

## USG SGM ~ Holding History ~ November, 2021

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

www.soulmatterssharingcircle.com



**Chalice Lighting** It is not forgetting that heals. It's remembering. *Amy Greene*

**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.*

**Intro** *"Jewish teaching includes frequent reminders of the importance of a broken-open heart, as in this Hasidic tale: A disciple asks the rebbe: "Why does Torah tell us to 'place these words **upon** your hearts'? Why does it not tell us to place these holy words **in** our hearts?" The rebbe answers: "It is because as we are, our hearts are closed, and we cannot place the holy words in our hearts. So we place them on top of our hearts. And there they stay until, one day, the heart breaks and the words fall in."*

So, a closed heart. It's admittedly a strange place to begin a month of exploring Holding History. And yet, when we are honest, we know that defensiveness, protectiveness and closed doors rule our relationship with history more than we'd like. Let's not just "remember" this month. Let's not just talk of telling truthful tales. Let's prepare to grieve, to confess, to feel, to forgive. The world needs broken-open hearts, not just good historians. That is, indeed, the only way the past gets in.

### **Spiritual Exercises**

#### ***The Image of You***

We all have it, that one memory from our younger years that brings us joy or grounds our sense of identity. It's one of the most precious pieces of personal history, so we hold on to it tightly. The invitation is to spend some time exploring it in a deeper way than maybe you have before. So make time to ask yourself: Why have I held on to this memory for so long? Why has it been holding on to me? What is it trying to give me? Who helped me remember it? What piece of my current identity does it hold? What hunger does it represent? What wish is it wanting to rekindle?

#### ***Holding On to the History of Where You Are From***

Remembering who we want to be is tied up with remembering where we've come from. Holding on to our roots keeps us rooted. It also keeps us connected to gratitude and humility. To remember where you've come from is to remember that you didn't create yourself or earn your successes all on your own. Remembering where you've come from is also a way to celebrate your uniqueness.

### **Quotes for Inspiration/Readings**

History is written by the victors. *Author unknown*

History is written by everyone. The more accurate quote would be, "History is temporarily twisted by people who're going to profit from it in the short term." *Subham Jain*

The prophetic tasks of the church are to tell the truth in a society that lives in an illusion, grieve in a society that practices denial, and express hope in a society that lives in despair. *Walter Brueggemann*

In times like these, I look to the past. I come from people not meant to survive, and here is our bloodline, stronger than ever. *Brittany Packnett*

To acknowledge our ancestors means we are aware that we did not make ourselves. *Alice Walker*

We are well advised to keep on nodding terms with the people we used to be, whether we find them attractive company or not. Otherwise they turn up unannounced and surprise us, come hammering on the mind's door at 4 a.m. of a bad night and demand to know who deserted them. *Joan Didion*

Memory invites us to maintain our grip on the past, but it also calls us to pay attention to who we are in the present. Memory's question is not just "Do you remember?" but "How do you want to be remembered?" *Rev. Scott Talyer*

You will lose someone you can't live without, and your heart will be badly broken, and the bad news is that you never completely get over the loss of your beloved. But this is also the good news. They live forever in your broken heart that doesn't seal back up. And you come through. It's like having a broken leg that never heals perfectly – that still hurts when the weather gets cold, but you learn to dance with the limp. *Anne Lamott*

Don't cling to a mistake just because you spent a lot of time making it. *Aubrey De Graf*

**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 holding history means for you and your daily living.*

- 1-When you tell the history of the pandemic ten years from now, what story do you think you will begin with?
- 2- What memory has been with you the longest? What does it want from you so badly that it has held on to you for so long?
- 3- What if the question isn't, "Did it really happen that way?" But instead, "Why do you want to remember that it happened that way?"
- 4- What has life taught you about memory and pain?
- 5- Have you forgiven yourself for that mistake-filled chapter in your own history?

**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 Sarah McLachlan - I Will Remember You**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B51hO8McLbs>

**Extinguishing the Chalice**

Remember your birth, how your mother struggled to give you form and breath. You are evidence of

Her life and her mother's, and hers....

Remember the earth whose skin you are...

Remember you are all people and all people are you..." *Joy Harjo*, Remember the Sky