

Covenant Group Session for May,2017
Follen Community Church, Lexington, MA

TRANSFORMATION

ANNOUNCEMENTS. A reminder: May is the month when Covenant Group Participants indicate their preference for the coming year. You will get an email from Susanne Intriligator asking whether you want to stay in your current group, change to another one, or drop out altogether. Please watch for the email and respond quickly.

CANDLE LIGHTING AND OPENING WORDS

It may be hard for an egg to turn into a bird: it would be a jolly sight harder for it to learn to fly while remaining an egg. We are like eggs at present. And you cannot go on indefinitely being just an ordinary, decent egg. We must be hatched or go bad.--- C.S. Lewis

SILENCE

CHECK IN:

1. What in your life is undergoing transformation these days? Do you feel an urge to be hatched?
or
2. Tell us about your experience with this month's spiritual exercise
or
3. What is lifting or draining your spirit this month?

Spiritual exercise for May: TRANSFORMATION:

Got a Bible? Sure you do—at home or on the web, find a Bible and turn to the book of Psalms. There are 150 Psalms in the Hebrew Bible. Choose one—any one—and transform it. Rewrite, reinterpret, reimagine—transform the psalm into a psalm for today, a psalm for you, a psalm to share with others. (If you can, try to read several translations of the psalm you decide to work with, to see how translation can be its own act of transformation.) Why did you choose the psalm you chose? How did you transform it—and why?

(For examples of people transforming psalms and other sacred texts, see:

laughingbird.net –an Australian pastor transforms biblical texts into colloquial Australian

giftsinopenhands.wordpress.com – a local UCC pastor, Rev. Maren Tirrabassi, reimagines psalms, liturgies, and prayer
A Book of Psalms by Stephen Mitchell - poetic reimaginings of the psalms, for our modern world

Prayers for Privileged People by Walter Brueggemann – poetic and prophetic prayers inspired by years of Biblical study

Prayers of the Cosmos: Meditations on the Aramaic Words of Jesus by Neil Douglas-Klotz – modernized and poetic transformations of Biblical writings

SILENCE

MAIN READING

TODAY by Billy Collins

If ever there were a spring day so perfect,
so uplifted by a warm intermittent breeze

that it made you want to throw
open all the windows in the house

and unlatch the door to the canary's cage,
indeed, rip the little door from its jamb,

a day when the cool brick paths
and the garden bursting with peonies

seemed so etched in sunlight
that you felt like taking

a hammer to the glass paperweight
on the living room end table,

releasing the inhabitants
from their snow-covered cottage

so they could walk out,
holding hands and squinting

into this larger dome of blue and white,
well, today is just that kind of day.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Spring fever. Do you recall a perfect Spring day that unleashed deep feelings? What were those feelings? Where did they lead?

2. You have ripped the door off the canary's cage and smashed the glass paperweight to release the inhabitants inside. What made you want to do that? Could this lead to something "big"?
3. How does the spiritual exercise for May extend, deepen or relate to the main reading?

AFFIRMATIONS

This is a time for the whole group to consider quietly what was experienced or spoken, to describe what may have shifted for you or someone else, or to express gratitude or appreciation for something that you or another person revealed or expressed. The purpose of this section is to reflect silently on what was moving or meaningful, and then to offer a single comment into the circle without further response or conversation.

CHECKOUT-LIKE/WISH/WONDER

This is a time to consider the experience we have had together, and share gratitude, appreciation, concerns, or ideas. Try to start your sharing with "I like..." "I wish..." or "I wonder..."

CLOSING WORDS

Help us to be the always hopeful
Gardeners of the spirit
Who know that without darkness
Nothing comes to birth
As without light nothing flowers.---May Sarton

Until we meet again, let us go forth, sharing the gifts of Sacred Listening.
The light within me honors the light within you. Go in peace.

Spiritual exercise for June: Pilgrimage

We are lucky to live in a place where so many spiritual Unitarians and Universalist ancestors once lived, and where so many elements of our UU history happened are happening now. In some ways, the Boston area is the UU "Mecca"! Take a pilgrimage to one of these places, or another one you know of, and---do a little research on why they matter:

Walden Pond (Henry David Thoreau)
Ralph Waldo Emerson's house (Concord, MA)
The Alcott house (Concord, MA)
The UUA (24 Farnsworth St., Boston)
The statue of William Ellery Channing (Arlington St., Boston)
King's Chapel (Boston—oldest still-active church in America)
Margaret Fuller house (Cambridge, MA)
UU Urban Ministry (Roxbury, MA)

