

HOPE (adapted from sessions developed by Rev. Fred Small, First Parish in Cambridge, Unitarian Universalist, 2009,
and the Small Group Ministry Institute, The Mountain, August 2008)

OPENING WORDS & CHALICE LIGHTING:

Spirit of Life and Love,
We have gathered here in search of answers to hard questions.
We have come in search of understanding, in search of community.
We have come in search of hope and healing.
Let this be a place not only of searching, but of discovery.
Let this be a place not only of learning, but of wisdom.
Let this be a place not only of meeting, but of connection.
And let this be a place where healing fosters giving, and hope fosters service.
~Rev. Sue Ayer

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: Hope

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

Hope - to look forward to with desire and reasonable confidence; to believe, or trust; the feeling that what is wanted can be had or that events will turn out for the best; a feeling of desire for something and confidence in its possibility

“We should not let our fears hold us back from pursuing our hopes.” ~*John F. Kennedy*

“The important thing is not that we can live on hope alone, but that life is not worth living without it.” ~*Harvey Milk*

“If you lose hope, somehow you lose the vitality that keeps life moving, you lose that courage to be, that quality that helps you go on in spite of it all. And so today I still have a dream.” ~*Martin Luther King, Jr.*

“The road that is built in hope is more pleasant to the traveler than the road built in despair, even though they both lead to the same destination.” ~*Marian Zimmer Bradley*

“Most of the important things in the world have been accomplished by people who have kept on trying when there seemed to be no hope at all.” ~*Dale Carnegie*

Questions for Contemplation

What does hope mean to you? From what do you draw hope in your personal life?

What gives you hope? How do you keep hope alive in your heart?

Is hope a natural inclination, a spiritual practice, whistling in the dark, or something else?

In your life, has hope been helpful or harmful? Why? Always?

When has your sense of hope been shaken? Describe what happened and how you responded.

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:

Gather in peace, gather in thanks
Gather in sympathy now and then
Gather in hope, compassion and strength,
Gather to celebrate once again.
~Singing the Living Tradition #347, Gather the Spirit