



Centering Prayer Summer 2022



United Churches of Langley

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What is Centering Prayer?

Centering Prayer is a method of prayer which opens us to receive the gift of God's presence, traditionally called contemplative prayer.

Centering Prayer facilitates the movement from more active modes of prayer — verbal, mental or affective prayer — into a receptive prayer of resting in God.

Centering Prayer is drawn from ancient prayer practices of the Christian contemplative heritage, notably the Fathers and Mothers of the Desert, Lectio Divina, (praying the scriptures), The Cloud of Unknowing, St. John of the Cross and St. Teresa of Avila. It was distilled into a simple method of prayer in the 1970's by three Trappist monks, Fr. William Meninger, Fr. Basil Pennington and Abbot Thomas Keating and further defined and refined by The Rev. Dr. Cynthia Bourgeault.

The Method of Centering Prayer

Choose a sacred word as your consent to God's presence and action within. This word can be from the reading of the day, or a word for the Divine that resonates with you. Sit comfortably, settling into the silence, and with your first few breaths, introduce your sacred word silently to yourself. When thoughts arise, ever so gently return to your sacred word.

Opening & Introduction:

June 21st is designated as Indigenous Prayer day. The month of June is also designated as a month to honour the indigenous people of our land, a time when we honour the cultural traditions of the First Peoples of the land.

For Summer 2022, we will honour these traditions with readings from the Seven Sacred Teachings to honour them as a way of life, of living in harmony with all creation, all beings, all life, as well as reflect on the Animal medicine of Bear.

We acknowledge the Creator that has given these teachings, and the people from whom they have been gifted to us. They are not ours... but may we strive to live these teachings in how we live our lives - with and for each other and all creation.

We acknowledge that we gather on the Ancestral and Unceded territories of the Kwantlen, Katzie, Matsqui and Semiahmoo people.

Wherever you are, tune into your own place where you are, and sense the First People's of your land... May we continue to walk with them in the Spirit of Reconciliation.

Gathering Prayer

Creator, we gather to join our hearts together with each other and with you.
With gratitude we gather as a community, to seek transformation and to celebrate the power of your Spirit that is always moving. Amen.

The Seven Sacred Teachings

are values based on First Nations cultural tradition. Each teaching honours one of the basic virtues to help us to live a full and healthy life:

**If you have a candle near you,
Light the Light to remember and honour
these Seven Sacred Teachings:**

To cherish knowledge is to know **WISDOM**;
To know **LOVE** is to know peace;
To honor all of the Creation is to have **RESPECT**;
COURAGE is to face the foe with integrity;
HONESTY is to be honest first with yourself – in word and action; and with all others
HUMILITY is to know yourself as a sacred part of the Creation,
TRUTH is to know all of these things.

SING BOWL/CHIME (if have one)

Readings Each Week:

June 15: Wisdom – Beaver

June 22: Solstice Blessing – Long Time Sun

June 29: Song of Lamentation

July 6: Love - Eagle

July 13: Respect - Buffalo

July 20: Break (Sophia not available)

July 27: Courage – Bear

Aug 3: Break – (Sophia not available)

Aug 10: Honesty - Sabe

Aug 17: Humility – Wolf

Aug 24: Truth – Turtle (on your own - Sophia not available)

Aug 31: Summer-y (summary) of all Teachings (on your own)

**Followed by 20 minutes of Silence,
Sacred Teachings Prayer, Prayers for each other**

Sacred Teachings Prayer (after time of silence)

God, Creator and Great Mystery,
we praise you this day for the gifts all people.

We lift all people up for healing comfort
and your compassion.

We pray for those who suffer –
in mind, body and spirit.

May they be wrapped in your arms of comfort.

We pray for the families who grieve,
May they receive comfort in their loss.

We pray for our warriors who fight
against the injustices our people endure;
we pray they have your compassionate ear;
we pray for strength and endurance for them.

We pray just as the Elders prayed,
for renewal and for the restoration of beauty
to the land and its people.

We pray for Mother Earth,
the waters, the winds, for our siblings –
the animals, birds, and fish, and all of life that surrounds us.

We pray that we will walk the good Red Road of life,
and that we will walk with Wisdom, Love, Respect, Courage,
Honesty, Humility, and Truth.

We offer this prayer in humility and hope.
Amen.

