

Solitude – A Gift for Ourselves

Adapted from outlines by First Church of Groton, UU Church of Augusta ME, and River of Grass of Davie FL

Chalice Lighting and Opening Words

(Take a moment to breathe and center. Leave aside the thoughts and worries that distract you.)

Come into this circle of hope, holiness, and health.

Come into this sanctuary of sharing.

Come in and feel secure and comfortable.

Come in, knowing that you will be able to explore and learn and discover.

Come in, knowing that you will be heard and will be able to hear.

“Loneliness can be conquered only by those who can bear solitude.

Our language has wisely sensed the two sides of being alone.

It has created the word ‘loneliness’ to express the pain of being alone.

And it has created the word "solitude" to express the glory of being alone.” ~ Paul Tillich

Check-in

For up to 2 minutes, share how you are today. Is anything distracting you today that you would like to let go of, so as to be fully present to the group?

Reading

Lie down and listen to the crabgrass grow,

The faucet leak, and learn to leave them so.

Feel how the breezes play about your hair

And sunlight settles on your breathing skin.

What else can matter but the drifting glance

On dragonfly or sudden shadow there

Of swans aloft and the whiffle of their wings

On air to other ponds? Nothing but this:

To see, to wonder, to receive, to feel

What lies in the circle of your singleness.

~ Maiya Mannes, American

Journalist

Questions

1. How do you create your own solitude?
2. Why or when is solitude most important to you?
3. Do you intentionally make time for solitude? How & Why?
4. Do you find it easy or difficult to distinguish loneliness from solitude?
5. What do you find in solitude—peace, God, harmony, silence, renewal...what else?

Likes and Wishes

Closing Words

Solitude suggests peacefulness stemming from a state of inner richness. It is a means of enjoying the quiet and whatever it brings. It is something we cultivate. Solitude is refreshing; an opportunity to renew ourselves. ~ Hara Estroff Marano