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Provoke One Another To Love and Good Deeds

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Hebrews 10:23-25
Let us hold fast to the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who has promised is faithful. And let us consider how to provoke one another to love and good deeds, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

Meditation
When I facilitate Guided Intoning, the first intention offered to the group is, "In your mind's eye and your heart's knowing hold before you one who loves you…and offer your blessing for this one into the sound." The presumption, of course, is that each person in the practice can actually imagine another soul, being, or Divine Other who *does* love them—that somehow someone or something connects to the individual at deep, relational levels. The responding interconnection, even reciprocity, may occur whether the received love is unconditional and accepting or restrictive and wounding. How persons learn to love, to relate, and to respond tempers their interactions with those souls around them. It manifests in the small, daily affirmations and lovingkindnesses offered to one another along with the jabs, undermining, scapegoating, and projecting that can wound again and again. What we learn, we enact.

In today's text, the writer of Hebrews ponders a different manner of being in community. Rather than suffering the potential for unthinking harm and capricious loving relationships, the author notes *what can be* when relationships foster communities with intention and care. Imagine living in relationships that *habitually* nurture and undergird all persons involved and those tangential. Imagine a community grounded in practices of deep listening, respectful dialogue, and honoring of difference. Imagine a community that embodies the vulnerability and humility of receiving and giving through unbridled and generous hospitality, affirmation, and welcome. Imagine a gathered community bent on provoking "one another to love and good deeds," to showing up and shoring one another up.

Such community is not utopian. No, the author of Hebrews writes of a very doable form of embodied relationship that manifests through intentional practice and dedication to showing up again and again and again to one another despite mistakes, flaws, and sheer human frailty. The Gathered Community requires not perfection but perseverance, not being right but being together, not insisting on a proscribed form but welcoming possibility and vision.

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Still sound too grand?

- Then, consider what could be one small move, one intentional action you could embody today to nurture a relationship within the communities of your life?
- How may you show up today to another soul in the comings and goings of your day?
- What vulnerability of hospitality and welcome can you give and receive?
- And then, what about tomorrow….? Imagine….