

# Gathering for Caring Community

## Words of the Day

My experience of a caring community includes ...

## Chalice Lighting

We light this chalice to shine on our time together. In its light we celebrate the relationships and understanding we are creating in this place and time. May our sharing be deep. (*Light chalice*)

## The Basket

## Sharing of Joys and Concerns

## Silence, holding ourselves and each other in silent support.

## Shared Readings *I Want to Be With People, by Dana E. Worsnop*

*We will read it going around the circle, with breaks at .....*

Often people say that they love coming to a place with so many like-minded people.  
I know just what they are getting at – and I know that they aren't getting it quite right.  
.....

I don't want to be with a bunch of people who think just like me.  
.....

I want to be in a beloved community where I don't have to think like everyone else to be loved,  
to be eligible for salvation.

I want to be with people who value compassion, justice, love and truth, though they have  
different thoughts and opinions about all sorts of things.  
.....

I want to be with independent-minded people of good heart.

I want to be with people who have many names and no name at all for God.  
.....

I want to be with people who see in me goodness and dignity, who also see my failings and  
foibles, and who still love me.

I want to be with people who feel their inter-connection with all existence and let it guide their  
footfalls upon the earth.  
.....

I want to be with people who see life as a paradox and don't always rush to resolve it.

I want to be with people who are willing to walk the tight rope that is life and who will hold my  
hand as I walk mine.  
.....

I want to be with people who let church call them into a different way of being in the world.  
I want to be with people who support, encourage and even challenge each other to higher and more ethical living.  
.....

I want to be with people who inspire one another to follow the call of the spirit.  
I want to be with people who covenant to be honest, engaged and kind, who strive to keep their promises and hold me to the promises I make.  
.....

I want to be with people who give of themselves, who share their hearts and minds and gifts.  
I want to be with people who know that human community is often warm and generous, sometimes challenging and almost always a grand adventure.  
.....

In short, I want to be with people like you.

## **Deep Sharing/Deep Listening**

**Round 1:** Share your reflections on caring community and the preparation materials.

**Round 2:** Share feelings and thoughts on our current covenant group.

## **Closing Circle**

## **Extinguishing the Chalice**

We extinguish this flame and we remember the warmth of our community, the light of our wisdom, the generosity of our sharing. We keep these in our heart until we meet again.  
*(Extinguish the chalice.)*

## **Song/Chime**

## **Announcements**

### **The Covenant**

I commit myself:

- to come to meetings when I possibly can, knowing that my presence is important to the group
- to let the facilitator know if I will be absent or need to quit
- to share with the facilitator the responsibility for good group process by watching how much time I take to speak and noticing what is going on for others
- to do the reading and thinking about the topic ahead of time
- to not gossip about what is shared in the group, and tell only my own story to others
- to honor the safety of the group by listening to what others share with an open heart
- to refrain from cross-talk, judging, giving advice, or advocating a specific view
- to share as deeply as I can when it is my turn and to stay on the “I-message.”