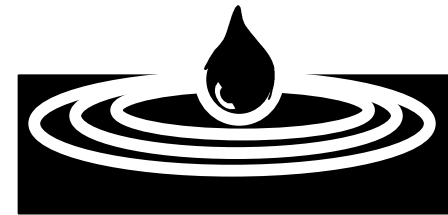


Closing

-- A. Powell
Davies

Choose a reader or read the text together. Join hands as the words are spoken.

When sorrow comes, let us accept it simply,
As a part of life.
Let the heart open to pain; let it be stretched by it.
In the desolate hour, there is an outcry;
A clenching of the hands upon emptiness;
A burning pain of bereavement;
A weary ache of loss.
But anguish, like ecstasy, is not forever.
There comes a gentleness, a returning quietness,
A restoring stillness.
This, too, is a door to life.
Here, also, is a deepening of meaning—
And it can lead to dedication;
A going forward to the triumph of the soul,
The conquering of the wilderness.
And in the process will come
A deepening inward knowledge
That in the final reckoning, all is well.



SMALL GROUP MINISTRY
FIRST UNITARIAN CHURCH OF
SAN JOSE

A Member Has Died

It was bitter to learn
That we come to death as we come
To love, bitter to face
The just and solving welcome
That death prepares. But that is bitter
Only to the ignorant, who pray
It will not happen. Having come
The bitter way to better prayer, we have
The sweetness of ripening. How sweet
To know you by the signs of this world!
-- *Wendell Barry, from "Ripening"*

After the false night, warm true voices, wake!
Voice of the dead that touches the cold living,
Through the pale sunlight
once more gravely speak.
Tell me again, while the least leaves are falling:
"Dear child, what has been once so interwoven
Cannot be raveled, not the gift ungiven."
-- *May Sarton, from "All Souls"*

Preliminaries Assign readers and chalice lighter (unless minister or leader is doing them). Discussion by leader about the flow of the session.

Opening/Chalice Lighting
 -- misc. UUA readings
 In our time of grief, we light a flame of sharing,
 The flame of ongoing life.
 In this time when we search for understanding
 And serenity in the face of loss,
 We light this sign of our quest
 For truth, meaning, and community.

Singing
 -- Hymnal #398,
 Gathered Here
 Gathered here in the mystery of the hour.
 Gathered here in one strong body.
 Gathered here in the struggle and the power.
 Spirit, draw near.

Silence
Please join hands while sitting together and for a few moments, experience the love, support, and common purpose you share in this group.

Ritual
 -- Based on Hymnal #553,
 Nancy Wood
The group leader or minister will read the following words while holding each of the elements provided on the table.

(Hold up the bowl of soil.)
 Earth cure me.
 Earth receive my woe.

(Hold up the stone.)
 Rock strengthen me.
 Rock receive my weakness.

(Hold up the bowl of water.)
 Rain wash my sadness away.
 Rain receive my doubt.

(Hold up the chalice.)
 Sun make sweet my song.
 Sun receive the anger from my heart.

In this time of sorrow, we remember that our lives, and our deaths, are interwoven with the basic elements of our world. They are part of the cycle of nature.

Deep Listening / Silent Support *Share your feelings about this loss. (Later, you will have time for reflections specifically about the member and your relationship with him/her.)*

After each has shared, please hold him or her in silent support for a moment before going on..

Reading
 -- From "Before the Mourner's Kaddish,"
 Temple Israel,
 Stockton,
 California
 (adapted)
 To everything there is a season,
 A time for everything under the sun
 A time to be born and a time to die
 A time to laugh and a time to cry
 A time to dance and a time to mourn
 A time to seek and a time to let go.
 This is the time we remember
 One who gave meaning to our lives.
 This is the time we remember the bonds that
 tied us together,
 The love that we shared,
 And the memories that remain with us still.

Reflections / Flower Communion
You are invited to briefly share a personal reflection on the member who has died: something you have learned from them, a favorite memory, a quality you will miss, or any other aspect of their life or your relationship that is in your heart right now.

When you finish your reflections, please take a flower from the vase on the table.

Singing
 -- Hymnal #388,
 Dona Nobis Pacem
Dona Nobis Pacem can be sung once altogether or as a round, if you choose. (Just as a reminder, that phrase is the only lyric to the song, and it repeats six times.)

Closing
 -- A. Powell
 Davies
(Please see the back page.)

