

Celebrating Chalica

Chalica is a Unitarian Universalist weeklong holiday celebrated every year beginning on the first Monday of December.*

Every day light a chalice (or candle or flashlight) and read that day's reflection. If you like, you can also discuss or journal about what the principle of the day means to you or do one of the activities listed below. You may even be inspired to be a good deed that is related to the principle. And if you want to exchange gifts, including notes or small handmade items, you can!

Learn more about Chalica by reading <https://www.uuworld.org/articles/chalica-gains-adherents>.

OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES

Playdough Chalice: <https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/chalicechildren/session4/298234.shtml>

Chalice Necklaces: <https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/chalicechildren/session6/297964.shtml>

Fruit Chalice: <https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/chalicechildren/session8/298304.shtml>

Other Chalice: <https://uuwinnipeg.mb.ca/learning-overview/chalices/diy-chalices>

UU Principles Mobile: <https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/lovesurrounds/session16/170420.shtml>

Reflections and ways to honor each principle come from <https://www.uua.org> and <https://chalica.blogspot.com>.



Monday

1ST PRINCIPLE: *The inherent worth and dignity of every person*

In simpler language: *We believe that each and every person is important.*

Reflection

Reverence and respect for human nature is at the core of Unitarian Universalist (UU) faith. We believe that all the dimensions of our being carry the potential to do good. We celebrate the gifts of being human: our intelligence and capacity for observation and reason, our senses and ability to appreciate beauty, our creativity, our feelings and emotions. We cherish our bodies as well as our souls. We can use our gifts to offer love, to work for justice, to heal injury, to create pleasure for ourselves and others.

"Just to be is a blessing. Just to live is holy," the great twentieth-century Rabbi Abraham Heschel wrote. Unitarian Universalists affirm the inherent worth and dignity of each person as a given of faith—an unshakeable conviction calling us to self-respect and respect for others.

—The Rev. Dr. Rebecca Ann Parker, minister, theologian, and author (from *The Unitarian Universalist Pocket Guide*)

Ways to honor this principle:

- give someone a thank-you card celebrating differences
- offer words of forgiveness / apology
- extend a peace offering such as inviting someone to dinner
- help someone in need

* Consider turning Chalica into an 8-day observance by reflecting on and honoring the proposed 8th principle. *Journeying toward spiritual wholeness by working to build a diverse multicultural Beloved Community by our actions that accountably dismantle racism and other oppressions in ourselves and our institutions.* See <https://www.8thprincipleuu.org> for more info.



Tuesday

2ND PRINCIPLE: *Justice, equity, and compassion in human relations*

In simpler language: *We believe that all people should be treated fairly and kindly.*

Reflection

Justice, equity, and compassion in human relations points us toward something beyond inherent worth and dignity. It points us to the larger community. It gets at collective responsibility. It reminds us that treating people as human beings is not simply something we do one-on-one, but something that has systemic implications and can inform our entire cultural way of being.

Compassion is something that we can easily act on individually. We can demonstrate openness, give people respect, and treat people with kindness on our own. But we need one another to achieve equity and justice.

Justice, equity, and compassion are all part of the same package. Just as the second Principle overlaps with the first, so it is related to the seventh Principle—the interdependent web of all existence.

—The Rev. Emily Gage, Unity Temple, Chicago, IL (from *The Seven Principles in Word and Worship*)

Ways to honor this principle:

- volunteer with the food pantry
- donate clothes to a worthy organization
- display kindness and care to those around you
- take part in a political demonstration at city hall



Wednesday

3RD PRINCIPLE: *Acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth in our congregations*

In simpler language: *We believe that we should accept one another and keep on learning together.*

Reflection

Spiritual growth isn't about a vertical ascent to heaven but about growth in every dimension at once. It's spirituality in 3-D. Growth in spirit doesn't measure one's proximity to a God above, but rather the spaciousness of one's own soul—its volume, its capacity, its size.

We need souls that can take in the world in all its complexity and diversity, yet still maintain our integrity. And we need souls that can love and be in relationship with all of this complexity. Instead of fight or flight, we need a spiritual posture of embrace.

