

Gratitude

Chalice Lighting

Joys and Concerns

Silence, holding ourselves and each other in silent support.

Shared Reading

A Pantheist's Thanksgiving:

There is joy in all:
in the hair I brush each morning
in the cannon towel, newly washed, that I rub my body with each morning
in the chapel of eggs I cook each morning,
in the outcry from the kettle that heats my coffee each morning,
in the spoon and the chair that cry "hello there, Anne"
each morning,
in the godhead of the table that I set my silver, plate, cup upon each morning.

All this is God, right here in my pea-green house,
each morning
and I mean, though often forget, to give thanks, to faint down by
the kitchen table in a prayer of rejoicing as the holy birds at the
kitchen window peck into their marriage of seeds.

So while I think of it, let me paint a thank-you on my palm for this
God, this laughter of the morning, lest it go unspoken.
The Joy that isn't shared, I've heard,
dies young.

Ann Sexton, *The Awful Rowing Towards God*

Brief Check-in

Transitional Reading

Let us give thanks for a bounty of people.
For generous friends with hearts and smiles as bright as their blossoms;
For feisty friends as tart as apples;
For continuous friends, who, like scallions and cucumbers, keep
reminding us that we've had them;
For crotchety friends, as sour as rhubarb and as indestructible;
For handsome friends, who are as gorgeous as eggplants and as elegant
as a row of corn, and the others, as plain as potatoes and as good for
you;
For funny friends, who are as silly as Brussels sprouts and as amusing as
Jerusalem artichokes, and serious friends, as complex as cauliflowers
and as intricate as onions.
For friends as unpretentious as cabbages, as subtle as summer squash, as
persistent as parsley, as delightful as dill, as endless as zucchini, and
who, like parsnips, can be counted on to see you throughout the
winter;
For old friends, nodding like sunflowers in the evening-time, and young
friends coming on as fast as radishes;
For loving friends, who wind around us like tendrils and hold us,
despite our blights, wilts, and witherings;
And finally, for those friends now gone, like gardens past that have been
harvested, and who fed us in their times that we might have life
thereafter;
For all these we give thanks.

By Max Coots

Deep Sharing/Deep Listening/Discussion

Group Business

Closing Words and Song "Go Now in Peace"

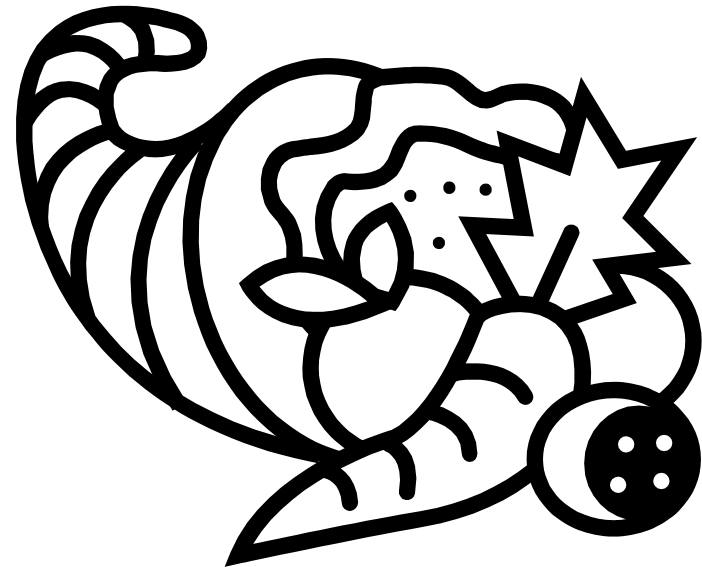
The Covenant

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 goodbye if I need to quit.
- 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 Circles

Gratitude



Gratitude - Leader's Notes

Getting Ready

As people come in, recruit someone to read the "Bounty of People" reading which is in the bulletin.

Light the Chalice

Joys and concerns

Ask if anyone has a joy or sorrow to share
Share any news you have of absent members
Enjoy the silence

Shared Reading

Go around the group, letting each person in turn read a line of this Anne Sexton poem.

Brief Check-in

Ask group members to share something going on in their life right now that they are grateful for.

Transition

Have your reader read the "Bounty of People"

Deep Sharing, Rounds 1, 2 and, if time, 3

People may share their insights from the homework list, their reaction to the quotes and poems, or their feelings about the issue of gratitude in their lives.

Closing

Pass out homework sheets.
Form your circle and close as usual.

Gratitude

*Just to be is a blessing.
Just to live is holy -Abraham Heschel*

*May it be delightful my house;
From my head may it be delightful;
To my feet may it be delightful;
Where I lie may it be delightful;
All above me may it be delightful;
All around me may it be delightful. -Navaho chant*

*A thankful person is thankful under all circumstances. A complaining soul
complains even if he lives in paradise. Baha'u'llah*

*When I rise up
let me rise up joyful
like a bird.*

*When I fall
let me fall without regret
like a leaf. -Wendell Berry*

“If the only prayer you ever say in your whole life is “thank you”, then that is enough.” –
Meister Eckhart

Exercise: Get out a piece of paper, number the lines from 1-25, and make a list of 25 things you are grateful for. Then do it again.

Questions to think about:

Are you as grateful as you would like to be?
What keeps you from your gratitude?
In what ways do you practice your gratitude?