

## Gathering for Stillness and Silence

*There are suggestions for Zoom sessions – speaking in turns, muting, and using Chat. Some sections use a timer / clock.*

**When you join the session** *Facilitators – do these for yourself first and help others.*

- Check that you are unmuted and have video. Check your volume. Edit your name tag if necessary.
- Make sure you have a copy of the Gathering available.
- **Words of the Day.** In Chat, write “When I am silent, I feel ...” and complete the sentence.

**Chalice Lighting** “We’ll begin by lighting the chalice.” *Ask for a volunteer to read.*

I am grateful for the silence of winter mornings, for the beauty and wonder of the glint of sunlight in frost melting to dew, for the early-riser's peaceful solitude that sets a mood of thankfulness, hope, and calm for the dawning day. *Terri Guillemets*

**Words of the Day** “Now we’ll read the Words of the Day from the Chat box.” *People can’t see Chat written before they joined the meeting, so you might want to read these yourself or ask people to read their own.*

**Sharing of Joys and Concerns** “We’ll share joys and concerns.” *Begin, and then either call on people or ask them to “chain” to the next person. Make sure everyone has an opportunity.*

**Silence, holding each other in support** “Now a few minutes of silence” (2 or 3)

**Shared Readings** “I’ll start the first Shared Reading.” *Begin, and then either call on people or ask them to “chain” to the next person. Make sure everyone has an opportunity to read.*

The silence sings. It is musical. I remember a night when it was audible. I heard the unspeakable.  
*Henry David Thoreau*

In order to see birds it is necessary to become a part of the silence. *Robert Lynd*

And in the naked light I saw  
Ten thousand people, maybe more  
People talking without speaking  
People hearing without listening  
People writing songs that voices never share  
And no one dared  
Disturb the sound of silence  
*Paul Simon*

Our task is to listen to the news that is always arriving out of silence. *Rainer Maria Rilke*

My personal hobbies are reading, listening to music, and silence. *Edith Sitwell*

Once I knew only darkness and stillness ... my life was without past or future ... but a little word from the fingers of another fell into my hand that clutched at emptiness, and my heart leaped to the rapture of living. *Helen Keller*

I raise up my voice not so that I can shout, but so that those without a voice can be heard. *Malala*

Whenever there is stillness there is the still small voice, God's speaking from the whirlwind, nature's old song, and dance. *Annie Dillard*

True silence is the rest of the mind. It is to the spirit what sleep is to the body, nourishment and refreshment. *William Penn*

Out beyond ideas of wrong doing and right doing there is a field. I'll meet you there. When the soul lies down in that grass the world is too full to talk about. *Rumi*

## **Deep Listening and Sharing**

**Round 1. Deep Sharing.** "Now we share reflections on Silence and the preparation." *Go first to model and then ask who is ready to go next.*

**Round 2. Responses and Comments.** *Note how much time is available for Round 2. People can unmute for freer exchange. Go first to model for the group.*

**Closing Circle** "We're going to say a word or sentence about what we are taking away from the session." *Begin, and then either call on people or use "chaining."*

**Chalice** "We will extinguish the chalice." *Ask for a volunteer to read.*

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.

**Silent Reflection** "To end our session, an extended moment of silent reflection."

## **Bell or 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 responsibility for good process by watching how much time I take to speak, noticing what is going on for others, and considering problems if they occur
- 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."