

Who are we?

CGI Fellowship is an opportunity for spiritual community that is not defined by a specific doctrine of belief, but rather by a common set of spiritual principles. Together we create a sacred space and an open spiritual fellowship which allows each of us the freedom to define what that means to ourselves. We draw from sacred texts and rituals from many of the major world religions for inspiration, questioning, and dialogue. We support each other in living our spiritual values in our daily lives.

Principles

- We each have a right to define our own spiritual path and we respect the right of others to define their own spiritual path.
- We encourage personal responsibility for discerning one's own path to Truth.
- We recognize that people's beliefs may and commonly do evolve throughout a lifetime. Therefore, we value the freedom of people to question, doubt, explore, and re-imagine their own faith, meaning, rituals, and beliefs.
- We support people in putting their spiritual values into practice.
- As individuals we are also part of an interdependent whole. Our spiritual development is enhanced within the context of a safe, supportive, and compassionate fellowship.
- We draw from the sacred texts of the major world religions, in trust that the wisdom in these sources can help to strengthen our understanding of our own path.

What is "interspiritual?"

- It **is not** a new religion.
- It **is not** a replacement for your spiritual path.
- It **is not** a blending of all paths.
- It **is not** trying to identify who has the right belief.

- It **is** a willingness to find wisdom regardless of the label it is expressed within.
- It **is** an attitude of respect and appreciation for those who have traveled ahead of us.
- It **is** a focus on experiences of heart and unity consciousness rather than on creeds and beliefs.
- It **is** a recognition of a common mystical basis and experience within all the great wisdom traditions.

This sounds a lot like Interfaith—what’s the difference?

Interfaith means different things to different people. In one sense, interfaith simply means involving people of different religions. But we want to also include people without a defined religion (e.g. “Spiritual but not Religious”). For some people the word interfaith is associated with “interfaith studies.” This commonly brings to mind courses like “comparative religions.” Unfortunately, all too often, these courses are either a survey of various religions—or if they really compare religions—they tend to focus on the *differences between religions*. In other words, they tend to focus on how we are different (which unfortunately tends to keep people separate). Finally, the word interfaith is sometimes used as shorthand for “interfaith dialogue.” Again, this implies a constructive dialogue and/or interaction among people of various religions or faith traditions, for instance working together on social projects, and thus generating more tolerance—but it commonly stops short of actually worshipping together! So we think of interfaith as a stepping stone to a deeper connection among people of different faith traditions leading towards interspiritual fellowship.

Are My Beliefs Welcome?

We welcome people of those world faith traditions that are in harmony with our principles, including Christian, Buddhist, Jewish, Muslim, Baha’i, Taoist, Hindu, Earth-centered and ACIM practitioners.

We are a fellowship that is based on core principles and values rather than doctrinal beliefs. We welcome people who:

- have a spiritual path that does not fit into any single definition,
- may no longer feel fully aligned with or welcomed by a traditional church,
- identify themselves as spiritual but not religious,
- want the freedom to explore their own beliefs in a supportive environment,
- have blended more than one path to fit their needs,
- are seeking a path with more depth and meaning for them,
- are looking for a spiritual fellowship that accepts diversity,
- are seeking to develop skills that put their spiritual values into practice, or
- are content worshipping in traditional mainstream churches yet want to deepen their understanding of their own faith through mutual constructive dialogue with those of other faiths.

What ties us together as a fellowship is a recognition that spiritual development is a journey rather than a static belief in a doctrine. Our experience and understanding continue to develop throughout the journey. We also come together as a community to practice living our spiritual

values through the development of skillful listening, communicating, and acting in the world with integrity and congruence. We recognize that not everyone is at the same place in our journeys and we celebrate those differences.

Worship Discussion Topics

We don't like sermons! We don't like the word "should!" Instead, we come together as spiritual seekers to dialogue around key questions. Examples include:

- What is one central teaching from your spiritual path that has impacted you in your life? How did you discover that teaching? What has it meant for you?
- What are some normal activities that you do in your life that have become spiritual practices for you? What makes them "spiritual?"

Worship

Our worship service acknowledges three different temperaments of spiritual seekers including devotion, intellect, and action. We weave together our hearts, minds, and hands to support an integrated and vibrant spiritual life. To create sacred space we draw elements from various traditions. A general format for a worship service may include the following elements and rituals: invocation, candle lighting, introduction to CGI Fellowship and the minister, opening prayer, sacred text reading, music/chanting, brief meditation, introduction to a spiritual practice, facilitated focused discussion, and benediction.

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- What are some normal activities that you do in your life that have become spiritual practices for you? What makes them "spiritual?"
- How have you found ways to express your spiritual values through actions in the world? Where have you struggled to express your values in the world?
- What are the goals expressed by your spiritual path? What are your personal spiritual goals and longings?
- What do you understand about sin? How do you understand and practice forgiveness?
- What rituals from your spiritual path of origin are meaningful to you? What rituals give you a sense of the sacred? What rituals "turn you off?"

- What experiences have you had talking with people about religion / spirituality that have gone well... and not so well? What do you think made the difference?
- How do you feel about using the word "God?" Do you have other words that refer to a "universal source?"

Sacred Text

We acknowledge and celebrate the wisdom contained in the many world scriptures including the Bible, the Torah, the Qur'an, the Dhammapada, the Bhagavad Gita, the Tao Te Ching, and A Course in Miracles. We also acknowledge the continuing revelation of wisdom through individual insight, experience, and attunement. Join us in the Ministry!