

**Welcome the space you are in.
Light a candle or bring in a soft light.**

Centering

Center yourself into this time. Quiet your mind. Be open to how this reflection speaks to you.

Prayerful land acknowledgement

We gather in places both apart and together knowing this and all ground beneath and all sky, light and dark above us our sacred and connected. One community with billions upon billions of stars. Bright and unique and all one cosmic pattern of Creating God's palette.

Scripture: Matthew 28:16-20. The Commissioning of the Disciples

Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. When they saw him, they worshipped him; but some doubted. And Jesus came and said to them, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.'

Reflection

Life needs deep acceptance.

Space to play and fall-to hurt and heal.

Places to roam and hibernate-snuggle into truth and give up control.

As I lay confined without freedom to walk or make myself a cup of tea, I am thoughtful of my circumstances and try as I might to understand the timing of things and the potential impact, I realize there is no satisfying answer. Things happen to all of us that don't make sense and that subsequently changes our direction. Sometimes just for a while and sometimes for the rest of our lives. We are not really in control.

Jesus knew both being free and being captured. Living in a reality so counter to his heart. Being radical in an unforgiving world. Knowing and experiencing the sacredness of all life that too often was subjected to extreme and unfathomable cruelty.

How his heart must have hurt.

Then he found friends-forever companions to share his pain and vision-his story and his life.

There is immense relief in this.

Knowing Jesus had love and friendship and us knowing our paths can be similar.

Soul friends are forever.

They get you and love and accept you in spite of your baggage and flaws.

And they walk with you to wherever God is waiting.

Through:

The rough waves of love.

The anguish of profound loss.
Failures. Affirmations. Grief. Celebrations. Change.

Having only one soul friend is enough.
Imagine having a dozen.

We can create our own small collectives of like-minded individuals. Deep dive together, travel the rough terrain of life, pray, sing, cry, wait and love-together.
I believe small groups do better than large ones.
Urban life is full of colour and resources and so many opportunities, but falls short of personal space and easy, uncomplicated access to the natural world. And we each need this. It is necessary for our well being and is what is required for us to save our planet. Time, intentional long swatches of time, with the natural world.

In small collectives we experience:
Empathy with each other and creation.
Love with little or no condition.
Seeing ourselves in others.
Shouldering our mistakes together.
Being the disciples God believes we are.

One little rural congregation stoked with passion, wisdom, experience and faith is a testimony to resilience and open mindedness. A collective of like-minded souls.

At ECORC's annual gathering this weekend we are encouraged to be explorers. Whether in quietude and supportive fellowship or in creating something new - both can be true.
The windows are open to traverse as companions - in whatever way is right for you.

Take a moment.

Where do you see or want your spiritual journey to be going?
What about your Community of Faith?
Make a list-it could be helpful to share at the congregational meeting.

Pause and offer prayer for:

Your Community of Faith.
Your family and friends.
The natural world.
The conflict, displacement, scarcity, fear and suffering throughout the globe.
The United Church as it moves into a new vision.
Yourself-your struggles, conditions, desire to be closer to God, for inner peace and healing.
Hold all this in soft golden light while God embraces you.

Prayer for the journey

Awaken your spirit to adventure,

hold nothing back,
learn to find ease in risk;
soon you will be home
in a new rhythm,
for your soul senses
the world that awaits you.
John O'Donohue

Holy, holy, holy, my heart, my heart adores you.
My heart is glad to say the words, you are holy God.
Amen