Touchstones

Small Group Discussion Guide

Justice & the Common Good

Before You Gather

Read the following prior to gathering.

1. ***Be an Extremist*** by Martin Luther King, Jr.

But as I continued to think about the matter, I gradually gained a bit of satisfaction from being considered an extremist. Was not Jesus an extremist in love? "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, pray for them that despitefully use you." Was not Amos an extremist for justice— "Let justice roll down like waters and righteousness like a mighty stream." …Was not John Bunyan an extremist— "I will stay in jail to the end of my days before I make a butchery of my conscience." Was not Abraham Lincoln an extremist— "We hold these truths to be self-evident that all men are created equal." So, the question is not whether we will be extremist but what kind of extremist will we be. Will we be extremists for hate or will we be extremists for love? Will we be extremists for the preservation of injustice—or will we be extremists for the cause of justice?

Source: *Letter from a Birmingham Jail* by Martin Luther King, Jr.

2. ***Restorative Justice*** by Howard Zehr

Of special concern to restorative justice are the needs of crime victims that are not being adequately met by the criminal justice system. Victims often feel ignored, neglected, or even abused by the justice process. …The legal definition of crime …does not include victims. Crime is defined as against the state, so the state takes the place of the victims. Yet victims often have a number of specific needs from the justice process. …

1. Information. Victims need answers to questions they have about the offense—why it happened and what has happened since. …

2. Truth-telling. An important element in healing or transcending the experience of crime is an opportunity to tell the story of what happened. Indeed, it is often important for a victim to be able to retell this many times. …Often, too, it is important for victims to tell their stories to the ones who caused the harm and to have them understand the impact of their actions.

3. Empowerment. Victims often feel like control has been taken away from them by the offenses they've experienced—control over their properties, their bodies, their emotions, their dreams. Involvement in their own cases …can be an important way to return a sense of empowerment to them.

4. Restitution or vindication. Restitution by offenders is often important to victims, sometimes because of the actual losses, but just as importantly, because of the symbolic recognition restitution implies. When an offender makes an effort to make right the harm, even if only partially, it is a way of saying "I am taking responsibility, and you are not to blame." Restitution …is a basic need that we all have when we are treated unjustly.

Source: *The Little Book of Restorative Justice* by Howard Zehr

3. ***Hungry for Justice?*** by Jim Wallis

When we are hungry, we become increasingly concentrated on relieving our hunger. …We are not easily distracted or drawn away by other things. We get single-minded, focused, and persistent. Are we hungry …enough to act for righteousness and justice? Or are we continually pulled away by other cares and concerns?

The movement from social concern to a hunger for justice has both spiritual and political significance. Our concern for the poor does little

to bridge the enormous distance between us. Indeed, it creates the patronizing dynamics of some people "doing for" others, a pattern that can become destructive to everyone. But to become genuinely hungry for justice makes it more positive to join with the poor and oppressed in a common struggle. It is our own hunger, not someone else's problem, that begins to drive us to action. Together we long for the day when we shall all find satisfaction. When hungry people learn to share the bread of hope together, a new kind of community becomes possible and the first fruits of justice can begin to be enjoyed.

The day when a substantial number of middle-class Americans have moved from social concern to a hunger for what is right will be the day when the justice becomes more possible in this country. As long as the poor are marginalized in their isolation and the concerned people are paralyzed in their guilt, no real action is possible. It is the hunger for justice …that could bring us together.

Source: The Soul of Politics by Jim Wallis

4. ***Justice is Love, Embodied*** by Omid Safi

…Much of my life has been about carrying inside me two streams that both nurture my soul. On one hand has been Rumi, Hafez, medieval Sufism: the extraordinary tradition of Divine love that erupts onto humanity. On the other hand have been movements of social justice committed to redemption and liberation.

…When I wander into spiritual oceans next to my own — realizing that all oceans are connected — it is usually figures who connect together love and justice that most deeply touch my soul. It is the same Martin Luther King who talks so beautifully about agape and redemptive suffering who is moved to action in Montgomery and Albany, Selma and Riverside. It is the same Desmond Tutu who is a moral compass for the anti-apartheid struggle who embodies the power of forgiveness. It is the same Abraham Joshua Heschel who so beautifully and powerfully spoke about God's love for the stranger and the marginalized who said that as long as there is war, as long as African Americans are treated as they are, the synagogue and church are forbidden to us. It is the same Pope Francis who washes the feet of inmates who points out the foul stench of capitalism.

