

# ALL SOULS UNITARIAN CHURCH

## January Theme Justice

### Opening Reading/ Chalice Lighting

“Justice cannot be for one side alone, but must be for both.”

~ Eleanor Roosevelt

**Check-In** How goes thy spirit? What do you need to leave behind in order to be fully present here and now? 2-3 sentences

### Business

### Revisit the Covenant

**Claim time for Deeper Listening** Deeper listening is a time at the end of our meeting where you can be listened to uninterrupted for what is essentially an extended check in if you have more you need to say than the initial check in. You are encouraged to claim time ranging between 3-5 minutes.

**Centering** Take a moment to breathe, feel your feet on the floor and your body in the chair. After a few minutes of breathing, find your heartbeat (either by listening to your ear or placing your fingers on your pulse). See if you can hold the attention of your heartbeat and listen to the sounds in the room. (1-2 minutes) Our goal would be to bring this sense of calm and way of listening to the readings and to one another, keeping our attention toggling between self and what you are listening to.

**Readings** (Read through readings and questions twice, one time per facilitator, with reflection space in between followed by Quaker Style sharing. Try to stay in I statements and personal stories and not shift into third person and facts. Try to leave space between speakers.)

**Justice Personified, by Rev. Tamara Lebak, Associate Minister, and Kate Starr,  
Youth Director**

Justice appeared in a dream.

She was hidden in the deep darkness of a cave,

on a hill,

somewhere once so familiar,

but now forgotten,

just out of reach.

Justice had long, gray braided hair,

and was wrapped in layer upon layer

of woven blankets

and animal pelts.

She sat cross-legged near a fire,

her back against the cave wall.

In the firelight,

her face looked both proud and sad.

Her eyes peered out

from behind wizened layers of leathered skin

like two clouded moons.

Justice was not blind,  
as most people believe,  
but profoundly far-sighted  
and sensitive to the light.

Justice spoke in her native tongue.

She said,

"The world is full of danger,  
and full of opportunity.

There are laws of nature,  
and the laws of man.

There is the letter of the law,  
and the spirit of the law.

The children of the Creator are all free,  
and all are enslaved.

Everything is dying,  
and everything is being born."

Each word was stated with passion,  
and profound fatigue.

She said,

"Drops make rivers make canyons in stone.

Hands make bricks make temples to the sun.

Words make stories make up minds.

Minutes make lifetimes make legacies.

People make choices.”

She said,

“Take this.

Put it in your pocket and remember.

Decide. Persist. Endure.”

Justice appeared to have fallen asleep

and looked like an infant at peace in her mother's lap.

Then, with a start, she spoke again,

"Eyes closed, lips closed, hands closed, hearts closed.

Eyes open, lips open, hands open, hearts open."

And then,

she was gone.

### **Mr. Luther King Jr.**

I have a dream today.

I have a dream that one day every valley shall be exalted, every hill and mountain shall be made low, the rough places will be made plain, and the crooked places will be made straight, and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together.

This is our hope. With this faith we will be able to hew out of the mountain of despair a stone of hope. With this faith we will be able to transform the jangling discords of our nation into a beautiful symphony of brotherhood.

With this faith we will be able to work together, to pray together, to struggle together, to go to jail together, to stand up for freedom together, knowing that we will be free one day.

This will be the day when all of God's children will be able to sing with new meaning, "My country 'tis of thee, sweet land of liberty, of thee I sing. Land where my fathers died, land of the Pilgrims' pride, from every mountainside, let freedom ring."

### **Questions**

- 1. What informs your sense of justice? Fairness? Righteousness? Reason?**
- 2. Are you or have you been part of a social justice movement? What was your experience? How has it changed you?**
- 3. When have you felt that injustice has been committed against you? Tell your story.**
- 4. What role does your spirituality or God play in your understanding of justice?**
- 5. What is the relationship between justice and mercy? Justice and Utopia? Justice and Jazz? Justice and Power?**
- 6. Does real justice always mean sacrifice for one party involved? What have you given up? What do you think needs to be sacrificed in the future by you or someone else?**
- 7. Have your actions ever been paralyzed by your ideas about what is just or in making a just choice? How did you resolve the conflict?**

**Deeper Listening** If time is claimed by an individual, group listens to speaker uninterrupted for that designated time. It is best to have a timer of sorts so that facilitator can listen fully as well.

### **Check Out**

One sentence about where you are now that we have been together for the past hour and a half. (How did you show up? Would you share more or less? Would you do anything differently? Focus your likes and dislikes on your own behavior)

### **Closing reading/Chalice Extinguishing**

Alexander Solzhenitsyn:

Justice is conscience, not a personal conscience but the conscience of the whole of humanity. Those who clearly recognize the voice of their own conscience usually recognize also the voice of justice.

