



The Soul of Aging

What does it mean to be growing older? What image comes to your mind when you think of aging?

Most of us tend to think of aging as dealing with health issues and letting go of life. In fact, growing older can and ought to be quite the opposite experience. As we grow older, we begin to look at life differently. We come to learn from our shared experience, to mature in spiritual presence. Indeed, as we age, we are called “to sage,” to grow in maturity and wisdom, to become wise elders radiating spiritual vitality, love and peace. One is never too young to begin Saging!

The Soul of Aging is an experiential retreat program for those who long to understand, accept, surrender and be transformed by the aging process. This program offers space and time to expand our capacity to love, serve, forgive ourselves and others, find peace, and ultimately to embrace our own deaths.

The Soul of Aging is a licensed curriculum of Parker J. Palmer’s Center for Courage and Renewal, and is based upon the Center’s “Circles of Trust” approach to small group ministry. 32 people from UUCA have already participated in The Soul of Aging program. An additional 25 have experienced the Circles of Trust approach to spiritual awakening in a year-long “Leading From Within” weekend retreat series.

UUCA is pleased to offer this 10-part program this spring, specifically as follows:

- Introductory Session 1 on Sunday afternoon March 10, or alternatively, Wednesday evening March 20, (If you have taken Session 1 before you are encouraged to do it again, but is not required), and
- Sessions 2, 3 and 4 on Friday evening and Saturday morning and afternoon, March 29 and 30, and
- Sessions 5 through 10 on Wednesday evenings from April 10 through May 15
- All sessions are 2.5 to 3 hours. Evening sessions start at 7:00, morning sessions at 9:00, and afternoon sessions at 2:00.

Session 1 will be a trial offering. Should you wish to continue, you will be asked to complete an application form and commit to attending all subsequent sessions as best you can. There will be a registration fee of \$35 to cover materials and refreshments.

The program sessions will be led by CC&R-trained facilitators Mary Pike and Jacomina de Regt.

The Soul of Aging is a UUCA Adult Religious Education program offering.
Register with David McTaggart at dmctagg@gmail.com, (703) 835-6944

The Unitarian Universalist Church of Arlington
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The Soul of Aging Session Descriptions

One: Calling in the Ancestors: Visions of Aging

We begin with an introduction to how aging is a time of change and diminishment but also a rich time when our inner life calls; there are enormous opportunities for growth, learning, and discovery. We learn about the Circle of Trust approach and the Touchstones for the program.

Two: Spiritual Formation across the Lifecycle: Living Into the Soul's Calling

We explore our spiritual formation across the lifecycle. Knowing that our vision can be clearer looking back, we take time to reflect on some of the major lessons learned along the way. We also introduce the practice of asking open, honest questions and explore where life is calling us now.

Three: The Courage to Name and Claim Your Unlived Life

We explore the notion of "your unlived life" or the qualities and commitments you may not have found time for in your younger years that are calling out for attention and care now. This can be a time of new freedom and discovery as we find the courage let go of old ways and move into uncharted territories of self-expression.

Four: Pathways to Wholeness

This session invites us to have the courage to face the darker side of our natures and the potential riches found through "shadow work." We explore befriending our shadow as a path to wholeness and the value of letting go of perfection.

Five: All My Relations: The Call to Completion

This session offers the opportunity to make peace with aspects of the past, including some of the people and situations where we hold regrets and resentments and where there is the need for forgiveness and healing.

Six: Enlightenment in Slow Motion

We explore some of the gifts that come with aging like the emergence of greater compassion and gratitude, along with ways to nurture and support the natural deepening of the spiritual dimension of our lives.

Seven: Stories of Divestment: The Foreign Currency of Change

We share our stories of loss, grief, and renewal as we lift up some of the inevitable changes and divestments that are a normal part of the currency of aging.

Eight: The Wisdom of Living in Deep Time

We reflect on the power of our changing awareness of time as we age, and the different qualities of the ways we occupy time. We consider how our use of time reflects our needs and values and what in our life might be calling for more "deep time."

Nine: The Final Stage of Growth

We consider the importance of doing our "homework," in preparation for our own deaths while we are still vital and able to do so, in the embrace of a trusting community. We delve into our thoughts about what a "good death" would look like.

Ten: Generativity, Legacy, and Harvesting Our Lives

We look at the gifts, experiences, abilities, and wisdom gained over a lifetime and the opportunity to listen for where our deepest values and passions expressed themselves.