

Preparation for T301-Salvation

April continues our “Year of Cherishing.” Some of the goals for this year are to learn to cherish life, to become a more expressive people in terms of cherishing, and to expand the field of who and what we cherish.

“Salvation” is the monthly theme for April 2013. All month on Sunday morning we will be exploring salvation. For more resources based on this month’s theme, see the April 2013 Newsletter on our church website.

How do UUs Understand Salvation?

The English word *salvation*, derives from the Latin *salus*, meaning health. Unitarian Universalists are as concerned with salvation, in the sense of spiritual health or wholeness, as any other religious people.

However, in many Western churches, salvation has come to be associated with a specific set of beliefs or a spiritual transformation of a very limited type.

Among Unitarian Universalists, instead of salvation you will hear of a yearning for, and experience of personal growth, increased wisdom, strength of character, and gifts of insight, understanding, inner and outer peace, courage, patience, and compassion. The ways in which these things come to, change, and heal us are many indeed. We seek and celebrate them in our worship.

-From Page 5 of 8, *Our Unitarian Universalist Faith: Frequently Asked Questions*, A UUA pamphlet by Alice Blair Wesley ISBN: 9783017

Questions:

1. If salvation is defined as spiritual health or wholeness, does that change what salvation means to you? If so, how?
2. What does it mean to you to be spiritually healthy? Give an example of something from your life that improved your spiritual health?
3. In his book, *Beyond Religion: Ethics for a Whole World*, the Dalai Lama argues that compassion is the foundation of well-being. In your experience, how has compassion contributed to your spiritual health or well-being? The spiritual health or well-being of others?
4. The Dalai Lama also says that “ *When discernment (the application of reason) is combined with a compassionate motivation, we have the two key components of a comprehensive approach to ethics and spiritual well-being.* ” And, “ *The exercise of discernment . . . enables us to translate our good intentions into good outcomes . . . awareness of what will benefit both oneself and others – does not arise magically, but comes from the use of reason.* ” (pg. 74) Have you ever thought about how you might benefit both yourself and others? Has discerning what might benefit yourself and others contributed to your sense of spiritual health or wholeness?
5. Christian theology posits that people can be saved through/by faith, works, love, and hope. Which of these things has contributed to your spiritual health? Tell us a story about that contribution
6. How is it possible to be both “savior” and “saved”? Give an example from your life.