Sharing of Personal Prayers

Summer Blessing (to end with)

Eternal Spirit

Giver of Life and Source of All,
Loving Truth of the Heavens.

May your energy sing throughout the Universe
as we grow to understand our own power.

May we take up your cause
of peace and freedom.

May we know compassion, harmony and love.

May we have resilience for our trials,
and humility in our victories.

May we be gracious with our strength,
and let us eclipse our self-doubt.

As the sun spirals its longest dance,
Illuminate our paths.

As nature shows bounty and fertility,
Bless us.

May all live with loving intent –
for themselves, for each other,
for all creation and its creatures.

May it Be So.

Always and in All Ways.

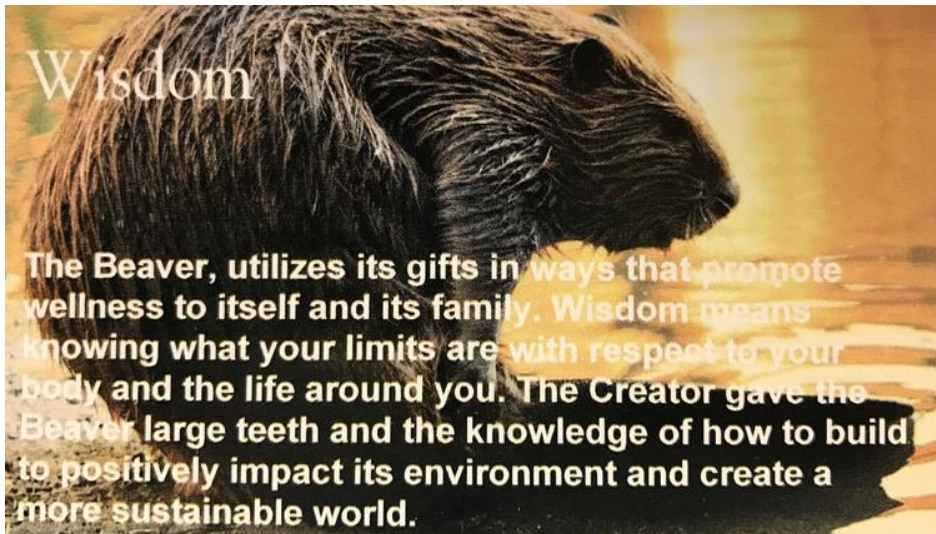
A Reading on Wisdom by SITTING BULL (June 15)

(from Seven Sacred Teachings)

Open to the kindness, quiet, silence
and gentleness inside your own heart,
for it is here when you quietly tune
to Mother Earth that you can hear Her voice.

Hear the beautiful ballads and mystical plaintive chants that
She sings to Her waters,
earth, air, fire, ether,
and the great strong healing remedy melodies
that She sings.

You can hear Her also in the sighing winds
as She cries for Her own creatures
and children, including you.



Wisdom is the ability to make decisions based on personal knowledge and experience. Community is entirely dependent on the gifts given to each member by the Creator and the wisdom to know how these gifts are to be used.

The beaver teaches us Wisdom.

The beaver's example of using its sharp teeth for cutting down trees and branches to build its dams and lodges expresses this teaching.

If the beaver didn't use its teeth in this way, the teeth would continue to grow until they became useless, ultimately making it impossible for the beaver to sustain itself.

The same can be said for human beings. One's spirit will grow weak if it is not fulfilling its use. When used properly, one's gifts contribute to the development of a peaceful and healthy being and community.

Wondering / Invitation to Practice:

Contemplate your own gifts that can be offered to help create peaceful and health community.

We Enter the Silence – 20 minutes

**Sacred Teachings Prayer
Sharing of Prayers & Summer Blessing**

Honouring Summer Solstice (used June 22)

"Saving Daylight" — Davidson Pickett

Suppose for a moment you live in a land,
amazed at what happens during summer solstice.
Very strange things begin to occur.
Instantly, there is little darkness,
Night that we are so used to - Gone;
what is left is the brilliant colors.
Daylight from dusk to dawn to dusk again,
Alight in all its energy and brightness.
Gaze upon the horizon, waiting for darkness to reappear,
Hold on to summer in all its life, love and beauty;
See it ebb once more as daylight fades to night once more.

