

Tidying-Up—UUFVB Covenant Groups—July 2020

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: What is most on your mind today?

Opening Reading

What sort of day was this?

Did you return home empty handed:
arms full of groceries, the newspaper,
empty gossip, work-weariness,
worries about the economy, the weather,
the high cost of gasoline?

What sort of day was this?

Was your heart's basket filled:
seeds for spring, flowers for the table,
lunch with a good friend, a book of poems,
a candle with a jasmine scent,
something like a prayer for a child?

Treasures: as tangible as art, as soft as love - What do you bring into your home?
And, what might you leave at the door?

This is about intention.
And choice.

This is about your soul, your body, your home.
What do you bring into it?

(The Rev. Glenn H. Turner, UU minister and Small Group Ministry Consultant)

Topic Exploration: In her 2014 book and subsequent television series, The Life-changing Magic of Tidying-up: the Japanese Art of Decluttering and Organizing, Marie Kondo laid out in great detail her much-touted method for creating order in any physical space in a relatively short period of time. She recommends tidying by category (clothing, books, papers, miscellany and mementos) rather than by room and to begin with things that have the least emotional attachment. The author is perhaps most famous for her admonition to “take each item in one’s hand and ask: ‘Does this spark joy?’ If it does, keep it, if not, dispose of it.”

Ms Kondo postulates that decluttering your external environment has a profound effect on your inner life. She states, “When you put your house in order, you put your affairs and your past in order, too.” The author further asserts that if you cannot find contentment in a clean and tidy house

surrounded only by things you love, it is possible that your previously-cluttered state was helping to mask unresolved issues in your life.

“It is only when we face the things we own one by one and experience the emotions they invoke that we can truly appreciate our relationship with them...we can...face them now, face them sometime, or avoid them until the day we die,” concludes Marie Kondo.

Questions / Sharing

1. How does finding yourself in the midst of clutter make you feel? And conversely, do you feel any differently when your personal space is more orderly?
2. What do you think about Marie Kondo’s suggestion that we only hold onto an object if it gives us joy? What is your definition of joy?
3. What makes you feel more secure, having just what you need or having an abundance, “just in case”?
4. Ms. Kondo believes that there are only two reasons for holding on to superfluous items, an attachment to the past, or a fear of the future. Can you think of any other reasons one might accumulate items? Does either factor play a role in your decision-making regarding holding on or letting go?
5. What do you hold on to and why?
6. When you envision an orderly environment, is it necessarily clean? Do you see a connection between the terms “orderly” and “clean”?

Closing Reading

Eyes blinded by the fog of things
Cannot see truth.
Ears deafened by the din of things
Cannot hear truth.
Brains bewildered by the whirl of things
Cannot think truth.
Hearts deadened by the weight of things
Cannot feel truth.
Throats choked by the dust of things
Cannot speak truth.

(Harold Bell Wright, pastor and writer of early 20th Century fiction)

Check-out and reflections on today’s session

Please take a moment to express your closing thoughts on the content or process of 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