USG SGM ~ Blessings ~ November, 2016

Chalice Lighting

Whoever brings blessing will be enriched, and one who waters will himself be watered. - Proverbs 11:25-26

Check-in Share briefly what's been on your mind lately or your highs and lows since we last met. We will listen to each other without asking questions or offering advice to allow people the safety to share what's in their hearts.

Quotes for Inspiration

The thing to do, it seems to me, is to prepare yourself so you can be a rainbow in somebody else's cloud. Somebody who may not look like you. May not call God the same name you call God - if they call God at all. I may not dance your dances or speak your language. But be a blessing to somebody. That's what I think. - Maya Angelou

Formal rituals of blessing are significant ways we mark important occasions in our lives. The reality is that blessing is also part of the fabric of our everyday lives. Blessing is around us all the time. It is part of our greetings of one another – whether we bow to each other or say "peace" or "Namaste" and whether we do this in the grocery store, on the street or in church. - Reverend Sandra Fees

When people are blessed, they discover that their lives matter, that there is something in them worthy of blessing. And when you bless others, you may discover the same thing is true about yourself.

- Dr. Rachel Naomi Remen, My Grandfather¹s Blessings: Stories of Strength, Refuge and Belonging

Reading

Choose to Bless the World by Rebecca Parker

Your gifts—whatever you discover them to be— can be used to bless or curse the world.

The mind's power,
The strength of the hands,
The reaches of the heart,
The gift of speaking, listening, imagining,
seeing, waiting

Any of these can serve to feed the hungry, Bind up wounds, Welcome the stranger, Praise what is sacred, Do the work of justice Or offer love.

Any of these can draw down the prison door,
Hoard bread,
Abandon the poor,
Obscure what is holy,
Comply with injustice
Or withhold love.

You must answer this question: What will you do with your gifts?

Choose to bless the world.

The choice to bless the world is more than an act of will,
A moving forward into the world
With the Intention to do good.
It is an act of recognition, a confession of surprise, a grateful acknowledgment
That in the midst of a broken world
Unspeakable beauty, grace and mystery abide.

There is an embrace of kindness that encompasses all life, even yours.

And while there is injustice, anesthetization, or evil
There moves
A holy disturbance,
A benevolent rage,
A revolutionary love,

Protesting, urging, insisting
That which is sacred will not be defiled.
Those who bless the world live their life as a gesture of thanks
For this beauty
And this rage.

The choice to bless the world can take you into solitude
To search for the sources of power and grace;
Native wisdom, healing, and liberation.

More, the choice will draw you into community,
The endeavor shared,
The heritage passed on,
The companionship of struggle,
The importance of keeping faith,
The life of ritual and praise,
The comfort of human friendship,
The company of earth
The chorus of life welcoming you.

None of us alone can save the world. Together—that is another possibility waiting.

Spiritual Exercises

- 1. Make a list of the gifts you have that you can use to bless the world. Choose a few and list the ways you have used these gifts. Do these come back to you? How?
- 2. Choose a few gifts from the list you made in exercise one (they can be the same or different than the ones you chose for that exercise). Practice using these gifts to bless the world this month. Reflect on your actions.

Questions

What is a blessing?

When have you blessed someone? Have you missed an opportunity to do so? When have you been blessed by someone else?

What are the blessings in your life? Where did they come from?

Sitting in Silence *Take a few moments to sit quietly and reflect upon your thoughts.* If you wish, meditate on a blessing you have given or received recently and try to relive the emotions you felt.

Sharing/Deep Listening Respond with your thoughts/experiences with the topic.

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

Singing Singing the Living Tradition, 402, *From You I Receive* Chant or sing two or three times with hand gestures, if you wish.

From you I receive
To you I give
Together we share
And from this we live.

Extinguishing the Chalice

The capacity to bless life is in everybody...A blessing is a moment of meeting, a certain kind of relationship in which both people involved remember and acknowledge their true nature and worth, and strengthen what is whole in one another. - Dr. Rachel Naomi Remen