"Long Time Sun" – sung blessing

There are many recordings of this blessing sung by Snatum Kaur on YouTube. Here's one you might enjoy.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q-QU5N4X30o>

Wondering / Invitation to Practice:

Feel into the Long Time Sun shining upon You
And the Pure Light Within You
Guiding you On, Guiding You Home.
Consent to the Presence of this Illuminating Light

We Enter the Silence – 20 minutes

Sacred Teachings Prayer

Sharing of Prayers & Summer Blessing

Song of Lamentation (used June 29)

Northern Gateway *(from The Wild in You)*

Once there was a mourning song
A singer sang for four days staring out to sea.
That song is lost.

Everyone born here, every old one,
every spirit the salmon feeds,
every man inside a bear, inside a whale,
inside the throat of frog and eagle,
every woman whose chopped hair tossed into the sea,
grew into eel grass,
whose wrist and ankle bones became the pebbles,
waves rattle on the shore,
every child raised by wolves, by mother cedars,
by sea lions in undertows of grief –
these are the ones called upon
to sing a lamentation that will not cease.

Wondering / Invitation to practice

What song of lamentation do you hear in the wind?
What song do you sing in your heart?

We Enter the Silence – 20 minutes

"Long Time Sun" – sung blessing

Sacred Teachings Prayer

Sharing of Prayers & Summer Blessing

A Reading on Love by CRAZY HORSE (July 6)
(from Seven Sacred Teachings)

I have been called The Greatest Warrior
among All Our Relations.
This may be so.

What I learned to conquer
were the challenges to my Heart Unity
within my chest.

Self-confidence and love,
strengthen everything inside you.
This you can also do, my sister and brother.

This is the time to continue
your Good Red Road Journey,
while still in the body.

To know **Love** is to know the Creator.
Therefore, it is expected one's first love
is for that of the Creator or Great Spirit.

The love given to the Great Spirit
is expressed through self-love;
if you can't love yourself
how can you love anyone else?

The Great Spirit chose the eagle
to represent love because the eagle soars the highest of all
creatures in bringing pure vision to the seeker.

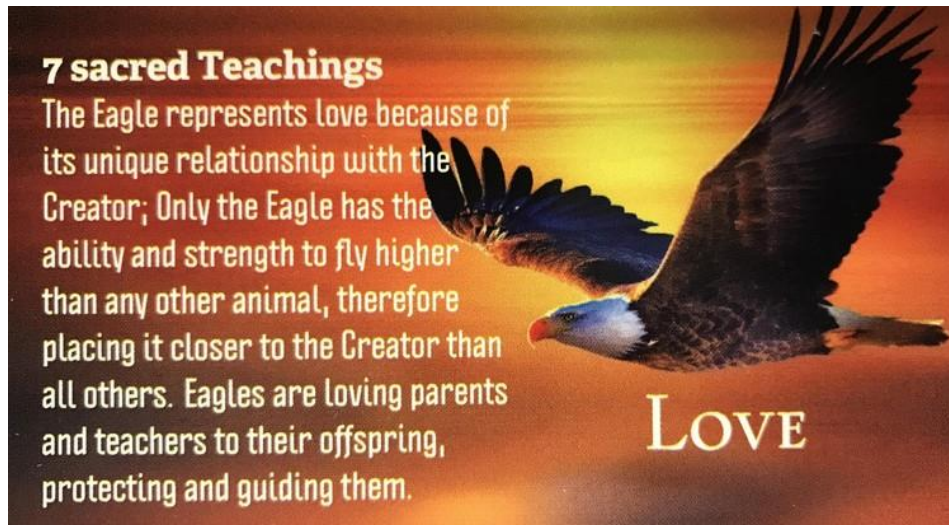
Although love is the supplier
of the greatest and most powerful medicine,
it can also be the most elusive of the teachings
as it depends on a world
that acknowledges the importance of spirituality.

Wondering / Invitation to Practice:

Contemplate Love....
Love of the Creator and all creation,
love of self, love of other...

We Enter the Silence – 20 minutes

Sacred Teachings Prayer
Sharing of Prayers & Summer Blessing



A Reading on Respect by CHIEF JOSEPH (July 13)

(from Seven Sacred Teachings)

If you want to live in peace
with All Our Relations,
you will be able to do so
when you treat all creatures
alike with respect.

Give them all the same kind consideration.
Give them an even chance
to live and grow.

