



Living the Questions: Theme Packet

Each month, our church gathers around a common theme and practice to guide our reflection in worship, education, justice and small groups. This packet provides questions and excerpts to guide personal or group writing or discussion, and serves as the guide for our monthly Sharing Circles. For more info. contact Rev. Luke Stevens-Royer revluke@whitebearunitarian.org or 651.426.2369

Transformation: the practice of embracing change May, 2013

QUESTIONS

How have you experienced transformation in your life?

In your experience, has transformation been sudden, gradual, or something else?

Have you known transformation as it has happened, or only as you reflected back on an experience or time passed?

How does our world encourage or caution against change?

What changes, within yourself, or in people you know or the culture or world around you, have surprised you?

QUOTES

One of the most painful lessons is that the work of peace and justice, like the work of the Seed within, is one of patient waiting.

Patience is an active condition of the spirit.

It can march; it can demonstrate; it can live in jails.

It can survive the long haul of transformation.

- Douglas Gwyn

When we quit thinking primarily about ourselves and our own self-preservation, we undergo a truly heroic transformation of consciousness.

- Joseph Campbell

Personal transformation can and does have global effects. As we go, so goes the world, for the world is us. The revolution that will save the world is ultimately a personal one.

- Marianne Williamson

“Sorrow prepares you for joy. It violently sweeps everything out of your house, so that new joy can find space to enter. It shakes the yellow leaves from the bough of your heart, so that fresh, green leaves can grow in their place. It pulls up the rotten roots, so that new roots hidden beneath have room to grow. Whatever sorrow shakes from your heart, far better things will take their place.”

- Rumi

“There were people who went to sleep last night,
poor and rich and white and black,
but they will never wake again.

And those dead folks would give anything at all
for just five minutes of this weather
or ten minutes of plowing.

So you watch yourself about complaining.

What you're supposed to do
when you don't like a thing is change it.
If you can't change it,
change the way you think about it.”

- Maya Angelou

POETRY/LYRICS

The bud
stands for all things,
even for those things that don't flower,
for everything flowers, from within, of self-blessing;
though sometimes it is necessary
to reteach a thing its loveliness,
to put a hand on the brow
of the flower,
and retell it in words and in touch,
it is lovely
until it flowers again from within, of self-blessing

- Galway Kinnell

CHANGE

Change not mean perfect,
Change just change.
Not a perfect, there is,
But always a change.

After change, after change,
Too, also back from change.
Few a change
From the past,
And also, new change, vast.

From change, gets back-changed,
Reminding future a past.
Back-change, unvast past,
Future change, full of vast.

- Deepta Protik Osman

Some Day

Once upon a time I was
 Now I am
Some day I will become

Once there was
 And now there is
 Soon there will be
some day there surely shall be

Once upon a time we were
 Now we are
someday (Hallelujah!) we shall surely become
 Amen
 Amen

- Margaret Williams Braxton

READINGS & EXCERPTS

So you must not be frightened if a sadness rises up before you larger than any you have ever seen; if a restiveness, like light and cloudshadows, passes over your hands and over all you do. You must think that something is happening with you, that life has not forgotten you, that it holds you in its hand; it will not let you fall. Why do you want to shut out of your life any uneasiness, any miseries, or any depressions? For after all, you do not know what work these conditions are doing inside you."

- Rainer Maria Rilke, Letters to a Young Poet

One generally understands "transformation" to mean a shift in form; a change from one thing into another. Yet, the implications are radically different depending on the sphere of usage. Strictly speaking, "transformation" occupies the stage magician's mind as a change in any combination of shape, color, size, weight, or overall essence, achieved through any of a variety of methods - but always illusionistic. Whether we are confronted by a method of substitution or of disguise, the effect is the same: one thing appears to have become another. On the contrary, the traditional shaman may employ some of the same illusionistic tricks as the magician; however, it is the process of transformation, and not the outcome, which dictates the magical moment, the mysterious reality which permeates all reality. For those engaged in politics, "transformation" is the reformative or revolutionary remedy sought to resolve a desperate state of affairs - a reality wrought with illusions. In such a context one attempts to uncover the means behind the manifestation; to reveal or unmask the power and thereby change the prevailing conditions. And finally there is art - an illusion unto itself, so frequently deceived by its own conjurations; yet still we see the potency of "transformation" not as "the magic of art" nor as "the art of magic" but as a magical art which is representative and therefore evocative of emotion, evoking of set purpose some emotions rather than others in order to discharge them into the affairs of practical life.

- from tacticalmagic.com