

UUCR Small Group Ministry Session Plan
December: LOVE

May your time together deepen your connections – mind, heart and spirit! -Rev. Rebekah

CHALICE OR CANDLE LIGHTING

MOMENT OF SILENCE

OPENING WORDS (by Rev. Jennifer Kitchen)

Come sit by our fire and let us share stories.

Let me hear your tales of far off lands, wanderer, and I will tell you of my travels. Share your experience of the holy with me, worshipper, and I will tell you of that which I find divine.

Come and stay, lover of leaving, for ours is no caravan of despair, but of hope.

We would hear your stories of grief and sorrow as readily as those of joy and laughter, for there is a time and a place and a hearing for all the stories of this world.

Stories are the breath and word of the spirit of life, that power that we name love.

Come, for our fire is warm and we have seats for all.

*Come, again and yet again, come speak to me of what fills your heart,
what engages your mind, what resides in your soul.*

CHECK-IN

READING:

“The spiritual meaning of love is measured by what it can do. Love is meant to heal. Love is meant to renew. Love is meant to bring us closer to God.” ~*Marcus Aurelius*

“To see the universal and all pervading Spirit of Truth face to face, one must be able to love the meanest of all creation as oneself.” ~*Mahatma Gandhi*

“Love is the spiritual essence of what we do. Technique is the manifestation of the preparation and investment as a result of the love.” ~*Wynton Marsalis*

“Where there is love, there is vulnerability to pain.” ~*Laura Ramirez*

“You can search throughout the entire universe for someone who is more deserving of your love and affection than you are yourself, and that person is not to be found anywhere. You, yourself, as much as anybody in the entire universe, deserve your love and affection.” ~*Buddha*

“Love is the burning point of life, and since all life is sorrowful, so is love. The stronger the love, the more the pain. Love itself is pain, you might say -the pain of being truly alive.” ~*Joseph Campbell*

“What we have once enjoyed and deeply loved we can never lose, for all that we love deeply becomes a part of us.” ~*Helen Keller*

“There is no love without forgiveness, and there is no forgiveness without love.” ~Bryant H. McGill

“Love is divine only and difficult always. If you think it is easy you are a fool. If you think it is natural you are blind.” ~Toni Morrison

“There is always some madness in love. But there is also always some reason in madness.”
~Friedrich Nietzsche

“In the end, only three things matter: how much you loved, how gently you lived, and how gracefully you let go of things not meant for you.” ~The Buddha

MOMENT OF SILENT REFLECTION

QUESTIONS and REQUESTS (Please respond to any of the questions you feel moved by. It is not necessary to respond to all of them.)

- ❖ How have you experienced love in your life? What do you truly value in “love”?
- ❖ How does “love” relate to community as a spiritual principle? How do you see and feel the sacred and holy in “love”?
- ❖ If you were to ignite more love in your life right now, what would you do differently?
- ❖ Love is often linked to acceptance of self/others and forgiveness of self/others. How does acceptance and forgiveness block or blossom in your heart?
- ❖ Where do you turn when love wanes?
- ❖ What is your most bold vision of love in the world and how are you living this?

SHARING (up to 6 to 8 minutes each without interruption, depending on the time available, with optional open discussion at the end after all have shared)

MOMENT OF SILENT GRATITUDE

LIKES (celebrations, gratitudes, appreciations for needs met) and WISHES (mournings, requests, acknowledgements of needs not met)

CHECK-OUT (a few words or phrases from each who wants to share)

CLOSING WORDS (by Israel Buffardi)

My friends, when you go from here know that our hearts are always in a holy place, for we are always connected to one another.

Know that deep down, our hearts beat in one universal rhythm.

May we each find the sacred space to hear it.

EXTINGUISH THE CHALICE OR CANDLE