

## UUCMC Covenant Circle Session

### September 2018: Vision

#### Opening Words & Chalice Lighting

If you sense there must be more, there is more. ~ Alan Cohen

**Reminder of our Covenant** For this first session refer to the Covenant Circle Guidelines to help all understand how you would like to be together.

#### Check-In (3-4 minutes each)

#### Topic with Readings

Vision: The act or power of anticipating that which will or may come to be.

From Old French vision: presence, sight; view, look, appearance; dream, supernatural sight.

We are limited, not by our abilities, but by our vision. ~ Unknown

The soul never thinks without a picture. ~ Aristotle

We are here to abet creation and to witness it, to notice each thing so each thing gets noticed. Together we notice not only each mountain shadow and each stone on the beach, but we notice each other's beautiful face and complex nature so that creation need not play to an empty house.  
~ Annie Dillard

The best and most beautiful things in the world cannot be seen or even touched - they must be felt with the heart. ~ Helen Keller

The most beautiful things are always hidden. ~ Anonymous proverb

Your vision will become clear only when you look into your heart. Who looks outside, dreams. Who looks inside, awakens. ~ Carl Jung

Vision without action is a daydream. Action without vision is a nightmare. ~ Japanese Proverb

Vision looks inward and becomes duty. Vision looks outward and becomes aspiration. Vision looks upward and becomes faith. ~ Rabbi Stephen Wise

If you change the way you look at things, the things you look at change. ~ Wayne Dyer

Once there were 3 bricklayers. Each one of them was asked what they were doing. The first man answered gruffly, "I'm laying bricks." The second man replied, "I'm putting up a wall." But the third man said enthusiastically and with pride, "I'm building a cathedral."  
~ Author Unknown

Luke, you're going to find that many of the truths we cling to depend greatly on our own point of view. ~ Obi-Wan Kenobi

If you want to build a ship, don't drum up people to collect wood and don't assign them tasks and work, but rather teach them to long for the endless immensity of the sea.  
~ Antoine de Saint-Exupery

Failed plans should not be interpreted as a failed vision. Visions don't change, they are only refined. Plans rarely stay the same and are scrapped or adjusted as needed. Be stubborn about the vision, but flexible with your plan. ~ John C. Maxwell

It is a commonplace of all religious thought, even the most primitive, that the [person] seeking visions and insight must go apart from [their] fellows and live for a time in the wilderness.  
~ Loren Eiseley

All human activity can be viewed as an interplay between two contrary but equally essential factors -- vision and repetitive routine... When one factor prevails at the expense of the other, the consequences are often undesirable. If we are bound to a repetitive cycle of work that deprives us of our freedom to inquire and understand things for ourselves, we soon stagnate, crippled by the chains of routine. If we are spurred to action by elevating ideals but lack the discipline to implement them, we may eventually find ourselves wallowing in idle dreams or exhausting our energies on frivolous pursuits. It is only when accustomed routines are infused by vision that they become springboards to discovery rather than deadening ruts. And it is only when inspired vision gives birth to a course of repeatable actions that we can bring our ideals down from the ethereal sphere of imagination to the somber realm of fact...  
~ Bhikkhu Bodhi

The great tragedy of speed as an answer to the complexities and responsibilities of existence is that very soon we cannot recognize anything or anyone who is not traveling at the same velocity as we are. We see only those moving in the same whirling orbit and only those moving with the same urgency. Soon we begin to suffer a form of amnesia, caused by the blurred vision of velocity itself, where those germane to our humanity are dropped from our minds one by one. We start to lose sight of any colleagues who are moving at a slower pace, and we start to lose sight of the bigger, slower cycles that underlie our work... Just as seriously, we begin to leave behind the parts of our own selves that limp a little, the vulnerabilities that actually give us color and character. We forget that our sanity is dependent on a relationship with longer, more patient cycles extending beyond the urgencies.  
~ David Whyte, on how our vision is limited by speed

We're always talking about how we should live in the now and "be present." We shame ourselves for looking back at the past or into the future... It's a beautiful thing to be mindful of the present, but don't forget to honor yourself, your past, and how far you've come. Odds are, it's further than you think... I realized that I sometimes get so caught up with my big dreams... that I forget to recognize all the little dreams I've made come true!... We can get so caught up looking at where we should be, where we aren't, and where others are in comparison that we forget to appreciate where we've been and where we've come from. ~ Rose Nguyen

When you look deeply into your anger, you will see that the person you call your enemy is also suffering. As soon as you see that, the capacity of accepting and having compassion for them is there. ~ Thich Nhat Hanh

Earth's crammed with heaven. ~ Elizabeth Barrett Browning

Above all, watch with glittering eyes the whole world around you because the greatest secrets are always hidden in the most unlikely places. Those who don't believe in magic will never find it.  
~ Roald Dahl, The Minpins.

What will mess you up most in life is the picture in your head of how it is supposed to be.  
~ Unknown

My barn having burned down I can now see the moon. ~ Mizuta Masahide

Sweet Darkness  
David Whyte  
Full poem with reading found at <https://onbeing.org/blog/sweet-darkness/>

When your eyes are tired  
the world is tired also.  
When your vision has gone  
no part of the world can find you...

Turning to One Another  
Margaret Wheatley  
Full poem found here: <https://101friends.wordpress.com/2013/10/31/margaret-wheatley-turning-to-one-another/>

Ask: "What's possible?" not "What's wrong?" Keep asking.  
Notice what you care about.  
Assume that many others share your dreams...

