Join IUCC for a day of special events on **Sunday, Dec. 5, to get the holidays started!**

- At 3 p.m., join us for the annual Advent Workshop where children and adults can get in the Christmas spirit with crafts and other activities.
- At 4 p.m., come for a sled run and snow play! Bring a sled and put on your warmer clothes.
- At 5 p.m., warm up with some samples from the Chili Cook-off and change into dry clothes.
- At 7 p.m., youngsters can enjoy a supervised movie in Plumer Hall while older kids and adults enjoy the annual Christmas Concert in the Sanctuary. The theme for this year’s Chancel Choir winter concert is “Home for the Holidays.” Concert goers will also get a chance to sing along.
- After the concert, join the choir on the patio for refreshments.

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**The Irvine United Congregational Church**

**Chancel Choir**

presents

**Home for the Holidays**

A concert of seasonal and special music to warm your heart with the Spirit of Christmas.

**Sunday, December 5, 2021**

**7:00 pm**

Irvine United Congregational Church

4915 Alton Parkway, Irvine, CA 92604

A freewill offering will be taken to benefit the IUCC General Fund.
Advent Greetings!

Christmas is coming!

It feels different this year. Maybe it’s because I feel the freedom of the vaccine and its booster. Maybe it’s because my children are excited about the little things, decorating the house, putting up the lights, telling the story of Jesus’ birth. They are old enough to know we have traditions and are excited about invoking them! They know that this year they get to see their cousins again. They love coming to church and are excited about the Christmas pageant. And of course, they know there will be gifts! There’s nothing like seeing Christmas through the eyes of children! Except maybe the perspective of knowing what a gift their experience really is!

I don’t know if I can fully pinpoint it, but I know it feels different this year. In some ways it’s the return of the familiar: the twinkling lights on rooftops, the carols on the radio, the Christmas movies I’ve seen a hundred times! But there’s more...

I feel it in a way I haven’t felt for a long time. There’s an excitement in the air. The energy is building daily, pulling me towards Christmas, inviting me deeper into the season.

In reality this is the point of Advent, it isn’t supposed to come all at once, we’re supposed to anticipate, to feel Christmas coming closer as the energy grows. We live in a culture of “I want it and I want it now.” However, Advent doesn’t give us Christmas now. Instead it promises Christmas soon and asks us to wait. The anticipation in Advent makes Christmas all the more sweet, but it also reminds us that the journey matters. This is the one time of year when I want to slow time so that I can take time to do things like sit in the dark with my daughter and watch a candle light flicker, or squint our eyes to see the colors of the Christmas tree lights dance together.

I love the contemplation of Advent. I find that no matter how down I feel about the state of the world, when I look for hope, peace, joy and love I find them! And there’s something powerful in the quest to look deeply, to do so quietly, and even when it all feels so overwhelming, I find the real power in those simple gifts. I can’t help but feel hope, to feel centered in peace, to feel joy, and to thank God again and again for love.

So, yes, I’m excited about Christmas this year. I’m excited in the old familiar way and this new, not fully explained way too.

I hope you’ll join me in this excitement. I hope you’ll participate in all of the opportunities to celebrate the season, to contemplate it, and to rejoice in it! We’ve got a very busy month with energy building week to week and it all starts with Communion on the second Sunday of Advent, followed by the Concern America fair trade craft market, our Advent Workshop, Snow Run (!!!!) and Chili Cook-off and our famous IUCC choral concert! And each week there’s something more to experience as we get closer to Christmas Eve. I can’t wait to see this year’s Christmas pageant and to see our kids in action! And since last year we didn’t get to celebrate Christmas together, I’m incredibly excited about Christmas Eve! I can’t wait to carry the light of Christ out into the silent night!

I can’t wait...but I will. Because, after all, Advent invites us to slow down and experience it all.

I hope you will too!

In Advent Hope, Peace, Joy and Love,

Pastor Sarah
And suddenly, it’s December! I might gasp at how swiftly the year has passed, but the truth is there’s been a lot to keep us all busy as we negotiate the requirements of the pandemic and discover new ways to do ministry in a modern world.

Craig Repp and Eduardo Arismendi-Pardi have begun a four-week series on Sunday mornings, viewing and discussing Amy-Jill Levine’s video series “Light of the World.” Join them each week at 10:00 am for Amy-Jill’s enlightening observations!

Ken Wyant continues to lead the Tuesday Bible Study group through the thickets of the book of Genesis, with insight and humor in equal measure. And please note – both classes are available in person at IUCC and on Zoom!

If you’ve been at IUCC for Sunday worship or another event, you’ll have noticed five large posts rising from the Patio. These are the supports for the new patio cover! Once support brackets are installed on the preschool, the sail-shades will be manufactured and shipped for a one-day installation.

A few volunteers have already spent some time in the tech booth on Sunday mornings – thank you to Craig Tyrl, Tricia Aynes, and Mary Swope! It would surely be nice – and someone knows who’s naughty or nice! – to have a few more folks familiar with our worship technology. Just call or email me at the church office. And thank you, in advance!

Calling All Advent & Pageant Season Participants & Volunteers!

Christmas Pageant “Night of Stars” will be presented Sunday, Dec 19th

We invite you to enjoy our youth Christmas Pageant on December 19th during both services (9:30am and 11am)! For those who want to join in, there is something for everyone - whether pre-recorded, live, move-focused, speaking, crafting sets and props or other behind the scenes action, and more.

Pageant Practice - during Sunday School
Pageant practice time will be during Sunday School (9:45am - 10:30am), where we will weave in lessons as the kids engage in roleplay, song, movement, and art to envision what’s to come.

If you want to volunteer for the Pageant, Advent, or anything else - contact Sally@iucc.org or the church office!
We’ve barely caught our breath since that yummy Thanksgiving dinner, and the Christmas shopping frenzy is already upon us. Americans are projected to spend a record amount of money on gifts this year, and malls are full of bright lights, carols, and decorations. People are excited to celebrate the season after missing out last year. Most (if not all) of us adults at IUCC have gotten our vaccinations and booster shots and are looking forward to socializing again. I’m feeling optimistic about the future, and I hope you are too!

Advent is already underway. This year, it started on November 28 and will end on December 24. Advent starts the season of the liturgical year dedicated to anticipating the birth of Jesus. The most common Advent tradition involves the lighting of four candles. As we light each one, we reflect on the past and anticipate what is to come, taking time to contemplate what the four candles traditionally represent: hope, faith, joy, and peace. We need all four more than ever before!

This coming Sunday, December 5, IUCC will celebrate Advent in a big way. We’ll have an Advent Workshop, a chili cook-off, and a Snow Run! That evening, we’ll enjoy a lovely concert featuring our own Chancel Choir. I hope you’ll come for part or all of it to get into the spirit of Christmas.

In the midst of our joy at this return to some semblance of “normal,” we remain keenly aware that many of our neighbors have suffered losses of loved ones, income, and jobs, and we hold each one in prayer for a better year ahead. We are cautious amid signs of a possible winter COVID surge and the appearance of a new variant that may be resistant to the vaccine. A lot of unknowns remain, and we’ll have to navigate them as best we can.

I am very grateful that we have managed to graduate to hybrid services this year: part live, part taped. For many of us, these services have been a wonderfully sustaining lifeline during a tumultuous time. So much thought and effort go into making our worship services special each week, and we are blessed to have tremendously talented staff and volunteers who work hard to bring us a high quality and meaningful experience.

You’ve probably noticed a big focus on church finances lately. We’ve just wrapped up our stewardship campaign, and you’ll soon receive a special appeal letter from Pastor Sarah and me requesting you to provide an end-of-year donation. I hope you’ll consider doing so.

What’s up? Well, our preschool - the source of so much financial support over the years - continues to struggle to regain its footing. Not all parents feel comfortable returning. We remain confident that it will rebound next year, but for now we need to make up the lost income through your generous donations. Thank you for your faith and unwavering support!

Please mark your calendar now for our upcoming Winter Congregational Meeting on January 30 after second service. We’ll be hearing about the progress of the Strategic Planning Task Force and voting on the 2022 budget. We can’t conduct the important business of this meeting without a quorum, so your attendance is especially important. We’ll be trying something new for us - a hybrid Congregational Meeting with both in-person and Zoom attendees - so there’s really no excuse not to come!

