

Wisdom Circle – Just Community
June 2019



Chalice Lighting – We Need One Another by Erik Walker Wikstrom

We come together this morning because within us there is something that knows we need more than we can find in our aloneness.

We know—instinctively, in the depths of ourselves—that we need others for this journey of life even though we also guard our independence and individuality quite jealously.

So let us celebrate all that makes us unique yet also all that makes us one, and let us dream dreams of all that we can do... together.

Meditation- Take three minutes to settle into this space, to fully arrive. Your facilitator can keep track of time.

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 (approx. 10 min)

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

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) **Loving Kindness Meditation** – Set some time aside of your day (16 minutes) to do this guided loving kindness meditation in the comfort of your home, or during your work lunch break.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d0Yimdb73sA>

- b) **Observe**– Pay attention to the things people do around you. You don't need to go anywhere special. You may look out your home window or your workplace window. Just watch people being human. Pay special attention to the ordinary or small actions people take that create a more kind or more just community.

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

“We don't heal in isolation, but in community.” — **S. Kelley Harrell**

“Healing is impossible in loneliness; it is the opposite of loneliness. Conviviality is healing. To be healed we must come with all the other creatures to the feast of Creation. (pg.99, "The Body and the Earth")” — **Wendell Berry**

“One of the most important things you can do on this earth is to let people know they are not alone.” — **Shannon L. Alder**

“One of the marvelous things about community is that it enables us to welcome and help people in a way we couldn't as individuals. When we pool our strength and share the work and responsibility, we can welcome many people, even those in deep distress, and perhaps help them find self-confidence and inner healing.” — **Jean Vanier**

“To build community requires vigilant awareness of the work we must continually do to undermine all the socialization that leads us to behave in ways that perpetuate domination.” — **bell hooks**

“We cannot seek achievement for ourselves and forget about progress and prosperity for our community... Our ambitions must be broad enough to include the aspirations and needs of others, for their sakes and for our own.” — **Cesar Chavez**

Just Community by Rev. Tania Márquez

This month, I'm including as part of this reflection, two longer readings/quotes that I hope will stimulate your own reflections on the topic of community.

“I am not separate from you, my neighbor.
If you are my enemy then I am my own enemy.
If you are my friend then I am my own friend.
Today, I have stripped off my masks
and come to know myself.
I am Christian. I am Jew. I am Muslim and Hindu.
I am European and African. Asian and South American.
I am man. I am woman. I am intersexed.
I am homosexual. I am heterosexual and asexual.
I am abled. I am disabled.
I am all these things because you are,
and you are all these things because we are.
I exist in relation to each of you, this is what gives my being meaning.
Why must I label myself like a bottle of wine?

When I am the bottle, the wine, and the drunkenness.
Why must I label myself at all?
When I am the flesh, the light, and the shadow.
When I am the voice, the song, and the echo.
Tell me why I must label myself
when I am the lover, the beloved, and love.
I am not separate from you, my neighbor.
And you are not separate from humanity.
We are all mirrors, reflecting one another in perpetuity.”

— **Kamand Kojouri**

“There are many forms of poverty: economic poverty, physical poverty, emotional poverty, mental poverty, and spiritual poverty. As long as we relate primarily to each other's wealth, health, stability, intelligence, and soul strength, we cannot develop true community. Community is not a talent show in which we dazzle the world with our combined gifts. Community is the place where our poverty is acknowledged and accepted, not as something we have to learn to cope with as best as we can but as a true source of new life.

Living community in whatever form - family, parish, twelve-step program, or intentional community - challenges us to come together at the place of our poverty, believing that there we can reveal our richness.”

— **Henri J.M. Nouwen**

Discussion Questions:

1. What was your reaction to Kojouri's and Nouwen's words?
2. What makes a community just?
3. Where have you seen glimpses of the potential of a community to be just or to reflect the ideal of the Beloved Community?

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

Extinguishing of the Chalice: by Kathy A Huff

Our time in this place may have ended, but our connection to each other and this community remains.

Together may we walk the path of justice, speak words of love, live the selfless deed, tread gently upon the earth, and fill the world with compassion.

Until we meet again, blessed be.