

Fellowship Recovery Compass: February 2026



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Message from the Board of Directors

As a not-for-profit organization registered under the Alberta Societies Act, the Fellowship Centre is required to have an Annual General Meeting (AGM) of its members. This year the AGM will be held on Sunday **February 22 at 7:30 PM** at the Fellowship Centre with Zoom attendance available. In accordance with the Center’s bylaws, the agenda and supporting documentation will be emailed to members in early February. Zoom invitations will be emailed later in the February. If you would like to become a member of the Fellowship Centre, visit the Centre’s website. In the Help Us dropdown menu, complete the required form. If you do not have a member to nominate you, please contact the Centre at info@fellowship-centre.org.

Of particular importance in this year’s AGM is the voting in of two new directors as well as the officer positions of vice-president and secretary. If you would like to put your name forward for such service positions, visit the Centre’s website, in the Help Us dropdown menu, complete the required form. If you do not have a member to nominate you, please contact the Centre at info@fellowship-centre.org.

Trusted Servant Knyckie is the Centre’s Facebook and Instagram Expert

Facebook and Instagram attract different audiences and serve different roles. Facebook is more popular with adults ages 25–54 and is great for community groups, events, and sharing updates. Instagram tends to reach a younger audience, mainly ages 18–34, and focuses on photos and videos.

Engagement matters on both platforms. Liking posts on Facebook and tapping the heart on Instagram tells the algorithm that content is valuable. The more engagement a post gets, the more people it reaches. So showing support really helps! A simple “Like” or ❤️ can boost visibility and make a big difference!!



Alternatives to Step Two of Alcoholics Anonymous

Alcoholics Anonymous provides a crucial framework for those seeking sobriety, with Step Two stating: “We came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.” However, many individuals resonate more with alternative approaches. Here are noteworthy alternatives, each accompanied by a detailed analysis of interpretation of Step Two.



Patricia Lynn Reilly's Revision: "I have come to believe in the deep wisdom of my own inner life. I stopped flailing and been restored to sanity through a loving and respectful relationship with myself." Reilly's approach emphasizes self-trust and introspection. By affirming the wisdom within, individuals are encouraged to develop self-compassion, reducing the tendency for self-blame. This shift can lead to a healthier self-image, essential for recovery. It empowers individuals to acknowledge their feelings and experiences, fostering resilience against addiction.

Mindfulness-Based Recovery: "I acknowledge my thoughts and feelings without judgment and allow myself to be present in the moment." Mindfulness practices encourage individuals to observe their mental and emotional states without judgment. This non-reactive awareness can help manage cravings and reduce anxiety, which are significant challenges in recovery. By cultivating present-moment awareness, individuals learn to respond to distress with calmness rather than impulsivity, ultimately enhancing emotional regulation.

Cognitive Behavioural Approach: "I am learning to identify and change negative thought patterns that contribute to my addiction." This perspective emphasizes the link between thoughts, emotions, and behaviours. By identifying and restructuring negative thought patterns, individuals can change their responses to triggers. This approach is grounded in evidence-based practices, providing practical strategies for coping with cravings and stress. It also fosters a sense of agency, as individuals realize they can influence their thoughts and behaviours.

Humanistic Approach: "I recognize my inherent worth and capacity for growth, embracing my journey towards healing." The humanistic perspective focuses on self-acceptance and personal growth. By recognizing their inherent worth, individuals can cultivate a positive self-image that is crucial for recovery. This approach encourages individuals to see their addiction as part of their unique journey, promoting resilience. Embracing the journey can foster motivation and a forward-looking mindset, essential elements for long-term sobriety.

Spiritual but Not Religious: "I trust in the interconnectedness of all beings and the wisdom that arises from this unity." This alternative offers a spiritual framework without specific religious constraints, making it accessible to a wide audience. It emphasizes a sense of belonging and community, which can be incredibly supportive during recovery. By connecting to something larger than themselves, individuals can find hope and purpose. This approach nurtures a sense of unity and understanding, counteracting feelings of isolation often experienced in active addiction.