…From the lunch counters to anti-war activism, these have been the faithful women and men who have insisted on bringing love into public spaces, and linking together love and justice.

Source: https://onbeing.org/blog/justice-is-love-embodied/

5. ***Great Power Lives in Our Love*** by Parker J. Palmer

Martin Luther King, Jr. was a man of ideas, as reflected in his comments about love and power, delivered in his last presidential address to the Southern Christian Leadership Conference on August 16, 1967:

"…Power properly understood is nothing but the ability to achieve purpose….

"…And one of the great problems of history is that the concepts of love and power have usually been contrasted as opposites, polar opposites, so that love is identified with a resignation of power, and power with a denial of love….

"…Now, we got to get this thing right. What is needed is a realization that power without love is reckless and abusive, and that love without power is sentimental and anemic. Power at its best is love implementing the demands of justice, and justice at its best is love correcting everything that stands against love….

"…It is precisely this collision of immoral power with powerless morality which constitutes the major crisis of our times…."

Here's a question worth asking: Am I using whatever power I have in the service of love — via my voice, my vocation, my personal and public witness?

Dr. King was also a man of action, non-violent action. Here's another question worth asking: Am I willing to engage in acts of love, truth and justice whenever I have a chance? Each of us has such chances every day — in our families, neighborhoods, classrooms, congregations, and workplaces.

…Across all our lines of difference and division, we must care for and about one another if Dr. King's "Beloved Community" is to be more than a dream.

Source: https://onbeing.org/blog/parker-palmer-great-power-lives-in-our-love/

6. ***A Most Crucial Mindfulness*** by Chellis Glendinning

As the child of violence, I am humbled before the miracle that allows for healing and tracks the intricate map leading in its direction. There is no single moment when I arrive at the destination, rather I creep up on it from a myriad of trails and approaches. …My dreams no longer shriek tales of rabid fathers and forcible entrapment; they take me now on journeys to the stars, to woodlands and weddings. This is not to say that life does not dish up hardship and injustice. History does not dissolve. It is only to say that I have all the resources I was meant to have. I have become fully human.

And now, as an adult in this empire world, I am humbled again. A most crucial mindfulness is required of me. The maps I have learned are dangerously incomplete, the histories I have studied absurdly one-sided. …My entire education has been shaped by the defended, and banal, projections of conquest. The task now is to expand beyond the identity and experience of the empire world. It is to learn the stories so long squelched and denied: of native peoples, the vanquished, losers in war, survivors of conquest, the other side of the story. The task is to realize the culture and community that have been erased: knowledge of animals and seasons, music of the land, extended family, cooperation, celebration. The task is to remember. My people. Our history. The good and the horrendous, nothing left out, colonizer and colonized indelibly intermingled, indelibly embraced.

Source: https://www.spiritualityandpractice.com/book-reviews/excerpts/view/11775

Gathering

Business: Deal with any housekeeping items (e.g., scheduling the next gathering).

Opening Words: "…A justice of human rights, as necessary as it is, provides a grossly inadequate form of justice. It leads to an individualistic expressivism that reduces rights to wants, to a freedom of mere choice, and neglects commitment to and service of the common good. A justice of rights, …results …in the fragmentation of community into lifestyle enclaves and a politics of identity. Further, it does not build …community for and of the common good." *Tex Sample*

Chalice Lighting (James Vila Blake) (adapted)
(In unison) *Love is the spirit of this church, and service is its law. This is our covenant: to dwell together in peace, to seek the truth in love, to serve human need, and to help one another.*

Check-In: How is it with your spirit? What do you need to leave behind in order to be fully present here and now? (2-3 sentences)

Claim Time for Deeper Listening: This comes at the end of the gathering where you can be listened to uninterrupted for more time if needed. You are encouraged to claim time ranging between 3-5 minutes, and to honor the limit of the time that you claim.

Read the Wisdom Story: Invite someone to read aloud the following wisdom story.

