

Gathering for Listening

When you join the meeting *ask for help if you're not sure what to do*

- Check that you are unmuted and have video, if you're using video. Check your volume.
- Check your "name tag" in your picture box. Ask the facilitator to help you change it if needed.
- Make sure you have a copy of the Gathering available.

Chalice Lighting

We light this chalice to shine on our time together. In its light we celebrate the relationships and understanding we are creating in this place and time. May our sharing be deep.

Introductions

Tell us about yourself in 4 or 5 sentences. Here are some possibilities.

I grew up in ...

I have been ... (teacher, parent, engineer, artist, caregiver, salesperson ...)

I am interested in ... (gardening, reading, social justice, painting ...)

My family or support system ... (partner, children, friends)

In this covenant group I hope ...

Silence, holding ourselves and each other in silent support

Business

- **Covenant Group Basics.**
- **Zoom Basics** (*Speaker / Gallery view, Rename, Muting, Chat. Speaking in turns.*)

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."

Shared Readings

The human soul does not want to be fixed, it wants simply to be seen and heard. *Parker J. Palmer*

You will never be able to escape from your heart. So it's better to listen to what it has to say.

Paulo Coelho

When we are committed to doing the work of love we listen even when it hurts. *bell hooks*

Autism makes you listen louder. It makes you pay attention on an emotional level as well as an intellectual level. *Jace King*

The greatest gift we can give another is our presence. *Thich Nhat Hanh*

Listen to yourself and in that quietude you might hear the voice of God. *Maya Angelou*

A woman once described a friend of hers as being such a keen listener that even the trees leaned toward her, as if they were speaking their innermost secrets into her listening ears. *Linda Hogan*

Love is the quality of attention we pay to things. *J.D. McClatchy*

There is a you telling yourself a different story of you. Listen to her. *Paidraig O'Tuama*

Most people need a few experiences of simply being listened to before they can really believe that just listening is enough. In time, we discover that to be listened to is a way of being loved, and that listening is a way of being loving. *Christine Robinson*

Introducing the Process for Deep Sharing/Deep Listening

Rounds of Sharing. There are two rounds of sharing. During each round, one person speaks at a time. Speakers share from the heart as deeply as they are willing, reflecting on the topic and their feelings, thoughts, and experiences. The job of listeners is to listen deeply, keeping their hearts open.

Round 1. Each person in the group takes about five minutes to reflect aloud on the topic and the preparation materials. They speak without interruption. The facilitator starts. Everyone who wants to speak gets one turn, in any order they choose. Anyone may pass. As each person finishes speaking, there are a few breaths of silence. Then the next person speaks. People can speak in any order.

Round 2. This is an opportunity to share additional reflections and thoughts about what others have shared. Speakers still focus on their own thoughts, feelings, and experiences and remain mindful not to judge another's sharing, give advice, or advocate a position. Everyone who wants to speak gets a turn, and everyone is mindful of time so that each person has an opportunity to speak.

Deep Listening and Sharing

Round 1. Share reflections on listening and the preparation materials.

Round 2. As time allows, 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.

Bell or Chime

Announcements