

Wisdom Circle – Radical Welcome
September 2018



Chalice Lighting , by Sean Neil-Barron

Your body is welcome here, all of it.
Yes, even that part. And that part. And yes, even that part.
The parts you love, and the parts you don't.
For in this place we come with all that we are
All that we have been,
And all that we are going to be.
Our bodies are constantly changing, cells die and cells are reborn
We respond to infections and disease
Sometimes we can divorce them from our bodies,
and other times they become a permanently part of us.
Your body and all that is within it, both wanted and not wanted has a place here.
Our bodies join in a web of co-creation, created and creating.
Constantly changing, constantly changing us
Scarred and tattooed, tense and relaxed
Diseased and cured, unfamiliar and intimate
Formed in infinite diversity of creation
Your body is welcome here, all of it.
So take a moment and welcome it
Take a moment to feel in it.
Take a moment, to be in it.

Silence- Take three minutes to settle into this space, to fully arrive. You may also use this time to reflect about the chalice lighting words above.

Check-In

As you feel comfortable, take 2-3 minutes to share whatever you need to share with this group in order to be fully present. This is a time for sharing, but not for discussion.

Business

Use this time for any new business: welcoming new members, scheduling future meetings, revisiting/reciting the covenant, answering questions about wisdom circle processes, etc.

Since this is the first meeting of this new cycle of Wisdom Circles, take some time to review the covenant with your group and to make any changes to it that make sense for your group.

Wisdom Circles Covenant

As group members,...

Before our meetings, we agree to:

- make meetings a priority, including being on time.
- contact the facilitator (or one of the co-facilitators) ahead of time if we are unable to attend.
- read the material and attempt the assigned spiritual exercise.

During our meetings, we agree to:

- participate in discussion of the reading material and exercise by engaging each other's ideas with inquisitiveness and support rather than debate, dismissal or argument.
- monitor our own participation so all members have opportunities to speak.
- refrain from interruption during times of personal sharing
- speak for ourselves and try to speak from both the heart and the intellect.
- make time to say good bye when a member decides to leave the group.
- periodically revisit, edit and re-affirm this covenant as a group.

After our meetings, we agree to:

- be willing to follow up with other members as needed, especially any who miss a meeting without notice to make sure they are okay.
- respect the privacy of group members by keeping personal information confidential.
- keep each other in our prayers and hearts, reaching out to each other in tangible ways as we feel comfortable.

Spiritual Exercise

Share any insight, learning, lesson gained from doing or resisting this month's spiritual exercise. (Focus on your heart/emotions/spirit/personal experience). Because this is a section for personal sharing, attentive listening and no-crosstalk is recommended.

Choose one of the following spiritual exercises:

- a) **Welcome someone new**– If you come to Sunday service or any other church activities, take the time to introduce yourself to someone new or to talk to someone you don't usually talk to.
- b) **Journal about a time where you felt welcome in a new place or among strangers** – Can you think about the specific things people did to make you feel that way?

How was this experience for you? What insight did you gain?

Discussion of Reading and Words of Wisdom

Take turns reading the words of wisdom. Share about the one(s) that caught your attention. Discuss the reading and the questions below. Crosstalk can enrich your conversation here (avoid judging or wanting to “fix” things, and speak from your own experience, avoiding generalizations, and identifying who you mean when/if you use the word “we”).

Words of Wisdom

“A smile is the universal welcome” -**Max Eastman**

“We can do much to help our communities loosen their boundaries and begin to welcome a multitude of ways of being to make sure that individuals of mixed race, religion, or ethnicities don't feel the need to choose one or the other but see their layers as a gift, something that adds beauty.” -**Maya Soetoro-Ng**

Community and Connection

“You can sit with us.
You can live beside us.
You can play your music.
You can listen to mine.
We can dance together.
We can share our food.
We can keep an eye on each other's kids.
We can teach each other new languages.
We can respect traditions.
We can build new ones.
You can ask for a cup of sugar.
You can ask for directions.
You can tell me when things are hard.
You can tell me when beautiful things happen.
We can listen to stories.
We can disagree.
We can agree.
We can come to understandings.
You can wear what you want.
You can pray as you feel compelled to.
You can love who you want.
You can sit with us.”
– **Elizabeth Tambascio**

The Guest House

This being human is a guest house.
Every morning a new arrival.
A joy, a depression, a meanness,
some momentary awareness comes
as an unexpected visitor.
Welcome and entertain them all!
Even if they are a crowd of sorrows,
who violently sweep your house
empty of its furniture,
still, treat each guest honorably.
He may be clearing you out
for some new delight.
The dark thought, the shame, the malice.
meet them at the door laughing and invite them in.

Be grateful for whatever comes.
because each has been sent
as a guide from beyond.
— **Jellaludin Rumi,**
translation by Coleman Barks

Activity: What is Radical Welcome?

Invite each participant to share what they understand by radical welcome.

A variation of this activity is to create a list of what radical welcome is based on the contributions of each member of the group.

Gratitude: Share 1-2 things that have been meaningful to you from this session.

Extinguishing of the Chalice:

Words by Samuel A Trumbore

Go forth in simplicity.
Find and walk the path
that leads to compassion and wisdom,
that leads to happiness, peace and ease.
Welcome the stranger and
open your heart to a world in need of healing.
Be courageous before the forces of hate.
Hold and embody a vision of the common good that
serves the needs of all people.