

ALL SOULS UNITARIAN CHURCH

Themes 2010-2011

Democracy

Opening Reading/ Chalice Lighting

Trusting each other is the beginning of a certain secular faith, a faith that allows us to live in families and communities and nations. Democracy, above all other forms of government, requires this faith. ~Sue Halpern

Getting to know One Another: Please take time at this point to introduce yourselves and to go around the room and say how long you have been attending and how you found All Souls. Suggest that everyone try to remember to wear a nametag so that you can learn everyone's names

Check-In How goes thy spirit? What do you need to leave behind in order to be fully present here and now? 2-3 sentences

Business (Please highlight the following with your group if events have not passed)

Sem I Tuesdays

Oct 5 Vision, Emily and Ryan

Oct 19 Evil, Tamara

Nov 2 Democracy, Tamara

Nov 16 Gratitude Tamara

Nov 30 God Tamara

Dec 7 Closing Endings Tamara

Facilitators meeting have been moved to Second Wednesdays from 7 to 8:30 beginning in OCT and will have childcare! WOOHOO! I am taking advantage of a new Wednesday night format that allows for a limited number of board meetings to take place on Wednesday night with two slots from 5-6:30 and 7-8:30 in order to increase or traffic for meals and encourage chapel attendance. If its been awhile since you have attended a Branches Facilitators meeting, PLEASE mark your calendars to attend one soon! Our first meeting will be in October on **Wednesday October 13th.**

Revisit the Covenant

(Please go over the culture of a branches group highlighting: space inbetween speakers, popcorn style/Quaker style sharing, taking care of your own needs, speaking from I..no crosstalk, etc)

The culture of your group: Are there things that need to be addressed? Starting and ending time, social opportunities before after meeting or at another date?, your service project inside and outside the church)

Claim time for Deeper Listening Deeper listening is a time at the end of our meeting where you can be listened to uninterrupted for what is essentially an extended check in if something is going on in your life that you would like to share. You are encouraged to claim time ranging between 3-5 minutes at this time. *Is there anyone who would like to claim time for deeper listening?*

Centering Take a moment to breathe, feel your feet on the floor and your body in the chair. After a few minutes of breathing, find your heartbeat (either by listening to your ear or placing your fingers on your pulse). See if you can hold the attention of your heartbeat and listen to the sounds in the room. (leave space for 8-10 breaths) Our goal would be to bring this sense of calm and way of listening to the readings and to one another, keeping our attention toggling between self and what you are listening to.

Readings (*Read through readings and questions twice, one time per facilitator, with reflection space in between* followed by Quaker Style sharing. Try to stay in I statements and personal stories and not shift into third person and facts. Try to leave space between speakers.)

Democracy Personified, by Kate Starr and Rev. Tamara Lebak

Every weekday morning, usually before dawn,
Democracy slides into the booth at the local diner
with Peace and Power and orders the usual:

black coffee, oatmeal with bananas and walnuts,
dry wheat toast, one egg over easy with a dollop of salsa,
and homegrown tomatoes or fresh fruit if they're in season.

It's not the breakfast most would expect for a muscular man in coveralls,
with thick calloused hands and a flat top haircut.

This self-educated man has been influenced by his daughters,
Education and Nutrition, and wants to live long enough
to travel around the world with them.

(His one indulgence is the hand-rolled tamales

the Mexican vendor sells at lunchtime
outside the water treatment plant where Democracy serves as union
president.)

Democracy lives on his family's farm
where both he and his father Idealism grew up.
Idealism and mother Justice taught their only son how to grow crops,
milk cows and goats, make cheese, gather eggs,
gig frogs, slop hogs, and skin rabbits for meat and fur.
Today Democracy and his wife Freedom still cook on the original wood
stove,
but they did install indoor plumbing.

Democracy and Freedom lead a simple life and are quite happy.
There was a time when Capitalism, Democracy's high school sweetheart,
tried to seduce him into leaving Freedom to travel third-world countries
selling encyclopedias, English dictionaries and Bibles.
All is forgiven now. Capitalism married Power and
they've been together almost as long as Democracy and Freedom.

Democracy walks with a limp – the result of a brawl
he and Power once got into while on leave during The War.
They have an on-going argument over the inherent goodness of people
and their right and ability to make good decisions for themselves.
It is a topic they no longer discuss.
Democracy is also slightly hard of hearing – especially in a crowded room
when everyone is talking at once.
The resulting misunderstandings can be both humorous and disastrous.
It frustrates him to no end to rely on whomever he's with to tell him what
he's missed.

Democracy is a gentle and sensitive man who cries every time he hears
“The Star Spangled Banner” (or any national anthem for that matter).
Friends also describe him as cranky and impatient.
He can't seem to understand why everyone insists on such a scarcity
mentality.
He believes there is enough for everyone: enough food, enough land, enough
jobs,
enough untapped human potential on the planet.
There is so much fear and ignorance and greed.
The whole thing just breaks his heart.

Questions

1. **What is the relationship between Freedom and Democracy? Democracy and education? Democracy and Power? Can you address these relationships with examples from your own experience?**
2. **Our church polity is grounded in the democratic process. How is Democracy Religious? Have you experienced different church polity? How did that polity make you feel?**
3. **In the poem there is a sense of American nostalgia. Is Democracy a thing of the past? How have/do you participate in our American democratic process? Have you been inspired by your participation? How?**
4. **How do you make decisions in your family? In your business? Is it a pure democratic process? Why or why not?**
5. **Is democracy bigger than the idea of one person one vote? How and when do we speak for those without a voice? How do we address those who may be in power and are “hard of hearing”?**

Deeper Listening If time is claimed by an individual, group listens to speaker uninterrupted for that designated time. It is best to have a timer of sorts so that facilitator can listen fully as well.

Check Out

One sentence about where you are now that we have been together for the past hour and a half. (How did you show up? Would you share more or less? Would you do anything differently? Focus your likes and dislikes on your own behavior) Please state your name again for the group so that we might have yet another opportunity to put faces to names.

Closing reading/Chalice Extinguishing

Democracy is not an easy form of government,
Because it is never final; it is a living changing organism,
With continuous shifting and adjusting of balance between individual
freedom and general order. ~ Ilka Chase