

SGM JUNE 2018 - WONDER

Lighting the chalice

The world is full of magic things, patiently waiting for our senses to grow sharper.
-W. B. Yeats

Check in *Share briefly what has been going on or what is alive in you right now. We give each other the gift of listening without asking questions or offering advice to allow people the safety to share what's in their hearts.*

Readings

We believe in the Spirit of Life that unifies humanity, the earth and the cosmos. Wonder and joy emanate from this source, as does love. ... We experience awe at the mystery of existence and, spurred by curiosity, use our intellect and imagination for life long learning about our fellow beings in the here and now and the there and then.
-USG Congregational Core Values

People go abroad to wonder at the heights of mountains, at the huge waves of the sea, at the long courses of the rivers, at the vast compass of the ocean, at the circular motions of the stars, and they pass by themselves without wondering. -*St. Augustine*

Look at everything always as though you were seeing it either for the first or last time: Thus is your time on earth filled with glory.
-*Betty Smith, A Tree Grows in Brooklyn (1943)*

The invariable mark of wisdom is to see the miraculous in the common.
-*Ralph Waldo Emerson*

Mystery creates wonder, and wonder is the basis of man's desire to understand.
-*Neil Armstrong*

The real voyage of discovery consists not of seeking new landscapes but in having new eyes.
-*Marcel Proust*

One cannot help but be in awe when one contemplates the mysteries of eternity, of life, of the marvelous structure of reality. It is enough if one tries merely to comprehend a little of this mystery every day. -*Albert Einstein*

Spiritual Exercises

1. Focus on the wonder that can come from your sensory experiences: smell, touch, taste, sight, hearing and even synesthesia (the interplay of the senses). Try to expose your senses to new sensations and notice what each sense is drawn to and irritated by. For some inspiration, go into a natural food store, where herbs and spices are stored in bulk, and see how many you can identify by smell alone; walk barefoot; visit an art museum or arboretum and pay attention to your sensations. End the practice with gratitude for this time of reflection and what has arisen out of you inside this practice. *Adapted from www.spiritualityandpractice.com*

2. “A great many people will live out their days without ever seeing such sights, or if they do, never gasping. My parents taught me this — to gasp, and feel lucky. They gave me the gift of making mountains out of nature's exquisite molehills.” *Barbara Kingsolver, High Tide in Tucson (2003)* Take a walk or look out your window. What “exquisite molehills” of nature can you see? Does it change how you perceive them when you look at them in this light?

Questions for contemplation

1. What elicits a sense of wonder for you? When do you experience a state of wonder? Are there certain things that lead you to wonder?
2. What squelches the impulse to wonder for you? What do you need to open yourself up to it?
3. Think of a “wow” moment, a feeling of wonder, that you have had. Did any small transformations come out of that moment?

Sitting in Silence *Take a few moments to sit quietly and reflect upon your thoughts.*

Sharing/Deep Listening *Respond with your thoughts/experiences with the topic. We create a safe space by listening deeply and not responding. When sharing, connect with what is true for you. When listening, give the speaker your full attention rather than thinking about what you will share.*

Reflection *This is a time to supportively respond to something another person said or relate additional thoughts that have occurred to you as others shared.*

Singing *Wake Now My Senses (verse 1), Singing the Living Tradition, # 298*

Wake, now, my senses, and hear the earth call;
feel the deep power of being in all;
keep, with the web of creation your vow,
giving, receiving as love shows us how.

Extinguishing the chalice

Once we believe in ourselves, we can risk curiosity, wonder, spontaneous delight, or any experience that reveals the human spirit. -e. e. cummings