

## Fellowship Circle Resources - Topics: Faith

Opening reading, Chalice lighting

A casual stroll through the lunatic asylum shows that faith does not prove anything.

Friedrich Nietzsche

Check-In

Focus reading

"Faith (sahraaddha), in Buddhism, does not mean accepting a theory that we have not personally verified. The Buddha encouraged us to see for ourselves. Taking refuge in the Three Jewels is not blind faith; it is the fruit of our practice.....In Buddhism, our faith is concrete, not blind, not a leap. It is formed by our own insight and experience."

Thich Nhat Hanh, The Heart of the Buddha's Teaching

As Unitarian Universalists, faith can be a touchy subject. As a creedless religion (practice? community? fellowship? sect? cult?) that does not demand a set of beliefs or dogmas, "faith" can have as many definitions as definers. Even the word has a lot of baggage for many UU refugees from Christianity. UU Faith? Faith in what?

Focus questions

- 1) What does faith mean to you? What did it mean to you, growing up, and how has that changed?
- 2) What are the things that you place faith in? Beliefs, concrete things, practices?
- 3) What do you think Faith means to UU's in general? Do we have a faith together? Do we have faith in each other and in ourselves, rather than faith in God or Jesus?
- 4) If a "loss of faith" is a part of your spiritual story, what caused that loss? Did you ever get it back?
- 5) Are the UU Principles the fundamental definition of our faith, or is it more?

Check-On

Closing reading

"When we have faith, a great energy in us is unleashed. If our faith is in something unreliable and false, not informed by insight, sooner or later it will lead us to a state of doubt and suspicion. But when our faith is made of insight and understanding, we will

touch the things that are good, beautiful and reliable. Faith is the confidence we receive when we put into practice a teaching that helps us overcome difficulties and obtain some transformation...It is not blind. It is not belief in a set of ideas or dogmas."

Thich Nhat Hanh, *The Heart of the Buddha's Teaching*