

Meaning and Purpose in Life
Unitarian Universalist Church in Eugene

Chalice Lighting and Moment of Silence

Opening words

~ Excerpt from *The Summer Day* by Mary Oliver
I don't know exactly what a prayer is.
I do know how to pay attention, how to fall down
into the grass, how to kneel in the grass,
how to be idle and blessed, how to stroll through the fields,
which is what I have been doing all day.
Tell me, what else should I have done?
Doesn't everything die at last, and too soon?
Tell me, what is it you plan to do
With your one wild and precious life?

Check-in

Reading

In the Utne Magazine (Jan.-Feb. 2006), Nina Utne asked Robert Gass, a teacher and spiritual activist, "How do we know what to do? How do we know what matters?"

He replied, We don't! But still we choose to engage. Each of us is here for a purpose. Not an idea, not something we invent, but something we discover. If each of us answers this unique call, somehow it will all get done. For some of us, our purpose might express itself through standing up against racism or sexism. For others, it's about caring for a family. We may live our purpose through community service, through art, or through business. As one who trains activists, I believe my job is to help each person find a true and powerful expression of that authentic purpose.

Questions

- What activities and roles in your life are associated with a sense of meaning, purpose, and satisfaction for you? Why?
- Are there parts of your life that do not seem to have meaning or purpose and lack satisfaction? Why? Would reframing something you do out of a sense of obligation, "I **have to** _____," to be viewed in the context of "I **choose to** _____ because I **want** _____" lead to any change in how you feel about what you are doing? Are there other ways you are able to find meaning in mundane activities?
- Do you think that there is a common purpose and meaning to life that applies to all people, or not, and what has influenced your ideas and opinions about that? How, if at all, have religious beliefs, current or in the past, influenced your views about the meaning and purpose of your existence?

Likes (gratitudes, appreciation for needs met) and **Wishes** (requests, acknowledgement of needs not met)/**Check-out**

Closing Words and Extinguishing the Chalice

"We give thanks for one another, for the chance to share our lives, and to renew our spirits in the company of friends. May we proceed with our day, enriched by our gathering, committed to living life fully, to loving life with more passion, and to supporting one another."

~ From "Gatherings" by Tony Bushman and Bill Hamilton-Holway.