

NAVIGATING THE UNKNOWN

by Erik Westlund

What can I say about change? Much, but perhaps I should only say a little... So here it goes.

I grew up on the East coast outside Washington DC and have lived in multiple states prior to arriving in Tucson, AZ more than 16-years ago. My history of occupations, ranging from manual, technical, creative and human centric work is even more varied than the places I have lived. Superficially at least, it appears that navigating change is one of the main things I do. Regardless of how much uncertainty I've dealt with from changes in community, work, and relationships it always brings up an unpleasant, almost queasy feeling in me.

There is a popular concept that our responses to change are universal and follow a predictable pattern: shock/denial, anger/fear, acceptance, and commitment. Sometimes referred to as the 'stages of grief' we can experience this sequence of emotions from any form of change, including positive changes. The key is to recognize what we are experiencing and to love and accept ourselves for being present and engaged in life.

For sad changes often come positive ones. Here at Catalina UMC we will be saying farewell to Pastor, Rev. Matt Colby, followed by hello to our new Associate Pastor Rev. Kelli Knight. With loss comes a gift, you could say. Soon, renovations taking place in the Sanctuary (exciting) require us to hold our Sunday worship services to the Fellowship Hall (scary, at least for me). The majority of available technology for live streaming Sunday worship are securely built into the Sanctuary. I think I'm still in the shock/denial stage on that one.

There is a power, greater than me, that knows and understands how all things come together. Regardless of what I am called upon to respond to, i.e. for me to be responsible for, I know that I can count on more than just myself to navigate through change. Curious about what scripture might offer I did a search and found a wide variety of answers including in Romans, Proverbs, James, Isaiah, and more. Probably my favorite is Philippians 4, starting at verse 4. If interested, I recommend it offers a calming and reassuring way to navigate change. For my part, I will be concentrating on being thankful for the gifts and opportunities change provides.