

Arts in Society—UUFVB Covenant Groups--March 2018

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?

Centering: Find a stillness, hold a stillness, let this moment of silence ease your soul.

Opening Reading

"Every child is an artist. The challenge is to remain an artist after you grow up. Art washes away from the soul the dust of everyday life." (*Pablo Picasso*)

Topic Exploration: Five reasons why we need art (*adapted from SpeakArtLoud/wordpress.com*)

A. Art is a Natural Human Behavior: Creating art is a primal behavior. Children the world over instinctively make art. Every culture has art. Like language and laughter, art is a fundamental human behavior. Put very simply, art is a part of who we are. **We need art because it makes us complete human beings.**

B. Art is Communication: Art, like language, is a medium to express ideas and to share information. Art offers us a method to communicate what we may not necessarily fully understand or know how to express. Art helps us to share thoughts, ideas and visions that may not be able to be articulated any other way. **We need art to have a full range of expression.**

C. Art is Healing: Creating or experiencing art can relax and sooth us or it may enliven and stimulate us. The process of creating art engages both the body and the mind and provides us with time to look inward and reflect. Experiencing art also gives us reason to think and be reflective or may inspire us to get up and dance. Art provides a release, a place for reflection and a way to engage our whole selves. Further, art therapy is used as effective treatment of persons of all ages, particularly those who are disabled or disturbed. **We need art to keep us healthy.**

D. Art Tells Our Story: Art is a history lesson, an historical record, a preservation of culture, and an autobiography all in one. Art documents events and experiences and allows us a richer understanding of history. Art reflects cultural values, beliefs and identity and helps to preserve the many different communities that make up our world. Art chronicles our own lives and experiences over time. **We need art to understand our individual and shared history.**

E. Art is a Shared Experience: The creation of art is a collective activity. Art forms such as dance, theatre and choir all require a group of artists and an audience. Even the solitary painter or poet relies upon the craft of the paint-maker or book-binder to help create art. Art

offers us a reason to come together and share in an experience. **We need art to keep us connected.**

Take a moment to reflect on the following questions before sharing as you wish:

Questions and Sharing

1. What is your experience in creating art? Do you have artists in your immediate family? How have they enriched your life?
2. Art can be expressed in multiple ways—in architecture, singing, acting, dancing, writing, animation, book illustration, product design, painting, sculpture—the list is long and varied. What is your favorite form of art and why?
3. Is it comfortable for you to think of art in broad terms, say, beyond painting and sculpture? Describe other mediums that have proved meaningful to you.
4. Have you been emotionally affected by some form of art? If so, share that experience.
5. What have you observed about the art of different cultures?
6. Give examples of how you think art has reflected human history.
7. Do you think art, art history or art appreciation should be taught in the public schools? If so, what, or in what format, and in what grades? Did you have such classes in your elementary or secondary school?

Closing Reading

“Arts education not only enhances students' understanding of the world around them, but it also broadens their perspective on traditional academics. The arts give us the creativity to express ourselves, while challenging our intellect. The arts integrate life and learning for all students and are integral in the development of the whole person. The Arts communicate and speak to us in ways that teach literacy and enhance our lives. We must continue to find a place for arts programs and partnerships not only for what it teaches students about art, but for what it teaches us all about the world we live in.”

*(Dr. Terry Bergeson, State Superintendent of Public Instruction,
Washington State, November 2001)*

Check-out and reflections on today's session: Were your needs for connection and spiritual growth met by this session? Do you feel your voice was heard?

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