Game, Set, Justice, Match by Stephen L. Carter

The literary agent Morton Janklow told me the following story. Back in the days when Forest Hills hosted the United States Amateur tennis championship instead of the United States Open, the great amateur Ted Schroeder was contesting a difficult match against the sensational Pancho Gonzalez — a match Schroeder would ultimately lose. At a critical point, Gonzalez served what appeared to be an ace: that is, his opponent was unable to return the serve. The line judge, whose job it is to make these calls, said that the serve was out, meaning that the point would go to Schroeder. The crowd could not believe the call. Neither could Gonzalez. Even Schroeder himself protested, signaling that the ball was clearly in

bounds. But the line judge refused to change his call, and the umpire refused to overrule him. Play resumed. When Gonzalez made his next serve, Schroeder let the ball go by, making no effort to return it, and Gonzalez won the point he should have had on the previous serve. In the end, Gonzalez also won set and match — by two points. But Schroeder preserved his integrity. Indeed, he followed all three rules for integral living: he decided what was right, did it at cost to himself, and was quite open about what he was doing.

Source: https://www.spiritualityandpractice.com/book-reviews/excerpts/view/11739

Readings from the Common Bowl: Invite group members read the following selections aloud. Leave a few moments of silence after each to invite reflection on the meaning of the words.

"Equal justice under law is not merely a caption on the facade of the Supreme Court building, it is perhaps the most inspiring ideal of our society. It is one of the ends for which our entire legal system exists...it is fundamental that justice should be the same, in substance and availability, without regard to economic status." *Lewis F. Powell Jr.*

"When people begin moving beyond charity and toward justice and solidarity with the poor and oppressed, as Jesus did, they get in trouble. …[They] start to ask why people are poor, which is never as popular as giving to charity. One of my friends has a shirt marked with the words of late Catholic bishop Dom Hélder Câmara: "When I fed the hungry, they called me a saint. When I asked why people are hungry, they called me a communist." Charity wins awards and applause but joining the poor gets you killed. People do not get crucified for living out of love that disrupts the social order that calls forth a new world. People are not crucified for helping poor people. People are crucified for joining them." *Shane Claiborne*

"Writing: such has been my crime ever since I was a small child. To this day writing remains my crime. Now, although I am out of prison, I continue to live inside a prison of another sort, one without steel bars. For the technology of oppression and might without justice has become more advanced, and the fetters imposed on mind and body have become invisible. The most dangerous shackles are the invisible ones, because they deceive people into believing they are free. This delusion is the new prison that people inhabit today, north and south, east and west...We inhabit the age of the technology of false consciousness, the technology of hiding truths behind amiable humanistic slogans that may change from one era to another.... Democracy is not just freedom to criticize the government or head of state, or to hold parliamentary elections. True democracy obtains only when the people—women, men, young people, children - have the ability to change the system of industrial capitalism that has oppressed them since the earliest days of slavery: a system based on class division, patriarchy, and military might, a hierarchical system that subjugates people merely because they are born poor, or female, or dark-skinned." *Nawal El-Saadawi*

Few will have the greatness to bend history itself, but each of us can work to change a small portion of events. It is from numberless diverse acts of courage and belief that human history is shaped. Each time a … [person] stands up for an ideal, or acts to improve the lot of others, or strikes out against injustice, … [they send] forth a tiny ripple of hope, and crossing each other from a million different centers of energy and daring those ripples build a current which can sweep down the mightiest walls of oppression and resistance. *Robert F. Kennedy*

"But all our phrasing—race relations, racial chasm, racial justice, racial profiling, white privilege, even white supremacy—serves to obscure that racism is a visceral experience, that it dislodges brains, blocks airways, rips muscle, extracts organs, cracks bones, breaks teeth. You must never look away from this. You must

always remember that the sociology, the history, the economics, the graphs, the charts, the regressions all land, with great violence, upon the body." *Ta-Nehisi Coates*

"I am convinced that imprisonment is a way of pretending to solve the problem of crime. It does nothing for the victims of crime, but perpetuates the idea of retribution, thus maintaining the endless cycle of violence in our culture. It is a cruel and useless substitute for the elimination of those conditions--poverty, unemployment, homelessness, desperation, racism, greed--which are at the root of most punished crime. The crimes of the rich and powerful go mostly unpunished. It must surely be a tribute to the resilience of the human spirit that even a small number of those men and women in the hell of the prison system survive it and hold on to their humanity." *Howard Zinn*

"If there is no struggle, there is no progress. Those who profess to favor freedom, and yet deprecate agitation, are men who want crops without plowing up the ground. They want rain without thunder and lightning. They want the ocean without the roar of its many waters. ...Power concedes nothing without a demand. It never did and it never will. ...Find out just what people will submit to, and you have found the exact amount of injustice and wrong which will be imposed upon them; and these will continue until they are resisted with either words or blows, or with both. The limits of tyrants are prescribed by the endurance of those whom they oppress." *Frederick Douglass*

