

Gathering for Gratitude

Words of the Day

This month, in keeping with our theme, we will use an abundance of phrases. Use phrases that refer to specific experiences in your recent past. For example, instead of listing food, mention the delicious apple you had at lunch. Or instead of listing friends, list a specific great experience you had with a friend. You may put several ideas on one slip of paper, or you may use more than one. The Words of the Day sentence is “I am grateful for”

Chalice Lighting

Who can make an accounting of gratitude?

For the universe we give thanks, an expanse of life to stretch us with wonder . . .

For the earth we give thanks, fragment of the stars that is our home . . .

For life we give thanks, the burning of stars ordered and tempered here allowing us life and breath . . .

For growth we give thanks, for the heritage of the spirit, for all the forces past our knowing, power
past our control . . .

For the ages which follow us, for the eternity of days, in which life is ever renewed and fulfilled, we
give thanks.

Kenneth Patton, adapted

The Basket

Sharing of Joys and Concerns

Silence, holding ourselves and each other in silent support

Shared Readings

We can only be said to be alive in those moments when our hearts are conscious of our treasures.

Thornton Wilder

How can I smile when I am filled with so much sorrow? It is natural – you need to smile to your sorrow because you are more than your sorrow. *Thich Nhat Hanh*

Self-actualizing people have a wonderful capacity to appreciate again and again, freshly and naively, the basic goods of life, with awe, pleasure, wonder, and even ecstasy. *Abraham Maslow*

We are all more blind to what we have than to what we have not. *Audre Lorde*

When a person doesn't have gratitude, something is missing in his or her humanity. A person can almost be defined by his or her attitude toward gratitude. *Elie Wiesel*

Happiness cannot be traveled to, owned, earned, worn or consumed. Happiness is the spiritual experience of living every minute with love, grace, and gratitude. *Denis Waitley*

Our experience of grace as a blessing that comes into our lives unearned, without merit, calls forth the response of gratitude. *Margaret A. Burkhardt and Mary Gail Nagai-Jacobson*

We can be lost in our thoughts and fears. Or we can remember to breathe, to soften the heart, to trust and give thanks. *Jack Kornfield*

An awe so quiet I don't know when it began.
A gratitude had begun to sing in me.
Denise Levertov

"Thank you" is the best prayer that anyone could say. I say that one a lot. Thank you expresses extreme gratitude, humility, understanding. *Alice Walker*

Deep Sharing/Deep Listening

Round 1: Share your reflections on gratitude and the preparation materials.

Round 2: Share additional thoughts or reflect on what others have shared.

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.

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."