

## Thoughts on the Subject of Change

We emphasize that we believe in change because we were born of it, we have lived by it, we prospered and grew by it. So the status quo has never been our god, and we ask no one else to bow down before it.

- Carl T. Rowan

Just when I think I have learned the way to live, life changes.

- Hugh Prather

A living thing is distinguished from a dead thing by the multiplicity of the changes at any moment taking place in it.

- Herbert Spencer

Any change, even a change for the better, is always accompanied by drawbacks and discomfort.

- Arnold Bennett

All change, even the most longed for, have their melancholy, for what we leave behind us is a part of ourselves; we must die to one life before we can enter into another.

- Anatole France

Why do we shrink from change? What can come into being save by change?

- Marcus Aurelius

The important thing is this: to be able at any moment to sacrifice what we are for what we could become.

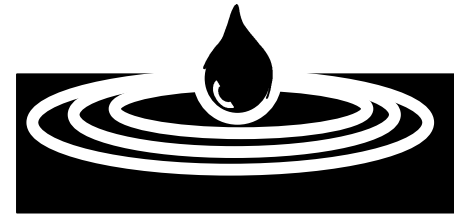
- Charles DuBos

When one door of happiness closes, another opens; but often we look so long at the closed door that we do not see the one which has been opened for us.

- Helen Keller

Where the old tracks are lost, new country is revealed with its wonders.

- Ragindranath Tagore



## SMALL GROUP MINISTRY

FIRST UNITARIAN CHURCH  
OF SAN JOSE

## BIRTHING

“One of the aspects of real love is just this: it tries to create the conditions in which other people may grow to the maximum of their potential within the opportunities at hand.”

- Martin Kelsey

**Preliminaries** Announcements, chalice lighter, readings, flowers

**Completing The Altar**  
(*Leader reads*) One at a time, please place the flowers you brought onto the altar, inside the circle of stones. As you place your flower, say one thing you brought to this group.

**Chalice Lighting**  
From Partings,  
by Ruth Rudner  
Flowers must be so beautiful because their lives are so brief. If something is only going to be around a short time, it better have the means to get its message across fast. The message of ... flowers seem[s] clear – the message of beauty is beauty, of life is life. The chain of iris, of lilies, the renewing, sustaining chain goes no forever ... Life is eternal.

**Check In** Take 1 or 2 minutes to share briefly the high point or low point of your life since the time we last met.

**Reading**  
- "Stages" by Hermann Hesse (excerpt)  
As every flower fades and as all youth  
Departs, so life at every stage  
So every virtue, so our grasp of truth,  
Blooms in its day and may not last forever,  
Since life may summon us at every age  
Be ready, heart, for parting, new endeavour,  
Be ready bravely and without remorse  
To find new light that old ties cannot give.  
In all beginnings dwells a magic force  
For guarding us and helping us to live.

Serenely let us move to distant places  
And let no sentiments of home detain us.  
We must prepare for parting and leave taking  
Or else remain the slaves of permanence.

**Sitting in Silence**

**Sharing/Deep Listening** Share a story from your time with this group, or thoughts you have on the change that is about to take place.

**Communion of Stones**  
(*Leader reads*) Let us stand together, and each pick up one of the stones from the altar. These stones have been blessed by our presence here, and have been touched by the flowers that represent our individual gifts. As we sing this next chant, we will pass the stones around. At the beginning of each verse, pass the stone from your left hand to the right hand of the person next to you. We will sing this through until each stone has been touched by everyone here, and returned to its original owner.

**Song**  
From you I receive  
To you I give  
Together we share  
And in this we live

**Communion Blessing**  
- From "All Souls" by May Sarton (excerpt)  
. ... What has been once so interwoven  
Cannot be raveled, nor the gift ungiven.

**Communion of Flowers**  
(*Leader reads*) We each brought a flower here, representing our unique gifts to the group. One at a time, we will now take a flower from the altar, representing the gifts that this group has given to us. As you pick up your flower, I invite you to say a word or two about what you will take away from this group.

**Extinguishing the Chalice**  
- Walt Whitman Behind a good-bye there lurks much of the salutation of another beginning to me.

