Eno River UU Fellowship Covenant Groups & Chalice Circles

**Soul Matters: Emergence** April 2018

**Opening Words**:

Let mystery have its place in you; do not be always turning up your whole soil with the plowshare of self-examination, but leave a little fallow corner in your heart ready for any seed the winds may bring, and reserve a nook of shadow for the passing bird; keep a place in your heart for the unexpected guests, an altar for an unknown God.

 *- Henri-Frederic Ariel*

 **Check-in:**

**Topic Introduction:**

Henri-Frederic Ariel’s reminder about leaving room and letting some things be is especially important as we move into the season of spring. During this time of year, it’s not just farmers but us all who turn to the work of “tilling and turning up our whole soil.” All around us, the culture shouts its heroic talk about striving and perfecting. Struggle is the dominant metaphor of the day. We talk of “fighting” to become all we can be. Images of sprouts breaking through concrete start showing up everywhere. Yet, we need to be careful because, more often than not, emergence and transformation is a much subtler art. It’s about stillness, listening and waiting to be led… not conquering, struggle and taking charge.

In other words, when it comes to emerging into something new, the message of spirituality is “Be careful with what you’ve been taught and told because much of it takes us in exactly the wrong direction.” As a people of emergence, we are called to take a different tack. We’ve been entrusted with the wisdom that emergence is most often about breathing rather than becoming better, patience not perfection, depth not dominance; acceptance not striving, attention not constant improvement.

And, friends, we don’t want to miss those unexpected guests! Those seeds brought by the wind and those passing birds are the partners that make emergence possible. They help us notice new paths. They invite us to walk with a new step. They awaken in us new songs. They remind us that new life is not something we do alone. They assure us that transformation doesn’t have to be a long and lonely struggle, but instead can be more like learning a new dance with a new friend. All we have to do is trust, take the hand of that “unknown God” and follow its lead.

**Quotes (optional, can be used with Closing Words)**

You cannot go on indefinitely being just an ordinary, decent egg. We must be hatched or go bad. *~ C.S. Lewis*

Always be a work in progress. *~ Emily Lillian*

When you're finished changing, you're finished. *~ Benjamin Franklin*

**Questions to consider *(pick just 1 or 2)***

1. Is that broken thing you keep trying to put back together keeping you from the beautiful thing that is waiting to be built?
2. Is one well-crafted and comfortable life what you really want? Was there a time when you planned on experiencing many lives in this one lifetime you’ve been given?
3. Is regret over what could have been preventing you from fully leaning into what’s being offered?
4. What if Life isn’t trying to get us to transform into something new or better? What if it simply wants us to emerge into the awareness that we are already enough?

**Likes and Wishes**

**Logistics**

**Closing Words:**

In my own worst seasons I’ve come back from the colorless world of despair by forcing myself to look hard, for a long time, at a single glorious thing: a flame of red geranium outside my bedroom window. And then another: my daughter in a yellow dress. And another: the perfect outline of a full, dark sphere behind the crescent moon. Until I learned to be in love with my life again. Like a stroke victim retraining new parts of the brain to grasp lost skills, I have taught myself joy, over and over again*.* *~ Barbara Kingsolver*