



## **A Service of Release and Renewal\***

Leader: We come to this place today having spent time reflecting on all the ways God is still at work in our lives. We know that with change comes many challenges, and we recognize the value of naming all the ways things have changed - for the better and otherwise - over this last year.

**People: We acknowledge and accept the physical, emotional and spiritual changes in our lives.**

Leader: We have learned the importance of taking the time to acknowledge our grief and sense of loss with these changes.

**People: We surrender our sorrow more fully to make way for more light and joy to enter in.**

Leader: We recognize the importance of confession and forgiveness in our journey.

**People: We surrender the hurt we have felt from others, and we ask forgiveness for the hurt we have caused others.**

Leader: We know that there are times we forget to trust in God's love and grace. We get focused ourselves and our failings, and we forget we still have purpose.

**People: God, forgive us when we doubt our usefulness and our value to You.**

Leader: And now, we take this time to claim our capabilities and proclaim all we are still able to do. We recommit ourselves in this moment to finding what is good within us and those around us.

**People: We know we can still make a difference in this world, when we trust and rely on You.**

**Prayer:** Loving God of all, we know You love all your children. Remind us how precious we still are to You. Help us to take the changes that come in stride so that we can truly age gracefully. Lord, You said You came so we may not only have life, but have it abundantly. Help us not shortchange ourselves by wallowing in our grief and self-pity to the point we cannot see Your beauty and what is left for us to do. Open our eyes as we surrender to you! We ask this in Your name. **Amen**



## **Significance of the Water and the Rocks**

We look at the rocks in the water and are reminded of several things:

No matter how rough the waters get, the rocks may toss and spin, but they are not destroyed. In fact, through the difficult waters, rough surfaces may become more smooth. We are works in progress as well. When we allow a loving God to shape us during those difficult times, God can smooth our rough edges enabling us to be used more fully.

Water is a symbol of birth and rebirth. Some may remember their baptism and how coming out of the water symbolizes a new birth into a new life in Christ.

As you reach your hand into the water, I invite you to feel around to find a rock you like. Feel the weight of the rock as you lift it, and feel the water drip off your hand as the rock emerges from the water.

Today begins a new chapter in your life! This is the chapter where you see change in the proper perspective because you are willing to continually to surrender all things to the God of grace, mercy, love, hope and eternal life.

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