



Dear CUF folks,

Happy New Year! It always seems that time goes by quickly - I can hardly believe that it's 2023 already. I have to remind myself to take a moment to pause and reflect before rushing into meeting the demands of post-holiday life. In taking even a few minutes to breathe slowly and listen to my body and my surroundings, I can reorient my mind. It's not exactly a New Year's resolution, but this month's theme from Soul Matters: "**Finding Our Center**" helped me make a goal to carry that experience of spiritual "re-set" into daily life. Another inspiration has been this poem by eighth century Chinese Zen master "Layman Pang" (*P'ang Yün*):

My daily affairs are quite ordinary; but I'm in total harmony with them.

I don't hold on to anything, don't reject anything; nowhere an obstacle or conflict. Who cares about wealth and honor? Even the poorest thing shines. My miraculous power and spiritual activity: drawing water and carrying wood.

This is a person who practiced finding his center every day through performing essential tasks. We're not 8th century Buddhists, but we might all benefit from identifying our own "miraculous power and spiritual activity" and thinking and acting as if those tasks center us. How can making meals, doing laundry, or taking out the trash link us to the present moment? How can we be so centered that we "don't hold on to anything, don't reject anything," allowing our minds and spirits to be expansive *and* inclusive? Entering the new year, we have places to go, things to do, people to see, goals to work towards in our lives. How might it feel to begin those activities from centeredness?

These are good questions for us as a faith community, too. What are the activities and relationships that are centering for this Fellowship - that will make our partnerships and justice work in the community more a part of who we are as well as what we do? I look forward to starting 2023 by finding our center, together.

Peace,