



MINISTER'S COLUMN

NOVEMBER 2022

Dear CUF folks,

What is your relationship with change? A family member of mine is quick to identify as a person who hates change, and I don't think that relationship of resistance to change is that uncommon. On the one hand, we can recognize the reality of constant change in every living thing around us and even our own bodies. On the other hand, it can still sneak up on us. I remember my grandmother in her 90's, saying that when she looked in the mirror, she wondered, "who is that old woman?" Another reason we might resist change is that life moves so quickly these days, and there is a never-ending stream of information demonstrating especially those changes for the worse that we might want to keep a grip on certain aspects of our lives as static touchstones.

The pandemic has been a great teacher in this sense – whether we felt/feel forced to change nearly every aspect of our lives' routines, or we welcomed new ways of doing and being, or both, we learned that resistance to change is futile (shout out to Trekkies!). Maybe we can reduce resistance and the stress it brings by looking at how change can lead to growth. One of our common hymns goes, "I know this rose will open. I know my fear will burn away. I know my soul will unfurl its wings. I know this rose will open." Last month we sang this chant as a mantra for courage, and it is, because it takes courage to change, to let go of the familiar. Anais Nin also used the flower metaphor to describe this shift:

And the day came when the risk to remain tight in a bud was more painful than the risk it took to blossom.

This month we have the opportunity to reflect on our personal and our communal relationships with change. Take an extra moment as you look at your reflection in the mirror to wonder about the person there and your feelings about the changes you've experienced. Let's take time when we're together as a congregation or smaller groups to notice who and how we are together, and what changes we've experienced. I look forward to this communal time of reflection and change together. I know this rose will open.

Peace,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'John' or similar, written in a cursive style.