Beyond Words  
Katie Pratt  
Full poem found at <http://www.ayearofbeinghere.com/2014/10/katie-pratt-beyond-words.html>

When I look into your eyes,  
I see your spirit.  
When I notice your feet,  
I see the journey you're taking...  
Would you put down your logical way of thinking for just a moment to see the hidden spirit glowing in you...

There is something dying in our society, in our culture, and there's something dying in us individually. And what is dying is the willingness to be in denial. And that is extraordinary. The

willingness to be in denial is dying in a meaningful number of us, the tipping point. It's always been happening, and when it happens in enough of us, in a short enough period of time, at the same time, then you have a tipping point, and the culture begins to shift.

~ Rev. Angel Kyodo Williams

Look at the world around you. It may seem like an immovable, implacable place. It is not. With the slightest push—in just the right place—it can be tipped.”

~ Malcolm Gladwell, *The Tipping Point: How Little Things Can Make a Big Difference*

The world is a dangerous place, not because of those who do evil, but because of those who look on and do nothing. ~ Albert Einstein

## **Silent Reflection**

### **Questions to prompt discussion (choose ones that work for you)**

1. What vision has been with you since you were a child? How has it both changed and remained the same?
2. Who are your vision mentors? What poet, preacher, spiritual teacher, artist, activist or musician helps you hold on to your vision of the possible and the good? What practice do you use to keep their guidance and inspiration in front of you?
3. What vision do you want to pass on to your kids, grandkids or those who look to you for guidance?
4. How is the season of fall a time of vision for you? How does this season of harvest and turning of leaves allow you to “see” differently?
5. How might it be a gift to lean into your near-sightedness? How might vision be calling you to take a break from the long view and gratefully gaze at the treasure right in front of you?
6. What might it mean to use a new form of perception to connect with the sacred? Many of us lean on our visual sight and analytical thinking to perceive and engage the holy. But how might listening or touch open an entirely new door? What about allowing your intuition to help you “see”? Or letting the muse of creative expression open up a new horizon? Many also suggest that vision is clearest when we look out with a “beginner’s mind.” What new form of “vision” is calling to you?
7. You see the beauty around you, but are you taking it in?
8. Wayne Dyer writes, “If you change the way you look at things, the things you look at change.” What in your life needs another look? What if you started with the things you are most sure about?

9. Is your vision of how your life is “supposed to be” in your way? Could clear vision require letting go of the visions to which you currently cling?
10. Have you ever had a "vision?" A spiritual revelation, mystical experience or premonition? Have you shared it easily? Or kept it to yourself?
11. “Once there were three bricklayers. Each one of them was asked what they were doing. The first man answered gruffly, ‘I’m laying bricks.’ The second man replied, ‘I’m putting up a wall.’ But the third man said enthusiastically and with pride, ‘I’m building a cathedral.’” Are you sure you are just laying bricks? What “brick” or “wall” is asking you to see a “cathedral” in it?
12. What if you made room for one long, uninterrupted stare at a beautiful thing?
13. Loren Eiseley reminds us, “It is a commonplace of all religious thought, even the most primitive, that the [person] seeking visions and insight must go apart from [their] fellows and live for a time in the wilderness.” What might “stepping apart and going into the wilderness” look like in your life?
14. Rose Nguyen writes, “I sometimes get so caught up with my big dreams... that I forget to recognize all the little dreams I’ve made come true!... We can get so caught up looking at where we should be, where we aren’t, and where others are in comparison that we forget to appreciate where we’ve been and where we’ve come from.” How might looking back on how far you’ve come be a blessing to you this month?
15. Is the speed and pace of your daily routine blurring your vision? Could the secret to finding clear sight be slowing down?
16. What’s your question? Your question may not be listed above. As always, if the above questions don’t include what life is asking from you, spend the month listening to your days to hear it.

**Housekeeping Details** How goes your service project plans? Do you need ideas? Lisa, Michelle or Virginia are happy to help!

### **Check-out**

### **Closing Words**

The Opening of Eyes ~ David Whyte  
 Life is no passing memory of what has been  
 nor the remaining pages in a great book  
 waiting to be read.  
 It is the opening of eyes long closed...

(Full poem found at <https://cslcv.blogspot.com/2014/06/the-opening-of-eyes-by-david-whyte.html> )

## Optional homework/ reflection:

### *Your Personal Vision Statement: Write It!*

We've all heard of companies writing vision statements, but we rarely write one for ourselves. Use this month to fix that. Simple, clear and memorable statements of vision inspire us, help clarify our choices and motivate us to get out of bed each morning. Without them, we wander. With them, we choose and shape our own path. It's one of the best gifts we can give to ourselves.

And here's the great thing: it's not really that hard to give ourselves this gift. You don't have to make it complicated. In fact, the best personal vision statements are short and simple, even one-sentence. You can also make it less intimidating by narrowing the timeline. For instance, instead of trying to write a vision of what you will make of your entire life, just focus in on what you want to accomplish this year. For instance, you could just make the exercise a matter of answering one or both of the following questions: "How do I want to be different when this church year comes to an end?" and/or "What do I want to have done when this church year ends?"

Here's some more support. If you want to take the single sentence approach, check out these videos:

- <https://vimeo.com/8480171>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gw2xSdp4bOc&feature=youtu.be>
- 

If you want to dive in more deeply, here's a great road map:

<http://static1.squarespace.com/static/5765deb1be659449f97fcbf5/t/5770b309579fb313164a7a37/1467003657818/LINDYNORRIS.COM+-+How+to+Develop+a+Personal+Vision+Statement.pdf>

As you are writing your statement, run it by those close to you. Ask for their reactions. Something insightful will surely arise from those conversations.