

ATONEMENT (inspired by the sermon preached by Rev. Patierno on Oct 9th, 2011, for Yom Kippur, “We Begin Again in Love”)

OPENING WORDS & CHALICE LIGHTING:

The heart of most spiritual practice is just this:
Remember. Remember who you are.
Remember what you love. Remember what is sacred. Remember what is true.
Remember that you will die and each day is a gift.
Remember how you wish to live.

~Wayne Nummer

PURPOSE: We come together to build connections and to talk about what deeply matters.

CHECK IN: *Take a minute or two to share briefly the high and low points in your life since we last met.* What are you leaving behind to be here today?

READING OF GROUP COVENANT

FOCUS: Atonement

Each person in the group speaks uninterrupted; if time remains, general response and conversation are welcome.

The beginning of atonement is the sense of its necessity. ~Lord Byron

Yom Kippur atones only for sins between man and G-d, not for sins against another person. To atone for sins against another person, you must first seek reconciliation with that person, righting the wrongs you committed against them if possible. That must all be done before Yom Kippur.

Questions for Reflection (inspired by the sermon preached by Rev. Patierno on Oct.9th for Yom Kippur, “We Begin Again in Love”)

1. From the sermon: “Wisdom says that apologizing doesn’t always mean that you’re wrong or the other person is right. It just means that you value your relationship more than your ego.”

Speak about a time that this was true for you.

2. Again from the sermon: “Atonement is nothing without change. Today we atone. Who will we be tomorrow? We will be better for it. If we take this act seriously, it is not easy. It is ...intricate and heart wrenching... But there is a beauty in it that will not be denied. We re-emerge lighter. Cleansed. We are invited to let go of all that holds us down.”

Speak about a time when apologizing or atoning for something you had done changed you.

3. In the responsive reading, “A Litany of Atonement”, the congregation replies each time, “We forgive ourselves and each other; we begin again in love.” Speak about a time when you found you had to forgive yourself.

CONFIDENTIALITY CHECK: Is there anything that you shared here today that you would like held confidential? Otherwise, this is a reminder that we treat each other’s sharing with kindness and respect.

CLOSING WORDS:

“The great gift the Jewish people have given me, through the Days of Awe, Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, is the reminder that each year, even each new day, brings with it the hope for transformation, for possibility, for forgiveness and acceptance. And that when we bring those qualities of acceptance and forgiveness to our religious community, all of us grow and become better people.” ~ Rev. Barbara Wells, Paint Branch UU Church