

Covenant Program #4:

Forgiveness

(Materials from First Unitarian Society in Newton; Group Session Plan developed by the Rev. Glenn H. Turner)

Chalice Lighting

"If you knew how I felt inside, you would not act that way outside.
But most likely,
If I knew how you felt inside
I would not mind so much the way you act outside.

Why don't we try turning ourselves inside out?"
Edward T. Atkinson

Check-in: "How goes it with your spirit?"

Topic: Forgiveness

"We cannot let the world's wounds destroy our spirits. We cannot let our hurts and betrayals destroy our capacity for growth and caring. That there will be judgments and, perhaps, justice, is necessary. That the violence be confronted and, if possible, contained, is essential. But, most important, is our capacity to nurture a loving heart, to affirm and not to curse, to forgive even when we cannot completely forget."
- Rev. Glenn H. Turner

"No, I forgave because that is what I needed to do to feel whole, to like myself, and to rid myself of the excess emotional baggage that was weighing me down and holding me back. I wanted peace of mind, and I could not have it as long as I was stymied by unfinished business from my past and expending most of my energy nursing my unhealed wound. I was not happy with myself or my life. I thought maybe, just maybe, I could do more and be more than I was. And so I chose to heal."

Suzanne Simon

Some questions to consider:

How do you respond when you are wounded?
How do you feel toward the person who has hurt you?
How long do you carry your anger and how does that resentment (feeling it again and again) continue to hurt you?
Can you forgive and break the cycle?
Can you understand the other?
What does forgiveness mean to you?
What does it cost not to forgive? What keeps us from forgiving? How have I learned to forgive?

Check-out: Share a word or sentence about what you are leaving with...or share a word of appreciation with someone who said something that you found meaningful.

Closing Words:

"May the love which overcomes all differences which heals all wounds, which puts to flight all fears, which reconciles all who are separated, be in us and among us now and always." -
Frederick F. Gillis

Extinguish Chalice