

## **Fire Communion**

### **January 5, 2025**

**This month's theme is "story".**

It could be argued that each one of us is a part of a community or collection of stories. Part of what we do is listen to each other's stories: we do this in joys and concerns, in coffee hour, and in shared celebrations.

During this month, we will celebrate our individual stories, the stories of leaders who have helped to make our world a better place, stories of racial injustice and how we can create a better ending, mythical stories that can empower us to live a better life, and the challenges in choosing the stories we create and consume in tough times.

Today we will spend time releasing the stories of our life that no longer serve us and planting the seeds for new beginnings. Please hold on to your package to help facilitate this ceremony.

**"A Ritual of Letting Go, Cleansing, Intention, and Hope**

The New Year is upon us and offers the promise that we can leave behind that which no longer serves us, allows us to begin fresh and new. The date of January 1 is just a symbol...we could do this at any time, but winter will always bring the north, the cycle on the Medicine Wheel that compels us to look at our core, to give us a chance to release unwanted conditions in our life and make room for our new beginnings.

The Fire Communion, sometimes called the Burning Bowl Ceremony, has been a tradition of the Unitarian Universalist and other congregations for many years. This ritual provides a sacred way to let go of the things that no longer serve you. What will you release this year? You have control over what you carry into the New Year.

For your eyes only, take the blank piece of paper or the paper with the word "release" in your package and begin writing. Letting go begins the moment

you put the pen to the paper. It can be as simple as a name or word, or more in-depth. Let your heart open to the flow as it releases any negativity. It is also ok if you don't have anything you need or want to release right now...you can do this any time of the year.

Those on zoom, feel free to write down your releases

### ***Light a fire in the bowl***

*If you are ready, come to the front and place your paper in the fire (starting at the front of one side of the room)*

*As you move to the front think of these words (a tent card will also be beside the bowl with these words)*

Today I release what I no longer need.

I am healed and renewed.

I open my heart to love.

I am blessed with joy, love, peace, wisdom, harmony.

*Music will be played throughout this ritual*

Once everyone is seated again:

### **The Future:**

*Take out the card: My 2025 Mantra and the colored pen*

As important, we will begin to imagine what will fill the open space within the months and the year ahead, reminding you that your future and your story are in your hands.

One of the treasured New Year's traditions from a few UU congregations is coming up with a word for the year: a single word you want to be the theme for your entire year. It can become a mantra to meditate on throughout the year and to look to for guidance when challenged. You can look back at the amazing things you did to embody the value.

**Here are a few ideas:** (By Addae Ama Kraba)

**Stamina.**

To finish things left uncompleted.

To call on people I neglected last year.

**Courage.**

To rally in the cause for peace and justice.

To speak out in support when others remain silent.

**Empathy.**

To better understand the pain and suffering of others.

To continue engaging heart to heart.

**Patience.**

When seeking resolutions to problems.

When seeking a new beginning after an ending.

**Creativity.**

In seeking new meaning in service.

Engaging others in service to the beloved community.

As an example, my word is **curiosity** (hold my word up). I want to ask curious questions, listen with a loving mind and heart to the stories of others' lives, to have a better understanding to allow my relationships to deepen.

Let's take a moment to think of one word you would like to carry you through the year. If you are not yet ready to decide on this word, take the card and decide later.

Your friends in UU are walking beside you as you welcome a New Year of Possibilities.

Even if you think New Year's Resolutions are a little hokey, I encourage you to try this word-of-the-year idea.

“One tree can start a forest, One smile can begin a friendship, One hand can lift a soul, One star can guide a ship at sea, One word can frame the goal, One vote can change a nation, One candle can wipe out darkness, One laugh can

conquer gloom, One hope can raise our spirits, One touch can show you care,  
, One life can make the difference.” -Author unknown

## **Discussion--Brainstorm intentions for the fellowship for the year.**

Our discussion time will focus on uniting our thoughts and intentions for our fellowship this year. As a fellowship, what would we like to create to support our community, our nation, and ourselves? Let's brainstorm for a few minutes about what we would like to achieve. Being realistic is important—what can we truly accomplish? I will post the list we create today on the bulletin board, and we can continue to revise and expand it throughout the year. May our tapestry, woven with threads of reflection and resolution, guide us in the coming year."

A few examples

1. Continue to work on incorporating the UU values in our service and our fellowship.
2. How can we support immigrants?
3. How can we react to climate change