

USG SGM ~ RENEWAL ~ 2020

drawn from Soul Matters materials, see the full packet for more of all of these elements

www.soulmatterssharingcircle.com



What our faith asks of us, what our faith imagines for us, is that somehow, right at that moment when our hearts break, we will find our way to see through that heartbreak. We will stay put – not close off, not run away, not hurt back – but keep on being in relationship, doing what we can to repair the world and each other.”
Rev. Gretchen Haley

Spiritual Exercise

A Renewal Box to Remind You Reminders are essential to renewal. Normal life has a way of crowding out opportunities for rest, rejuvenation and what matters most. Because of this we have to be intentional about reminding ourselves to make room for renewal. And nothing helps us remember better than physical reminders. So this month engage your creativity and create “a renewal box” covered with and containing physical items and visual images that will help you renew and keep you connected to your core commitments as well as the things that nourish you most.

Chalice Lighting

Don't ask yourself what the world needs; ask yourself what makes you come alive. And then go and do that. Because what the world needs is people who have come alive. Rev. Dr. Howard Thurman

Check-in *Share your highs and lows since we last met focusing on what drains you and what lifts you up. We give each other the gift of listening without asking questions or offering advice to allow people the safety to share what's in their hearts.*

Quotes for Inspiration/Readings

The thing is to love life, to love it even when you have no stomach for it, and everything you've held dear crumbles like burnt paper in your hands, your throat filled with the silt of it... Then you hold life like a face between your palms, a plain face, no charming smile, no violet eyes, and you say, yes, I will take you, I will love you again. Ellen Bass

It is always quietly thrilling to find yourself looking at a world you know well but have never seen from such an angle before. Nobody can go back and start a new beginning, but anyone can start today and make a new ending. Bill Bryson

Sometimes with the bones of the black sticks left when the fire has gone out someone has written something new in the ashes of your life. David Whyte

May the tears I cried last year be nourishment to the soil of this new year. Anonymous

Covenantal theology doesn't just say that we become human through our promising, but also we become human when we break those promises, and yet somehow find ways to reconnect and begin again – when we repair the relationship because we know we need each other – even when we think the other isn't doing enough – even when our partner is annoying us, or isn't listening well, or isn't doing things the way we want them done – even then – when we realize right then, that we are still partners, and we can't give up – and so we return, and begin again – it is this beginning again that is what it means to be human.
Rev. Gretchen Haley

It was my conviction and determination that the church would be a resource for activists -- a mission fundamentally perceived. To me it was important that individuals who were in the thick of the struggle for social change would be able to find renewal and fresh courage in the spiritual resources of the church. Rev. Dr. Howard Thurman (quoted in Mark Morrison Reed's *Black Pioneers*)

Every person needs to take one day away. A day in which one consciously separates the past from the future. Jobs, family, employers, and friends can exist one day without any one of us, and if our egos permit us to confess, they could exist eternally in our absence. Each person deserves a day away in which no problems are confronted, no solutions searched for. Each of us needs to withdraw from the cares which will not withdraw from us. Maya Angelou

Questions

Pick the one question that speaks to you most and let it lead you where you need to go. The goal is to figure out what being a part of a people of RENEWAL means for you and your daily living.

1. Whose way of being in the world renews your faith in humanity?
2. How is "summer renewal" different from "fall renewal" for you?
3. Are you sure it's your body that's tired, or could it be your soul?
4. When was the last time you allowed yourself a day in which nothing was produced, no items were checked off your list, no problems were confronted, no solutions were searched for?
5. We're taught that "time away" is about *restoring ourselves* in order to return to our work. But what if we saw it as making space to decide if it's time to *reconfigure ourselves* and re-imagine what our true "work" is?
6. How would your life change if you saw rest as "a form of resistance" against a culture that gladly "uses us," deforms us and lures us into believing that exhaustion is a mark of success? (Tricia Hersey)
7. You've been telling yourself you need rest, but what if what you really need is play?
8. Which of your commitments to the greater good needs renewed this year?

Sitting in Silence *Take a few moments to sit quietly and reflect upon your thoughts.*

Sharing/Deep Listening *Respond with your thoughts and experiences with the topic. We create a safe space by listening deeply and not responding. When sharing, connect with what is true for you. When listening, give the speaker your full attention rather than thinking about what you will share.*

Reflection and Gratitude *This is a time to respond briefly to something another person said or to relate additional thoughts that may have occurred as others shared. Consider lifting up one comment or experience for which you are particularly grateful.*

Singing

Alive Again by AHI

<https://music.youtube.com/watch?v=gJmmHpLcN1U&list=PLvXOKgOQVYP4NLAp71C75DrfIXzAORBun>

Extinguishing the Chalice

Anyone can slay a dragon, she told me, but try waking every morning & loving the world again. That's what takes a real hero. Brian Andreas