

Compassion—UUFVB Covenant Groups—October 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

Spirit of life, be present with us as **compassion**,
that we may open our hearts, listen deeply, and be truly present with one another.
Spirit of life and love that lives in us and in all people, be present with us this day.
Help us to be grateful for all that we have,
grateful for this time of connection,
grateful for these friends, and for all who enrich our lives.
Be present with us as generosity of spirit,
that we may meet the world with good will.
Be present with us as vision,
so that we may see beyond this moment
and beyond the limits of our own day to day concerns,
and remember, once again, that we are part of a larger world, and all that lies therein.

Topic Exploration

A compassionate attitude can greatly reduce the distress people feel in difficult situations and can become a profound personal resource in times of stress. Nelson Mandela, in prison for 27 years, forgave his jailers; Martin Luther King, Jr., forgave his persecutors.

A. Do you think of compassion as something so large and grand that you could never be like these men? Discuss your general ideas about compassion.

One of the goals of Small Group Ministry is to get to know one another better and to show compassion and caring support to one another. Each person may have a different approach to the sharing of personal information and have different needs when they are in the midst of transition, challenge or crisis.

B. When **you** are going through a difficult time, what are the signs? (For example, do you seek advice, silent withdrawal, cry, lash out, etc.)

C. How do you best like compassion to be shown to you? (For example, do you need space, want someone to reflect on when they've felt like that, bow in silence, enjoy receiving a phone call, written note, caring touch, etc.)

D. What is most important for the group to understand about you so they can offer you the kind of compassion that is most appropriate for you in times of need?

E. Remember a moment when you could have been more compassionate. How can you forgive yourself for that situation?

Questions / Sharing: Describe your “compassion” under the following circumstances

1. How is your compassion evoked and expressed when you hear about sex slaves, abusive practices by some ethnic groups toward women, or kidnapping young boys for military service?
2. How did you feel after 9/11? What was your first impulse, second?
3. How did you feel when a President you did not like was elected?
4. What if your spouse, out of the blue, said they wanted a divorce or separation or another betrayal occurred? What role would compassion play in each circumstance?
5. How would you feel if your child, when he/she was young, said they were running away from home and didn't like you? Or what if they said similar things later in life?

Closing Readings

“Being unwanted, unloved, uncared for, forgotten by everybody—I think that is a much greater hunger, a much greater poverty than the person who has nothing to eat. (*Mother Theresa*)

“Love and compassion are necessities, not luxuries. Without them, humanity cannot survive.” (*His Holiness the XIVth Dalai Lama*)

“What makes a person **compassionate**? Really, the only way to tell is by his or her actions. And those actions come from having an open and giving heart.” (Jack Cornfield)

*May you be held in compassion.
May your pain and sorrow be eased.
May your heart be at peace.*

*May I be held in compassion.
May my pain and sorrow be eased.
May I be at peace.
(Jack Cornfield)*

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