

Harwood Place UU Circle

March 23, 2023

What Makes a Family?

Background Reading:

What families have in common the world around is that they are the place where people learn who they are and how to be that way.

Self-Esteem: A Family Affair by Jean Illsley Clarke, 1978

Family Life! The United Nations is child's play compared to the tugs and splits and need to understand and forgive in any family.

Kinds of Love, by UU May Sarton, 1970

Chalice Lighting and silence:

We light this chalice to celebrate Unitarian Universalism.

We are a church of the open mind.

We are a church of the helping hands.

We are a church of the loving heart.

Together we care for our earth and work for friendship and peace in our world.

Check in:

What is one thing that is draining your spirit and one thing that is nourishing your spirit?

Opening words:

Call it a clan, call it a network,
call it a tribe, call it a family,
whatever you call it, whoever
you are, you need one.

Families, by Jane Howard 1978

Questions to consider and discuss:

1. What is the difference between what family means today and what it meant in the past?

2. What are some of the cultural differences in families around the world?
3. How have those cultural differences affected your family?
4. How many different kinds of families do you know?
5. How many *families* do you belong to? How would you describe them?
6. If your family of origin was less healthy or balanced in its interactions, what are your choices?
7. How is your current family different from your original family?

Closing Words:

If the family were a container, it would be a nest, an enduring nest, loosely woven, expansive, and open.

If the family were a fruit, it would be an orange, a circle of sections, held together but separable – each segment distinct.

If the family were a boat, it would be a canoe that makes no progress unless everyone paddles.

If the family were a sport, it would be baseball: a long slow, non-violent game that is never over until the last out.

If the family were a building, it would be an old but solid structure that contains human history, and appeals to those who see the carved moldings under all the plaster, the wide plank floors under the linoleum, the possibilities.

Letty Cottin Pogrebin, *Chop Wood, Carry Water*