While the land and trees – outside your window or as you walk the ring road – look quite dull and lifeless in their winter garb of brown and gray, we know new life is stirring.

Year after year we trust in the promise that soon maple, oak, and other trees will be in bud, that sap will be rising, and that critters will be birthing. As you pause to think about this, flower bulbs have begun their pushing up through gravel, dead leaves, dirt, and snow.

When winter seems forever, Benedictine Monk David Steindl-Rast reminds us that ~

_A single crocus blossom ought to be enough to convince our heart that the springtime, no matter how predictable, is somehow a gift, gratuitous, gratis, a grace._

The crocus shooting up through the dirt with colors of purples, whites, and yellows is truly a promise of spring. Their delicate petals never fail to bring joy and a promise of hope and an a-ha that …

Spring is on the wing.

As we enter a new season, we can ponder and pray together these tender and reassuring words from Scripture.

_“The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad; the desert shall rejoice and blossom like the crocus; it shall rejoice with joy and blossom abundantly.”_  
– Isaiah 35:1

_“See! The winter is past; the rains are over and gone. Flowers appear on the earth; the season of singing has come, the cooing of doves is heard in our land. The fig tree forms its early fruit; blossoming vines spread their fragrance. Arise, come, my darling; my beautiful one, come with me.”_  
– Song of Songs 2:11-13

As One Community we live into the Divine Promise of the renewal of life and hope upon Earth. Blessed are we.
CONTEMPLATIVE SITTING

Mindfulness frees us of forgetfulness
and makes it possible to live fully each minute of life.
— Thich Nhat Hanh

Contemplative sitting is an invitation to
• attend to your thoughts, feelings, and emotions with an open heart.
• offer/dedicate your everyday experiences, be they joys or sorrows, comforts or discomforts to the care and safety of others.
• gently shift patterns of behavior that do not serve you or others well.
• become more and more a presence, a being of loving kindness and compassion.
• dwell in Holy Mystery.

Mindfulness Practice
Set a time of 10, 15, 20 minutes, or more. It is helpful to have a set time for meditation. Sitting in your chair or resting in bed, come gently come into the present moment. Begin noticing any sounds around you like voices in the hall, a bell ringing. Gently hear the sounds and let them pass on by. This is Mindfulness of Sound. Then gently focus and concentrate on your breath.
• Begin with taking three breaths, just normal breaths, breathing each one in and out. Gently keeping focus on your breath; you may feel it at the tip of your nostrils or sense the movement in your chest or abdomen. If you can’t feel it, place your hand on your chest or abdomen and breathe in and out.
• Each time the mind wanders, take note of where it went, and gently return to the breath. If you do this 100 times, it is just fine!

Simple Practice
• Breathing in, I calm my body, breathing out I smile,
  Breathing in present moment, breathing out precious moment.
• Breathing in Holy Spirit, breathing out aah.
• Breathing in the universe, breathing out amazement.

Awareness of your mindfulness experience is key. Awareness of being distracted, or anxious, or crabby, or peaceful, or happy is key with no self-blame or judgment about your experience. Awareness is key!

My responses to this First Sunday reflection: