

# Renew Your Life

COVID-19 Version

Session 3: The Energy of Possibility

Reading: Chapter 3

## Welcome & Opening Questions (10 minutes)

Introduce yourself and share your responses to one or more of these questions:

- What is your favorite day and time of the week? What makes it your best time?
- What did you do this week that was life-giving?

## Group Prayer Practice (5 minutes)

Spend a few minutes in silence as a group. Sit in a comfortable position and imagine yourself being held by God. Close your eyes and focus on your breath. Gently set aside or release any distracting thoughts during this time. The leader will guide you with these prompts.

- As you think about the past day or week, what did you experience that was life-giving?
- As you think about the past day or week, what was energy depleting for you?
- Silently, release the past day or week over to God in prayer.
- Imagine yourself held in the expansive energies of God's love. Take a minute to breathe deeply of God's presence and peace.

Amen.

## Scripture Text (5 minutes)

*Isaiah 42:5-9 (NRSV)*

Thus says God, the LORD,

who created the heavens and stretched them out,  
who spread out the earth and what comes from it,  
who gives breath to the people upon it  
and spirit to those who walk in it:

I am the LORD, I have called you in righteousness,

I have taken you by the hand and kept you;  
I have given you as a covenant to the people,  
a light to the nations,  
to open the eyes that are blind,  
to bring out the prisoners from the dungeon,  
from the prison those who sit in darkness.

I am the LORD, that is my name;  
my glory I give to no other,  
nor my praise to idols.

See, the former things have come to pass,  
and new things I now declare;  
before they spring forth,  
I tell you of them.

### **Reading Recap** (5 minutes)

God offers us a renewable energy filled with possibility. This life-giving energy brings us hope as individuals, hope for the community and hope for the wider world. It feels like a time when we can use a sense of new hope and possibility. It feels like a time for us to be that spark of new hope and energy with others in new ways.

For each of us, living into that possibility brings us to a place of knowing where we are, stepping out in trust, and moving in a new direction. Some key questions for Pastor Kai in this time were: What are you afraid of? What is keeping you from stepping out? If you could go somewhere, anywhere, where would it be? What decisions would need to be made to do so? What would be the implications?

### **Questions on Chapter 3** (35 minutes)

*Start with these questions, adding in other questions to supplement. Questions are also available in the Renew Your Life book, starting on page 141.*

- What concepts in the readings and sermon were life-giving for you?
- What concepts or stories were difficult or challenging for you to think about or integrate into your life?

### **The Energy of Possibility**

1. What gets you out of bed in the morning and gives you energy for a new day?
2. Think about a time when you needed to make a decision. What dreams, values or practical considerations were important to you?
3. When in your life have you found yourself standing on one side of the "gap", hesitant to step across? Who or what encouraged you to take the next step? What kept you from taking a step?
4. "Start by doing what is necessary; then do what's possible; and suddenly you are doing the impossible" (St. Francis). What are your thoughts about this statement? What steps does it encourage you to take as you move forward?
5. When you've needed extra strength or courage in the past, where has it come from? How was God's energy and presence part of that experience?

### Update during COVID-19

**Possibility – New Things** – In this unexpected, unpredictable, challenging time, we have many questions... Will this pandemic ever end? Can we go back to normal life from before the pandemic? What is normal? Is it worth going back to normal? The possibility we have in this time is to rethink what is most life-giving for us and for others. If you could emerge from this time into something new, what would that look like?

In a few short weeks, we have watched the loss of George Floyd's life and community outpourings of loss, grief, suffering, injustice, and the deep, deep pain that has been a reality for much, much longer. How can we listen and learn in this time? What new thought, insight, action, or idea is emerging in you? What new possibilities might emerge for you and for the community in this time?

### Questions during COVID-19

1. A new way of living and being has been thrust upon us during COVID-19. What are some new habits or practices you developed during the "stay at home" or "stay safe Minnesota" time that you hope to maintain? What is valuable about your new practices?
2. Give some examples of habits or practices that were "normal" before COVID-19 that you don't miss. Are there ways to avoid returning to those things or ways to reimagine them so they are less draining?
3. In an article by Carey Nieuwhof (pastor, writer and speaker on leadership and faith at [www.careynieuwhof.com](http://www.careynieuwhof.com)), he asks readers "to take a moment to focus on what you've learned, how you've grown, and what you've gained" during this time of a pandemic and protests. Reflect on this question for a few moments and share your thoughts.
4. What new possibilities can you imagine for yourself, personally, spiritually or in another way? How is God working in you to realize these possibilities?
5. What new possibilities do you see for the community and the world? What would you like to hold in your prayers? Are there actions you would like to take?

### Closing Question & Faith Practice (5 minutes)

*Explore how the chapter theme can make a difference in your life by considering this question & trying this faith practice:*

- What are the possibilities and hopes that give shape and meaning to my life? What possibilities and hopes do I hold for the community and wider world?
- Use this breath prayer in the coming week to remind you of God's grace and creative, renewing energy. (see "breath prayer" instructions).

*Inhale: Spirit of God  
Exhale: Open my Heart*

### **Closing Prayer** *(5 minutes)*

God, this is a time of challenges beyond what we could have imagined. We each face our own, unique circumstances, and together we share in a time of unforeseen changes, loss, uncertainty, pain, brokenness, fear and disruption.

Yet, God, we know that your steadfast love never ends and your presence never leaves us. We continue to see you in ordinary and extraordinary moments. We thank you for creation's renewal and beauty, for actions of kindness and love, for the blessings of daily life and for your renewing gift of hope. We are especially grateful for those who are doing self-sacrificing work on behalf of others, the community and the world. Most of all, we thank you for your peace, love and grace.

Guide us to know how to be your blessing in the world today. Open our hearts and imaginations to see how we can create healthy and abundant life for others. Sustain us, comfort us, guide us and enliven us to be your presence in the world. Amen.