All Our Relations were made
by the same Great Spirit.



Respect is the condition of being honoured.

Respect is represented by the buffalo.
Through giving its life
and sharing every part of its being
the buffalo showed the deepest respect
it had for people.

No animal was more important
to the existence of Indigenous families.
Its gifts provided shelter, clothing,
and utensils for our daily life.

Native people believed we were the true caretakers of the great herds and developed a sustainable relationship with the buffalo that resulted in a relationship of true respect.

Wondering / Invitation to Practice:

How do you treat Nature with Respect?

How do you treat Others with Respect?

Consider ways that you might be more respectful in your life...

We Enter the Silence – 20 minutes

Sacred Teachings Prayer

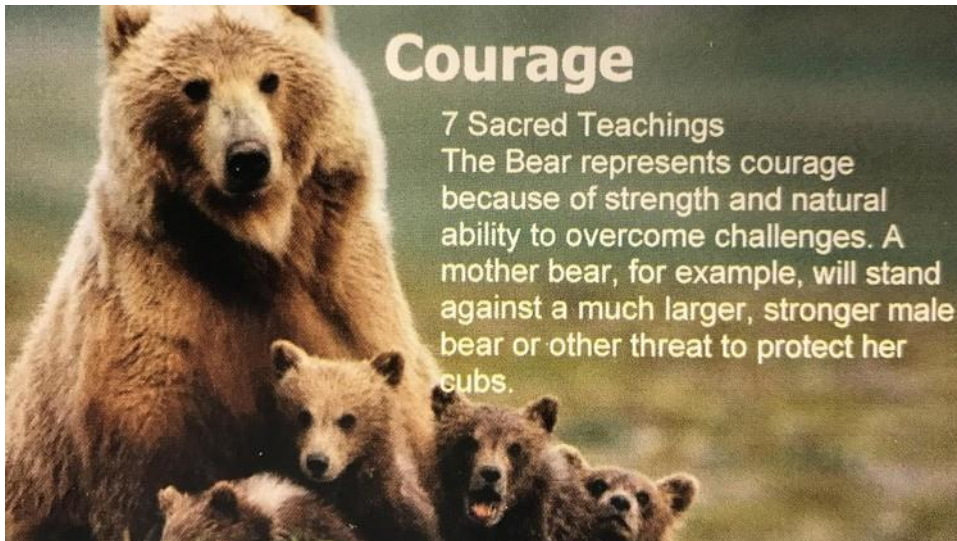
Sharing of Prayers & Summer Blessing

A Reading on Courage by VICTORIO (July 27)
(from Seven Sacred Teachings)

Every struggle, whether won or lost,
strengthens us for the next to come.

It is not always good for people to have an easy life.
They become weak and inefficient
when they cease to struggle.

Some need a series of defeats
before developing the strength and courage
to win a victory.



Music for theme of Courage: *If I were Brave* by Jana Stanfield
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UF5V2PEujqs>

Courage is the ability to face danger, fear,
or change with confidence and bravery.

The bear teaches us courage
with many lessons in the way it lives.
Courage is the most important teaching the bear offers.
Though gentle by nature,
the ferociousness of a mother Bear
when one of her cubs is approached
is the true definition of courage.

To have the mental and moral strength
to overcome fears
that prevent us from living our true spirit
as human beings is a great challenge
that must be met with the same vigour and intensity
as a mother Bear protecting her cub.

Living in the heart and spirit is difficult.
The bear's example shows us how to face any danger to achieve
courage in our lives.

Wondering / Invitation to Practice:

When have you had to be as courageous as a mother Bear?
How have you had to be courageous during this liminal time?
What would you do if you were Brave?