Self-Compassion Practices: "I treat myself with the same kindness and understanding that I would offer a friend in times of struggle." This approach centres on the practice of self-compassion, encouraging individuals to be gentle with themselves during difficult times. By recognising that struggle is a universal human experience, individuals can reduce feelings of shame and isolation. This perspective fosters emotional resilience, allowing individuals to navigate their recovery journey with greater patience and understanding.

THINGS THAT MESS UP RECOVERY

Believing that Sobriety will Fix Everything



If our only problem were drinking, drug use or acting out, we might believe that stopping these behaviours would resolve all our issues. However, newly clean and sober individuals often discover that there is much more to addressing our problems than simply quitting harmful behaviours. Addiction may have initially served to cope with emotional issues, but it ultimately becomes a far greater problem than the original emotional struggles. Consider a man who jumps off a pier into 20 metres of water to extinguish a fire on his body. While he may put out the flames, he risks drowning because of his reckless decision.

To achieve complete recovery, we need a two-pronged approach to address our issues. We must tackle both our addiction and the underlying problems. Specifically:

1. **Direct Treatment of Symptoms:** This stage of recovery focuses on breaking the psychological and physiological bonds of addiction.
2. **Repairing the Damage:** This involves addressing the negative effects of addiction on our psychological, physical, emotional, and spiritual health, as well as the emotional health of our relationships.
3. **Addressing Underlying Psychological and Relationship Issues:** This requires emotional growth and learning how to cultivate healthy relationships.

For many, maintaining sobriety necessitates developing what the Big Book refers to as a "fit spiritual condition" (p. 85). Spirituality plays a crucial role in recovery for good reason. Discovering and connecting with a spiritual force provides the strength and capability to remain clean and sober, which is achieved through cultivating humility. The 12 Steps are designed to connect us with a power greater than ourselves. To define sobriety and stay clean, we must learn to step aside and embrace humility. This process is systematic and accomplished by working through the Steps in order.

In addition to helping us break free from addiction, the 12 Steps also teach us how to live more effectively and harmoniously. While these steps offer a powerful formula for change, we must do the work ourselves - no one can do it for us! We must reach deep within ourselves and confront our issues like never before. We may feel worse before we feel better, and we need to abandon the search for an easier, softer way. It's important to accept that life can be challenging and that the path of least resistance is often not the best one.

We should stop trying to manipulate others to meet our demands to feel better about ourselves. Our reliance on others for self-esteem is a fundamental problem that needs addressing. To overcome this, we must learn to be self-reliant and take responsibility for our own feelings. This is crucial in our recovery once we have established a strong foundation for being clean and sober.

(Based on the writing of Allen Berger, *12 Stupid things that Mess up Recovery*, pp. 23-30)

The Therapeutic Value of the Twelve Steps

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| Step 1 We admitted we were powerless over alcohol, that our lives and become unmanageable. | This step helps us shatter our reliance on the false self. |
| Step 2 Came to believe that a power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity. | Hope is an important ingredient in all forms of healing. In this Step, we were given hope and humbled further, because we won't be able to solve our problem on our own. |
| Step 3 Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over the care of God <i>as we understood him</i> . | This Step is about commitment. We need to make a commitment to finding a new and more effective way of living. |
| Step 4 Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves. | The essence of this Step involves increasing our self-awareness, self-honesty, and insight into our behaviour. |
| Step 5 Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of a wrongs. | In this Step, we learn the value of self-disclosure, authenticity, and healthy relationships. This Step also continues to dismantle the false-self and false-pride and helps develop our humility and authenticity. |
| Step 6 Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character. | In this Step, we experience the pain of what we have done to hurt ourselves and others, and we begin to understand and develop insight into our behavioural patterns and the psychological functions of our character defects. |
| Step 7 Humbly asked him to remove our shortcomings. | In the Step, we are learning the importance of being vulnerable and asking for help. This is important in attaining more humility. |
| Step 8 Made a list of all persons we had harmed and became willing to make amends to them all. | The lesson taught in this Step has to do with the fundamentals of healthy communication: delivering our message to the proper person and being as specific as possible. |
| Step 9 Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others. | In this Step, we learn to be responsible for our behaviour; we learn how to respect others; and we learn that we are as important as others, no more no less. |
| Step 10 Continue to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it. | This Step concerns maintaining our humility, being honest with ourselves, and guarding against false-pride. |
| Step 11 Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God <i>as we understood him</i> , praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry it out. | Maintenance is not enough. We need to continue to grow, or we will regress. This Step is about expanding our consciousness and continuing to seek more knowledge about our new way of life. |
| Step 12 Having a spiritual weakening as a result of the steps, we tried to carry this message to alcoholics, and to practice these principles in all our affairs. | In this Step, we develop a new purpose in our lives that is not centred around ourselves. We discover the importance of being of value to others and learn that we need to maintain our integrity in all our affairs. |

