

ABOUT OPEN DOOR

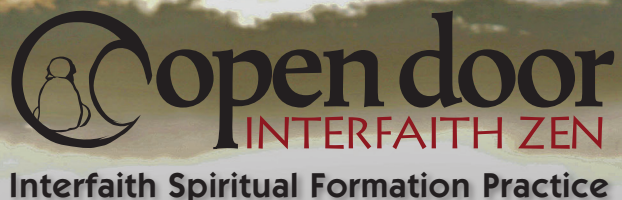
Open Door encourages spiritual transformation through inquiry, ritual, meditation, education, koan study and prayer. This is an inclusive and interfaith group. As the spiritual formation program of First Congregational UCC of Santa Rosa, Open Door is founded on the principle that spiritual formation is without boundary, the birthright of all. Open Door offers an interfaith approach to spiritual growth. All people, across all faiths, or of no faith at all, are welcome to Open Door.

Open Door offers the following: Spiritual Practises and Programs:

- Spiritual Community
- Open Door Meditation
- Book and Study Discussion
- Poetry Sharing and Investigation
- Early Sunday Service Sermon and Communion
- Day Intensives and Weekend Retreats
- Group Spiritual Conversation
- Small Group Koan Study
- 1-on-1 Spiritual Conversation
- Conversation
- Inquiry
- Prayer
- Ritual

There is a **Solitary Brightness**
without fixed shape or form.
that is able to listen, is able to
understand and is able
to teach the Dharma
That Solitary Brightness is you.

~ Linji



Look...

I have set before you
an Open Door,
which no one is able to shut.

~ Revelation 3:8

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■ **Open Door Weekly Group Meditation~**

There is no right way to meditate, no special state required for meditation to be “real” or “correct.” There is nothing to fix or get right. At Open Door we honor your way of meditation and offer support and guidance along the way. Meditation, a path of open awareness and discovery, invites us be present to our lives here and now. We use koans in meditation, along with conversation as a way of drawing our attention to life.

■ **Book Study and Poetry Sharing~** This is a time to study the spiritual life in more depth. Participants share in reflections upon a book or a poem, noticing how what is studied is alive in them.

■ **Day Intensives and Weekend Retreats~** Meditation retreats happen on a regular basis. These are times to meditate and work with koans in community, sharing insights and moving more deeply into Life. A Wilderness Weekend Retreat is being planned for Summer, 2016.

■ **Small Group Koan Study and Spiritual Conversation~** Koans are tools for transformation, helping us find freedom in the vast mystery of life. At Open Door there are on-going opportunities to meet in small groups for koan study, discovery and transformation. Conversation in these groups opens the heart to a fuller appreciation of life. At Open Door we use koans from the Zen tradition as well as those gleaned from a contemplative reading of the sayings and doings of Jesus.

■ **One to One Spiritual Conversation~** In one on one spiritual conversation you work with a teacher on a regular basis deepening your spiritual practice, opening you to Life and transformation.

■ **Conversation~** Life itself is a conversation, a call and response with vast mystery, inviting us into deep communion. Conversation, within small groups and one on one with spiritual friends, is a way to engage with each other in conscious awareness of Presence in each moment of life.

■ **Inquiry~** Inquiry brings you to the heart of things, undercutting your assumptions about life, opening you to deeper possibilities.. Simply, inquiry is to ask questions of your experience. The deeper you dive the more life reveals itself to you.

■ **Prayer~** As your heart opens, you may be awash with feelings of gratitude, or perhaps appeals on behalf of others well up within you, maybe feelings of being lost emerge. Without making too much of it, this is prayer. Paying attention we continue the conversation with life. Prayer, like meditation, is an opportunity to be present to life as we encounter it. Prayer is our talk back, a response to the mystery of Presence.

■ **Ritual and Worship~** The Worship Services of First Church (Contemplative and Traditional) are open to all spiritual practitioners Ritual is a practice of broadening the spiritual experience and widening community. In ritual, me becomes we, as together we participate in the inviting Mystery.

A student asked Zhaozhou,
“What is Meditation?”
“It’s not meditation,” said Zhaozhou.
“Why is it not meditation?”
“It’s Alive, it’s Alive.”

