"Thank You for Your Loving Hands"

Thank you for your loving hands, your loving heart, your loving ways—

Thank you for the gifts you bring into the world each day.

And if you ever doubt yourself, remember us, who love you well—

We know all the gifts you bring into the world each day.

So thank you for your loving hands, your loving heart, your loving ways,

Thank you for the gifts you bring into the world each day.

—by Judy Fjell and Lisa Bregger

The Covenant

I commit myself:

- to come to meetings when I possibly can, knowing that my presence is important to the group
- to honor the group by letting the leader know if I will be absent, and to come to the group one last time and say good-bye if I need to quit
- to avoid cross talk, giving feedback or trying to fix anyone
- to share with the leader the responsibility for good group process by watching how much time I take to speak and noticing what is going on for others
- to not gossip about what is shared in the group, and not tell other people's stories
- to listen to what others share with an open heart, and to share deeply in my turn

Covenant Groups

Destiny



The Stone of Scone (Stone of Destiny)
A large stone, hollowed out as a round chair,
upon which kings were made.

Destiny

Chalice Lighting

As we welcome this flame Let us bring to mind the words of the psalmist,

"Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity."

—Psalms 133:1

Sharing of Joys and Sorrows

Distribution of Fortunes

Silence

Silence, holding ourselves and each other in silent support.

Shared Readings

The willing, Destiny guides them; The unwilling, Destiny drags them.

—Seneca

If we could see the color of our future, we must look for it in our present; if we would gaze on the star of our destiny, we must look for it in our hearts.

—Canon Farrar

There is an unseen life that dreams us. It knows our true direction and destiny. We can trust ourselves more than we realize and we need have no fear of change.

—John O'Donohue

Fate is like a strange, unpopular restaurant, filled with odd waiters who bring you things you never asked for and don't always like.

—Lemony Snicket

You are what your deep, driving desire is. As your desire is, so is your will. As your will is, so is your deed. As your deed is, so is your destiny.

—Brihadaranyaka Upanishad

It is a mistake to look too far ahead. Only one link of the chain of destiny can be handled at a time.

—Winston Churchill

Deep Sharing and Deep Listening

Round 1: What do you believe is your destiny?

Round 2: If you were to change your destiny, how would you go about it?

Round 3: What resonated with you as others were sharing?

Closing Words

The old Anglo Saxon goddess of fate's name was Wyrd. And for these ancestors, fate was seen to be continually happening (a happening?), not an endpoint. The Venerable Bede, a Christian monk, tells us these folk viewed "life and death as being like the experience of a sparrow who flies out of a freezing night into a warm hall full of feasting and merriment, and then out into the night again."

How wonderful; how weird!

Closing Song

"Thank You for Your Loving Hands"

Group Business

Homework for the next meeting.

Homework: Destiny

This session focuses on the concept of *destiny*. Definitions: a preordained future; an inner realizable purpose of life. Synonyms: fate, fortune, kismet, lot in life.

The fault, dear Brutus, is not in our stars, But in ourselves, that we are underlings.

—William Shakespeare

We are merely the stars' tennis-balls, struck and bandied [about] Which [ever] way please them.

—John Webster, The Dutchess of Malfi

The spring is wound up tight. It will uncoil itself. That is what is so convenient in tragedy. The least little turn of the wrist will do the job. Anything will set it going.

—Jean Anouith

The bad end unhappily, the good unluckily. That is what tragedy means.

—Tom Stoppard

Questions to Ponder

- Which one of the following statements most closely matches your core belief about your own destiny? Change it as needed until it reflects your personal philosophy.
 - The circumstances of your birth set your destiny.
 - Your character creates your destiny.
 - God decides your destiny.
- If you were to change your destiny, how would you go about it?
- Think back to your childhood. How did your parents model their concept of destiny?
- Think of someone you love who seems destined for some sort of trouble. How might you help them create a better fate?

Leader's Guide: Destiny

This session focuses on the concept of *destiny*. Definitions: a preordained future; an inner realizable purpose of life. Synonyms: fate, fortune, kismet, lot in life.

Pre-Meeting Instructions

Prepare the fortunes (found at the end of this guide) ahead of time by cutting the fortunes into strips and folding them in thirds. Put the folded fortunes into a cup or basket.

Chalice Lighting (2 min)

Ask someone to read the chalice lighting reading found in the bulletin as you light the chalice.

As we welcome this flame

Let us bring to mind the words of the psalmist,

"Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity."

-Psalms 133:1

Sharing of Joys and Sorrows (10 min)

Ask group members to check in, telling in one or two sentences how they are doing this week. Share information about absent members.

Distribution of Fortunes (5 min)

Introduce the idea of destiny by passing the fortunes around the circle, having each person take one from the basket or cup and then read it to the group.

Silence (3 min)

Give your group the gift of three minutes of silence. Time it if you would like.

Shared Readings (5 min)

Have each person in turn read from the shared readings found in the bulletin until all the readings are finished.

Deep Sharing and Deep Listening (65 min)

Do three rounds of deep sharing and deep listening. Pay close attention to the time allotted each person to ensure that everyone gets a turn to share.

Round 1 (10 min): What do you believe is your destiny?

Round 2 (40 min): If you were to change your destiny, how would you go about it?

Round 3 (15 min): What resonated with you as others were sharing?

Closing Words (1 min)

Read or ask someone to read the closing words.

The old Anglo Saxon goddess of fate's name was Wyrd. And for these ancestors, fate was seen to be continually happening (a happening?), not an endpoint. The Venerable Bede, a Christian monk, tells us these folk viewed "life and death as being like the experience of a sparrow who flies out of a freezing night into a warm hall full of feasting and merriment, and then out into the night again." How wonderful; how weird!

Closing Song (1 min)

"Thank You for Your Loving Hands"

Group Business (5 min)

Pass out the homework for next time.

You will continue to take chances and be glad you did.

The most utterly lost of all days is that on which you have not laughed.

Seek friendship and you will find it.

You're allowed to do nothing.

Listen to your heartbeat and dance.

Send a love letter this week.

Be fearless.

Don't think about it so much.

Go against the grain.

Whisper in the dark.