The Art of Change: The Twelve Steps

1. **We admitted we were powerless over [whatever] and that our lives had become unmanageable.** This step is designed to help us face the truth; it emphasizes honesty and humility. Don't fear the word "powerless." It simply signifies that you are acknowledging your need for help. Alone, you may feel powerless, but aligned with a group or a higher power, you can find the strength to move forward.
2. **Came to believe that a power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.** Change cannot occur in isolation. With a power beyond yourself, change is possible. This power need not be a traditional deity; it can be a group, an idea, a belief system, or anything that provides you with the strength to transform. This step embodies hope: with support, you can regain your sanity and embrace change.
3. **Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God, as we understood Him.** All change begins with a decision. You choose to align yourself with the will of your higher power, be it God or your inner wisdom. This decision reflects a commitment to act according to this higher power rather than your fear, ego, addiction, or any other aspect that hinders your growth. Surrendering your will and life means embracing the process of change.
4. **Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.** Conducting an inventory is always beneficial. Documenting what you appreciate about yourself, alongside the aspects that hinder your progress, is equally important.
5. **Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.** Confession is vital for the soul. This ancient practice remains significant as it symbolizes your transition from the old self to the new. It is an integral part of the change process.
6. **Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.** Willingness is crucial for change; wait for it before proceeding. While waiting, you can continue to pray or experience the consequences of your actions—whatever resonates with you.
7. **Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.** If you could eliminate your shortcomings, you likely would have done so upon acknowledging them as liabilities. The truth is, you need assistance. If you demonstrate humility, your higher power will support you. With gratitude and faith, you are openly requesting God, as you understand Him, to accomplish what you cannot do alone. However, asking for help doesn't absolve you from taking responsibility.
8. **Made a list of all persons we had harmed and became willing to make amends to them all.** Writing down the names of those you have harmed is the first step towards releasing guilt and shame—significant obstacles to change.
9. **Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.** Making amends is essential for freeing yourself from the weight of guilt and shame. Once completed, you will be grateful for taking this step. You are merely addressing your responsibilities; the other person's response is irrelevant to your amends.
10. **Continue to take personal inventory, and when we are wrong, promptly admitted it.** Complacency is a major barrier to change. This step is designed to foster honesty and help you avoid reverting to old habits. Some individuals practice this step daily, while others do so only when they feel they have erred.
11. **Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood Him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.** This step enhances your relationship with your higher power. It calms you and reminds you not to rely solely on your ego for life decisions.
12. **Having had a spiritual awakening as a result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to [other sufferers] and to practice these principles in all our affairs.** This step focuses on service, which helps you maintain a positive self-image. It encourages you to work with others facing similar challenges, pushing you to step outside your own issues and connect with your fellow human beings.

(Adapted from The Art of Change by Susan Peabody, 2020)

Borrow A Return to Love from the Fellowship Library

Thanks to the generosity of an anonymous individual, the Library has a new book to help you continue to grow along spiritual lines. Borrow any Library material and return it when you are finished. To ensure anonymity, there is no sign out system. More books are always appreciated.

Return to Love is a profound spiritual guide written by Marianne Williamson that serves as a roadmap for individuals seeking to reconnect with the power of love in their lives. Drawing heavily from the principles of A Course in Miracles, Williamson emphasizes that love is the ultimate truth, while fear is merely an illusion that leads to suffering and disconnection from our true selves.

