

Welcome to Meditation & Snacks with Hamilton's Well. In a few minutes, we will begin with a 20-minute simple silent meditation. Some of you may have a lot of experience with meditation while for others this may be new. You are all deeply welcome.

There are many ways to meditate. We invite you to participate in whatever way is most comfortable for you: close your eyes, or keep them open with a soft gaze, perhaps looking at the flickering of the candle. Keep your hands where they feel natural. We only ask that you honour the silence.

One way that we recommend here is the use of what is called an anchor word. Sometimes this is called a mantra-based form of meditation. The Benedictine monk John Main developed the use of an anchor word meditation using the word 'Maranatha' which roughly translated means 'The presence of the divine.'

In this approach to meditation, we gently repeat the anchor word, split into four syllables: 'ma-ra-na-tha.' You can divide the rhythm however you'd like. To start, it may be helpful to take it slow, inhaling with 'ma,' exhaling with 'ra,' inhaling with 'na,' then exhaling with 'tha.'

When we feel distracted or feelings arise, we come back to our anchor word as a focus, inhabiting every syllable for as long as our breathing takes us. If you have a prior meditation practice with your own mantra, you are welcome to use your own mantra or anchor word.

We begin by focusing on our anchor word to get beyond distraction. And in time as we develop our practice we will have moments where we transcend our thinking and feeling to encounter what is beyond ourselves.

Meditation will begin with three bells. Every five minutes an intention bell will ring again to help bring us back to our breath and our practice. The meditation will end with three bells. I will then read some words from John Main before a final benediction.

Before we begin, you might want to stand or stretch your muscles. [Pause and stretch.] Find a comfortable seat, sitting alert and upright, supported in the back of the chair, but relaxed at the same time. Become aware of the feeling of your body. The feeling of your feet on the ground. The feeling of the chair beneath you. Do you feel any tense muscles? Your shoulders, your neck, your jaw? Let them relax. Finally, become aware of your breath, the rising and falling of your chest and abdomen. The feeling of your breath in and out. Settle into your breath and your anchor word. We will begin our practice in a few moments.

May this group be a true home for the seeker, a friend for the lonely, a guide for the confused. May all those who meditate here be strengthened by the Spirit to serve all who come to receive. In the silence of this room may all the suffering, violence, and confusion of the world encounter the power that will console, renew, and uplift the human spirit. May this silence be a power to open the hearts of people to the vision of creation, and so to each other, in love and peace, justice and human dignity. May the beauty of life fill this group and the hearts of all who meditate here with joy and hope. May all who come here weighed down by the problems of humanity, leave, giving thanks for the wonder of human life.