



January 2025 Chalice Circle: Care for our Bodies

UU Value: Equity

Opening Words and Chalice Lighting By Karishma Gottfried

*Each of us was created in the image of Love.
Wherever we come from, wherever we're going.
Whoever we are, whomever we love.
We proclaim with Love on our side:
Our bodies are sacred. Our minds are blessed. Our spirits are beloved.
May we be open to receive more love, always more Love.*

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: The Body is Not an Apology by Sonya Renee Taylor

Note: In place of a song and a few readings, we invite you to listen to this poem in its entirety and let the poet's fierce and assured words wash over you as you reflect on all the ways your own body has been appreciated or rejected by society, by others, and by you.

https://youtu.be/iXLSKHZOLkA?si=_6z6D6bAcsgUB0r

The body is not an apology.

Let it not be forget-me-not fixed to mattress when night threatens to leave the room empty as the belly of a crow.

The body is not an apology.

Do not present it as disassembled rifle when he has yet to prove himself more than common intruder.

The body is not an apology. Let it not be common as oil, ash, or toilet. Let it not be small as gravel, stain, or teeth.

Let it not be mountain when it is sand. Let it not be ocean when it is grass. Let it not be shaken, flattened, or razed in contrition.

The body is not an apology. Do not present the body as communion, confession, do not ask for it to be pardoned as criminal.

The body is not a crime, is not a gun, is not a lost set of keys or wrong number dialed. It is not the orange burst of blood to shame white dresses.

The body is not an apology. It is not the unintended granule of bone beneath will.

The body is not kill, is not unkempt car, is not a forgotten appointment.

Do not speak it vulgar. The body is not soiled, is not filth to be forgiven.

The body is not an apology. It is not a father's backhand. Is not mother's dinner late again, wrecked jaw, howl. It is not the drunken sorcery of contorting steel 'round tree.

The body is not calamity.

The body is not a math test.

The body is not a wrong answer. The body is not a failed class. You are not failing.

The body is not an apology. It is not a cavity, is not a hole to be filled, to be yanked out. Is not a broken thing to be mended, be tossed.

The body is not prison, is not sentence to be served. Is not pavement, is not prayer.

Do not give the body as gift. Only receive it as such.

The body is not to be prayed for, is to be prayed to.

So, for the ever-more tortile tenth grade nose, hallelujah!

For the shower song throat that crackles like a grandfather's Victrola, hallelujah!

For the spine that never healed, for the lambent heart that didn't either, hallelujah!

For the sloping pulp of back, hip, belly, hosanna!

For the errant hairs that rove the face like a pack of wild wolves, hosanna!

For the parts we have endeavored to excise.

Blessed be the cancer, the palsy, the womb that opens like a trap door.

Praise the body in its blackjack magic even in this. For the razor wire mouth. For the sweet God ribbon within it, praise!

For the mistake that never was, praise! For the bend, twist, fall, and rise again, fall and rise again.

For the raising like an obstinate Christ.

For the salvation of a body that will bend like a baptismal bowl.

For those who will worship at the lip of this sanctuary.

Praise the body, for the body is not an apology.

The body is deity, the body is God, the body is God.

The only righteous love that will never need repent.

Questions to Consider

1. What do you remember about how your body has been “assessed” by yourself and others throughout your life?
2. When you hear the sentence, “The body is deity, the body is God...” what sensations does that strike within you?
3. What ways might you move into this new year, this new phase of our communal life, appreciating your body even more than you may have in the past?

Sitting in Silence: We will sit in silence for 3-5 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. Please ensure everyone gets an equal opportunity to share.

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

Checkout: What are you taking with you as you leave the circle? OR How can we support you in the month ahead?

Closing Words/Extinguishing the Chalice (author unknown)

We are never complete. We are never finished. We are always yet to be.

May we always allow others to be, and help and enable each other to grow toward all

that we are capable of becoming. Amen