

## **RADICAL HOSPITALITY** (adapted from a session developed by Jolinda Stevens, UU Church of the Monterey Peninsula)

### **OPENING WORDS & CHALICE LIGHTING:**

“We both want and fear connecting with each other. Our resistance to others, resistance to change, these are housed in the mysterious realm of spirit. Our minds cannot conceive of solutions to our dilemma until our hearts are convinced to love.”

*Radical Hospitality: Benedict's Way of Love* by Daniel Holman and Lonni Collins Pratt (unless otherwise noted, all quotes are from this book.)

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

**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: Radical Hospitality**

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

“Guests are crucial to the making of any heart. Benedict instructed his monks to welcome the Divine in the stranger. He told them to look again, look deeper when you look into the eyes of strangers. If you want to be a person of great spirit, you can’t do life alone. If spirituality matters to you, you can’t do spirituality alone either. To really grow as a human being you need other people.”

“Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels [messengers from God] unawares.”  
Christian Bible

“Benedict tells us to offer an open heart, a stance of availability, and to look for God lurking in every single person who comes through the door.”

“Hospitality was not about social graces but about mutual reverence. Father Noel knew that spirituality is about relationships. Every man, woman, and child bears to us the presence of God.”

“The stranger next door, and at our door, is particularly frightening. People have been hurt by strangers. When we speak of the depth of hospitality, we are proposing something scary and radical. But it’s worth the risk. Unless we find a way to open ourselves to others, we will grow even more isolated and frightened. If we do not find and practice ways of hospitality, we will grow increasingly hostile. Hospitality is the answer to hostility.”

#### **Discussion**

Think of one person who has been open to you, has invited you in. How did you experience the interconnected web, the holy, or even yourself in that relationship?

Does hospitality, seen in this way, offer a valuable spiritual practice? Perhaps a kind of mindfulness meditation of relationship?

Is there value for you in viewing the people who cross your path as having a message for you? As being messengers of your subconscious, or the universe, or God?

What stands in the way of opening yourself to the stranger? Is it worth the risk?

**CONFIDENTIALITY CHECK AND CHECK OUT:** 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:**

This is the mission of our faith:

To teach the fragile art of hospitality;

To revere both the critical mind and the generous heart;

To prove that diversity need not mean divisiveness;

And to witness to all that we must hold the whole world in our hands. ~William Schulz