

Sacred Community, by Rev. Ginger Glasser
Sermon for SLF Worship August 2, 2026

I perceive the Sacred Light Fellowship, led by its spiritual director, Rev. Daniel Neusom, to be a Sacred Community.

Because within this community, my hopes and my fears, the light and the shadow of me, is reflected. It is here that I can heal the shadow side of me, and the light of God that is within me to grow stronger.

Bill Wilson and Dr. Bob were the co-founders of what was to become a sacred community called Alcoholics Anonymous. They did not set out to make it so. No, they just wanted to save themselves from a disease that created a whirlwind of horror and pain for themselves and those around them.

What are the common features of the Sacred Light Fellowship and Alcoholics Anonymous? What makes them “sacred communities?”

First, let me define a sacred community:

- A common cause – the experience of spiritual dilemma
- The positive attitude of care: care for oneself, one’s family, and the wider community.
- The ability to listen truly and well.

Spirituality and wisdom are transmitted from one person to another by “attending” to others – by being present to listen to others in such a way that we are willing to surrender our own worldview. In AA this is called, “Identify, don’t compare.” Identify with the feelings underneath the story the speaker tells, rather than comparing (or judging) the trappings of circumstance in the story.

Listening, attending is what happens first in any community. If we are to listen, we must also be willing to tell. It is in the mutuality between telling and listening, speaking and hearing, where we will find our deepest spiritual significance. Those of us who wrestle with spiritual dilemmas do not need answers, but presence. We need permission to confront the dilemma and struggle with it out loud.

We need good listeners, because good listeners are truthful tellers.

Good listening involves the surrender of a self-centered view of the world. Trust and love flow from that surrender.

To listen, to surrender, to trust and to love open us to discovery. Spirituality flourishes in discovery, and especially in the discovery of shared story – the discovery that creates sacred community. Community is not only where we learn how to listen and to practice storytelling, we learn the virtues of this practice: humility and obedience, two very misunderstood qualities that are contained in the art of listening.

- Humility involves the refusal to coerce, the rejection of all attempts to control others. Humility is an attitude that levels the playing field in terms of listening.
- Obedience – to obey – means simply to listen thoroughly, fully.

In other words, as is said in Alcoholics Anonymous, “We identify, rather than “take another’s inventory.”

Bill Wilson’s most profound message is this: “The spiritual approach was as useless as any other if you soaked it up like a sponge and kept it to yourself.”

And so, my message today is about the saving grace for me of the sacred community, The Sacred Light Fellowship – all of you people, the members and friends, and the co-founder and spiritual director, Rev. Daniel Neusom.

I cannot keep it to myself. Here is the crucible for me of the shadowy side within me, the part of me that I would rather push away and disown. It is here that I learn this part of me needs to be embraced and owned. This is where healing begins. The spiritual wisdom I soak up here is in the stories, the channelings, the meditations, the testimonies I listen to. It is here that (and here’s another AA bit of wisdom) I “listen to learn” how to face and integrate that dark side of me, which is not shameful or bad or needing to be hidden – it is to be stated out loud and offered to God for transformation. Here is a familiar Sacred Light phrase: I am forgiven and there is nothing to forgive.

It is then that I become the wounded healer, who needs to pass it on, to share and listen to you and any others we invite into our sacred community.

I end here by offering you a radical Welcome to this sacred community – you offered it to me, first. Thank you for your gift of Grace. Blessed Be.