

## Centering

We seek God's presence in our lives so that they might be expanded and widened. It's when we sink into *unfaith* that we are crabby, cranky, depressed, cynical. *Unfaith* builds no cathedrals, sings no songs. Unfaith has no steady foundation from which to reach, to hope, to dare. Unfaith walks alone, weeps alone.

Faith stares into the darkest shadows and sees even there the form and shape of hope. Faith looks straight into the unknown, the uncertain, even the fear-full places, and sees the promise that God, and goodness, and newness, will meet us—not above the darkness, but in it.

I invite you, in this moment of silence, to choose one of the images on the banners hanging in this sanctuary, and let it be for you the picture you carry to God in prayer. Maybe it reminds you of someone you know. Maybe you have been in a similar situation. Maybe it is a picture of your fear.

Whatever it is, let it give form to the prayer, the dream, inside of you.

### Silence

We honor this day a man who—no matter how dark things got for him and for the people who filled his heart—never gave up on this country.

A man of faith, who dared to speak his dream out loud:

"I have a dream," he said.

"I have a dream that one day 'every valley shall be exalted, every hill and mountain shall be made low, the rough places will be made plains, and the crooked places will be made straight, and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together.

This is our hope...With this faith we will be able to hew out of the mountain of despair a stone of hope. With this faith we will be able to transform the jangling discords of our nation into a beautiful symphony of brotherhood. With this faith, we will be able to work together, to struggle together, to stand up for freedom together, knowing that we will be free one day."

May our faith be just big enough to let us dream too. Just big enough for God to hang onto, to shape into God's dream.