

AGING

OPENING WORDS AND CHALICE LIGHTING

Ten thousand flowers in spring,

The moon in autumn,

A cool breeze in summer,

Snow in winter.

If your mind isn't clouded by unnecessary things,

This is the best season of your life.

---Wu-Men

PURPOSE: We come together to build connections and to talk about what deeply matters.

CHECK IN: We will be exploring AGING using a "Small Group Ministry" format. We will begin with brief introductions. Going around the circle, I'd like to invite you to each tell us your name and, if you like, tell us something you are leaving behind to be here today.

READING OF COVENANT

SHARING: Please share from your own personal experience. Each of us has a unique journey. Each person in the group speaks uninterrupted. We will leave a minute of silence between sharings.

A Yom Kippur Prayer

Birth is a beginning, and Death a destination;

From childhood to maturity and youth to age,

From innocence to awareness and ignorance to knowing.

From foolishness to discretion and then, perhaps, to wisdom.

From weakness to strength or strength to weakness, and back again.

From health to sickness and back, we pray, to health again.

From offense to forgiveness, from loneliness to love.

From joy to gratitude, from pain to compassion.
From grief to understanding, from fear to faith.
From defeat to defeat
Until looking backward or ahead, we see that
Victory lies not at some high place along the way,
But in having made the Journey, stage by stage

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

- 1) What has been your experience of aging over the past decade of your life? What surprises has it held?
- 2) What frightens you about aging? What comforts you about aging?

CONFIDENTIALITY CHECK: Is there anything that you shared here today that you would like held confidential? Otherwise, this is a reminder that we treat each other's sharing with kindness and respect.

CHECK OUT: What did you like about this session? What would you change?

CLOSING WORDS:

Look to this day!
For it is life, the very life of life.
In its brief course lie all the verities
And realities of your existence:
The bliss of growth
The glory of action,
The splendor of beauty;
For yesterday is but a dream,
And tomorrow is only a vision;
But today, well lived, makes every yesterday
A dream of happiness
And every tomorrow a vision of hope.
Look well, therefore, to this day.

- attributed to Kalidasa, Hindu dramatist and poet

“Ever since the age of six I have had a mania for drawing the forms of objects. Towards the age of fifty I published a very large number of drawings, but I am dissatisfied with everything which I produced before the age of seventy. It was at the age of seventy-three that I mastered the real nature and form of birds, fish, plants, etc. Consequently, at the age of eighty, I shall have got to the bottom of things; at one hundred I shall have attained a decidedly higher level what I cannot define, and at the age of one hundred and ten every dot and every line from my brush will be alive. I call on those who may live as long as I to see if I keep my word.”

--- *Japanese painting master Hokusai, who lived to be ninety*

READING OF GROUP COVENANT:

We will be here for about an hour and a half and while here we will abide by a set of agreed upon ground rules called a covenant. Here is the proposed covenant:

- 1) We will practice deep listening. This means we will simply listen when another talks without “cross talk” (commenting, interrupting, negating, or giving advice).
- 2) We will share the time equally and fairly.
- 3) We will share our reflections from our own personal experiences.