

## Chalice Circle Order of Service - March 2026

**Theme:** Survival is not a tank. It is a potluck.

Translation: Community. Nourishment.

**Chalice Lighting:** You Deserve a Place

*[Inspired by the poem "You Deserve a Love" by Estafanía Mitre, frequently misattributed to Frida Kahlo.]*

We light this chalice  
for the ones who arrive disheveled,  
carrying questions, contradictions,  
grief half-healed, and dreams still raw.

You deserve a place  
that welcomes your becoming,  
that knows your fire is not too much,  
your silence not too little.

A place that sees your shadows  
and still reaches for your light.

You deserve a community  
that listens when you speak your truth,  
that sits with you in turmoil  
and rises with you in joy,  
that believes in your voice  
even when it trembles.

You deserve a circle  
that brings you hope,  
and coffee, and poetry.  
A place to rest.  
A place to rise.

Let this flame be that place:  
not perfect,  
but possible.  
Not without cracks,  
but full of light.

Welcome home.

**Check-in:** Without crosstalk or interruption, please check in with the group, describing where you are in your life now, noticing what needs to be shared in order to be fully present in our circle.

**Song:** Lean On Me (Hymn #1021, Singing the Journey – grey hymnal)

YouTube video of Bill Withers performing the song live in 1974 -

<https://youtu.be/dtC1W-6hwIU?si=yK3uVYHjt7M0UQrA>

Lyrics: Sometimes in our lives  
we all have pain,  
we all have sorrow.  
But if we are wise  
we know that there's  
always tomorrow.

Lean on me when you're not strong  
and I'll be your friend, I'll help you carry on,  
For it won't be long 'til I'm gonna need  
somebody to lean on.

Please swallow your pride  
if I have things  
you need to borrow,  
For no one can fill  
those of your needs  
that you won't let show.  
Just call on me brother when you need a hand.  
We all need somebody to lean on.  
I just might have a problem that you'd understand.  
We all need somebody to lean on.

If there is a load  
you have to bear  
that you can't carry,  
I'm right up the road,  
I'll share your load  
if you just call me.

**Reading #1:** “Dominant culture has tried to keep us all afraid, to make us choose safety instead of risk, sameness instead of diversity. Moving through that fear, finding out what connects us, reveling in our differences; this is the process that brings us closer, that gives us a world of shared values, of meaningful community.” – bell hooks, excerpted from her book *Teaching Community: A Pedagogy of Hope*

**Reading #2:** “come with every wound  
and every woman you’ve ever loved  
every lie you’ve ever told  
and whatever it is that keeps you up at night  
every mouth you’ve punched in  
all the blood you’ve ever tasted  
come with every enemy you’ve ever made  
and all the family you’ve ever buried  
and every dirty thing you’ve ever done  
every drink that’s burnt your throat  
and every morning you’ve woken  
with nothing and no one  
come with all your loss  
your regrets, sins  
memories  
black outs  
secrets  
come with all the rot in your mouth  
and that voice like needle hitting record  
come with your kind eyes and weeping knuckles  
come with all your shame  
come with your swollen heart

I've never seen anything more beautiful than you"

-First Thought After Seeing Your Mouth Smile, by Warsan Shire

**Reading #3:** "The practice of love offers no place of safety. We risk loss, hurt, pain. We risk being acted upon by forces outside our control." – bell hooks, from her book *All About Love: New Visions*

**Questions to Consider:**

- 1) Potlucks are known for everyone bringing a unique dish to share with the group. What do you bring to the table when you gather in community? Do you ever struggle to connect with those seated across from you?
- 2) How do you stay engaged and present in a community space where clashing tastes and personalities may cause discomfort? Is showing up for your community worth the risk of 'raisins in your potato salad'?
- 3) Sharing your dish can be a daunting task. What scares you most about being fully seen and known? What lies on the other side of fear?
- 4) What was an enriching experience you had where you felt genuinely seen and accepted? What was an experience you had of truly seeing someone else? What did you learn from it?

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

**Sharing/Deep Listening:** Please listen deeply to others & share from your own experience and thoughts on the readings, questions, or theme without crosstalk or interruption. Please ensure everyone gets an equal opportunity to participate.

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

**Check-Out:** How are you feeling now, as you leave our circle? What are you taking with you? How can we best support you in the weeks ahead?

**Extinguishing the Chalice:**

And now we take our leave.

Before we gather here again—  
may each of us bring happiness into another's life;  
may we each be surprised by the gifts that surround us;  
may each of us be enlivened by constant curiosity —  
And may we remain together in spirit  
til the hour we meet again.

Bringing Happiness, by Barbara Cheatham