

Spiritual Practices and Change

This month we draw on Reverend Ian's February 27, 2022, sermon "When Our Heart is in a Holy Place: Spiritual Practices and Change" to explore our own spiritual practices and what they mean to us and how they have impacted our lives.

Chalice Lighting

Becoming Present: Guided Meditation and Movement

Opening Reading: From Reverend Ian's Sermon on February 27, 2022:

"...the change work we are called to do in our world and in our hearts is spiritual work. It's not just sociology or psychology, but it grows out of our religious, spiritual, theological commitments and invites us to ground ourselves in community, in learning and curiosity, and in the practices of our spiritual commitments.

"Over and over again, from religious leaders and thinkers in many faiths, we hear the call to understand that faith and action, contemplation and practice, believing and doing are always together in our lives and in our work in the world.

"My colleague, James Ishmael Ford wrote on his blog earlier this year, "I've told friends over the many years that if they want to do the work of justice they need a spiritual discipline, they need an anchor and the gift of a North Star. Otherwise, as the Japanese expression tells us vision without action is a dream, but action without vision is a nightmare."

Covenant

These are the personal promises we make to each other – Please read out loud or silently:

I will make a sincere effort to attend all sessions.

I will notify the facilitator if I have to be absent.

I will be considerate of my fellow members by arriving, starting, and ending on time.

I will respect the confidentiality of the group.

I will speak from personal experience and refrain from giving advice.

I will participate and also self-moderate, so that others may speak.

I will honor the desire of anyone "to pass."

I will be responsible for keeping the discussion "on track".

I will strive to listen fully.

I will let the group know if I choose to leave the group.

I will do my best, with the help of everyone in the group, to assure that this Covenant is followed and affirmed in order to maintain a safe environment.

Check in:

What is the state of your heart?

The Readings are drawn from Reverend Ian's sermon on February 27, 2022.

“What is Spirituality?”

- For me it can be a connection to something larger than our individual, limited self.
- Connection to community – small and larger
- Connection to the broader ecosystem/cosmos of which we are a small, but meaningful part
- A way of understanding ourselves more deeply as part of a “network of mutuality”
- It doesn't require belief in anything supernatural, or anything other worldly.”

“And it's Not Just an Attitude, it's a Practice”

“My colleague, Arvid Straube puts it this way: “The benefits [of spiritual practice] are feeling more calm, a feeling of being more available to oneself and to other people, of being more loving, of being in touch with a joy that does not depend on whether our outward circumstances are happy or not. It means getting in touch more often with the deep currents and purposes of our lives.”

“Some are explicitly contemplative practices – various forms of meditation. Lectio Divina – focused and contemplative reading of texts. Movement meditations – Tai Chi, Qi Gong. Chanting, drowning, dancing. Practices that ask the individual to reflect at the beginning or the end of the day on their intentions or the effect of their actions.”

“These practices, whatever we choose to adopt or adapt, must lead us back to connection to the relationships, communities, and ecosystems in which we exist daily.”

“We build spiritual practices of repeated ritual – meditation, chanting, prayer – the practice of returning each week to our collective liturgy and worship or our small group ministry – the attention we pay regularly to our yarn or pens or carving tools we use to craft new things – the exertion and work and knowledge of our physical selves when we swim or hike or run or guide ourselves through the forms of our martial arts. “

And it takes intent and will to return to a practice that can expose oneself to clearer vision and understanding of who we are and what our actions are creating in our lives and in our world. As we return again and again to our ritual – if we do it with commitment and honesty—we are faced more and more with deeper truths about ourselves and the possibility of being transformed by this understanding and experience.”

Moment of Silence

Sharing and deep listening: Questions for contemplation. Take time to review these questions. This month we'll go through each question. You may always choose to pass.

1. What does “spiritual practice” mean to you? Does anything appeal to you in Reverend Ian's explanation of spiritual practices?
2. Spiritual practices can be done both individually and communally. Do you have one or more spiritual practices? Will you share them with us? Have they evolved or changed?

3. What have you found challenging in maintaining your practices?
4. What have been the personal benefits of having a spiritual practice?
5. In what ways have your spiritual practices affected your community involvements?
6. Are there ways in which our Chalice Circle could support your spiritual practice?

Check out

How did today's sharing work for you?

Next Chalice Circle – April – please choose the date your Circle wants to meet.

Closing Words:

“Our spiritual practices can become part of our daily lives, always with us when we need them, there to return to again and again to the core of our connection with the wider universe and deeper love that flow in and through us.

May we craft them with care and let them remind us of all that we are and all that we might be.”

Reverend Ian Riddell