

December Theme 2019
Light: The Practice of Blessing

A blessing is a circle of light drawn around a person to protect, heal and strengthen.
John O'Donohue

Light as a noun is defined as the natural agent that stimulates sight and makes things visible. Visibility and light symbolize feelings of enlightenment, clarity, knowledge, truth and healing. Our main source of light is the sun which provides the energy and nourishment of life. The light within our soul also provides the nourishment of the healing power. It is an infusion of something with holiness, spirituality, redemption or divine will. Each one of us has the ability to provide light to others with our presence. We show up in our sanctuary to be in communion with our fellow congregants. We bear witness to the pain and suffering of those around us. We possess light within us when we show up to offer the blessings of a healing heart.

In our faith tradition light is ubiquitous throughout our service. We light the chalice and are called to enter a sacred space in a spirit of worship. As Susan Ritchie lets us know, this serves as a reminder that we illuminate the world that we feel called upon to serve with love and a sense of justice. We also light three candles during our worship service to offer prayers of thanks and remembrance. This flame serves to illuminate our intentions of blessings and love. We join Nathan as he quotes Leonard Cohen reminding us to forget our perfect offerings, there is a crack in everything and that is how the light gets in.

We cannot talk about light without the comparison of darkness as one does not exist without the other. It is the interplay of the two that allows for the beautiful nuances and mysteries to be found. Without the contrast of darkness there would be no healing light. Francis Bacon proposes that "In order for the light to shine so brightly the darkness must be present".

Ralph Waldo Emerson refers to light as the "divine spark". This spark can be the manifestation of the possibilities within each of our souls to serve as a blessing. The practice of blessing offers a way in which we can channel the power of our light to provide renewal, healing and strength to others. John O'Donohue talks about our soul as possessing light, "May the light of your soul guide you. May the light of your soul bless the work you do with the secret love and warmth of your heart."

With each sunrise and beam of light we are reminded of the beauty and sacredness of our world. The light of each new day offers the blessing of an opportunity to start over, to change our story, to offer forgiveness, and to heal wounds. It reminds us that there is always the blessing of hope, healing, renewal and light.

Questions to Explore:

This month's theme was composed by Jen Ryan-Brown and the Worship Associates.

1. What is your practice of blessing?
2. How do you feel blessed?
3. When and how do you experience light?
4. How do you define the spirit of light?
5. Have you experienced a time when despair or challenges later revealed itself as a blessing?
6. Do you believe that anyone can bestow a blessing on others or is it only those in spiritual authority?
7. How and when does your light shine?

Quotes:

“All the lights of the world cannot be compared to a ray of the inner lights of the self.” ~

Anonymous

“Only when we are brave enough to explore the darkness will we discover the infinite power of the light.” ~ Brene Brown

“What seems to us bitter trials are often blessings in disguise.” ~ Oscar Wilde

“You’re beautiful because you know your own darkness and still that alone doesn’t stop you from finding your own light.” ~ R.M. Drake

“Not what we say about our blessings, but how we use them is the true measure of our thanksgiving.” ~ W.T. Purkiser

“As we let our own light shine, we unconsciously give other people permission to do the same. As we are liberated from our own fear, our presence automatically liberates others.” ~ Marianne Williamson

“The moon will guide you through the night with her brightness, but she will always dwell in the darkness in order to be seen.” ~ Shannon L. Alder

For more on this month’s theme go to: <http://uuac.org/worship/themes-for-spiritual-practice/>

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