The book begins with the assertion that everyone has the capacity to experience deep, transformative love, not only in romantic relationships but in all areas of life, including friendships, family, and even professional interactions. Williamson highlights how societal conditioning often compels individuals to choose fear over love, resulting in feelings of inadequacy, anxiety, and alienation. She encourages readers to recognize these patterns and consciously shift their mindset toward love, compassion, and acceptance.

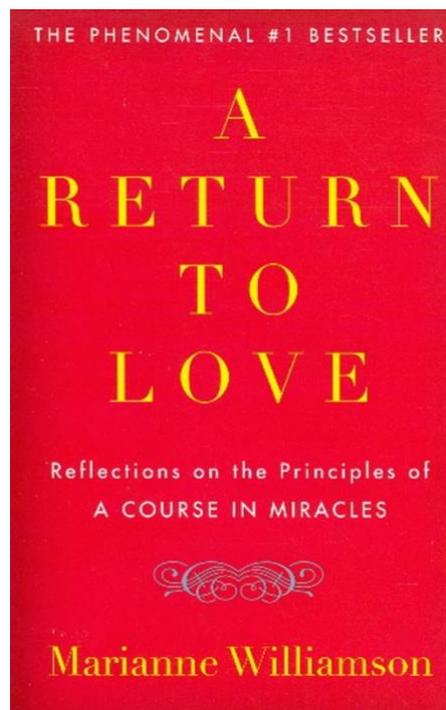
Williamson structures the book around practical advice and spiritual insights, emphasizing the importance of forgiveness as a path to healing. She discusses the significance of forgiving oneself and others to release the burdens of resentment and guilt that hinder personal growth. Forgiveness, in her view, is essential for cultivating love in one's life and relationships.

A central theme of Return to Love is the concept of self-love. Williamson stresses that love for oneself is foundational to loving others authentically. She argues that true love is selfless, characterized by support, empathy, and understanding, rather than dependency or possessiveness. By nurturing a healthy relationship with oneself, individuals can foster more meaningful and fulfilling connections with others.

Throughout the book, Williamson shares personal anecdotes, reflections, and insights that illustrate how the principles of love can be applied in everyday life. She encourages readers to embrace vulnerability, practice gratitude, and cultivate a deeper connection with the divine. This connection, she argues, is crucial for experiencing the fullness of love and joy.

In the concluding chapters, Williamson issues a powerful call to action, inviting individuals to choose love in their thoughts, actions, and interactions with others. She asserts that love has the power to heal wounds, restore relationships, and transform lives.

Overall, Return to Love is a compelling reminder of love's transformative power, offering readers a pathway to heal themselves and their relationships by returning to their authentic selves and embracing love as their guiding force.



12 Steps to a Stronger Spiritual Life

1. Meditate

Take time to sit quietly and tune into your feelings and intuition. Meditation allows you to clear your mind, promoting clarity and self-awareness. This practice can help you connect with your deeper self, fostering an environment of inner peace.

2. Engage in Reflective Dialogue

Talk to yourself as if you're confiding in a trusted friend. This could be through journaling or simply having a mental conversation. Expressing your thoughts and feelings can provide insights into your true self and help clarify your desires and goals.

3. Embrace Humility

Recognize that your ego can sometimes cloud your judgment. Practicing humility involves understanding that there's always room for growth and learning. By letting go of arrogance, you can open your heart and mind to new experiences and perspectives.

4. Pursue Knowledge

Engage in continuous learning. Read books, attend workshops, and listen to podcasts that challenge your thinking. Reflect on what you learn and integrate it into your everyday life.

5. Simplify Your Life

In today's fast-paced world, it's easy to get caught up in complexity. Take time to slow down and savour the little things - nature, music, or quality time with friends. This practice can lead to greater joy and appreciation for life.

6. Seek Solitude

Spend time alone to listen to your inner voice. Solitude can be a powerful way to reconnect with your thoughts and feelings, allowing for introspection and personal growth.