"If one really wishes to know how justice is administered in a country, one does not question the policemen, the lawyers, the judges, or the protected members of the middle class. One goes to the unprotected—those, precisely, who need the law's protection the most! —and listens to their testimony. Ask any Mexican, any Puerto Rican, any black man, any poor person—ask the wretched how they fare in the halls of justice, and then you will know, not whether or not the country is just, but whether or not it has any love for justice, or any concept of it. It is certain, in any case, that ignorance, allied with power, is the most ferocious enemy justice can have." *James Baldwin*

"Proximity has taught me some basic and humbling truths, including this vital lesson: Each of us is more than the worst thing we've ever done. My work with the poor and the incarcerated has persuaded me that the opposite of poverty is not wealth; the opposite of poverty is justice. Finally, I've come to believe that the true measure of our commitment to justice, the character of our society, our commitment to the rule of law, fairness, and equality cannot be measured by how we treat the rich, the powerful, the privileged, and the respected among us. The true measure of our character is how we treat the poor, the disfavored, the accused, the incarcerated, and the condemned." *Bryan Stevenson*

"Charity is the power of defending that which we know to be indefensible. Hope is the power of being cheerful in circumstances which we know to be desperate. It is true that there is a state of hope which belongs to bright prospects and the morning; but that is not the virtue of hope. The virtue of hope exists only in earthquake and eclipse. It is true that there is a thing crudely called charity, which means charity to the deserving poor; but charity to the deserving is not charity at all, but justice. It is the undeserving who require it, and the ideal either does not exist at all, or exists wholly for them. For practical purposes it is at the hopeless moment that we require the hopeful man, and the virtue either does not exist at all, or begins to exist at that moment. Exactly at the instant when hope ceases to be reasonable it begins to be useful." *G.K. Chesterton*

Sitting In Silence: Sit in silence together briefly allowing the *Readings from the Common Bowl* to resonate. Cultivate a sense of calm and attention to the readings and the discussion that follows (*Living the Questions).*

Reading

7. ***The Painful and Liberating Practice of Facing My Own Racism*** by Courtney E. Martin

…Progressive white people frantically read the right books, proclaim adoration of the right thinkers, learn and integrate the right language, buy our kids dolls with varying skin tones, donate to organizations that fight white supremacy, etc.

But you can't study, consume, or perform your way out of racism.

If you are white, if you've been socialized in the United States of America in the 21st century, you are racist. You will be racist until the day you die. There is nothing you can do to escape that fundamental fact.

In some ways, that's a frightening reality…. But …it's freeing. If there is no chance of escaping my own internal racism, then I don't have to work so damn hard all the time to prove just how not-racist I am.

…Interrogating my own internal racism is not a one-time show, but a life-long journey. The only way to keep at it is to build relationships that can surface it and withstand holding it up to the light. It's painful, but it is liberating because it releases me from thinking I can "win" or that I'm capable of perfection. I can't and I'm not.

…Shame has become such a fundamental part of the way white people, progressives especially, relate to their own whiteness. … But as Brené Brown writes: "Shame erodes our courage and fuels disengagement."

…When we move beyond shame (or at least don't let it be the driving emotion), we recognize that while we can never cure ourselves of the culture in which we were raised, we can transform it. …

Source: https://onbeing.org/blog/courtney-martin-the-painful-and-liberating-practice-of-facing-my-own-racism/

Living the Questions

Explore as many of these questions as time and interest allow. Fully explore one question before moving to the next. The questions do not need to be discussed in order.

1. In reading #1, Martin Luther King, Jr. takes pride in being considered an extremist. Extremists pursued him who wished him harm, but that is not the extremism that he had in mind. Have you been an extremist for something? If yes, please share. If not, what has most aroused your passion? Why? How do you react to extremists for hate and injustice? Have you known extremists for love and justice? Are they necessary to counter hate and injustice? Why or why not?
2. In reading #2, Howard Zehr advocates for restorative justice instead of retributive justice, which excludes victims from the criminal process. Does the exclusion of victims make sense? Why or why not? Among the needs that victims have is the opportunity to tell their stories. Why might this be important? Another need is empowerment. Being a victim of a crime is to lose control. How might being empowered contribute to their well-being? The final need is restitution. It might be as simple as receiving a heartfelt apology from the offender. How could this contribute to healing and wholeness? If you were the victim of a crime, what would you want from the criminal justice system? From the offender? From the community?
3. In reading #3, Jim Wallis asks, "Are we hungry …enough to act for righteousness and justice? Or are we continually pulled away by other cares and concerns?" How would you answer his questions? For him, the movement of the middle class to hunger for justice is the only way that justice will become possible. Do you agree? Why or why not? Wallis writes, "As long as the poor are marginalized in their isolation and the concerned people are paralyzed in their guilt, no real action is possible." Why is this the case? How can we create a hunger for justice?
4. In reading #4, Omid Safi writes that he is moved by the love expressed by mystics like Rumi and activists who work for social justice. Whom are you moved by? Why?

