

Generosity—BBUUC Journey Circle— April 2025

Chalice Lighting

May we know once again that we are not isolated beings,
but connected, in mystery and miracle,
to the universe, to this community and to each other.

Check-in: What is most on your mind today?

UU's new Shared Value:

Generosity: We cultivate a spirit of gratitude and hope. We covenant to freely and compassionately share our faith, presence, and resources. Our generosity connects us to one another in relationships of interdependence and mutuality.

Opening Reading

From Soul Matters about the month's topic of "Generosity".

It would be easy to see this as a month of niceness. After all, for many, the call of generosity is equated with the call to be kind.

But that's not the spiritual understanding, and certainly not the sort of gift our faith sees in generosity.

First of all, it's transformative. Generosity doesn't just brighten our days; it changes how we relate to life. Let's be honest, life can harden us. And before it does that, it often hurts us. So we can't be blamed for viewing it as a threat. Like some kind of dangerous obstacle course. Or a giant game of King of the Hill, where the winners take all and the rest of us are thrown to the bottom, bruised and empty-handed. No matter which metaphor fits, it's almost impossible to think our way out of it on our own. But then these seemingly small or sentimental gestures come our way. A person notices we forgot to bring our bus pass and pays for us before we have to ask. The neighbor shovels our part of the driveway while she does hers. The nurse takes a half hour to sit with us while we wait for the results. It wasn't her job, and she doesn't have the time, but she did it anyway. In those simple moments, the world suddenly feels less cold. A crack sets in. Our obstacle course, winner-take-all view of life gives way to something softer. We may still hurt, but it also feels as though life itself is trying to help. That's what generosity does. It

transforms.

It also connects. Deep down we know the difference between giving and giving generously. The former is taken from our “extra.” The latter is taken from what is essential. It’s the difference between giving our loose change and giving of ourselves. And when you hand over a part of you to someone else, you’re tethered. Your vulnerability meets their vulnerability. You haven’t just helped; you’ve shown you care. Both of you feel seen. And less alone.

But make no mistake, generosity doesn’t stop there, at care and connection. It also challenges. True generosity doesn’t just ask us to care for people, it also asks us to call them out. When you look at life through the lens of generosity, charity loses its sheen and many of those who have much, are exposed as hoarding what others need. It’s sneaky that way. Generosity undermines our comfortable views and invites justice in. It doesn’t just ask us to be kind to others, it also asks us to question why some have so much more than others.

Transform. Connect. Challenge. Not the usual words we pair with generosity. And maybe that’s the point. Maybe the invitation this month is not just to be more generous, but to notice how generosity is bigger than we think.

Questions / Sharing

1. In what ways do you see Generosity as being Transformative? Can you share any ways in which Generosity has Transformed you or someone else in your life?
2. In what ways do you see Generosity as inspiring Connection. Can you share any ways in which Generosity has inspired Connection to you or someone else in your life?
3. In what ways do you see Generosity as being Challenging?. Can you share any ways in which Generosity has Challenged you or someone else in your life?
4. Answer whatever question “Shimmers” to you?
 - How has your definition of generosity changed since you were younger?
 - Who taught you the most about being a generous person?

- What's been your *hardest* act of generosity?
- Have you ever wished your parent(s) had been more generous in some way?
- How easy is it for you to receive the generosity or help of others?
- [Some say](#) that attention is the rarest and purest form of generosity. Tell me about a time when someone's gift of attention came to you when you needed it most?
- How do you balance generosity with self-care? Can you be too generous?
- How good are you at being generous with yourself?

Closing Reading (from Jennifer Bacmeister's Sermon: "The Grace of Gratitude")

Generosity is more than just an action. It's more than writing a check, dropping off some canned goods, checking on a neighbor, helping a stranger.

Generosity is a way of being that has the power to transform us and the world. To be generous is to consciously set aside fear – fear of the unknown, fear of being judged, fear of people or ideas that are different from us or what we know. Today, it's almost an act of rebellion.

Check-out and reflections on today's session: Please express any closing thoughts about the subject selection or process of today's session.

Extinguish the Chalice

We extinguish this flame but not the light of truth,
the warmth of community, or the fire of commitment.
These we carry in our hearts until we are together again.

Housekeeping