

Excerpted from  
*The Prophet* by  
Kahlil Gibran

And what is it to work with love?  
It is to weave the cloth with threads  
drawn from your heart, even as if your  
beloved were to wear that cloth.  
It is to build a house with affection,  
even as if your beloved were to dwell in that  
house.  
It is to sow seeds with tenderness and reap  
the harvest with joy, even as if your beloved  
were to eat the fruit.  
It is to charge all things you fashion with  
a breath of your own spirit.  
And to know that all the blessed dead  
are standing about you and watching.

Work is love made visible.  
And if you cannot work with love but only  
with distaste, it is better that you should  
leave  
your work and sit at the gate of the temple  
and  
take alms of those who work with joy.  
For if you bake bread with indifference,  
you bake a bitter bread that feeds but half  
man's hunger.  
And if you grudge the crushing of the  
grapes, your grudge distils a poison in the  
wine.  
And if you sing though as angels, and love  
not the singing, you muffle man's ears to  
the voices  
of the day and the voices of the night.



SMALL GROUP MINISTRY  
FIRST UNITARIAN CHURCH OF  
SAN JOSE

## Our Work, Our Selves

He who labours, prays.  
- attributed to Saint Aurelius Augustine

It is the first of all problems for a man to find out  
what kind of work he is to do in this universe.  
- Thomas Carlyle, Address at Edinburgh

Let no one till his death  
Be called unhappy. Measure not the work  
Until the day's out and the labour done.  
- Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Aurora Leigh  
(bk. V, l. 78)

A man may fulfill the object of his existence by  
asking a question he cannot answer, and attempting  
a task he cannot achieve.  
- Oliver Wendell Holmes

**Preliminaries** Announcements, 2 readings, chalice lighting,

**Opening / Chalice Lighting** As the darkness calms  
*and gentles the ragged edges of life*  
 So thy dawn breaking over our days  
*blesses us to our work in the world.*  
 Read  
 responsively Light and shadow weave together  
*in this astonishing dance of life*  
 all:  
**in which we live and move and have our being.**

**Check-in** Share one joy and one sorrow from the past weeks. (Please take no more than one to two minutes each.)

**Reading**  
 - Franz Kafka If we knew we were on the right road, having to leave it would mean endless despair. but we are on a road that only leads to a second one and then to a third one and so forth. And the real highway will not be sighted for a long, long time, perhaps never. So we drift in doubt. But also in an unbelievable beautiful diversity. Thus the accomplishment of hopes remains an always unexpected miracle. But in compensation, the miracle remains forever possible.

**Silence**

**Sharing / Deep Listening** Share your thoughts about the journey that led you to your work and its relationship to your image of self.

**Reading**  
 -- John Gardner The society which scorns excellence in plumbing because plumbing is a humble activity, and tolerates shoddiness in philosophy because philosophy is an exalted activity, will have neither good plumbing nor good philosophy. Neither its pipes nor its theories will hold water.

**Discussion** What if we focused not on “what your do” but “how it is done”? Spend about 15-20 minutes as a group talking about this. Please be supportive of others’ feelings and ideas.

**Singing**  
 (if this is too silly sing “For all that is our Lives”)  
 I've been workin' on the railroad,  
 All the live long day.  
 I've been workin' on the railroad,  
 Just to pass the time away.  
 Don't you hear the whistle blowing?  
 Rise up so early in the morn.  
 Don't you hear the captain shouting  
 "Dinah, blow your horn?"  
 Dinah, won't you blow,  
 Dinah, won't you blow,  
 Dinah, won't you blow your horn?  
 Dinah, won't you blow,  
 Dinah, won't you blow,  
 Dinah, won't you blow your horn?  
 Someone's in the kitchen with Dinah.  
 Someone's in the kitchen, I know.

**Closing / Extinguishing the Chalice**  
 -Hymnal  
 #502, W. E. B. Du Bois  
 (Join hand or link arms )  
 Now is the accepted time, not tomorrow, not some more convenient season.  
 It is today that our best work can be done and not some future day or future year.  
 It is today that we fit ourselves for the greater usefulness of tomorrow. Today is the seed time, now are the hours of work, and tomorrow comes the harvest and the playtime.