—The Rev. Rob Hardies, All Souls Church Unitarian, Washington, DC (from *The Seven Principles in Word and Worship*)

Ways to honor this principle:

- give someone a chalice / book / hymnal
- extend words of peace or forgiveness to a fellow congregant whom you may have hurt / not understood in the past
- participate in a book discussion group



Thursday

4TH PRINCIPLE: *A free and responsible search for truth and meaning*

In simpler language: *We believe that each person must be free to search for what is true and right in life.*

Reflection

As responsible religious seekers, we recognize that we are privileged to be free, to have resources to pursue life beyond mere survival, to continually search for truth and meaning, to exist beyond bonds of dogma and oppression, and to wrestle freely with truth and meaning as they evolve.

This privilege calls us not to be isolated and self-centered, believing that our single perspective trumps all others, but rather to be humble, to be open to the great mysteries of truth and meaning that life offers. And those mysteries may speak to us through our own intuition and experience—but also through tradition, community, conflict, nature, and relationships.

As a faith tradition, Unitarian Universalism makes sacred the right and responsibility to engage in this free and responsible quest as an act of religious devotion. Institutionally, we have left open the questions of what truth and meaning are, acknowledging that mindful people will, in every age, discover new insights.

—The Rev. Paige Getty, UU Congregation of Columbia, Maryland (from *The Seven Principles in Word and Worship*)

Ways to honor this principle:

- offer / take part in an event that celebrates another religion / tradition
- teach someone something you know and love
- learn something new from someone else
- give a book / read a book



Friday

5TH PRINCIPLE: *The right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregations and in society at large*

In simpler language: *We believe that all persons should have a vote about the things that concern them.*

Reflection

In our religious lives, the democratic process requires trust in the development of each individual conscience—a belief that such development is possible for each of us, as well as a commitment to cultivate our own conscience. We could call it a commitment to the value of each person. In the words of Theodore Parker, "Democracy means not 'I am as good as you are,' but 'You are as good as I am.'" My connection with the sacred is only as precious as my willingness to acknowledge the same connection in others.

—The Rev. Parisa Parsa, executive director of the Public Conversations Project (from *The Seven Principles in Word and Worship*)

Ways to honor this principle:

- help a political party
- write your government
- help a committee in your congregation
- host a dinner / party to celebrate democracy



6TH PRINCIPLE: *The goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all*

In simpler language: *We believe in working for a peaceful, fair, and free world.*

Saturday

Reflection

The sixth Principle seems extravagant in its hopefulness and improbable in its prospects. Can we continue to say we want "world community"? "Peace, liberty, and justice for all"? The world is full of genocide, abuse, terror, and war. What have we gotten ourselves into?

As naïve or impossible as the sixth Principle may seem, I'm not willing to give up on it. In the face of our culture's apathy and fear, I want to imagine and help create a powerful vision of peace by peaceful means, liberty by liberatory means, justice by just means. I want us to believe—and to live as if we believe—that a world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all is possible. There is no guarantee that we will succeed, but I can assure you that we will improve ourselves and improve the world by trying.

—The Rev. Sean Parker Dennison, Tree of Life Congregation, McHenry, IL (from *The Seven Principles in Word and Worship*)

Ways to honor this principle:

- volunteer with an organization that has global influence
- write a letter for amnesty international
- help your social justice committee hold a fundraiser
- donate to a cause such as UNICEF, Doctors without Borders, etc.



Sunday

7TH PRINCIPLE: *Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part*

In simpler language: *We believe in caring for our planet Earth, the home we share with all living things.* (But it's not just about the Earth as the following reflection indicates!)

Reflection

Our seventh Principle, respect for the interdependent web of all existence, is a glorious statement. Yet we make a profound mistake when we limit it to merely an environmental idea. It is so much more. It is our response to the great dangers of both individualism and oppression. It is our solution to the seeming conflict between the individual and the group.

Our seventh Principle may be our Unitarian Universalist way of coming to fully embrace something greater than ourselves. The interdependent web—expressed as the spirit of life, the ground of all being, the oneness of all existence, the community-forming power, the process of life, the creative force, even God—can help us develop that social understanding of ourselves that we and our culture so desperately need. It is a source of meaning to which we can dedicate our lives.

—The Rev. Forrest Gilmore, Executive Director of Shalom Community Center, Bloomington, IN (from *The Seven Principles in Word and Worship*)

Ways to honor this principle:

- start a compost pile (or contribute to the one you already have!)
- recycle bottles and cans and donate the money to an environmental / animal aid society
- rescue an animal from a shelter