

## Kindness—UUFVB Covenant Groups—May 2017

### Chalice Lighting

May we know once again that we are not isolated beings,  
but connected, in mystery and miracle,  
to the universe, to this community and to each other.

### Check-in: How is your spirit right now?

### Opening Readings

One of the most difficult things to give away is kindness as it is usually returned. (*Joseph Joubert*)

Constant kindness can accomplish much. As the sun makes ice melt, kindness causes misunderstanding, mistrust, and hostility to evaporate. (*Albert Schweitzer*)

When we feel love and kindness toward others, it not only makes others feel loved and cared for, but it helps us also to develop inner happiness and peace. (*the Dalai Lama*)

Kindness is twice blessed. It blesses the one who gives it with a sense of his or her own capacity to love, and the person who receives it with a sense of the beneficence of the universe.

(*Dawna Markova*)

Remember there's no such thing as a small act of kindness. Every act creates a ripple with no logical end.

(*Scott Adams*)

You cannot do a kindness too soon, for you never know how soon it will be too late.

(*Ralph Waldo Emerson*)

### Topic Exploration

There seems to be universal agreement that kindness is a virtue. From its inclusion in the Knights Code of Chivalry, Aristotle's *Rhetoric*, as well as numerous Christian and Buddhist stories and texts, we know that kindness has historically been seen as beneficial to mankind. Its practice benefits both the giver and the receiver. The practice of kindness has also been identified as instrumental in an evolutionary sense, ultimately easing the way for early humans to live in groups by strengthening the bonds of relationship between individuals and, more importantly, within the group itself. When we are kind to someone outside our group, we strengthen the relationship between groups. Some scientists have theorized that the tendency to be kind is actually a genetically based survival tool.

It has been said that the practice of kindness is easier than for other virtues. Opportunities abound, from random acts of kindness (clearing someone's plate or letting someone into traffic), to actions that require more of ourselves, such as stopping to help at a traffic accident or volunteering to rebuild after a flood. Yet, with all of its obvious individual and social rewards, kindness is not always the automatic response.

**Moment of Silence:** Let us take a few minutes to reflect upon the impact of kindness in our lives.

### **Questions / Sharing**

1. What does kindness mean to you?
2. Describe an incident when someone's kindness toward you changed your life.
3. What gets in the way of our being kind all of the time?
4. Describe a time when you were kind to someone who had hurt you in the past or with whom you were not on good terms. What were the repercussions?
5. What motivates you to be kind to people you do not like or simply find annoying?
6. Why do you think some people have difficulty accepting kindness?
7. How have people been kind to you today? Can you think of any recent missed opportunities to do the same for others?

### **Closing Reading**

I expect to pass through life just once. If therefore, there be any kindness I can show, or any good things I can do to any fellow being, let me do it now, and not defer or neglect it, as I shall not pass this way again.

*(William Penn)*

### **Singing together**

*May I be filled with loving kindness, may I be well*

*May you be filled with loving kindness, may you be well*

*May we be filled with loving kindness, may we be well*

### **Check- out and reflection on today's session**

#### **Extinguish the Chalice**

We extinguish this flame but not the light of truth,  
the warmth of community, or the fire of commitment.  
These we carry in our hearts until we are together again.

### **Housekeeping**