



The Practice of Invitation

Dear CUF folks,

Welcome to a new church year! It's always an exciting time of possibility, knowing that even the familiar rhythms of congregational life will be different than last year with different people involved - and even the same people change over time. This month begins our 11th year of shared ministry. It's astonishing to me how I've changed as a minister and a person, and how the congregation has evolved over the past ten years. Astonishing because these developments happen gradually, often unnoticed, through small nonlinear increments. For example: Last year, our monthly themes focused on the new UU values, prefacing each one with "The Gift of..." This year the emphasis is on putting our values into action, so themes start with "The Practice of..." This is a subtle but important difference; an invitation to *be* the people and the congregation we say we are. We will also be working with a new Strategic Plan, "Creating Our Future" to help us meet new or updated goals – another invitation to practice what we preach. These two examples can be seen as positive changes, invitations to adapt, learn and grow. And, as every kind of change necessarily means loss, we may encounter resistance, internal and external. Resistance to change isn't good or bad, but unexamined resistance can be just as dangerous as making changes for change's sake.

Change is not a threat to your life, but an invitation to live.

~Adrienne Rich

Reflecting on the past and looking ahead to this church year, we know that things won't always work out as we planned. We know that it's important to mourn our losses, and in time, look for the possibilities for growth that come with them. It is a fine line between resting and being stuck. This month, we can ask ourselves where that line is for ourselves, and for our congregation. We can invite ourselves to be curious about changes that we may have been resisting. As a congregation, we can invite all to be curious about how we will adapt to change both planned and unexpected. We're all invited to the party that is our new church year. No need to RSVP, just bring your authentic self. See you soon!

Peace,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Adrienne Rich". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the left.