

Turning Points—UUFVB Covenant Groups—October 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

I shall be telling this with a sigh
Somewhere ages and ages hence: Two roads diverged in a wood.
And I – I took the one less travelled by,
And that has made all the difference.

(Robert Frost, American poet 1874-1963)

Topic Exploration

The idea of turning points in our lives is a powerful one. We can experience turning points in our private lives, our spiritual lives, and our educational as well as professional lives. At certain points, big events happen that can irrevocably alter our life paths. Meeting a mentor leads to a new career; a chance encounter at a café leads to a marriage proposal; an accident shatters one's dreams to be an athlete and leads to a new path in life. While many fear these directional changes, others embrace these shifts in life circumstances, or forks in the road, as huge opportunities. Turning points, while they often come from moments of darkness, can steer us in the direction of great light.

(Adapted from an article by Gini Graham Scott, American author and sociologist)

Questions / Sharing

"In a chronically-leaking boat, energy devoted to changing vessels is more productive than energy devoted to patching leaks." *(Warren Buffett, American business magnate)*

1. How might you relate this quote to a turning point you've experienced? Personal relationship, job or profession, religion, politics?
2. Think back on your own life. Are there experiences that stand out as critical turning points for you; incidents you think of as life-changing? Where would you be today if an alternative choice had been made?
3. What events or relationships generated the decisions that changed the direction of your life?
4. Could you share any past turning-point decisions that you regret?

5. How carefully do we make significant decisions? What part is rational and what part emotional?
6. When were you successful in pursuing a new direction? How comfortable are you living with your decisions?

Closing Reading

The Journey

One day you finally knew
what you had to do, and began,
though the voices around you
kept shouting
their bad advice –
though the whole house
began to tremble
and you felt the old tug
at your ankles.
“Mend my life!”
each voice cried.
But you didn’t stop.
You knew what you had to do,
though the wind pried
with its stiff fingers
at the very foundations,
though their melancholy
was terrible.

It was already late
enough, and a wild night,
and the road full of fallen
branches and stones.
But little by little,
as you left their voices behind,
the stars began to burn
through the sheets of clouds,
and there was a new voice
which you slowly
recognized as your own,
that kept you company
as you strode deeper and deeper
into the world,
determined to do
the only thing you could do –
determined to save
the only life you could save.

(Mary Oliver, American 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