

## ENDINGS AND LEAVE TAKING (adapted from UU Church, Eugene, OR)

### OPENING WORDS & CHALICE LIGHTING:

We seek the courage and compassion to hear with care the memories and current experiences we share with each other. We wish to be a community of understanding, hope, and support. May we find ways for our stories to enrich our connection and enhance our appreciation of each other.

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

CHECK IN: What you share may be about your physical or spiritual health, cares or concerns for loved ones, issues you are facing. What are you leaving behind to be here today?

### READING OF GROUP COVENANT

FOCUS: Endings and leave-taking

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

“I wanted a perfect ending. Now I've learned, the hard way, that some poems don't rhyme, and some stories don't have a clear beginning, middle, and end. Life is about not knowing, having to change, taking the moment and making the best of it, without knowing what's going to happen next.”

--Gilda Radner

### On Leaf-Taking and Leave-Taking

As frost and wind take leaves from trees,  
Stripping them naked and bare  
For discontentful Winter;  
So also does a goodbye  
Leave the parters unclothed  
And comfortless for a time.  
But, as sure as Spring,  
There will be buds  
And new comings-together,  
With time enough to grow.

--Charles William Conaway

Don't cry because it's over. Smile because it happened.

--Dr. Seuss

### QUESTIONS

1. What makes it easy or difficult for you to say goodbye in this or other situations in your life? What helps or supports you in letting go when you must: a belief; a faith; a practice; a perspective; past experience; the example of someone you admire; something or someone to look forward to; other?
2. What was a challenging ending or leave-taking you experienced in the past, and how did that transition evolve for you?
3. At the first meeting of this SGM group what did you hope to get from and to give to this group experience. To what extent have those hopes been realized?

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: We are changed, you and I. Just as before, countless times in cycles that never quite repeat. We are changed. But this time it is different. For we have shared the sacred gift of knowing one another, of trusting one another. And so I say to you: go forth boldly; you are not alone; you carry with you a part of all of us. And so I say to you: go forth, in peace.

--adapted from *Andrew C. Backus*