We Enter the Silence – 20 minutes

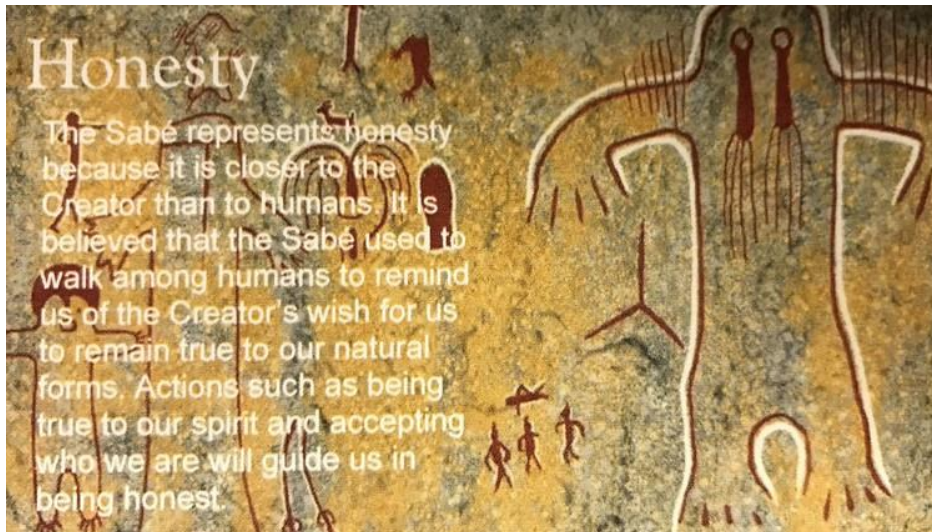
Sacred Teachings Prayer
Sharing of Prayers & Summer Blessing

A Reading on Honesty by GERONIMO (Aug 10)
(from Seven Sacred Teachings)

Honesty comes when you learn to be fearless
with yourself.

When you speak and act straight from the heart,
the Creator will give you love and strength
to say and do what is right for you in every moment.

Innocence, curiosity and openness will keep you honest.



Honesty is speaking and acting truthfully,
thereby remaining morally upright.

The Sabe (Sasquatch) represents honesty.
Long ago, there was a giant called Kitchi-Sabe.
It walked among the people to remind them to be honest
to the law of the Creator and with each other.

The highest honour bestowed on a person was the saying,
"There walks an honest person who can be trusted."
Keeping the promises one made to the Creator
or to others and self was to be truly honest.

The Elders would say, "Never try to be someone else;
live true to your spirit, be honest to yourself
and accept who you are the way the Creator made you."

Wondering / Invitation to Practice:

What does it mean to live as your True Self?
How might you cultivate "honest" living?

We Enter the Silence – 20 minutes

Sacred Teachings Prayer
Sharing of Prayers & Summer Blessing

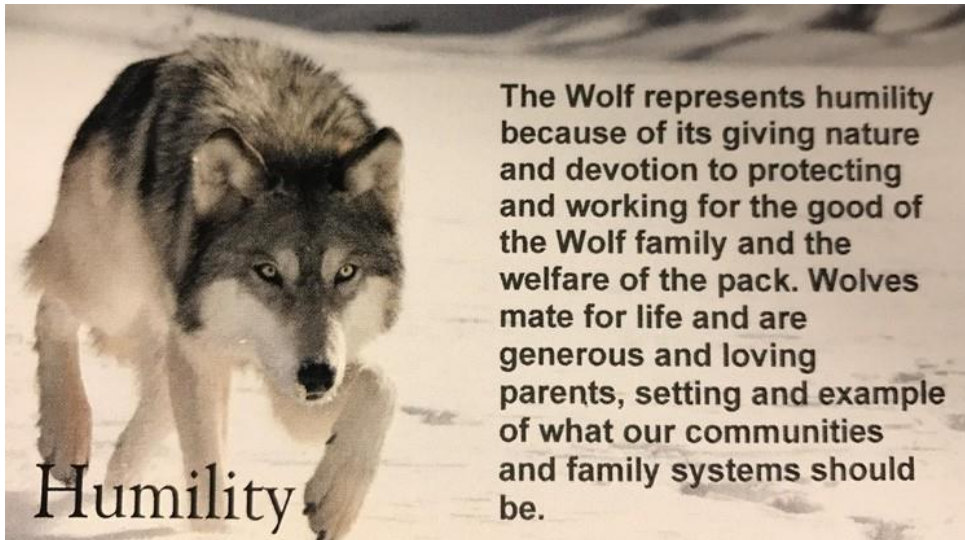
A Reading on Humility by TECUMSEH (Aug 17)

(from Seven Sacred Teachings)

We all walk this Good Earth Road
as creatures of the One Creator.

The rising and falling of the Sun each day,
the seasons, the gifts of food, shelter,
love and friendship are there for each of us
in the One Circle.

If you cannot find the way to be humble and grateful
in your heart, the fault lies within you.



