

## **October 2019**

### **Exploring What It Means to be a People of Belonging**

October's Soul Matters theme, which will be used in our Religious Education classes and in our covenant groups, is this question: What does it mean to be a people of belonging? This month's service on this theme will be on October 20th and the sermon conversation will also be on October 20th after second service.

From the Soul Matters packet:

You hardly knew how hungry you were to be gathered in,  
to receive the welcome that invited you to enter entirely...  
Tentative steps became settling in... You began to breathe again...  
You learned to sing.

But the deal with this blessing is that it will not leave you alone,  
will not let you linger...  
this blessing will ask you to leave, not because it has tired of you  
but because it desires for you to become the sanctuary that you have found...

- Jan Richardson

We've all felt it. Just saying the word "belonging" conjures it up: The hunger to be included; the longing to be let in. No one likes standing outside the circle. No one likes leaning against the locked door listening to everyone laughing inside. From the time we are little, belonging is the thing we seek.... the true blessing of belonging isn't that you get to come inside the circle; it's that you get to participate in expanding it.

Here are some more quotes about the month's theme:

\* The ancient question, "Who am I?" inevitably leads to a deeper one: "Whose am I?" – because there is no identity outside of relationship. You cannot be a person by yourself. To ask "Whose am I" is to extend the question far beyond the little self-absorbed self, and wonder: Who needs you? Who loves you? To whom are you accountable? To whom do you answer? Whose life is altered by your choices? With whose life is your own all bound up, inextricably, in obvious or invisible ways?  
-Douglas Steer

\* The word 'belonging' holds together the two fundamental aspects of life: Being and Longing, the longing of our Being and the being of our Longing.

-John O'Donohue

\* Somewhere, there are people to whom we can speak with passion without having the words catch in our throats. Somewhere a circle of hands will open to receive us, eyes will light up as we enter, voices will celebrate with us whenever we come into our own power. Community means strength that joins our strength to do the work that needs to be done. Arms to hold us when we falter. A circle of healing. A circle of friends. Somewhere where we can be free."  
-Starhawk

Here are some questions for reflection from Soul Matters:

Who is sitting just outside your circle and needs welcomed in?

Is it time to shift the question from "Who am I?" to "Whose am I?" How would your living and loving be different (and better) if it was a bit less about becoming and a bit more about belonging?

What does community mean for you? What does it mean to truly belong to a community?