

# Come as You Are

*Shared joy is double joy;  
Shared sorrow is half sorrow.  
- Swedish Proverb*

Grief is messy. It can be unpredictable and disorienting and exhausting. When we are alone in our grief, we may feel isolated, lonely and stuck.

Grief can also be shared.

In the company of others who are grieving, we may realize that although each of us is walking our own difficult path, having companions who understand makes the journey easier.

Would you benefit from having a safe space with a small group of people where you can show up just as you are? Would you like to connect with others who are also finding their messy way? Would it help you to “check in,” both with yourself and with a small group, to share what is hardest right now and what is giving you strength? Would you like to receive some gentle resources that might provide new tools and support for the life you are building now?

I would like to hold space for people to gather in this way. If this opportunity sounds like something you would like to explore, let’s meet and talk about it.

Please email me at [aebergstrom27@gmail.com](mailto:aebergstrom27@gmail.com), with Come as You Are in the Subject line, and include your phone number in the body of the email. I would like to meet you in a brief phone conversation and then form a group based on when people are able to meet. For now, our meetings will take place virtually, unless and until the group decides they would prefer to meet in person. This group will be “closed,” which simply means once we begin, the group will not expand. We will also meet for a pre-determined number of weeks (8-12). I sincerely hope to help facilitate opportunities for much-needed social support and connection, and meeting online has been surprisingly conducive to this!

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*My name is AnnElise Bergstrom and in 2016 I learned to Tango for Quiet Oaks Residential Hospice House and Respite Care. Very few things could convince me to compete in a local version of “Dancing with our Stars,” but I was willing to risk great embarrassment if I could shine a light on Quiet Oaks and potentially raise money for their vital work. Ultimately, we did raise money and awareness, and two of Journey’s kittens joined my family (Tango and his sister Cricket). I also found myself standing on an unexpected personal threshold. A new path was coming into view.*

*I have worked with young people for most of my professional life, teaching 8<sup>th</sup> grade Social Studies for five years and then directing youth ministry for fifteen years. But I left youth ministry two years ago so I could focus on my desire to respond meaningfully to people of all ages who are experiencing grief and loss.\* In a culture that avoids talk of death and has a low tolerance for deep emotion, I want to show up and respond. In my own life, I have experienced- and been witness to- profound grief and loss. I have also come to trust that restored hope, meaning, and peace are possible when we honor our journey by tending to the quieter needs of our heart.*

*\* To better prepare me for this work I completed certifications at The Sacred Art of Living and Dying (OR) and The Center for Loss and Life Transitions (CO).*