

HUU ADULT R.E. PROGRAM 2011-12

Mark your calendars for the 2nd and 3rd Sundays of each month for this season. All are welcome to all or any of our group sessions.

HUU's Adult R.E. is an opportunity for all of us to expand our understanding of various religious/spiritual traditions through focused appreciation, listening, dialogue, practice, and learning. We gather with the intention of using various print and video sources to learn together and enhance our search for personal religious growth and truth.

Our facilitators also help hold the space for our sharing and move the conversations and practices along. We use guidelines for sharing that support honest expression of personal experience and respectful listening, not positioning and debate.

Twelve Steps to a Compassionate Life will be on the 2nd Sundays.
Meditation and Chanting Practice will be on the 3rd Sundays.

The program launches in September. We start promptly at 9.00 a.m. for an hour or so before the morning service.

September 11. The Compassion program will begin with showings of Karen Armstrong's Ware lecture at the 2011 UU General Assembly in which she talks about her worldwide Charter for Compassion. In later sessions we will discuss what it means to live our lives compassionately based on Armstrong's Twelve Steps to a Compassionate Life, Knopf, 2010, hardcover, \$22.95. (Facilitator: Paul Revell). (See details below).

September 18. Exploring spiritual practices from a variety of sources, we will chant and meditate with the intention of direct experience of our inner spiritual lives. Beginning with the Hindu tradition in September, we will continue our inner journey through chanting and meditation practices drawn from a variety of spiritual paths. (Facilitator: Laura Dent). (See details below).

THE TWELVE STEPS TO A COMPASSIONATE LIFE (2nd Sundays)

These sessions will be based on the book **The Twelve Steps to a Compassionate Life** by Karen Armstrong. Conversation will focus on the various themes in the book (e.g. empathy, how we should speak with one another, concern for everybody, and loving one's enemies). The sessions will start (September, October) with a viewing and discussion of Karen Armstrong's 2011 presentation described above. She is a profound, lively and fun speaker and you are encouraged to come along. The video will offer you an historical and religious framework for our later conversations on compassionate living. Armstrong also talks about the **Charter for Compassion** (www.charterforcompassion.org), a movement and a vehicle by which people may help spread compassionate living in our communities and in the world.

Compassion: Outline and Schedule (Check regularly on this website for changes).

September 11th: Part One – Karen Armstrong's Ware Lecture at 2011 General Assembly followed by brief discussion of observations by participants.

Discussion: How does the compassion concept relate to the events of 9/11, and our personal and national reaction to those events?

October 10th Part Two – Karen Armstrong’s Ware Lecture and discussion.

Discussion: How do we personally define “compassion”? How does the UU community define and promote the concept of “compassion”?

November 13th: Steps I-III

- I. Learning About Compassion
- II. Look at Your Own World
- III. Compassion for Yourself

Discussion

- Follow up from previous session on defining “compassion”
- The “Golden Rule” – what is it? What does it mean to you personally?
- How is it interpreted and applied by the UU community?
- How does/should our larger community/state/nation interpret and apply it?
- What societal problems can you personally address with a compassionate mindset? What societal problems can a compassionate UU community address?
- How is compassion for yourself the foundation for compassion in a wider sense?

December 11th: Steps IV-VI

- IV. Empathy
- V. Mindfulness
- VI. Action

Discussion

- Four immeasurable minds of love meditation – Buddha
- What is mindfulness?
- The four “Fs”
- “Spots of time” – little, nameless, unremembered, acts of kindness and love
- Three step plan for putting the “Golden Rule” into action in our personal life

January 8th: Steps VII-IX

- VII. How Little We Know
- VIII. How Should We Speak to One Another
- IX. Concern for Everybody

Discussion

- Broaden your perspective so that it “can make a place for the other”.
- The process of ekstasis
- What is “true dialogue”?
- How do we assert a strongly held conviction with compassion?
- Who do we mean by “everybody”? In our congregation? In our community? Is there a wider perspective?
- Can we “make a place for the more distant other”?

February 12th: Steps X-XII

- X. Knowledge
- XI. Recognition

XII. Love Your Enemies

Discussion

- The effort of getting to know one another demands sound information and a willingness to question received ideas.
- The concept of upeksha
- Recognition-there is no “us” and “them”. They are the same.
- We are not alone in our suffering. Everybody is in pain.
- If there had been a non-violent response to the attacks of 9/11 instead of a military offensive, would our current situation in the world be different?
- Discuss the following quotation: “Loving our enemies means that we have to accept the necessity , over and over again, of forgiving those who inflict evil and injury on us”.
Martin Luther King
- What does it mean to “learn to see the sorrow of our enemy”?

March 11th:

1. Discussion of the Charter for Compassion and, if desired, how HUU members may raise awareness of this effort in Harrisonburg and local colleges.
2. Discussion of the Compassionate Cities Campaign. If and how HUU members might encourage Harrisonburg to become a registered Compassionate City?

CHANTING AND MEDITATION (3rd Sundays)

In this series we will be guided in chanting and meditation practices from a variety of spiritual paths. The focus will be on direct experience. In each session, there will be a brief orientation to the tradition, followed by chanting to invoke the power of sound and rhythm, and then meditation to go deep within ourselves.

Outline/Schedule (Check back on this website regularly for changes as we go).

September 18. Hindu Tradition

Inspired by the image of Shiva Nataraj (the Dancing Shiva), we contemplate the still center at the heart of the cosmic dance swirling around us and within us.

Chant: OM Namah Shivaya

Meditation: OM - the ALL

October 16. Buddhist Tradition

To honor our inner transformation, we immerse ourselves in the mantra “OM Mani Padme Hum,” “The jewel in the heart of the lotus.”

Chant and Meditation: OM Mani Padme Hum

November 20. Kundalini Yoga: Sikh Tradition

We form a healing circle to support each other with our prayers in this beautiful chant.

Chant: Ra Ma Da Sa, Sa Say So Hung
Meditation: Calm heart meditation

December 18. Christian Tradition

Through contemplative Gregorian chant, we invoke the prayer for God's mercy, and meditate on the presence of God within us.

Chant: Kyrie Eleison - Christe Eleison - Kyrie Eleison
Meditation: Be still and know that I Am.

January 15. Sufi Tradition

Drawing from Sufism, the mystical tradition of Islam, now known in the West as the "Path of the Heart," we strengthen our heart's connection to the divine.

Chant: Sufi invocation: Toward the One, the Perfection of Love, Harmony, and Beauty, the Only Being, united with all the Illuminated Souls, who form the Embodiment of the Master, the Spirit of Guidance.
Meditation: Heart Rhythm Meditation

February 19. Native American Tradition

We celebrate our relation to all beings: the four-leggeds, the flying ones, the crawling ones, the swimming ones, and all those who dwell with us on this planet.

Chant: Ho Mitakuye Oyasin = All My Relations
Meditation: Encounters with Spirit Animals

March 18. Wiccan Tradition

Invoking the names of the Goddess, we honor the inner divine feminine.

Chant: We all come from the Goddess
Meditation: Encounters with the Goddess

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