

**“In All Our Living: Our Personal Values in Health Care Decisions:
Including End of Life Decisions”**

United Church of Santa Fe

Fall Seminar 2019

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Rev. Talitha Arnold

Session 4: Aid in Dying

Reflection: Rev. Talitha Arnold

“LORD, let me know my end,
and what is the measure of my days;
let me know how fleeting my life is.”

Psalm 39:4

Questions/comments from last week’s conversation

Introduction: Medical Aid in Dying – Nancy Abell

- Definition
- Who is eligible
- Who tends to use it
- Personal story

End of Life: How Does Our Faith Inform Our Decisions and Shape the Journey?

Rev. Talitha Arnold

- Different situations, different decisions:
 - Stop treatment (e.g., no more chemo, radiation surgery) comfort care/pain relief.
 - Person decides to stop eating and drinking (water).
 - Medical aid –decision to take action.
- How does our faith inform those decisions?
 - Biblical and Koranic perspectives
 - Psalms, Moses, Saul, Elijah, Ruth and Naomi, Jesus, Paul
 - What are factors to consider?
 - Person’s ability to make decisions
 - What might be reasons for deciding to end one’s life?
 - Who has been part of the conversation?
 - “Loneliness” factor—is the decision to relieve the physical pain or the pain of isolation and loneliness?
 - Who needs to know your decision or your wishes?

(over)

- Psalm 139's "last word"

*O LORD, you have searched me and known me.
You know when I sit down and when I rise up;
you discern my thoughts from far away.
You search out my path and my lying down,
and are acquainted with all my ways.
Even before a word is on my tongue,
O LORD, you know it completely.
You hem me in, behind and before,
and lay your hand upon me.
Such knowledge is too wonderful for me;
it is so high that I cannot attain it.
Where can I go from your spirit?*

*Or where can I flee from your presence?
If I ascend to heaven, you are there;
if I make my bed in Sheol, you are there.
If I take the wings of the morning
and settle at the farthest limits of the sea,
even there your hand shall lead me,
and your right hand shall hold me fast.
If I say, "Surely the darkness shall cover me,
and the light around me become night,"
even the darkness is not dark to you;
the night is as bright as the day,
for darkness is as light to you.*

Resources and References:

- "How to Die in Oregon" – Prime Video – Amazon
- Compassion and Choices- <https://www.compassionandchoices.org>
- <https://www.phs.org/community/Pages/volunteer.aspx>
- <https://www.patientchoices.org/videos.html>
- More resources/references are on UCSF website. (Click the "In All Our Living" in the Announcement posts on the right side of the home page.)