

## USG SGM ~ Hope ~ July 2020

drawn from Soul Matters materials, see the full packet for more of all of these elements

www.soulmatterssharingcircle.com



### Introduction

Hope doesn't just whisper "It *will* be different," it also shouts "It *should* be different" and "It *can* be different." Yes, it speaks soothing words about trusting and waiting, but it also takes the form of a holy impatience that declares, "Enough is enough. The time is now!" As Moltmann puts it, hope is not just that which calms the unquiet heart; it also *is* the unquiet heart.

**Spiritual Exercise - Spreading Our Stories of Hope** - Spend some time remembering how you've been saved by hope. And then bring that story of hope to your group to share.

Hope rarely descends or magically appears. Most often, it's passed on. It comes to us as a gift. We don't find it, as much as we receive it. And almost always, that gift comes in the form of a story. Hearing tales of others finding their way through the dark helps us trust that light is waiting at the end of our tunnels as well. Listening to others talk about their sources of hope helps us notice the many resources available to us. Simply put, hope can't spread without our stories. Light doesn't travel through the dark on its own. It hitchhikes on the tales we tell each other.

So this month, let's give each other the gift of hope by sharing the gift of our stories. We all have them. Some of us will talk about that person whose belief in us enabled us to believe in ourselves. Others will talk about how we held on through depression for the sake of kids. More than one of us will name that moment when we realized that the darkness was not our enemy but actually contained a gift. At least one of us will likely talk about the magic of "faking it until we made it." Still others may share their experience of stumbling upon one of those beautiful "[It Gets Better](http://itgetsbetter.org)" ([itgetsbetter.org](http://itgetsbetter.org)) videos. In the end, the details of the stories are less important than the act of bringing them all into the room. Surrounded by each other's stories, the circle can't help but become lit up.

Besides bringing a personal story of hope to your group, consider also bringing in a symbol/token that represents the essence of your story. You might also want to keep that symbol/token close to you during the weeks before your meeting, as a way of both helping you remember the details and offering gratitude.

### Chalice Lighting

Hope comes from looking back and knowing we are on that arc... *Hope comes from looking forward and knowing can we harness the collective power of [the community around us]...* Hope comes from looking [deeply] and knowing we can change, and grow. --Rev. Jay Wolin

**Check-in** *Share your highs and lows since we last met focusing on what drains you and what lifts you up. 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.*

### Quotes for Inspiration/Readings

Hope: From Old English/Frisian *hopa* meaning to wish for, to desire, to have confidence in the future. The word despair comes from the Latin root *de* - without, and *sper* - hope.

Critical thinking without hope is cynicism. Hope without critical thinking is naïveté .- Maria Popava

Hope is a touch of graceful humor, no matter what's occurring. The ability to laugh, the ability to see the ridiculous, the ability not to tense up too much, when things become impossible, just to face them anyhow. A touch of humor. Let's say laughter through the flame... That's hope: Humor, guts, and courage, no matter the odds. --Charles Bukowski

For comfortably situated people, hopelessness means cynicism and letting oneself off the hook. If everything is doomed, then nothing is required. --Rebecca Solnit

Look at the facts of the world. You see a continual and progressive triumph of the good. I do not pretend to understand the moral universe; the arc is a long one, my eye reaches but little ways; I cannot calculate the curve and complete the figure by the experience of sight; I can divine it by conscience. And from what I see I am sure it bends towards justice. --Theodore Parker

### **Questions**

*Pick the one question that speaks to you most and let it lead you where you need to go. The goal is to figure out what being a part of a people of hope means for you and your daily living.*

1. Who is hope for you? Whose way of being in the world helps you believe that tomorrow will be better? What are you doing to ensure that their inspiration remains front-and-center rather than faded and far away?
2. Why are you keeping your hopes so small? Are you really going to let that past disappointment dictate the size of your dreams?
3. Are you hopeless? Or have you let someone *take away* your hope? Have you allowed someone's betrayal to convince you that the world is darker than it really is?
4. Is hope trying to sooth your heart or disturb it? Is there a holy impatience inside you that is tired of waiting? Is hope itself telling you, "Stop hoping; Start acting, demanding, doing!"
5. What if your darkness is not the darkness of the tomb, but instead the darkness of the womb? What if this pain of yours is not about death and loss, but new life trying to be born? Could it be that Life - like any good midwife - is calling you to "breathe and push"?

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

**Sharing/Deep Listening** *Respond with your thoughts and 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 and Gratitude** *This is a time to respond briefly to something another person said or to relate additional thoughts that may have occurred as others shared. Consider lifting up one comment or experience for which you are particularly grateful.*

### **Singing**

A Change Is Gonna Come, Sam Cooke

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wEBlaMOmKV4&index=2&list=RDRGSMxW4Nqtw>

### **Extinguishing the chalice**

The Sun will rise and set regardless. What we choose to do with the light while it's here is up to us. Journey wisely. -- Alexandra Elle