

Session 5: Connection and Community

To the facilitator, remember on each chance to share, let each person share in a circle or to each speak from the silence. If the group speaks from the silence, keep track of who has spoken and do not let another speak until each have had a turn or chosen to pass. If you're on zoom, you can establish an order with the first sharing and put that order of names in the chat.

Opening Words:

We Gather As Many Drops

By Rev. Leslie Takahashi

We gather as many drops, each winding our own path down life's surfaces and ruts.

Here we pool together as a single body, flowing together for a time.

Together we are a stream, at times even a river,

for with our shared force we can travel toward oceans of meaning and seas of connection.

Sitting in Silence:

As a facilitator, at the first meeting, invite everyone to sit together in silence. This should be at least a minute, perhaps more. It gives each person a chance to really "arrive" in the space.

Reminder: This is just a reminder that we are living in some strange times. We have each experienced the last more than a year differently and respond differently as circumstances change. We may feel awkward or unsure. As we go through today remember how you are doing in this moment in pandemic. Remember that we each respond to this time in our own unique ways. Allow and offer grace to yourself and to those in the circle as we share in this community.

Revisit the Covenant: Have someone read the covenant allowed, so it is present in our minds.

Check In:

What do you want to emotionally put away in order to be fully present for this gathering today? What do you want to bring instead?

Meditation:

Facilitator, please take time to breathe several long breaths between each paragraph.

This meditation is designed to help us enter our body's memory of being connected and loved. Remember it is your choice to participate and how to participate.

I invite you to place a hand on your heart and breath gently feeling your hand rise and fall.

Bring to mind a moment, just one moment, when you felt connected or loved. Just a moment. Could be a partner, a child, a friend, a pet, a community, a therapist, a teacher.

As you remember this moment, let yourself experience the feelings of that moment. Notice how your body responds now.

Repeating this practice can regulate and calm your nervous system and experience the warm glow of oxytocin in any moment.

Readings: (choose two or read all three)

“We have all known the long loneliness and we have learned that the only solution is love and that love comes with community.” – **Dorothy Day**

“Some people think they are in community, but they are only in proximity. True community requires commitment and openness. It is a willingness to extend yourself to encounter and know the other.” – **David Spangler**

River Call (excerpt)

by Manish K. Mishra-Marzetti

Between rocking the boat
and sitting down;
between stirring things up,
and peaceably going along,

We find ourselves
here,
in community.

Each called
from many different
life paths,
onto this river road.

Some are here
because the rocking of
the boat
has been too much:

too much tumult,
too much uncertainty,
too much pain.

Some are here with questions

about where the boat is going;
how to best steer it;
where this journey ends.

Others are here
as lovers of the journey,
lovers of life itself.

Questions for Discussion:

- Tell of a time when you had strong community and connections and how that was for you
- How do you best connect and participate in building community?
- What have you learned about who you are in community?

Likes and Wishes:

What did you like about this meeting? What do you wish could be different in future meetings?

Closing Words:

We leave this gathered community,
But we don't leave our connection,
Our concerns, our care for each other.
Our service to each other, to the world, and to our faith continues.
Until we are together again, friends,
Be strong, be well, be true, be loving.
Rev. Cynthia Landrum