

Gathering for Grace

Words of the Day

I have experienced grace when ...

Chalice Lighting

As swimmers dare
to lie face to the sky
and water bears them,
as hawks rest upon air
and air sustains them,
so would I learn to attain
freefall, and float
into Creator Spirit's deep embrace,
knowing no effort earns
that all-surrounding grace.

Denise Levertov

The Basket

Sharing of Joys and Concerns

Silence, holding ourselves and each other in silent support

Shared Readings

We are all neck-deep in grace. Whoever we are, we are held by the warmth of the sun and the shining embrace of the snow, nourished by the sweet waters of the rain, alive in the great mystery. Whatever our circumstances, we have the perfect capacity to awaken. With an open heart and open mind we discover a great stillness, a loving presence with things as they are. *Jack Kornfield*

Beauty and grace are performed whether or not we will or sense them. The least we can do is try to be there. *Annie Dillard*

Give up to grace. The ocean takes care of each wave 'til it gets to shore. You need more help than you know. *Rumi*

When we open our hearts to each other we allow grace to enter. It is as simple as that. And suffering – events that break open the heart – can become the refiner's fire that leaves us fully open to the truth about love and compassion. *Kathleen Brehony, psychotherapist*

Community is another source of grace. In community we are meant to grace one another; to be sources of grace; healers by way of grace. *Matthew Fox, priest and theologian*

The winds of grace are always blowing; it is for us to raise our sails. *Ramakrishna, Hindu mystic*

You can have the other words – chance, luck, coincidence, serendipity. I'll take grace. I don't know what it is exactly, but I'll take it. *Mary Oliver*

Life is grace. Sleep is forgiveness. The night absolves. Darkness wipes the slate clean, not spotless to be sure, but clean enough for another day's chalking. *Frederick Buechner*

I come into the peace of wild things
who do not tax their lives with forethought
of grief. I come into the presence of still water.
And I feel above me the day-blind stars
waiting with their light. For a time
I rest in the grace of the world, and am free.
Wendell Berry

Love is holy because it is like grace – the worthiness of its object is never really what matters.
Marilynne Robinson

Amazing grace! How sweet the sound/
That saved a wretch* like me!/
I once was lost, but now am
found./ Was blind, but now I see. *John Newton* *UU hymnal offers the substitute "soul" for "wretch"

Deep Sharing/Deep Listening

Round 1: Share your reflections on grace 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."