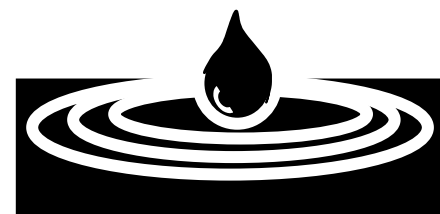


Listen  
with the night falling we are saying thank you  
we are stopping on the bridge to bow from the railings  
we are running out of the glass rooms  
with our mouths full of food to look at the sky  
and say thank you  
we are standing by the water looking out in different  
directions

back from a series of hospitals back from a mugging  
after funerals we are saying thank you  
after the news of the dead  
whether or not we knew them we are saying thank you  
in a culture up to its chin in shame  
living in the stench it has chosen we are saying thank  
you

over the telephones we are saying thank you  
in doorways and in the backs of cars and in elevators  
remembering wars and the police at the back door  
and the beatings on the stairs we are saying thank you  
in the banks that use us we are saying thank you  
with the crooks in office with the rich and fashionable  
unchanged we go on saying thank you thank you

with the animals dying around us  
our lost feelings we are saying thank you  
with the forests falling faster than the minutes  
of our lives we are saying thank you  
with the words going out like cells of a brain  
with the cities growing over us like the earth  
we are saying thank you faster and faster  
with nobody listening we are saying thank you  
we are saying thank you and waving  
dark though it is  
-- W. S. Merwin



SMALL GROUP MINISTRY  
FIRST UNITARIAN CHURCH OF  
SAN JOSE

## Gratitude – as a spiritual practice

“There is a calmness to a life lived in Gratitude,  
a quiet joy.”  
-- Ralph H. Blum

"If the only prayer you ever say in your entire  
life is 'thank you,' it will be enough."  
--Meister Eckhart

**Preliminaries** Ask for volunteers to read Merwin poem.

**Opening/  
Chalice  
Lighting**  
- Melodie  
Beatie

Gratitude unlocks the fullness of life.  
It turns what we have into enough, and more.  
It turns denial into acceptance, chaos to order, confusion to clarity.  
It can turn a meal into a feast, a house into a home, a stranger into a friend.  
Gratitude makes sense of our past, brings peace for today, and creates a vision for tomorrow.

**Check-in** Take 1 or 2 minutes to share briefly the high point or low point of your life since the time we last met.

**Reading** Read the poem by W.S. Merwin on the back cover.

**Sitting in  
Silence**

**Sharing /  
Deep  
Listening**

Please share your responses to the questions you answered prior to the session.

**Responsive  
Reading**  
- Caitlin  
Matthews, The  
Celtic Spirit

“The gifts of sadness, like the gifts of happiness, come to all conditions and types of people.  
*They provide moments of self-clarification that keep our lives on course...*  
Our going safely through the world is based upon a true regard of both conditions.  
*When we value the gifts both of joy and of sorrow, our taste for life increases.*  
When we accept both happiness and sadness as our mortal bequest,  
*we grow as human beings.*”

**Discussion** Share your thoughts on gratitude as a spiritual practice. How does gratitude relate to our UU Purposes and Principles? How might an “attitude of gratitude” change your everyday life?

**Singing**  
#28, Singing the  
Living Tradition

For all that is our life  
we sing our thanks and praise;  
for all life is a gift  
which we are called to use  
to build the common good  
and make our own days glad.

For needs which others serve,  
for services we give,  
for work and its rewards,  
for hours of rest and love,  
we come with praise and thanks  
for all that is our life.

For sorrow we must bear,  
for failures pain and loss,  
for each new thing we learn,  
for fearful hours that pass:  
we come with praise and thanks  
for all that is our life.

Repeat 1<sup>st</sup> verse.

**Extinguishing  
the Chalice**

For all that has been – Thanks!  
For all that shall be – Yes!  
-- Dag Hammarskjöld

**Closing**  
(stand and join  
hands)

Gratitude is also about thanking those around us. During this week, thank someone who deserves but rarely gets your thanks.