7. Let Go of Control

Sometimes, it's beneficial to step back and allow life to unfold naturally. Trust in the process and let go of the need to control every outcome. This can lead to unexpected opportunities and insights.

8. Cultivate Love

Learn to love yourself deeply and extend that love to others. This practice fosters compassion and strengthens your connections with those around you.

9. Serve Others

Reach out to those in need, offering your time, resources, or support. Acts of kindness not only benefit others but also enrich your own life.

10. Share Your Truth

Find a trusted friend or mentor to confide in about your struggles or insecurities. Sharing your experiences can alleviate burdens and foster a sense of connection.

11. Appreciate the Universe

Take moments to marvel at the beauty and complexity of the world around you. Gratitude for life's wonders can enhance your overall sense of well-being.

12. Celebrate Life

Make time to celebrate your achievements and the joys of life. Express your gratitude through joyful actions - dance, sing, or simply express your happiness. Embracing joy can invigorate your spirit and inspire those around you.



The Power of Forgiveness: A Path to Healing

Forgiveness, according to the Merriam-Webster dictionary, is defined as "to cease to feel resentment against (an offender)." This powerful act can be transformative, particularly in the context of relationships and personal well-being. While many view forgiveness as a gift to others, it often serves as a vital step toward one's own emotional liberation.

Carrying resentment can be burdensome, especially for individuals in recovery from addiction. As highlighted in Alcoholics Anonymous, the journey toward sobriety often involves not only physical detoxification but also a deep emotional reckoning. The program emphasizes the importance of making amends with those we have harmed and, importantly, with ourselves. Forgiveness is not about absolving someone else of their wrongdoing but liberating yourself from the chains of anger and resentment.



Susan Forward, in her book *Toxic Parents*, discusses the complexities of forgiveness, particularly in familial relationships. She asserts, "Forgiveness does not mean you condone what someone has done. It means you are freeing yourself from the poison of resentment." This sentiment echoes throughout various recovery programs, where the focus is on healing rather than dwelling on past grievances.

Forgiveness can be essential at various stages in life, particularly during recovery from addiction. It allows individuals to:

- **Release Emotional Burdens:** Letting go of grudges can lighten the emotional weight that often accompanies addiction, fostering a healthier mindset.
- **Rebuild Relationships:** Forgiveness can pave the way for mending broken relationships, which is crucial for a supportive recovery environment.
- **Enhance Personal Growth:** Embracing forgiveness can lead to greater self-awareness and emotional intelligence, which are key components of a sustainable recovery journey.

While forgiveness is often encouraged in recovery, it is essential to approach it with caution. Healing takes time, and forcing oneself to forgive prematurely can lead to further emotional distress. Recovery is a personal journey, and each person's timeline is unique. Here are some critical considerations:

1. **Self-Forgiveness:** Before forgiving others, individuals must learn to forgive themselves. This process is crucial for overcoming feelings of guilt and shame often associated with addiction.
2. **Setting Boundaries:** Forgiveness does not necessitate re-establishing relationships that may be harmful. It is essential to set healthy boundaries to protect one's well-being.
3. **Seeking Support:** Engaging in therapy or support groups can provide guidance in navigating the complex emotions surrounding forgiveness. Support networks can offer valuable insights and encouragement during the healing process.

Self-Regulation and Addiction Recovery

Self-regulation involves a combination of emotional control, impulse management, and goal-oriented behaviour. In the context of addiction recovery, individuals often face triggers that can lead to relapse. Developing self-regulation skills enables them to recognize these triggers and respond in healthier ways. This process is not only about resisting the urge to use substances or act out but also about fostering a more stable emotional and psychological state. Below are strategies that promote self-regulation.



Mindfulness and Meditation



Practicing mindfulness helps individuals become more aware of their thoughts and feelings without judgment. Techniques such as meditation, deep breathing exercises, and body scans can enhance self-awareness, enabling individuals to identify cravings as they arise. By observing these urges without acting on them, individuals can cultivate a sense of control over their responses.

Goal Setting



Setting specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART) goals can provide a clear roadmap for recovery. Goals may include attending a certain number of support meetings each week, engaging in physical exercise, or developing new hobbies. By breaking larger objectives into manageable steps, individuals can track their progress and celebrate small victories, reinforcing their commitment to recovery.

