BAY SHORE COMMUNITY CHURCH CONTEMPLATION GROUP

LONG BEACH, CA

In August of 2020, the Bayshore Contemplation Group was convened by Bob Paull and Marilyn Ruppart.  The intent of this group was to provide a safe place for people who were interested in contemplation to share experiences and support one another, to maintain and even deepen their spiritual practices. Bob and Marilyn approached several people who they thought might be interested and organized a Zoom meeting time once a week.   With few exceptions, the group has continued to gather every Monday night since then, with very few exceptions. Bob Paull generally facilities the group.

The current members of the group are:

Diane Donaldson (Long Beach, CA)

Darlene Gidley (Long Beach, CA)

Bob Paull (Long Beach, CA)

                                         Marilyn Paull (Long Beach, CA)

Michael Remley (Long Beach, CA)

Marilyn Robbins (Colorado Springs, CO)

Marilyn Ruppart (Long Beach, CO)

Mark Smerkanich (Long Beach, CA)

                                         (Associate) James Snyder (Verona, PA)

 Over several months, we shared our experiences of spiritual practices, explored the writings of various authors/topics such as: Howard Thurman, Eckhart Tolle, Rumi, Richard Rohr, the Mandorla, the symbolism of the Cross, the Tree of Contemplative Practices and New Thought. We engaged in Lectio Divina, Centering Prayer, and the Yahweh Breath Prayer. A part of each meeting is dedicated to sitting in silence.  We realized we were developing a set of shared core values and felt it would be helpful to have a cohesive listing of them.  With the help of the theological and wordsmithing talents of Marilyn Ruppart, we spent many weeks producing the attached document entitled “Shared Perspectives”.

We do not see this document as set-in-stone nor as a “closed canon.”  Rather, it is a tool we can use from time to time to revisit, review, or reframe the spiritual dimensions of our lives.

Also, we see this document as the ground of our pledge of intention and dedication to support, honor, and listen to each other as we continue our journey through life.

BAY SHORE MEDITATION GROUP

Shared Perspectives

January 2022

We support one another in our individual spiritual journeys; we each seek to experience an intimate awareness of the Divine. We hold each other through challenges and accomplishments that we each meet. We support one another in living lives of equanimity that express love, joy, gratitude, compassion, acceptance and respect for diversity and individual freedom, and in our service to others.

In essence, we share the following perspectives:

 1.     God is a Great, Unknowable Mystery; We believe God, the Divine, to be all pervading Consciousness; the Force of Love, Energy, Good and Wisdom that underlies all existence. Even though ultimately unfathomable, we have experienced personal and collective glimpses of the Divine inherent in Life.

 2.     All Creation, as expressed in the natural world, all creatures, and human beings are sacred expressions of the Divinity that is God. We, therefore, have at our core, a Spark of the Divine and we seek to live in loving and responsible kinship with all creation.

 3. God, as described above, has been and continues to be the prompt at the base of all religions of the world. Therefore, we relate to and are nurtured by Mystics from all Wisdom traditi

4.     Christianity is our common spiritual heritage. Jesus Christ incorporates for us both the personal and the universal aspects of the Divine Reality.

 5.     We are held within the Creator, the Creation, and the Holy Breath/Spirited Essence of the Trinity.

 6.     In our personal journeys and as we perceive It to be universally, Life is always changing, seemingly through evolving spirals of order, dis-order, and re-order. Remembering this flow supports us in valuing and being at peace with change.

 7.     The evolutionary spiral mentioned above is sublimely expressed in the Life, Death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ.  We personally experience the cycles of Life, Death, Rebirth, Life, Death, Rebirth, Life Death, Rebirth, while holding God as Constant, an Unchanging Presence.

 8.     Through prayer and meditation, we are prompted to awareness of our inherent Divinity and fullness of Life

9.     God granted free will to human beings, living in a dualistic world of choice.  Veiled as we are from an awareness of our essential unity with the Divine, we all, to some extent, live in fear, insecurity, and separation from God.  This state often leads to violence against our fellow beings and the earth and a lack of respect and compassion for others.

Paradoxically, we know our understanding to be limited and have faith that on a cosmic level, Life is unfolding with meaning, purpose and ever-evolving Good. Additionally, we experience inspiration, guidance, healing and communion with the Divine within, through contemplation, and without, in nature, other people, and life circumstances.

10.  All people are essentially good and unconditionally loved by God, even though, at times, we act in ways that are not loving. God, from Creation through Jesus Christ and continuing on to this moment, is eternal Presence and shares in our human experience.  We are not judged or punished by God but reap the consequences of our actions in ways known to God.

11.While we experience ourselves as individuals, we are part of one another, we are One, a human Whole. Through free will, we each contribute to the One collective evolution of humankind through our consciousness, words and deeds. In this way, we are Co-Creators within the Divine. Who we are as persons, matters.

Currently, we are exploring Richard Rohr’s book ***Yes…And****.*Our curriculum is built on consensus. We operate out of the question: What wants to happen next?Your *c*omments and thoughts would be appreciated. Please send them to robert.c.paull@gmail.com.