**UU Soul Matters Topic for September 2020**

**What does it mean to be a people of renewal?**

**Adapted for ERUUF Chalice Circle and Covenant Group Sessions**

**Chalice Lighting/Opening Words:** We light this chalice as a symbol of the renewal of our energy and commitments in the coming year.

**Check-In:**

**Introduction:**

With the beginning of a new school year and the return for some from vacations, renewal is often something we think about in September—it can be an opportunity for a fresh start or for a fresh look from a new perspective. It can also serve as an opportunity to restore or replenish our efforts and our learning. Renewal can focus on our personal or spiritual rejuvenation, on our commitments and covenants with others, and on our responsibilities to the greater good in relation to our ancestors and our descendants.

**Wise Words:**

A day when one has not pushed oneself to the limit seems a damaged, damaging day, a sinful day. Not so! The most valuable thing one can do for the psyche, occasionally, is to let it rest, wander, live in the changing light of a room. –May Sarton

I all too often take for granted what I once deemed an unmerited gift. And it is often only in the face of a looming transition that I am inspired to remember—not only to bask in the memory, but to recall, remind myself of how I once received this gift with gratitude... Transitions; beginnings and endings; they provide a pathway into awakening and reawakening; into gratitude and a renewal of gratitude... They cause us to reassess. They inspire us to consider what is most important. They remind us of the beauty that surrounds us... To paraphrase a popular song from decades ago, “You don’t know what you’ve got till it changes...”—Rev. Rod Richards

Nobody can go back and start a new beginning, but anyone can start today and make a new ending. –Maria Robinson

Anyone can slay a dragon, she told me, but try waking up every morning and loving the world all over again. That's what takes to be a real hero.—Brian Andreas

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. —Howard Thurman

We don't even know how strong we are until we are forced to bring that hidden strength forward. In times of tragedy, of war, of necessity, people do amazing things. The human capacity for survival and renewal is awesome. —Isabel Allende

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

A self that goes on changing is a self that goes on living. –Virginia Wolf

To be a people of renewal is to ask not simply, “How do I refresh?” but also “How do I return?” The challenge of life is not just about moving forward but moving forward without losing touch with all we hold dear. –Rev. Scott Taylor

**Reflection Questions for Deep Sharing:** (choose 1-3, no crosstalk)

1. Describe a time you hungered for personal renewal or replenishment. What did you do to restore yourself? How did you change?
2. What are your sources of renewal in these times—what replenishes or restores you when you need it?
3. We periodically take our cars in for service—tune ups, tire rotation, oil changes, etc. How do you tend your relationships so that they flourish and undergo renewal? Is there a relationship in your life that calls for your attention and renewal? If so, how might you tend to it?
4. Do you have a commitment to the greater good that may need renewal at this time? If so what actions might you take to renew that commitment?
5. Have you recently found yourself looking at the world from a new angle? How has your perspective changed? What piqued your curiosity?

**Connections and Responses:**

**Likes and Wishes:**

**Extinguishing the Chalice/Closing Words:** May we remember the flaming chalice as a symbol of our renewed commitment, love, and fellowship

**Other Resources—Videos & Podcasts**

Why Now, White People?

https://www.npr.org/2020/06/16/878963732/why-now-white-people

On the need to renew relationships not just commitment.

Loss and Renewal: Moving Forward After A Door Closes

https://www.npr.org/2018/12/28/680679054/loss-and-renewal-moving-forward-after-a-door-closes

For when you need your faith in humanity restored

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y5okTR7LRRM