

9-Day Retreat Check-In

June 18, 2025

The Great Search, Turning to Earth and Soul in the Quest for Healing and Home,
John Philip Newell

Welcome

Welcome to this first check in during our shared 9-day retreat. We journey together as individuals and a faith community, led by John Philip Newell's nine reflections in his book, *The Great Search*.

As a reminder, here is the cadence you might follow for the nine days. As always, it is your path so you might have read the whole book and return to each author for a day, you might be tending to the chapter on the day assigned, or other options.

Monday, June 9: Seeking Vision - Thomas Berry
Tuesday, June 10: Seeking Earth - Nan Shepherd
Wednesday, June 11: Seeking Presence - Martin Buber
(Check-in class #1 at 6:00 pm at church or on Zoom)

Thursday, June 12: Seeking Awareness - Carl Jung
Friday, June 13: Seeking Wellness - Julian of Norwich
Saturday, June 14: Seeking Love - Jalaluddin Rumi
Sunday, June 15: Shared worship, no assigned chapter
(Check in class #2 at 9:30 am at church or on Zoom)

Monday, June 16: Seeking Wisdom - Rabindranath Tagore
Tuesday, June 17: Seeking Meaning - Etty Hillesum
Wednesday, June 18: Seeking Faith - Edwin Muir and Conclusion - John Philip Newell
(Check in class #3 at 6:00 pm at church or on Zoom)

We will gather at church, in person or on zoom. If you need the zoom link here it is for you: **Great Search Classes: 6/11 (6 pm), 6/15 (9:30 am), and 6/18 (6 pm)**

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89491074480>

Meeting ID: 894 9107 4480

Christ Care Prayers

We will begin with the prayers we bring, the celebrations and deep concerns.

Tonight: Part Three – Seeking Wisdom, Meaning and Faith

We will pause for the reflection for each chapter, so dividing our conversation into three parts. We begin with some questions that are possible for all nine authors.



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Questions to ponder:

1. What did you hear in this chapter's reflection that opened you to God?
2. What did you hear in this chapter's reflection that opened you to the creation?
3. What did you hear in this chapter's reflection that opened you to others?

Rabindranath Tagore to note:

I believe in a spiritual world — not as anything separate from this world — but as its innermost truth." (127)

Tagore saw clearly that when humanity falls out of spiritual relationship with the natural world it creates "bewildering problems" for itself and for the future well-being of Earth." (129)

To a "God-conscious" person, says Tagore, the "object of worship is present everywhere." The universe is a living temple of the divine. (134)

Union with the divine does not have to be achieved. It already exists at the heart of our being as pure gift. (136)

Tagore called this "the idolatry of Geography," an absolutizing of boundaries that breeds suspicion and disrespect for those on the other side of the barriers we have artificially created. (140)

Etty Hillesum Quotes to note:

Dwelling too much on the self rather than the soul, she says, leads to a neglect of "the mighty eternal current" of life that courses through each one of us. (147)

"I draw prayer around me like a dark protective wall," she says, "[and] withdraw inside it as one might into a convent cell and then step outside again, calmer and stronger and more collected again. (148)

"I shall merely try to help God as best I can," she says, "and if I succeed in doing that, then I shall be at use to others as well. But I mustn't have heroic illusions about that either." (156)

Our only duty is "to reclaim large areas of peace in ourselves, more and more peace, and to reflect it towards others." (159)

Edwin Muir Quotes to note:

Faith for him was about being faithful to the immortal presence that shines in all things. (163)

"Remember, remember," as he writes in his diary. "We begin to die when we stop remembering." (172)

To pray "we," he says, is a pledge to all human beings. It is an "an act of union" with all that is and "an act of responsibility" for all. (177)

"What I am most aware of is that we receive more than we ever give:" (179)