

**2022 December**  
**Chalice Circle: Slowness**

**Opening Words and Chalice Lighting**

Do you have the patience to wait until the mud settles and the water is clear? Can you remain unmoving until the right action arises by itself? From the Tao te Ching

**Song:** “Be Still” by The Fray; [Youtube link](#)

**Guided Meditation** by Shari Woodbury

I invite you to enter a period of quiet for a guided meditation. You may wish to adjust your position so that your spine is straight, your body relaxed, your hands resting gently in your lap. You will probably want to close your eyes and shut out all the distractions of the light. Let us take a few deep, slow breaths and begin...

With vision muted, notice what your other senses are telling you... you may feel a sense of pressure in your back or your sitting bones, where your body comes in contact with your chair... you may have feelings of tightness in your shoulders... along the jawline...

Release any areas of tension that you notice... soften the neck and the swallowing muscles... release any tension you feel in your abdomen, imagining the inner organs in your belly letting go of tension... soften your eyes, let them feel warm and relaxed, as if floating in a pool of water... inhale, exhale... you may notice strange sensations such as tingling in a muscle, or a ticklish feeling on the skin... whatever comes to your awareness is okay, just acknowledge it in the silence...

Let us turn our attention to the sounds around us... What do you notice in the sanctuary? You may hear your own breathing, or growling stomach... you may hear a neighbor shifting position... perhaps cars passing on the street, and wind blowing by the outer walls of the building...

Having acknowledged these outward sounds, let us turn our focus inward now... thoughts may float through your consciousness, you can just let them float on by... feelings may bubble up from some deeper place with you – you don't have to name the feeling or put any words to it, just notice if there is anything there for you, with gentle acceptance...

Now imagine your body and mind are filled with darkness and silence, like the deep, dark night in a wilderness... Take comfort in the stillness, the restfulness of this space within you... Don't try to make anything happen, just rest into this inner darkness, knowing that you are safe in this moment... you can simply Be... breathe in and out...

In the quiet corners within, let us sense the healing powers of the body... the amazing ability of our soft animal body to restore damaged cells, to create new healthy cells, to bring balance to systems that have gotten out of whack... let us acknowledge, too, the creative powers of our minds and hearts... from the mysterious inner regions comes all poetry, all music... from the inner dark emerges all sculpture, and dance... all the art and cultures that are the heritages of humanity... even consciousness itself, the great unsolved mystery of science, resides in the deep unknown of ourselves...

Continue to be with your breath and a still, quiet mood as you rest a while longer in the darkness, with humility and awe and gratitude for all the powers of the darkness within yourself...

**Check-in:** Without crosstalk or interruption, briefly describe where you are in your life now, and notice what needs to be shared in order to be fully present in our circle.

**Reading:** Hibernation is a resting time, a time to put aside frantic activity and lie dormant until the rhythms of life call for a new beginning. It may look to the outside world like escape or laziness, but in fact it's a necessary part of the cycle of activity. It's the deep rest that allows renewed energy and life force to emerge. We all need periods of hibernation in order to maintain the life force that sustains us. ~ Rev. Libby Smith

### Questions to Consider

1. What are your feelings and thoughts about slowness?
2. What part(s) of your life might benefit from slowness?
3. Have you intentionally tried to find the right speed, the "tempo giusto," for your life?
4. What makes you feel rushed? Is that a bad thing?
5. What practices help you to slow down? Do you think this is difficult? Necessary?

**Sitting in Silence:** We will sit in silence for 5 minutes. Take this time to reflect on the readings, questions, and theme. Center yourself and consider what you want to share with the group.

**Sharing/Deep Listening:** Please share your own experiences and thoughts about the topic and readings with no crosstalk or interruption.

**Additional Thoughts/Crosstalk:** As time allows, after listening to others, do you have additional thoughts to share?

**Checkout:** Take a moment to check in with your feelings and to check out with the group.

**Closing Words/Extinguishing the Chalice:** "Keeping Still" by Pablo Neruda; translated from the Spanish by Dan Bellm

Now we will count to twelve  
and let's keep quiet.

For once on earth  
let's not talk in any language;  
let's stop for one second,  
and not move our arms so much.

A moment like that would smell sweet,  
no hurry, no engines,  
all of us at the same time  
in need of rest.

Fishermen in the cold sea  
would stop harming whales  
and the gatherer of salt  
would look at his hurt hands.

Those who prepare green wars,  
wars with gas, wars with fire,  
victories with no survivors,  
would put on clean clothes

and go for a walk with their brothers  
out in the shade, doing nothing.

Just don't confuse what I want  
with total inaction;  
it's life and life only;  
I'm not talking about death.

If we weren't so single-minded  
about keeping our lives moving  
and could maybe do nothing for once,  
a huge silence might interrupt this sadness  
of never understanding ourselves,  
of threatening ourselves with death;  
perhaps the earth could teach us;

everything would seem dead  
and then be alive.

Now I will count up to twelve  
and you keep quiet  
and I will go.

### **\*Song Lyrics**

Be still and know that I'm with you

Be still and know that I am here

Be still and know that I'm with you

Be still, be still, and know

When darkness comes upon you

And colors you with fear and shame

Be still and know that I'm with you

And I will say your name

If terror falls upon your bed

And sleep no longer comes

Remember all the words I said

Be still, be still, and know

And when you go through the valley

And the shadow comes down from the hill

If morning never comes to be

Be still, be still, be still

If you forget the way to go

And lose where you came from

If no one is standing beside you

Be still and know I am

Be still and know that I'm with you

Be still and know I am