

Sparks and Flames

Compiled and Edited by Doug Jones

Opening Words/Chalice Lighting

At times, our own light goes out and is rekindled by a spark from another person. Each of us has cause to think with deep gratitude of those who have lighted the flame within us.
-Albert Schweitzer

Check-in

Focus Readings

Don't ask yourself what the world needs, ask yourself what makes you come alive. And then go and do that. Because what the world needs is people who are alive. - Howard Thurman

Every flower must grow through dirt. - Author unknown

~~The religious~~ Community is essential, for alone our vision is too narrow to see all that must be seen. Together, our vision widens and strength is renewed. - Mark Morrison-Reed

How Wonderful by Howard Thurman

How wonderful it is to be able to feel things deeply!
The sheer delight of fresh air when you have been indoors all day;
The never ending wonder of sunrise and sunset;
The sound of wind through the trees and the utter wetness of the rain;

The excitement of finding something that was lost and is found:
My fountain pen, A beautiful word forgotten, The return of an old book,
The reconciliation after estrangement, The first step after months of illness.

How moving is the sheer wonder of being necessary to the life of another?
The source of food for a dog, a cat;
The giving of a gentle word when you did not know that such a word was desperately needed;

The sharing of so little at the crucial point of acute urgency;
The invasion of the mind and heart with a sense of Presence...
in which all of one's being suddenly becomes God's dwelling place.

"There are moments of such poignant intensity and fullness, moments when part of the personality is mobilized into a single act or a single intuition, that they outweigh the contents of a whole tame lifetime."
-Lewis Mumford

Music washes away from the soul the dust of everyday life. -Berthold Auerbach

An artist's duty is rather to stay open-minded and in a state where he can receive information and inspiration. You always have to be ready for that little artistic Epiphany. -Nick Cave

If your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more and become more, you are a leader. -John Quincy Adams

Questions For Reflection

1. Can you share a story about someone (Grandparent, Child, Teacher, Minister, Friend, Etc.) who sparked a flame within you or within someone else? Share about your experience(s) of being inspired, encouraged, or having a sense of awe, and why you felt that way. What did you do, if anything, as a result of that inspiration?
2. What do you feel deeply?
3. What gives you energy?
4. In what ways have you been an inspiration to others?
5. What sparks your interest or curiosity?
6. Talk about an everyday moment that renewed your spirit or made you feel good. Comment on ways individuals and/or events in your communities have inspired you.
7. Are there sparks within you waiting to catch on fire? Are there things you're interested in trying? Why wait?

Likes (celebrations, gratitudes, appreciations for needs met) and
Wishes (mournings, requests, acknowledgements of needs not met)

Check-Out (a few words or phrases from each who wants to share)

Closing Words

The Thread by Denise Levertov

Something is very gently, invisibly, silently, pulling at me...
a thread or a net of threads, finer than a cobweb and as elastic.

I haven't tried the strength of it. No barbed hook pierced and tore me.
Was it not long ago this thread began to draw me?
Or way back? Was I born with its knot about my neck, a bridle?

Not fear but a stirring of wonder makes me catch my breath
when I feel the tug of it when I thought it had loosened itself and gone.

Extinguishing The Chalice

May we offer to one another, and to ourselves, the fruits of our lives, that others, in return, may be a source of inspiration to those whose lives they touch. -Adapted from Howard Thurman.