

San Marino Tribune, January 12, 2018 “The New Year” by Rev. Jan Cook, Senior Associate Pastor

“If nothing ever changed, there’d be no butterflies.” - Unknown

I will admit that I am not very comfortable with some types of change in my life. I am not comfortable when my supermarket rearranges their aisles (especially when they leave the old aisle signage up!) or when my hair stylist takes an extended vacation. I cringe at the word “discontinued” when I go to Amazon for my favorite product and literally shiver at the thought that my favorite author is actually dead and I am going to run out of her works.

Change, which of course is a certainty in life, can be disturbing, disruptive and frustrating. So it always surprises me how every January we are so eager to make resolutions which involve changing our lives. I have a suspicion that this comes from a buried belief way down in our core, that change is incubated in hope and that each new day is also a new opportunity. Perhaps we can allow ourselves to set that belief free and see what will happen when we embrace rather than resist.

I have admitted that there are certain types of changes that worry and disturb me but I will also admit that some changes cause me to leap towards them and grab hold for the exhilarating ride that is ahead. When my daughter shared that she and her husband were expecting, honestly I was breathless with anticipation and joy. My sister recently retired and I will get to see her more often, I couldn’t be happier. My mom is turning 83 and I am so grateful for her presence just as I recognize the changes in her over the past few years (although she did just buy a 2017 Camaro because she likes the “get up and go!”). These are all transitions from one season into the next.

The most mysterious and, by far, most sought after change however does not come from any of these places. This is the change that happens when the heart softens or hardens, when walls are built or brought down. This is the fruit of our own transforming nature. Events like birth, death, loss, victory, joy and despair will always have a role in our lives simply because we are human and life is messy. The real transformation is in the way you simply stand in those moments. How we view our circumstances and respond with our next choice, is what shapes our interior life.

How are you doing from the inside out? How does it feel when the day grows quiet and night takes you into a place where you really examine your fears and worries? Are you fed and nourished properly so you are able to welcome these moments with respect and perspective? For me the answer is *sometimes*. When I think about a pending transition in my life, I long for a more stable transformative progression. I am grateful that my faith informs me not to fear the future because of a God who chooses to be in a steadfast and loving relationship with the world. I also believe that God has equipped and empowered us to live our very best selves, and to gracefully transition into the next seasons of our lives.

What is your next season? What pending transition are you facing? I am excited to tell you that on Saturday, January 20, 10:00-noon, our church welcomes Dr. Leslie Braksick. She has made it her life’s mission to teach people how to navigate the seasons in their lives. She will provide tools for transitions of every kind. Whether you are retiring, starting a family, facing a divorce or becoming empty nesters, this promises to be a morning of insight and wisdom. Start

the New Year right, please join us at San Marino Community Church Saturday morning,
January 20th.