

A Message from Pastor Karyn
May 22, 2020

I went to the mailbox yesterday and found 5 items. Every single one of them went directly into the trash or recycle bin. Most things come to me by email anyway. Today I paid bills online and submitted my final grades for the semester on the seminary's student management system. My car has a GPS guidance system to talk me through turn-by-turn directions wherever I need to go. I have multiple versions of the Holy Bible on my smartphone. I can sit in my living room and see brand new movies. Tonight my family from multiple states will Zoom and talk about our weeks. It seems the more things change the more they stay the same.

However, I still enjoy reading letters and cards I receive in the mail. And I love sending physical cards and letters to others. I like writing an actual check to my family members for their birthdays instead of sending it electronically by Venmo. I relish occasionally taking a road I don't know and turning off the GPS to see where I end up. Spending time with my family in person is a blessing I can't wait to do again. While I am grateful, being on Zoom is not the same. And sometimes just having the physical Bible in my hands is the best way to pray. It seems the more things change the more they stay the same.

Change happens. We cannot control the changes happening all around us. But as my Grandma Wiseman used to say when I complained about something, "All you can control is your reactions, Karyn." I know that intellectually but being "in control" is my superpower. I relish taking charge of things and making sure they happen in the ways I want them to. I need that. I want that. But life has other plans. It seems that no matter how hard I try, change happens whether I want it to or not.

Several people have asked me lately what the church will look like after this pandemic. That question assumes the pandemic will end. Lord, I pray that it will be with careful and faithful physical distancing and medical breakthroughs. I firmly believe that the church will both

survive and thrive these tough times. And I pray for that everyday. But I also think there will be some important changes. It seems the more things change though, the more they stay the same.

No matter what church looks like in the future, we're still going to be called to care for our neighbors. We're still going to be called to work to end systemic injustices. We're still going to be called to feed the hungry and those who are food insecure. We're still going to be called to worship in praise of our amazing God. We're still going to be called to take care of the most vulnerable among us. We're still going to be called to welcome **all** of God's children. We're still going to be called to love one another. Because the more things change the more they stay the same.

I feel the pulse of the church pounding loudly. I see the witness of the faithful in thousands of good news stories. And I sense God in all of these loving and kind acts. I feel God holding us in love and care. It seems the more things change the more they stay the same. There's a time for everything. Right?

Ecclesiastes 3 says it well ...

For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven:

a time to be born, and a time to die;

a time to plant, and a time to pluck up what is planted;

a time to kill, and a time to heal;

a time to break down, and a time to build up;

a time to weep, and a time to laugh;

a time to mourn, and a time to dance;

a time to throw away stones, and a time to gather stones together;

a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing;

a time to seek, and a time to lose;

a time to keep, and a time to throw away;

a time to tear, and a time to sew;

a time to keep silence, and a time to speak;

a time to love, and a time to hate;
a time for war, and a time for peace.

Right now is a time to wait, work, pray, support, worship, and uplift each other from a distance. The time to gather again will come ... when it's time. And in prayer we wait.

Grace and Peace –

PK