

Salvation: the practice of healing
UU Community Church of Santa Monica
Small Group Ministry
April 2014

Chalice Lighting

[N]one of us ever really walks in another's shoes or knows the innermost rooms of a person's heart. None of us truly knows the lonely places of another's journey or the causes of the lines around another's eyes. Therefore, let us be gentle with one another. Let us listen more than we speak and accept more than we judge. Let our open, outstretched hands reach and touch that we may walk along together for a little while in friendship and in trust.

-- Elizabeth Tarbox

Sharing Silence 3 minutes

You may wish to bring your attention to your breath, or move a bit until you have found a comfortable seat. If silence is not a familiar experience to you, three minutes may seem long. If you are accustomed to silence, it may seem short.

On Our Hearts 20 minutes

This is a time to share wonderful news or a heavy heart - the major highs and lows of your life you'd like everyone to keep in their hearts or in their prayers for you.

Covenant and Ground Rules

I commit myself:

- to come to meetings when I possibly can, knowing that my presence is important to the group;
- to let the leader know if I will be absent or need to quit;
- to share with the leader the responsibility for good group process by watching how much time I take to speak and noticing what is going on for others;
- 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, or giving advice;
- to ask questions gently and only if necessary;
- and to share as deeply as I can when it is my turn.

- Christine Robinson and Alicia Hawkins, *Heart to Heart* (adapted)

Housekeeping

- Service Projects
- Roster

Readings

...The idea of “salvation” at one time was associated with healing: the word is from the Latin *salvus*, which means to save and to heal. (*Salvus* is also at the root of the word “salve,” which refers to a substance that brings healing to a wound.) New Testament Greek translated “to save” as *sozo*, a word that like *salvus* means to save and to heal... Yet today’s churches have largely lost that connection between salvation and healing. Remember that “to heal” means to make whole—and holy. The Old English word *hal* is at the root of “heal,” “hale,” “healthy,” and “holy.”

-- Claudia Greer, “Becoming a Holy and Healing Church”

This new life is better
than a dozen beer-joint romances
or a hundred drunks at fishing camp.
My habit now is not drinking,
and waking up where I belong.
I can see colors again,
and I don't feel like a turd in the punchbowl
whenever I go around people.

I'll mow the weeds for Sharon
and almost enjoy it. She's even given up
checking my breath whenever I come home.
I went shopping for our anniversary
and wound up crying in the store,
but not the kind of tears you cry
when your wife catches you lying in the shed
with your pistol jabbed up in your mouth
and vodka running out your nose.

The only thing she could think to do
was check me into another detox,
and this time it finally took.
This year has made me different—
vodka could never do that for long.
Some days when I wake up early
and listen to Sharon lying there breathing,
it feels like somebody snuck in while we slept
and changed our sheets.
-- William Notter, “Gray’s First Sober Year”

Someday I may get to personally thank Patti La Belle for sharing her magnificent voice and extraordinary heart in song. Until then this will have to do...Every week, for two winters and two summers, as I drove to and from the cancer clinic for treatments, I played her renditions of “Somewhere Over the Rainbow” and “There’s a Winner in You” over and over. When I was frightened and thought I couldn’t make one more trip, I played those songs to get me there. Afterward, when I was tired and afraid I couldn’t make the drive home, I played them again. My spirits never failed to recover, and the miles just flew by. In

the midst of the darkest time of my life, that voice made me feel grateful to be alive...
There's a song for everyone, one incalculable mix of melody and magic that so neatly wraps
the heart that we are lifted out of the here and now. And something in us is healed. Search
for your song.

-- Nancy Burke, *Meditations for Health*

Questions for consideration

1. When in your life have you felt most grounded and whole? If you would like, please describe who was with you, and what surrounded you at that time.
2. What do you find in life that helps you heal after you have been hurt or wounded? What keeps you from doing the things that heal you?
3. What is saving your life right now?
4. What do you need to be saved or healed from?

Sharing 60 minutes

Closing Activity / Reflecting On Our Time Together

Please share how you showed up in our time together. Do you wish you had said something more, less, different? How are you leaving our time together? Feeling words are ok: sad, mad, glad, peaceful, powerful, joyful.

Closing Words

Be a lamp, or a lifeboat, or a ladder.

Help someone's soul heal.

Walk out of your house like a shepherd.

-- Rumi, Sufi Muslim poet and mystic