***The Gift of Justice and Equity***

***Soul Matters Session Guide for February***

***Group Business***

***Opening Words and Chalice Lighting:* I sometimes see people say that social change is impossible. But this is just not true. Social change is INEVITABLE. What isn’t inevitable is the timbre and shape of that social change, which we decide together.** —John Green

***Topic Introduction:*** At ERUUF we have a commitment to justice and equity, and to racial equity and inclusion, aligned with our mission and grounded in UU principles, values, and sources. We are working toward the vision of making ERUUF a radically welcoming spiritual home for people of all races, backgrounds and diversities and an effective voice for racial, economic, social, and environmental justice in Durham and beyond.

As Rev. Scott Taylor says in the Soul Matters materials for February, “Remember that the answers to injustice arise from relationship, as much as, if not more than, from reason.” It’s one thing to analyze a theme; it’s quite another to experience it. Our questions are designed to examine our own lived experiences and vulnerabilities. Come to your group ready to share your responses of the heart and spirit in the ways you relate to the challenges of justice and equity rather than focusing on facts, opinions, or abstract theoretical or political positions.

***Wise Words***

I am no longer accepting the things I cannot change. I am changing the things I cannot accept.—Angela Davis

All advocacy is, at its core, an exercise in empathy. —Samantha Power

If one really wishes to know how justice is administered in a country, one does not question the policemen, the lawyers, the judges, or the protected members of the middle class. One goes to the unprotected – those, precisely, who need the law’s protection most! – and listens to their testimony.—James Baldwin

When we identify where our privilege intersects with somebody else's oppression, we'll find our opportunities to make real change. —Ijeoma Oluo

If you are neutral in situations of injustice, you have chosen the side of the oppressor.—*Desmond Tutu*

I learned that racism, like most systems of oppression, isn’t about bad people doing terrible things to people who are different from them but instead is a way of maintaining power for certain groups at the expense of others. —Alicia Garza

It is certain, in any case, that ignorance, allied with power, is the most ferocious enemy justice can have.—James Baldwin

***Questions for reflection***

1. What personal or societal injustice has impacted you directly and in what way has it influenced your life? What has most helped you heal?
2. What was your first moment of fighting injustice? What motivated you to act?
3. What was your family of origin’s relationship to “justice work”? How does that shape you today?
4. How has empathy played a role in your connection to justice and equity?
5. As you think about your own actions (and potential future actions) related to justice and equity, what barriers have you encountered? What inspirations have motivated you?
6. When the enormity of injustice looms, what enables you to hold onto hope?
7. How has ERUUF changed the way you think and act about injustice and inequity?

***Responses/Discussion***

***Likes and Wishes***

***Closing Words and Extinguish Chalice***: **What I see everywhere in the world are ordinary people willing to confront despair, power, and incalculable odds in order to restore some semblance of grace, justice, and beauty to this world. —Paul Hawken**

***See Recommended Resources for Personal Exploration & Reflection in accompanying materials from Soul Matters***