



SMALL GROUP MINISTRIES

Compassion

Starr King Church, Hayward, CA, Bev Powell
Wednesday afternoon group, 12 Noon - 2 PM
February 28, 2018

Opening and Chalice Lighting (1 min)

Listen to the speech of others. Listen even more to their silence.
To pray is to listen to the revelations of nature, to the meanings of events.
To listen to music is to listen also to silence, and to find the stillness deepened
and enriched.

– **Jakob Trapp, #482 Singing the Living Tradition (abridged)**

Sharing/Check-In (27 min – 3 min ea.)

Take this time to share how you are spiritually, psychologically, emotionally, and physically. We want to know how you are in this moment.

Quiet Reflection (1 min)

The first duty of love is to listen. – **Paul Tillich**

Topic Readings (5 min)

Compassion literally means “to suffer with,” which implies a basic mutuality in the experience of suffering. The emotion of compassion springs from the recognition that the human experience is imperfect. – **Kristin Neff**

We make the choice, moment by moment, to be fully here. Attending to our present-moment mind and body is a way of being tender toward self, toward others, and toward the world. This quality of attention is inherent in our ability to love. - **Pema Chödrön**

Our task must be to free ourselves . . . by widening our circle of compassion to embrace all living creatures and the whole of nature and its beauty.

— **Albert Einstein**

You can have compassion for yourself – which is not self-pity. You’re simply recognizing that ‘this is tough, this hurts,’ and bringing the same warmhearted wish for suffering to lessen or end that you would bring to any dear friend grappling with the same pain, upset, or challenges as you. —**Rick Hanson**

Our culture does not emphasize self-compassion, quite the opposite. We’re told that no matter how hard we try, our best just isn’t good enough. It’s time for something different. We can all benefit by learning to be more self-compassionate, and now is the perfect time to start. — **Kristin Neff**

When we come into contact with the other person, our thoughts and actions should express our mind of compassion, even if that person says and does things that are not easy to accept. We practice in this way until we see clearly that our love is not contingent upon the other person being lovable.

— **Thich Nhat Hanh**

Compassion is sometimes the fatal capacity for feeling what it is like to live inside somebody else's skin. It is the knowledge that there can never really be any peace and joy for me until there is peace and joy finally for you too. — **Frederick**

Buechner

To the degree that we look clearly and compassionately at ourselves, we feel confident and fearless about looking into someone else's eyes.

— **Pema Chödrön**

True compassion is more than flinging a coin to a beggar; it understands that an edifice that produces beggars needs restructuring.

— **Martin Luther King Jr.**

Break/ Quiet Contemplation

(5 min)

Sharing/Deep Listening

(45 min – 5 min ea.)

Compassion - *Speak about this topic in any way that is comfortable to you. If you choose to use the questions, focus on just one or two, as this will allow you to explore the topic in more depth.*

- In the midst of challenge, people have different approaches. How do you show your need for compassion and care (seek advice/support; withdraw; cry; avoid the issue; lash out, etc.)?
- When compassion is needed, how can general concern be balanced with specific action?
- What kind of support is best for you (hugs; being listened to; having some space; receiving a written note or card; problem-solving)?
- Can you think of times you have been a recipient of compassion (an example of someone knowing/responding to you in a way that you felt authentically acknowledged your suffering or need)?
- What about a time you expressed/felt compassion for a friend, community acquaintance or complete stranger? Is it different or the same to feel compassion for someone close versus a stranger?
- Do you practice compassion for self? How hard or easy is this for you?
- What are some good things about self-compassion?

Open Reflection (20 min)

This is a time to supportively respond to something another person said or to relate additional thoughts that may have occurred as others shared. Please try to respond to others without judgment. Remember our Covenant to each other to listen deeply without interruption.

Service Projects (10 min)

Review dates and details of upcoming service projects: 1. The grounds/garden at Starr King Church, before Earth Day on 4/22/18; 2. At South Hayward Parish or Alameda County Food Bank.

Likes & Wishes (5 min)

What did you appreciate about today's session— in yourself, in others, in the gathering as a whole? What would you like to see change in the future?

Announcements (2 min) *Next session Wednesday March 14, 2018 – **Forgiveness***

Closing/ Extinguish the Chalice (3 min)

Keep alert, stand firm in your faith;
be courageous, be strong,
Let all that you do be done in love.
- #713, **Singing the Living Tradition**