

Questions to Consider

1. Can you remember learning to swim or teaching someone to swim? How might that relate to the theme and readings?
2. Can you think of a time when fear cramped your heart and you were able to lie back and release, to move on effectively? If so, please explain.
3. Can you remember a time when you dipped your toes in the water, either literally or metaphorically, taking a risk or trying something new? If so, please describe it.
4. Describe a time when you've been in a flow experience. What do you believe facilitated that? Is this something you experience often or rarely?
5. Have you ever used a piece of music to elicit a flow experience? If so, what type of music or what specific music did you use?

Sharing/Deep Listening:

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

Checkout: What are you taking with you as you leave the circle?

Announcements & Chalice Business

Our next meeting will be ...

Extinguishing the Chalice

As we extinguish this chalice, although we go our separate ways, we know that we remain connected in an organic way, just as the water is all of one body.

In the river, the water continually flows on, yet the river is ever there.

“Our lives flow on in endless song,” yet life and joy shall never end.

Quotation from the traditional Quaker song, “My Life Flows on in Endless Song,” #108 in Singing the Living Tradition. By John C Morgan