



Chalice Lighting: I love the recklessness of faith. First you leap, then you grow wings.
- *William Sloane Coffin*

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: The point is that in almost every instance of our lives we are, if we pay attention, in the midst of an almost constant, if subtle, caretaking. Holding open doors. Offering elbows at crosswalks. Letting someone else go first. Helping with the heavy bags... Pulling someone back to their feet. Stopping at the car wreck, at the struck dog... This caretaking is our default mode and it's always a lie that convinces us to act or believe otherwise. Always. - *Ross Gay*

Spiritual Exercises: Option A - Your Faith in Six Words

Sometimes talking about faith can wind us in circles. Ultimately, our faith is too complex, visceral and personal to be easily shared. But some have cut through the complexity by attempting to sum up their faith using only six words. It's a practice that clarifies and amplifies what matters most to us. It helps remind us of and hold on to our deepest commitments.

So this month, try it for yourself. Come to your group with your own six-word faith statement. Here are some inspiring examples to help you on your way:

<https://www.facebook.com/revjakebmorrill/posts/10203771525878015>

<https://www.facebook.com/tandi.rogers/posts/10152204974568645>

Spiritual Exercises: Option B – Tell Them!

More often than not, we can't renew our faith on our own. It takes others. Their commitment to justice renews our faith that a better world is possible. Their compassion and kindness (even when they have struggles of their own), renews our faith in humanity. Their bravery reignites our faith in ourselves. So who is that "other" for you? Whose faithfulness renews your own? And most importantly, have you told them?! That's exactly what this exercise is all about: telling them!

Why is that so important? Well, simply put, telling them they sustain your faithfulness helps them sustain theirs. It keeps them going. It's a gift to them. A gift that honors the gift they gave you. So get busy. Do it in a letter. Or maybe over coffee. Or maybe even in some clever or playful way. Tell them their faith and faithfulness has sustained your own.

Quotes for Inspiration/Readings

Faith is a willingness to take the next step, to see the unknown as an adventure, to launch a journey.
- *Sharon Salzberg*

There is always light. Only if we are brave enough to be it. - *Amanda Gorman*

The moment we break faith with one another, the sea engulfs us and the light goes out.
- *James A. Baldwin*

Faith without works is dead. It's just not nice to sit around — you can sit around in your prayer breakfast with all this faithy-faith and all this talking and thinking and 'hallelujahing' and it's nothing. It's nothing to God. I mean, I think it pisses God off. - *Anne Lamott*

"The Great Resignation" is not about people not wanting to work. It is about a dawning recognition that, for a larger and larger portion of this country, the American dream is dead. - *Kurt Eichenwald*

To have faith is to trust yourself to the water. When you swim you don't grab hold of the water, because if you do you will sink and drown. Instead you relax, and float. - *Alan Watts*

First Lesson, Philip Booth

Full poem at <https://thedewdrop.org/2021/12/17/philip-booth-first-lesson/>

Lie back daughter...
Spread your arms wide...
and let go...
lie gently and wide to the light-year
stars, lie back, and the sea will hold you.

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 renewing faith means for you and your daily living.

1. What have you trusted since childhood? What have you never lost faith in?
2. Has your faith in humanity increased or decreased as you've grown older?
3. Do you regret the time you were too scared to take that leap of faith?
4. Is it possible your doubting is partially a way to avoid risking a leap of faith that scares you?
5. Has age allowed you to be more or less faithful to your true self?

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 (or watching a video of someone else singing)

Songs in this playlist are organized as a journey of sorts, so consider listening from beginning to end and using the playlists as musical meditations.

Click [here](#) for the YouTube playlist on [Renewing Faith](#).

Extinguishing the Chalice

Faith is taking the first step even when you can't see the whole staircase. -*Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.*