

ALL SOULS UNITARIAN CHURCH

December Theme Peace

Opening Reading/ Chalice Lighting

Peace comes from being able to contribute the best that we have, and all that we are, toward creating a world that supports everyone. But it is also securing the space for others to contribute the best that they have and all that they are. -- Hafsat Abiola

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

Have you thought about your service project?

Next Branches Xtravaganza

Revisit the Covenant

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 you have more you need to say than the initial check in. You are encouraged to claim time ranging between 3-5 minutes.

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. (1-2 minutes) 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.)

As we contemplate the coming of the Prince of Peace, we wonder if the wars will ever cease. I know there are some stern souls who question whether yet another sermon on the need for inner peace will undermine the urgent need to summon

2952 S. Peoria Tulsa, Oklahoma 74114 (918) 743-2363

www.allsoulschurch.org

all our strength to confront and overcome the machinery of war. While I go on about the need for inner peace innocents are dying in Iraq and Lebanon and God only knows where else. Why aren't we out in the streets by the millions? What are we waiting for? Listen to these words the Angel Gabriel is said to have whispered into Mary's ear:

There is strength here like the sinew of a mother's arm.
It shatters the brittle pride of wealth;
It levels the clayfoot
thrones of tyrants.
It upholds the forgotten, the scarred.
Hunger both of body and soul will be filled.
Riches will no more be rewarded.
The holy one cleaves to those who keep faith;
It will endure in those who serve mercy.
And then promise made to legend ancestors will be kept.

I understand and often share the urgency but it does us little good. We live at the intersection of action and reflection. Self-reflection is no luxury which has to wait until more urgent matters are attended to. It is as essential to our lives as food and drink. When we don't take time to get up early and befriend the darkness we all too soon are overcome by our own inner demons.

Then all our efforts in the name of peace, encumbered by our rage and fear, will only serve to magnify the violence we so hope to quell. What was "the promise made to legend ancestors"? Surely not peace everlasting though we should pray and work for peace with every fiber of our being. The promise is "the baby in the barn." The promise is the possibility that you and I might come to know the holy one concealed in the darkness, not in some distant land but here at home, not in some long ago but here, today, right now. You are the promise. You are the one. Though "grief and loneliness have kept" you "you are the companion of the light that rises on all I know."

Questions

- 1. How do you work for Peace in the home? In the nation? In the world? In your heart?**
- 2. When are you most at peace?**
- 3. How do you practice self-reflection and what is its effect on your peace of mind?**
- 4. How does knowing the Holy add to Peace in the world or in you? What does that mean to you "Knowing the Holy?"**

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)

Closing reading/Chalice Extinguishing

If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.
- New Testament - Romans