Humility is recognizing and acknowledging
that Creator is a higher power than people.
This is truly humbling.

True humility is being humble and not arrogant.
To capture true humility one must express deference
or submission to the Creator,
through the acceptance that all human beings are equal.
The expression of this humility is manifested
through the consideration of others before oneself.

The wolf teaches us humility;
it bows his head in the presence of others in deference,
and once it has hunted
the wolf will not take any of the food
until it can be shared with the pack.

The wolf's lack of arrogance
and its respect for its community is a hard lesson,
but integral in the Aboriginal way.

Wondering / Invitation to Practice:

In what ways do you cultivate a consciousness of humility?

How might you consider others and your community
more in the choices you make in your life?

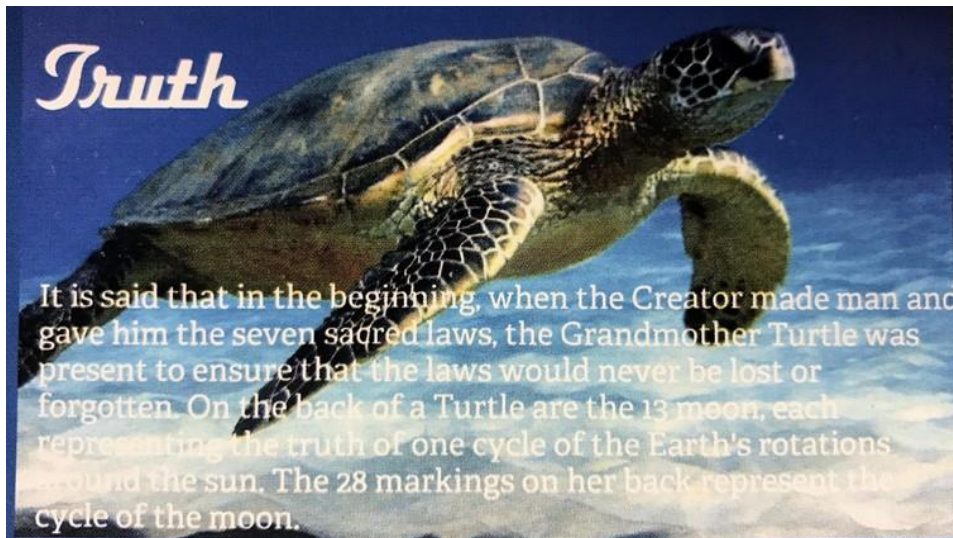
We Enter the Silence – 20 minutes

**Sacred Teachings Prayer
Sharing of Prayers & Summer Blessing**

A Reading on Truth from THE PEACEMAKER

(from *Seven Sacred Teachings*) - (Aug 24 – on your own)

The Great Law of Peace
from the Great Spirit
is perfect, balanced, true
and just in every way.
Only when each person
has the Living Laws of Peace
with in their heart, thoughts,
words and actions
will there be lasting peace
among the Nations of the Earth.



Truth is to know and understand all of the original laws given by the Creator and to remain faithful to them. The turtle teaches us about truth.

It is said that in the beginning when the Creator made humanity and gave them the Sacred Laws, the Grandmother Turtle was present to ensure that the laws would never be forgotten.

On the back of a turtle are the 13 moons, each representing the truth of one cycle of the earth around the sun. The 28 markings on the turtle's back represent the 28 days of the cycle of each moon. The shell of the turtle serves as a reminder of the Creator's will and teachings.

TRUTH is to know all of these teachings and live them.

Wondering / Invitation to Practice:

Contemplate how you live in sync with the rhythms of the Earth, the rhythms of life?

In what areas of your life do you feel out of sync?
How might you realign to a more natural rhythm?

We Enter the Silence – 20 minutes

Sacred Teachings Prayer

Sharing of Prayers & Summer Blessing

The Seven Sacred Teachings (Aug 31 – on your own)

are values based on First Nations cultural tradition.

Each teaching honours one of the basic virtues to help us to live a full and healthy life:

**If you have a candle near you,
Light the Light to remember and honour
these Seven Sacred Teachings:**

Read Slowly Through 3 times, pausing between readings:

To cherish knowledge is to know **WISDOM**;

To know **LOVE** is to know peace;

To honour all of the Creation is to have **RESPECT**;

COURAGE is to face the foe with integrity;

HONESTY is to be honest first with yourself –
in word and action; and with all others

HUMILITY is to know yourself as a sacred part of the Creation,

TRUTH is to know all of these things.