Safi cites the activism of Dr. King, Archbishop Tutu, Rabbi Heschel, and Pope Francis, all of whom combined love with their work for justice. How does love enhance our work for justice? How does our work for justice deepen our love? How can our love impact those who oppose us?

5. In reading #5, Parker Palmer quotes Martin Luther King, Jr. at length: "What is needed is a realization that power without love is reckless and abusive, and that love without power is sentimental and anemic. Power at its best is love implementing the demands of justice, and justice at its best is love correcting everything that stands against love…." Do you agree? Why or why not? What is required for us to claim and use our power? What gets in the way? Palmer asks, "Am I using whatever power I have in the service of love—via my voice, my vocation, my personal and public witness?" What is your answer to this? He then asks, "Am I willing to engage in acts of love, truth and justice whenever I have a chance?" Are you? Why or why not?
6. In reading #6, Chellis Glendinning recalls growing up in violence and finally moving beyond that reality and the harm it caused. She writes, "And now, as an adult in this empire world, I am humbled again. A most crucial mindfulness is required of me. The maps I have learned are dangerously incomplete, the histories I have studied absurdly one-sided." Do her words resonate with you? Why or why not? She continues, "The task now is to expand beyond the identity and experience of the empire world. It is to learn the stories so long squelched and denied: of native peoples, the vanquished, losers in war, survivors of conquest, the other side of the story." What is the empire world? In what ways does the empire world teach an incomplete history? Have you learned new histories? How have they changed your outlook? To what extent are the histories we are taught propaganda? How does the dominant history address injustice and justice?
7. In reading # 7, Courtney Martin writes about how she, being white, has confronted her racism. She writes, "If you are white, …socialized in the United States …, you are racist." Do you agree? Why or why not? She explains that shame gets in the way of accepting that one is a racist. How does this make sense? Martin concludes, "…While we can never cure ourselves of the culture in which we were raised, we can transform it." How might we transform white culture?

The following questions are related to the Readings from the Common Bowl.

8. Lewis F. Powell Jr. asserts that "equal justice under law" "is one of the ends for which our entire legal system exists...." Do you agree with his premise? Is it achieved in practice? Why or why not? In this sense, "Is justice blind," or is it just blind to injustice? In what ways does economic status undermine equal justice under the law?
9. Shane Claiborne addresses the tension between charity and justice. How would you describe that tension? As the "late Catholic bishop Dom Hélder Câmara [said]: 'When I fed the hungry, they called me a saint. When I asked why people are hungry, they called me a communist.'" What is the motive for this shift? Claiborne continues, "Charity wins awards and applause, but joining the poor gets you killed." Is this true? Why or why not? How does charity support the status quo? How does justice disrupt the status quo? Are the poor a necessary part of the status quo? Why or why not?
10. Egyptian feminist Nawal El-Saadawi begins, "Writing: such has been my crime ever since I was a small child." In what circumstances would writing be a crime? Having been imprisoned, she struggles with other kinds of imprisonment, writing, "The most dangerous shackles are the invisible ones, because they deceive people into believing they are free." What types of invisible shackles are used to control people? Do shackles exist in all countries? Why or why not? El-Saadawi concludes, "True

democracy obtains only when the people …have the ability to change …a hierarchical system that subjugates people merely because they are born poor, or female, or dark-skinned." Do you agree? Why or why not? How much "true democracy" actually exists?

