



MINISTER'S COLUMN

DECEMBER 2022

Dear CUF folks,

What brings you to wonder in these winter days? I've realized that although the experience of wonder is nearly always unplanned, spontaneous (at least for me), I have to be ready and open for the possibility. It's so easy to miss the wondrous in every moment as I occupy myself with daily tasks and focus on keeping up with professional and personal demands on my time. I think many, if not most, humans across space and time have the same struggle. That's why we talk about being "struck" with awe – it takes something big and unexpected to wake us out of our usual awareness. At the same time, we *know* that the miraculous is around us and in us – even on a dreary day, we might feel wonder at our reflection in a drop of water. Our bodies are wondrous, so too is love we feel for and from other beings, but mostly we don't notice it. What if we "flip the script" of the focus of our attention? This line from "Messenger" by Mary Oliver can serve as a kind of mantra, or prayer for making space for wonder:

*Let me keep my mind on what matters,
which is my work,
which is mostly standing still and learning to be
astonished.*

December might be a particularly challenging month to practice "standing still and learning to be astonished," what with all the extra busy-ness of the holidays – travel and parties and cooking and shopping and family traditions and...you fill in the blank. And December might be exactly the right month to practice it *because* of that busy-ness. It's an opportunity to cultivate our capacity for wonder by regarding it not as important as our daily work, but as an important part of it. This spiritual practice can help us to seek out moments of wonder in our holiday activities, as well as help us to reduce their stress.

This is a season to marvel at the life of this congregation, too. I look forward to doing communal spiritual practice with you – making space for wonder as part of our work/being together.

Peace,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be the name 'Sarah'.