

**Harwood Place UU Circle**  
**September 22, 2022, 10:30 am**  
**Opening to Joy**

**Background reading:**

Opening to Joy

It's easy to get tricked,  
taken for a ride,  
convinced that joy  
is a possession.

Something to be opened  
just by us.  
As if it's a holiday special delivery,  
waiting for us to unwrap it  
and keep forever.

And who can blame us,  
with pain being so prevalent.  
Sadness seems to stay.  
Why can't joy?

But maybe it's elusive  
for a reason.  
Maybe it's slippery  
in order to help us understand  
that it was put here to fly.  
Or better yet:  
To be flung!  
To be passed, not possessed.

To be spread  
between you and me,  
between the ones who received its gift  
and the ones that have been looking for its treasure  
for a very long time.

Maybe it's a beautiful and elegant contagion,  
over which we have more control than we think.  
If only we share it.  
If only we notice that joy is not ours to keep,  
but ours to give.

Maybe joy opens us  
as much as we open to it.

Maybe that's the way light leaks into our world.

**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:**

Twinkle lights are the perfect metaphor for joy. Joy is not a constant. It  
comes to us in moments-often ordinary moments. Sometimes we miss

out on the bursts of joy because we're too busy chasing down extraordinary moments. Other times we're so afraid of the dark that we don't dare let ourselves enjoy the light. Brene' Brown

**Questions to ponder and discuss:**

1. Who helps you see the joy in front of you?
2. What were you first taught about "deserving joy"?
3. How has your definition of joy changed as you've grown older?
4. Did you grow up in a "happy family"?
5. Are you mostly a creator of joy, receiver of joy, notice-er of joy or spreader of joy?
6. Are you too responsible to let joy in?
7. When was the last time you did something "useless"? Might joy be waiting for you there?

**Check out:** A word or two about our experience together today

**Closing Words:**

Even a wounded world is feeding us. Even a wounded world holds us, giving us moments of wonder and joy. I choose joy over despair. Not because I have my head in the sand, but because joy is what the earth gives me daily and I must return the gift. Robin Wall Kimmerer