11. Robert Kennedy praised small acts on behalf of justice, writing, "Each time a … [person] stands up for an ideal, or acts to improve the lot of others, or strikes out against injustice, … [they send] forth a tiny ripple of hope…." Do small acts make a difference? Why or why not? What about a million small actions, as he suggests? What individuals come to mind that have started movements or energized them? How can we sweep down the mightiest walls of oppression and resistance?
12. Ta-Nehisi Coates writes that all of our terms for racism serve "to obscure that racism is a visceral experience, that it dislodges brains, blocks airways, rips muscle, extracts organs, cracks bones, breaks teeth." What is your reaction to his words? Do they begin to persuade you of the utter violence of racism? Does our language about racism and anti-racism sanitize this violence, as he suggests? As we acknowledge the native land we occupy, do we need to begin discussions of racism with words about the experience of oppression by the oppressed to honor their reality and ground the conversation?
13. Howard Zinn writes that criminal justice as retribution perpetuates an "endless cycle of violence in our culture." How might this be true? If true, why does this system remain so firmly in place? What needs does retribution satisfy? Who benefits from retribution? If retribution is necessary, how could it incorporate restoration that involves the victim, seeks restitution for the victim, and promotes rehabilitation/reintegration? He asserts that retribution "is a cruel and useless substitute for the elimination of those conditions—poverty, unemployment, homelessness, desperation, racism, greed…." Do you agree? Why or why not? Zinn also writes, "The crimes of the rich and powerful go mostly unpunished." Do you agree? If true, what does it say about the administration of justice? What does it say about a society that permits this?
14. Frederick Douglass, who escaped slavery, was a gifted orator who worked tirelessly to abolish slavery and advocate for women's rights. He wrote, "If there is no struggle, there is no progress." Do you agree? Why or why not? If true, what does it require of activism? He added, "...Find out just what people will submit to, and you have found the exact amount of injustice and wrong which will be imposed upon them…." Why would this be true? Can you recall an example of this? Of course, resisting to submit in the face of force is sometimes very difficult. Does this change his assertion or make it more tragic? He concluded, "The limits of tyrants are prescribed by the endurance of those whom they oppress." How is this illustrated in countries where tyrants subjugate the population? How were the limits overcome in countries that successfully overthrew oppression?
15. James Baldwin wrote, "If one really wishes to know how justice is administered in a country, one does not question the policemen, the lawyers, the judges, or the protected members of the middle class. One goes to the unprotected—those, precisely, who need the law's protection the most! —and listens to their testimony." Do you agree? Have you heard the testimony of the dispossessed, unprotected, and oppressed? If yes, what insights did you gain? If not, why has this remained unavailable to you? How would you rate your country's love for justice? Is it robust or relatively thin? Why? Baldwin concluded, "Ignorance, allied with power, is the most ferocious enemy justice can have." Do you agree? Why or why not? Who benefits from people's ignorance? Why? How?
16. Bryan Stevenson writes, "Proximity has taught me some basic and humbling truths…" What do we miss when we see things at a distance, like poverty, racism, or

incarceration? What does maintaining this distance do for people? How can the distance be decreased? He notes, "Each of us is more than the worst thing we've ever done." Do you agree? Why or why not? Stevenson then writes, "The opposite of poverty is not wealth; the opposite of poverty is justice." How might this be true? If true, what are the implications for society? He concludes, "The true measure of our character is how we treat the poor, the disfavored, the accused, the incarcerated, and the condemned." Assuming this is true, how would you describe our national character?

17. G.K. Chesterton writes, "Charity is the power of defending that which we know to be indefensible." Do you agree? Why or why not? Assuming this is true, what is indefensible about the power of charity? He then suggests that charity to the "deserving" poor is justice. What is his point here? How do you divide the poor into the deserving and undeserving? Chesterton then suggests that the undeserving poor require charity and justice. If undeserving is a legitimate category, why is it essential to provide them justice? Referencing hope, he concludes, "Exactly at the instant when hope ceases to be reasonable it begins to be useful." Is reasonable hope really hope? How can unreasonable hope be useful?

The facilitator or group members are invited to propose additional questions that they would like to explore.

Deeper Listening: If time was claimed by individuals, the group listens without interruption to each person the time claimed. Using a timer allows the facilitator to also listen fully.

Checking-Out: One sentence about where you are now as a result of the time spent together and the experience of exploring the theme.

Extinguishing Chalice (Elizabeth Selle Jones)
We extinguish this flame but not the light of truth, the warmth of community, or the fire of commitment. These we carry in our hearts until we are together again.

Closing Words

"Do not be daunted by the enormity of the world's grief. Love mercy now. Do justly now. Walk humbly now. You are not obligated to complete the work, but neither are you free to abandon it." from the Talmud