

**Renewal: the practice of returning**  
UU Community Church of Santa Monica  
Heart to Heart Circles  
April 2015

### **Welcome and Orientation**

This is a time when your facilitator/s introduce themselves and go over housekeeping details such as parking, meeting space, nametags, and confirming your contact information.

### **Chalice Lighting**

At times our own light goes out and is rekindled by a spark from another person. Each of us has cause to think with deep gratitude of those who have lighted the flame within us.

- Albert Schweitzer

### **Sharing Silence**

We open our time together with shared silence for about three minutes. This can be a time to meditate if that is part of your spiritual practice, reflect on your transition from where you have been during the day to where you are now, or to just be. If you are accustomed to silence, three minutes may feel short. If you are not, it may feel long.

### **On Our Hearts** 20 minutes

### **Covenant**

Our covenant includes a description of how we want to be with each other, ground rules for our time together, and our expectations for members of the group.

Adapted from *Heart to Heart* by Christine Robinson and Alicia Hawkins

I commit myself:

- to give attendance at meetings a real priority knowing that my presence is important to the group;
- to let the leader know if I will be absent or need to quit;
- to participate with my group in two service projects, one for our church community, and one for the wider community
- to share with the leader the responsibility for good group process by watching how much time I take to speak and noticing what is going on for others;
- to not gossip about what is shared in the group, and tell only my own story to others;
- to honor the safety of the group by listening to what others share with an open heart;
- to refrain from cross-talk, judging, problem solving, or giving advice;
- and to share as deeply as I can when it is my turn.

## Readings

There is nothing like returning to a place that remains unchanged to find the ways in which you yourself have altered.

—Nelson Mandela

In the places that reek of impossibility

The serpent of life coils.

She crawls upon the swollen stone,

Crawls upon the swollen stone,

Crawls upon the swollen stone,

and loosens her only garment.

- Carolyn McDade, *Serpent Song*

Enough. These few words are enough.

If not these words, this breath.

If not this breath, this sitting here.

This opening to life

we have refused

again and again

until now.

Until now.

-David Whyte, *Where Many Rivers Meet*

## Questions for consideration:

1. When has renewal required or led to change in your life? Has there been a time when renewal involved returning to a previous state?
2. In our fast paced society, what are some ways that you experience renewal? How do you refresh and begin again, return to rootedness, or sweep the mind of all its clutter?
3. What has renewal asked of you, your family, or your community? Was there a time when renewal happened only through the death of something or the end of something and, if not, what other triggers or elements were essential?
4. Does returning each Sunday to religious community renew you? In what ways?

**Sharing** 60 minutes

## Reflecting On Our Time Together

### Closing Words

None of us alone can save the world.

Together—that is another possibility,  
waiting.

- Rev. Rebecca Parker