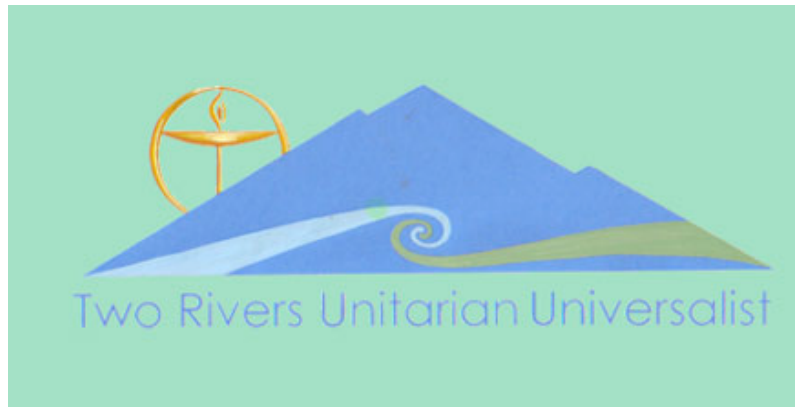


A Bright and Spirited Path

A Deeper Exploration of Unitarian Universalism

(conceived of and compiled by Rev. Mike Morran,
Sr Minister at First Unitarian Society of Denver)

At



1st Sundays, 11:45-1:15
October 2nd, November 6th, December 4th,
January 8th, February 5th

OR

1st Sundays, 7:00-9:00 p.m.
November 6th, December 4th, January 8th

OR

1st Saturdays, 1:00-4:00 p.m.
April 7th, May 5th

WELCOME, to what I hope will begin a transformative adventure for you! In this class of (two, three, or) five sessions, we will be exploring the central religious teachings and insights of Unitarian Universalism. These teachings and insights will be presented in a way intended to open new doors of discovery, healing, growth, connection, and empowerment. Our time together will be partially information, with a strong experiential foundation. It will include assignments and practices to try in class, and in the weeks between class sessions.

Religion is not a spectator sport! This will be one of our central starting points. Spirituality is worth little as an intellectual exercise. These teachings and the methods that follow them are meant to be lived, grown into, practiced, embodied in our thinking, our relationships, our lives, and our hopes. We will touch on history and theology, but our focus will be to explore this faith as a spiritual path.

Some of what we will explore together will be ancient wisdom. Some will be modern science. All of it is intended to deepen our understanding of some essential spiritual and existential truths, so that we may live lives of deeper awareness and profound connection.

May it be so.

Class Outline

1) Class One: The Unity That Makes Us One

- We are One – Manifestations of the One, consciousness, the Universe aware of itself
- God is One – Conceptual origins of Unitarianism – Bible, Buddhism, Islam, Judaism, etc.
- God and Creation are One – Pantheism, Process concepts
- Cosmology and the **Universe** – Gnosis (intuition), religious experiences, Analogies

2) Class Two: All Are Held as Ultimately Sacred and Worthy – On Being Born Into Covenant

- Religious Experiences
- All are Sacred and Worthy:
- Born from and into Oneness, therefore born into covenant

3) Class Three: Revelation is Not Sealed and Our Lives are filled with Inherent Possibilities

- Revelation is Not Sealed – On Pluralism and Mystery
- Inherent Possibilities in Every Moment - On participation and responsibility

4) Class Four: The Transformative Power of Courageous Love and the Response to Covenant

- Practice of Love (concepts from MLK, Thurman, Gandhi, Fowler, Tolle, etc.)
- Implications of Unitarianism and Universalism for Justice and Social Change
- Commitment and Associations (Adams, etc.)

5) Class Five: Salvation in this Life (the methods & disciplines of Liberal Religion)

- Insight
- Community
- Nature
- Prayer and Blessing
- Dialogue
- Study

WHO IS A MYSTIC?

A mystic is anyone who has the gnawing suspicion that the apparent discord, brokenness, contradictions, and discontinuities that assault us every day might conceal a hidden unity. Just beneath the apparent surface, everything is joined to everything else. To a mystic, therefore what we call reality is but the myriad refractions of that ultimate, underlying unity. It is a Oneness in which all things – even and especially the self-consciousness of the mystic – are intermittently dissolved, annihilated. Now, only the One remains, or in Yiddish: Alz ist Gott – everything is God!

Rabbi Lawrence Kushner in KABBALAH, by Arthur Goldwag

A little criticism makes me angry, and a little rejection makes me depressed. A little praise raises my spirits, and a little success excites me. It takes very little to raise me up or thrust me down. Often I am like a small boat on the ocean, completely at the mercy of its waves. All the time and energy I spend in keeping some kind of balance and preventing myself from being tipped over and drowning shows my life is mostly a struggle for survival: not a holy struggle, but an anxious struggle resulting from the mistaken idea that it is the world that defines me.

Henry Nouwen

God does not die on the day when we cease to believe in a personal deity, but we die on the day when we cease to be illuminated by the steady radiance, renewed daily, of a wonder, the source of which is beyond all reason.

Dag Hammarskjold

Underneath all the texts, all the sacred psalms and canticles, these watery varieties of sounds and silences, terrifying, mysterious, whirling and sometimes gestating and gentle must somehow be felt in the pulse, ebb, and flow of the music that sings in me. My new song must float like a feather on the breath of God.

Hildegard of Bingen