

## Retirement: the Reality—UUFVB Covenant Groups—August 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 Readings

“In the beginning, there was no retirement. There were no old people. In the Stone Age, everyone was fully employed until age 20, by which time nearly everyone was dead, usually of unnatural causes. Any early man who lived long enough to develop crow's-feet was either worshipped or eaten as a sign of respect. Even in Biblical times, when a fair number of people made it into old age, retirement still had not been invented and respect for old people remained high. In those days, it was customary to carry on until you dropped, regardless of your age group -- no shuffleboard, no Airstream trailer. When a patriarch could no longer farm, herd cattle or pitch a tent, he opted for more specialized, less labor-intensive work, like prophesying and handing down commandments. Or he moved in with his kids.”

*(“The History of Retirement, From Early Man to AARP,” by Mary-Lou Weisman, New York Times, March 21, 1999)*

### Topic Exploration

Now, let's explore what the reality of retirement looks like today. If you're approaching retirement, you probably have expectations about what that will be like. If you're already retired, that status may be quite different from what you expected, or everything you dreamed of. Let's share our ideas about expectations and reality on all significant levels, including economic conditions, personal relationships, health care and housing.

### Questions / Sharing

1. What strategic planning was helpful to you before retirement—or did you do that planning?
2. How did you choose where to retire and what type of living arrangement you would have? House, condo, senior living, the expat life? What are the pros and cons?
3. What has surprised you most about retirement? What were your most difficult adjustments?
4. What system have you found helpful for adapting to changing physical, mental/emotional, or lifestyle needs regarding, for instance, housing, downsizing, transportation, etc.?

5. What are good approaches for surviving and enjoying retirement as a single person or a couple? What, do you think, is the key to having a satisfying retirement?
6. Do you think retirement expectations are different for men and women? Can you have too much together time?
7. What advice would you give to those approaching retirement?

### **Closing Reading**

AND SO, WHILE OTHERS  
MISERABLY PLEDGE THEMSELVES  
TO THE PURSUIT OF AMBITION  
AND BRIEF POWER,  
I WILL BE STRETCHED OUT IN THE SHADE,  
SINGING.

*(Fray Luis de Leon (c. 1527-1591,  
Augustinian friar and Spanish lyric poet)*

**Check-out and reflections on today's session:** Please express any 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**