

## Religion

Let religion be to us life and joy.

*Let it be a voice of renewing challenge to be the best we have and may be; let it be a call to generous action.*

Let religion be to us a dissatisfaction with things that are, which bids us serve more eagerly the true and right.

*Let it be the sorrow that opens for us the way of sympathy, understanding, and service to suffering humanity.*

Let religion be to us the wonder and lure of that which is only partly known and understood:

*An eye that glories in nature's majesty and beauty, and a heart that rejoices in deeds of kindness and of courage.*

Let religion be to us security and serenity because of its truth and beauty, and because of the enduring worth and power of the loyalties which it engenders;

*Let it be to us hope and purpose, and a discovering of opportunities to express our best through daily tasks:*

Religion, uniting us with all that is admirable in human beings everywhere;

*Holding before our eyes a prospect of the better life for humankind, which each may help to make actual.*

- Vincent B. Silliman, Hymnal #466



SMALL GROUP MINISTRY

FIRST UNITARIAN CHURCH OF  
SAN JOSE

## What Does Religion Mean to Me?

Religion is our human response to the dual reality of being alive and having to die. We are not so much the animal with tools or the animal with advanced language as we are the religious animal.

- The Rev. Forrest Church, sermon at General Assembly, 2003

Religion is the state of being grasped by an ultimate concern, a concern which qualifies all other concerns as preliminary and which itself contains the answer to the question of the meaning of our life.

- Paul Tillich

**Preliminaries** Get volunteers to light chalice and lead responsive reading. Announce church events. Pass the bowl of quotations.

**Chalice Lighting**  
Hymnal #448  
- Christine Robinson  
*Read aloud together:*  
We gather this hour as people of faith  
With joys, sorrows, gifts and needs.  
We light this beacon of hope,  
sign of our quest for truth and meaning,  
in celebration of the life we share together.

**Check-in** Please take minute or two to share briefly what's been on your mind lately.

**Readings From the Bowl** Going around the circle, read aloud the slip you have drawn from the bowl. Continue around the circle as many times as necessary to read all the quotations. If desired, you may also read the quotations on the front of this program.

**Sitting in Silence**

**Sharing/ Deep Listening** Share your responses to the preparation questions.

**Responsive Reading**  
- Vincent B. Silliman,  
Hymnal #466

The reading is on the reverse of this page.

**Discussion** This is a time to respond briefly to something another person said or to relate additional thoughts that may have occurred as others shared.

**Singing**  
Hymnal #108

**My Life Flows On in Endless Song**

My life flows on in endless song  
Above earth's lamentation.  
I hear the real though far-off hymn  
That hails a new creation.  
Through all the tumult and the strife  
I hear the music ringing.  
It sounds an echo in my soul.  
How can I keep from singing!

What though the tempest 'round me roars,  
I know the truth, it liveth.  
What though the darkness 'round me close,  
Songs in the night it giveth.  
No storm can shake my inmost calm  
While to that rock I'm clinging.  
Since love prevails in heav'n and earth,  
How can I keep from singing!

**Closing / Extinguishing the Chalice**  
- Theodore Parker,  
Hymnal #683

*Join hands or link arms as you read the closing words together:*

Be ours a religion which, like sunshine, goes everywhere;  
its temple, all space;  
its shrine, the good heart;  
its creed, all truth; its ritual, works of love;  
its profession of faith, divine living.