



Civility

Starr King Church, Hayward, CA
Wednesday Afternoon Group, Bev Powell
November 22, 2017

Opening & Chalice Lighting (2 min)

Come, let us walk together.....
 May we reflect on our walking together – or apart.
 It’s OK that we walk different speeds or distances.
 Maybe I will perceive something new by walking with you, and you with me.

Come, let us walk together.....
 May our walking together be a ministry,
 May we bring our own selves to be ministered to,
 Our feelings and fears and needs.
 May we bring the gifts of our beings to minister to each other.
 May our connections deepen our spiritual journeys through community. - *Rev. Helen Zidowecki (abridged)*

Sharing/Check-in (3 min ea, 27 min)

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

Quiet Reflection (1 min)

Treat everyone with politeness, even those who are rude to you – not because they are nice, but because you are. – *Author Unknown*

Topic Readings (10 min)

Civility comes from the word *civilis* which means “citizen.” Civility is more than the individual’s actions as a citizen. When civility functions properly usually there are many citizens performing their civic duties by taking part in the political process (voting, governance), which is also known as civic engagement. Some definitions conflate civility with politeness, which suggests disengaging with others to so as not to offend. - *Wikipedia*.

Civility is more than just politeness, although politeness is a necessary first step. It is about disagreeing without being disagreeable, listening past one’s preconceptions, and teaching others to do the same. - *Cassandra Dahnke, co-founder, Institute for Civility in Government*

(I) fear, that in every assembly (of the Congress), members will obtain influence by noise, not sense. – *John Adams, in a letter to Abigail*

We all encounter this: people associating their own view with being moral or good, and an opposing one as inherently bad or damaging. To point this out in conversation is a way of shutting down discourse; to suggest that a perspective is in itself bad without querying the reasons behind it is to refuse the opportunity to test your own view, or learn whether and why you are wrong. – *Laura Kennedy*

People these days who are civil often lack strong convictions, and people with strong religious convictions often are not very civil. What we need is convicted civility. - *Martin Marty, Lutheran scholar*

...the inclination in times of difficulty is to kind of demonize the other, but, in fact, the other – there isn’t any such thing. The other, if you look closely at it, if you look at it in a literary way, the other is just us on a different day. – *George Saunders*

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| | <p>In America, we have got to learn how to disagree without demonizing each other. - <i>Pastor Rick Warren</i></p> <p>He who knows others is wise. He who knows himself is enlightened. – <i>Lao Tsu</i></p> <p>... literature has always been a way of softening borders between people, breaking down projections, kind of taking big dismissive concepts and complicating them with actual human characters. So, I think any of us could use that in a world that is, you know, kind of dominated by what I would consider a fairly shallow and pervasive mode, social media, in which you tend to think of the other person as an invisible, anonymous other who’s sort of in opposition to you. Literature turns that around and says no, actually, the person you think is your enemy, regarded with enough affection, with enough time and care and love, will be seen to be very similar to you actually, even if they’re quite different in the world, they emanate – we emanate from the same source. - <i>George Saunders</i></p> |
| Break/Quiet Contemplation (6 min) | |
| Sharing/Deep Listening (4 min ea, 36 min) | <p><i>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.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is civility something you pay attention to? Why or why not? • High self-awareness is said to be correlated with high levels of civility. Are you a little, somewhat or very self-aware? • What do you think Martin Marty means by convicted civility? Does it matter? • What role do social media play in creating incidents of incivility? What other cultural factors might be involved? |
| Open Reflection (20 min) | <p><i>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. Please attempt to include everyone in the conversation and give reticent speakers “room” to participate.</i></p> |
| Housekeeping (10 min) | <p><i>Review latest Service Project; Discuss direction for future projects.</i></p> |
| Announcements (2 min) | <p><i>Next Session: Wednesday, December 13, 2017- Group Get-Together</i> <i>Please send Bob & Bev an email indicating your favorite thing(s) to bring.</i></p> |
| Likes & Wishes (3 min) | <p><i>What did you appreciate about today’s session – in yourself, in others, in the whole? What would you like to see change in the future?</i></p> |
| Closing Words/ Extinguishing the Chalice (1 min) | <p>We need one another when we are in trouble and afraid. We need one another when we would accomplish some great purpose, and cannot do it alone. We need one another in the hour of success, when we look for someone to share our triumphs. We need one another in the hour of defeat, when with encouragement, we might endure. All our lives we are in need and others are in need of us. – <i>George Odell (abridged)</i></p> |