

Small Group Ministry

Topic: Love

Welcome and Chalice Lighting

Warm welcome to all who have gathered

The quiet lighting of the chalice and time for quiet reflection

Chalice Lighting

Love does not begin and end the way we seem to think it does. Love is a battle, love is a war; love is a growing up. - James A. Baldwin

Check-in

Our covenant: Covenant Review

Topic: Love

Reading: *Looking for Love in all the Wrong Places* - David Blanchard (on back)

1. Where do you look for love? Where do you find it?
2. What does James Baldwin mean when he says "love is a battle, love is a war; love is growing up?"
3. How does your faith and/or values impact your thoughts on/experience of love?
4. Have you ever experienced love as transformative? When?
5. How do you share your love with the world?

Check Out

Extinguishing the Chalice

"This year, mend a quarrel. Seek out a forgotten friend. Dismiss suspicion and replace it with trust. Write a letter. Give a soft answer. Encourage youth. Manifest your loyalty in word and deed. Keep a promise. Forgo a grudge. Forgive an enemy. Apologize. Try to understand. Examine your demands on others. Think first of someone else. Be kind. Be gentle. Laugh a little more. Express your gratitude. Welcome a stranger. Gladden the heart of a child. Take pleasure in the beauty and wonder of the earth. Speak your love and then speak it again."

— Howard W. Hunter

Looking For Love in All The Wrong Places

By David Blanchard

Most of us look for love in only the most obvious places, and as a result, most of us come away disappointed. It's as if we are still grade school kids, counting valentines as a measure of what matters. The love that matters is not typically the subject of sonnets or love songs.

There can be love in being told we are wrong. There can be love in sharing a regret. There can be love in asking for help. There can be love in communicating hurt. There can be love in telling hard truths. Most of us find it painful to live at this level of love, but it can be there, even in these most unlikely places. It isn't the kind of love we've been promised in the fairy tales of princes and fairy godmothers, but it is the kind experienced by frogs and dwarfs. It's the sort of love that can bring us closer to finding the missing pieces of ourselves that we need to make us whole.

Some of the most loving things I've ever experienced, I haven't been ready for, wasn't looking for, and nearly didn't recognize. A few of them I didn't want. But all of them have changed me, transformed some part of me, filled in a place that I didn't even know was empty.

When the valentine has been tucked away in a drawer, the candy eaten, the flowers faded and gone, there will be other legacies of love that will last as long as we do, because they have brought us to know an element of life—part feeling, part idea, part mystery—that once known, is ours to keep.