

The Wisdom of the Hands

Unitarian Universalist Church of Palo Alto, CA, Rev. Amy Zucker Morgenstern, April 2011

Opening / Chalice Lighting (*Read around the circle*)

Blessed be the works of your hands, O Holy One.

Blessed be these hands that have touched life.

Blessed be these hands that have nurtured creativity.

Blessed be these hands that have held pain.

Blessed be these hands that have embraced with passion.

Blessed be these hands that have tended gardens.

Blessed be these hands that have closed in anger.

Blessed be these hands that have planted new seeds.

Blessed be these hands that have harvested ripe fields.

Blessed be these hands that have cleaned, washed, mopped, scrubbed.

Blessed be these hands that have become knotty with age.

Blessed be these hands that are wrinkled and scarred from doing justice.

Blessed be these hands that have reached out and been received.

Blessed be these hands that hold the promise of the future.

Blessed be the works of your hands, O Holy One.

Opening Our Hearts: Check-in

How is it with your spirit? What have been the high points and low points in your life since we last met?

Reading

From *Always Coming Home*, Ursula K. LeGuin; the speaker is a potter from an imaginary future culture in Northern California.

It was a good thing for me to learn a craft with a true maker. It may have been the best thing I have done. Nothing we do is better than the work of handmind. When mind uses itself without the hands it runs the circle and may go too fast; even speech using the voice only may go too fast. The hand that shapes the mind into clay or written word slows thought to the gait of things and lets it be subject to accident and time. Purity is on the edge of evil, they say.

Sitting in Silence / Reflection *We will begin and end a period of silent reflection with the sound of the bell. Some food for thought:*

- ♥ What kind of work do you do, or have you done, with your hands? (It need not be work for pay.)
- ♥ In your experience, is "handmind" work different than other kinds of work, and if so, in what ways?
- ♥ Are there any qualities of craft that you would like to bring into the rest of your life?

Sharing / Deep Listening

Please share your thoughts on some or all of the above quotes and questions. During this sharing, we will listen deeply without response or thought of response, as a gift to each other and ourselves.

Sharing Together

Now that all have shared, you may wish to engage with each other's responses.

[If facilitators' session:

Tending the Groups

Checking in about our groups, and sharing our concerns about, pleasures in, and wishes for our groups.]

Singing “Return Again,” Shlomo Carlebach

Return again, return again, return to the land of your soul. (2x)

Return to what you are

Return to who you are

Return to where you are

Born and reborn again.

Return again, return again, return to the land of your soul.

Closing / Chalice Extinguishing

Go in peace, and may the work of your hands make manifest the love in your heart.