

## Wisdom Circle – Change

April 2017

### PREPARATION

#### Words of Wisdom

“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed, citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.”

~ Margaret Mead

“The world as we have created it is a process of our thinking. It cannot be changed without changing our thinking.”

~ Albert Einstein

“Life is a series of natural and spontaneous changes. Don't resist them; that only creates sorrow. Let reality be reality. Let things flow naturally forward in whatever way they like.”

~ Lao Tzu

“I alone cannot change the world, but I can cast a stone across the waters to create many ripples.”

~ Mother Teresa

“All that you touch, you Change. All that you Change  
Changes you. The only lasting truth is Change.  
God is Change.”

~ Octavia E. Butler

“Mother Dear, one day I'm going to turn this world upside down.”

~Martin Luther King Jr.

“When people are ready to, they change. They never do it before then, and sometimes they die before they get around to it. You can't make them change if they don't want to, just like when they do want to, you can't stop them.”

~Andy Warhol

“I give you this to take with you: nothing remains as it was. If you know this, you can begin again, with pure joy in the uprooting.”

~Judith Minty

## Reading by Tania Márquez

### Notes on Personal Change

I am often surprised by how the biggest truths are always told in the simplest language and how ancient that wisdom is. For example, “Change is the only constant” said Heraclitus about 500 years before the current era. Yet, many of us continue looking for stability. In fact, in a society that profits from everything, the anxiety and struggle that comes with change becomes a profitable business. We are sold life, health, car, home, and many others type of insurances. The purpose of those insurances is to buffer the impact of sudden change.

Change can be planned or spontaneous, it can be intentional or forced and, therefore, can be perceived as negative or positive. When change is unexpected or unplanned it can cause us a great amount of stress. At the end of the day, we tend to assess its negative or positive impact by the intensity of pain or stress experienced. For example, change can be low in stress when it is planned. Last month we talked about our growing edges and working towards making changes in areas we see the need for growth can be perceived as positive. The change in this case is intentional and conscientious and therefore our attitudes towards it would be, generally, more positive.

On the other hand, we experience change as disruptive when there is a dissonance between our expectations and reality: a car accident, an unexpected illness, a relationship loss, and many other life events can also suddenly bring change to our lives. This type of change is unexpected and, therefore, comes with a greater amount of stress and, sometimes, pain. How can we prepare ourselves for this type of change? What kind of practices, do we need to have to help us cope with sudden change?

There’s also the change that comes slowly, with the years, knowledge and experiences and that make up the individuals we’re constantly becoming. Take a few minutes to watch this TED Talk by Psychologist Daniel Gilbert. It is one of my favorites in the subject. You can watch it here:

[https://www.ted.com/talks/dan\\_gilbert\\_you\\_are\\_always\\_changing](https://www.ted.com/talks/dan_gilbert_you_are_always_changing)

## **Spiritual Exercise –**

We are so used to our routines and ways of doing things that we don't really think that we'll learn anything new from altering it. **The invitation this month is to look at your routine and to make a small change to it.** Perhaps you take a different route to work, perhaps you can take public transportation instead of driving or parking in a different place, perhaps it is about walking in silence, disconnecting from social media, greeting people on the street. The change can be small or big, but what's important is that you pay attention and that you're open to what that experience will bring you.

After you do this exercise, reflect about the following questions:

1. Why did you choose to “change” that specific part of your routine?
2. What did you notice about yourself and about the environment?
3. If the change you made involved interactions with others, how did they react?

## **Questions for Discussion:**

- How are you different now from the person you were 10 years ago?
- How has that changed happened? What caused it?
- Have there been things you changed or have tried to changed intentionally? Tell us more.
- Did you try to resist change? How did it go?
- What about social change? How do you think it happens and what role do individuals play in it? What are some changes that our society resists? And our church?

## Wisdom Circle – Growth

### Session Plan

*This session plan is a suggested guide, not a rigid set of rules. You may adjust this plan as you feel is appropriate in your group.*

#### **Gathering & Welcome (~5 min)**

#### **Chalice Lighting (~2 min)**

*Optional Chalice Lighting reading:*

“Nature’s first green is gold,  
Her hardest hue to hold.  
Her early leaf’s a flower;  
But only so an hour.  
Then leaf subsides to leaf  
So Eden sank to grief,  
So dawn goes down to day.  
Nothing gold can stay.”

**-Robert Frost**

#### **Check-In (20-30 minutes)**

*As you feel comfortable, take 2-3 minutes to share one thing that is lifting your spirits, and one thing that is weighing you down. This is a time for sharing, but not for discussion.*

#### **Business (10 minutes)**

*Use this time for any new business: Welcoming new members; Scheduling future meetings; Revisiting the Covenant; Answering questions about Wisdom Circle processes; Etc...*

#### **Experience with Spiritual Exercise (15-20 minutes)**

*Silent Reflection (~2 minutes)*

*Invite participants to share any insights gained from the spiritual exercise. Participants can take turns sharing what their experience with the exercise was. Insight can also come in the form of resistance to a spiritual exercise or type of spiritual exercise. This is also a time for sharing but not for discussion. (15-18 minutes)*

#### **Discussion (40 minutes)**

*Introduce Topic and invite participants to begin by responding to the following questions.*

- How are you different now from the person you were 10 years ago?

- How has that changed happened? What caused it?
- Have there been things you changed or have tried to change intentionally? Tell us more.
- Did you try to resist change? How did it go?
- What about social change? How do you think it happens and what role do individuals play in it? What are some changes that our society resists? And our church?

*First Responses (Share in the order you feel moved)*

*Cross-Conversation (Ask questions that invite deeper reflection; Speak from personal experience, and use "I" statements; Avoid explaining or judging)*

### **Gratitude (5-10 minutes)**

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

### **Closing**

Optional Chalice Extinguishing:

*"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."*

**-Samuel A Trumbore**