Emotional Regulation



Understanding and managing emotions is critical in addiction recovery. Individuals can benefit from learning emotional regulation strategies, such as identifying triggers, expressing feelings constructively, and employing coping mechanisms like journaling or talking to a trusted friend. By processing emotions rather than suppressing them, individuals can reduce the likelihood of turning to substances or compulsions as coping mechanisms.

Building a Support Network

Creating a strong support network is essential for maintaining self-regulation. This network may include family members, friends, counsellors, and support groups such as Twelve Step Fellowships. Sharing experiences, challenges, and successes with others who understand the journey can provide motivation and accountability, making it easier to resist temptations.



Healthy Lifestyle Choices

Adopting a healthy lifestyle can significantly impact self-regulation. Regular physical activity, a balanced diet, and sufficient sleep contribute to improved mental health and emotional stability. Engaging in activities that promote well-being (such as yoga, hiking, or creative pursuits) can also serve as constructive outlets for stress and anxiety, further reducing the risk of relapse.





South Edmonton Fellowship Centre

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WEEKLY IN-PERSON MEETINGS

| SUNDAY | MONDAY | TUESDAY | WEDNESDAY | THURSDAY | FRIDAY | SATURDAY |
|--|---|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|---|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| | 7:00 AM Alcoholics Anonymous | 7:00 AM Alcoholics Anonymous | 7:00 AM Alcoholics Anonymous | 7:00 AM Alcoholics Anonymous | 7:00 AM Alcoholics Anonymous | |
| 10:30 AM Alcoholics Anonymous (Women Only) | | 10:30 AM Alcoholics Anonymous | | | | 10:00 AM Alcoholics Anonymous |
| 12:00 PM Alcoholics Anonymous | 12:00 PM Alcoholics Anonymous | 12:00 PM Alcoholics Anonymous | 12:00 PM Alcoholics Anonymous | 12:00 PM Alcoholics Anonymous | 12:00 PM Alcoholics Anonymous | 12:00 PM Alcoholics Anonymous |
| 1:30 PM Twelve Steps to Trauma Recovery | | | | | | 2:00 PM Gamblers Anonymous |
| 3:00 SMART Recovery | | | | 2:30 PM Overeaters Anonymous | | |
| 4:30 PM Meditation for Addiction Recovery | | | | | | 4:00 to 6:00 PM Wellbriety |
| 6:00 PM Cocaine Anonymous | | 7:00 PM Alcoholics Anonymous | 7:00 PM Cocaine Anonymous | 6:30 PM Alcoholics Anonymous (Punjabi, Hindi) | 7:00 PM Alcoholics Anonymous | 7:00 PM Sex Addicts Anonymous |
| | 7:30 PM Alcoholics Anonymous (Men Only) | | | 8:00 PM Alcoholics Anonymous (Men Only) | | |

WEEKLY ONLINE MEETINGS

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|-----------------------------|---|
| SUNDAY 1:30 PM | Twelve Step to Trauma Recovery is a 60-minute meeting focused on working the Twelve Steps to recover from past trauma. All are welcome. ZOOM MEETING ID 821 9943 2979 PASSCODE 936178 |
| SUNDAY 3:00 PM | Self-Management and Recovery Training (SMART Recovery) is a 60-minute online meeting based on psychological approaches for those seeking an alternative to Twelve Step addiction recovery. All are welcome. ZOOM MEETING ID 815 5962 9907 PASSCODE 357546 |
| WEEKDAYS 7:00 AM | Sunrise Weekdays are 60-minute Alcoholics Anonymous meetings held Monday through Friday. Start your workday with the program! ZOOM MEETING ID 899 6946 5894 PASSCODE 912107 |
| SATURDAY 4:00 PM | Wellbriety is a 60-minute meeting based on Indigenous teaching and wisdom to live a sober life that is balanced emotionally, mentally, physically, and spiritually. All are welcome. ZOOM MEETING ID 878 0138 8639 PASSCODE 298709 |