

Centering Prayer

Long ago—before we were born, before our names were written, God said to people who were not so different from us, “A new heart I will give you; a new spirit I will put within you.”

Sometimes it feels like we are still waiting for that new heart and spirit.
We pass through our times, year after year, day after day, with the same old problems—
Relationships that are scarred by old, familiar insecurities;
families made tired by the ruts and patterns we fell into long ago.
The same anxieties are with us wherever we go, however far we run.
We wait to grow wiser as we get older, but we never grow out of ourselves.

We have tried self-help books and support groups, exercise machines, therapy, magic fixes,
Looking for a new me and a new you.
A new start, a new age, a new life.

But we are not new.
We are not transformed or transfigured; we are just us.
Very much like yesterday.

Into this disappointed silence, God speaks again, “And I will remove from your body the heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh.”

Yes, God—help us to open our stone-hard hearts one more time—to a faith in newness, and fresh spirits, and a loving God.
Give us a new heart—a heart that can feel again without being afraid,
That can hold the endless lifetime of love for our families,
That can know again the call to care for every aching life around us.
A heart that can grow big enough to find again all the idealism of our youth.
A heart that remembers the triumph of love, and faith in a God who creates a new future every day,
a future where we are *not just us*, but new creatures of grace and hope.

In the silence, I invite you to speak the truth: those places in your heart that feel like they are made of stone; your need, your hope, your prayer for newness.