SING BOWL/CHIME (if have one)

Wondering / Invitation to Practice:

Which of the teachings/virtues speaks most to you?

Which one challenges you?

Commit to one teaching per day for 7 days
or one per week heading into the Fall.

We Enter the Silence – 20 minutes

Sacred Teachings Prayer

Sharing of Prayers & Summer Blessing

A Blessing of Bears (another practice for your enjoyment)

A pod of whales,
An unkindness of ravens,
A gaze of racoons, a skein of geese.
A sloth or sleuth of bears?

Sure, at the end of fall,
bears dig shallow bowls
to plop their fat bellies in
when they lie down to nap,
and they love to nap,
but Slothful? Sleuthful?

How about a burliness of bears, a bulk of bears?
A balladry, a bedazzle,
a bamboozlement of bears,
a broughaha?
How about a magnificence,
a blessing of bears?

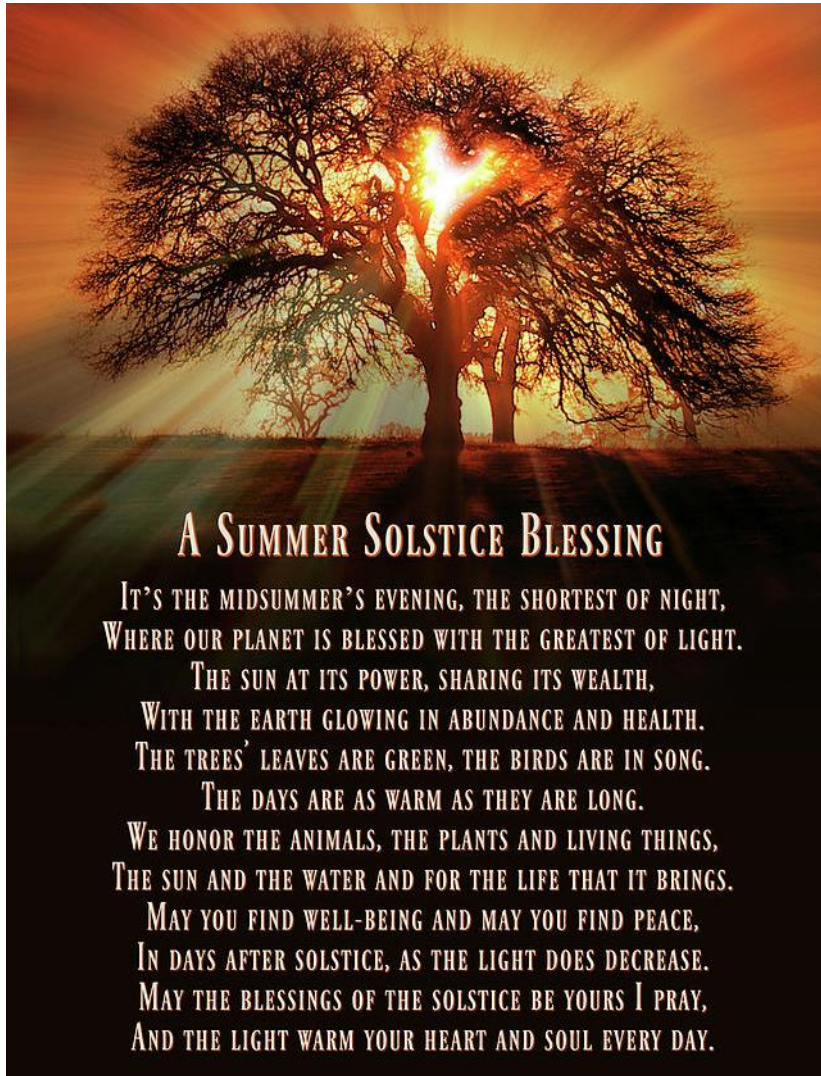
Wondering / Invitation to Practice:

What is the name you might give to a group of *your people*?
And how might you live into this "name"?

We Enter the Silence – 20 minutes

Sacred Teachings Prayer

Sharing of Prayers & Summer Blessing



"Long Time Sun" – sung blessing

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