Speaking of the Strategic Planning Task Force, it’s going really well. Please join me in thanking Cesar Sangalang (Chair), the Rev. Steve Swope (Facilitator), and members Kelly Garrity, Cheryl Arismendi, Jon Ingal, Alex Ingal, Bil Aulenbach, Sarah Wall, and Linda Heath. Pastor Sarah and I have been serving ex-officio. We’ve had some wonderful discussions about the future direction of IUCC, and I think you’ll be pleased with the results!

In hope and optimism,

Tricia
The Ministry with Young People (MYP) and the Mission & Service Ministry (M&S) teamed up on November 6 to offer a service and learning event called “Things We Can Do to Help Our Unhoused Neighbors.” We were open to all ages with a specific focus on activities to help younger kids and families envision what they can do. In our time together we did the following: assembled 20 hygiene kits; created cards and notes of support for our neighbors to go with the kits; and learned how we can join in year-round efforts to help our unhoused neighbors with M&S and other organizations. Our 20 kits joined with 51 kits from other volunteers and have been delivered for distribution to those who can use them. We hope to continue with ministry team-ups and to do more service events together! - Lauren Louie
To Our IUCC Family:

“First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for all of you ...” (Romans 1:8), for your fervent prayers for David and for me, your many acts of kindness great and small, and for your hope, faith, and love that in countless ways—known and unknown—have supported us, kept us safe, and brought us to a more hopeful place. Manifesting the love of Christ, you change our lives.

In eternal gratitude,
Laura Long and David Smith


Steve Swope will be performing in Orange County Ballet Theater’s Nutcracker at Northwood High School in Irvine on Dec. 17 & 18. See https://www.etix.com/ticket/o/6850/dmitri-kulev-classical-ballet-academy-dkcba for tickets.

The stewardship theme for 2022 is REFRESH>REBOOT>RENEW!

Please make your 2022 pledge!
Your pledge to IUCC helps our leaders plan for the coming year, knowing “about how much” funding to expect. If you haven’t done so already, log on to our website and make your pledge for 2022. Go to iucc.org/giving/pledge and help IUCC Refresh > Reboot > Renew!

IUCC Members Dance in Local Productions!
Concern America’s Marketplace of Fair Trade Crafts will be at:

Irvine United Congregational Church
Sunday, December 5, 2021
~After the 9:30am & 11am services~

Concern America’s fair trade craft program provides direct support to materially impoverished artisans and their communities in Latin America, Asia, and Africa. You get the opportunity to support them by purchasing their gorgeous hand made items.

For more information visit: www.ConcernAmerica.org
IUCC Treasurer Mark Allen tendered his resignation, and Chuck Heath graciously agreed to step in as Treasurer and finish the term through the end of June 2022. Per our bylaws, a vacancy in the office of Treasurer may be filled in the interim between Spring Congregational Meetings by a vote of both boards. Both the Administration Board and the Ministries Board have approved Chuck’s appointment unanimously. Mark has been very helpful in providing Chuck with all the materials he needs to ensure a smooth transition. We thank Mark for his years of service to IUCC, and we thank Chuck for sharing his financial expertise with us during this time.

Welcome to our New Members

Please welcome our new members, who joined Nov. 21st!
Above L to R: Harley & Rugee Gimaron, Erin Fletcher, and Joe Dressler. At left, Martha Ratinoff & her children Elliott & Hudson

Mission & Service Ministry

IUCC ANGEL TREE
Adopt-a-Family
Holiday Gift Program with Families Forward

For the past several years, IUCC has collected toys for Families Forward at Christmas time. This year, Families Forward requested that we “adopt” specific families and provide gifts for the children that they have personally requested. Therefore, this holiday season we are adopting 4 needy families. Families Forward recommends one gift (max. $50) for each child. You may choose instead to purchase a $25 gift card for a child that the parent can use to buy something for them. FF suggests “The Preferred Gift Card,” a gift card that is honored by over 400 local merchants and can be purchased at the Guest Services kiosks at the Irvine Spectrum and The Marketplace in Tustin. A grocery, gas, or other gift card (Target, Walmart) may be given to parents.

You’ll see our Angel Tree in the narthex with beautiful ornaments created by our Sunday School youth!! On the back of each ornament is the name of a specific parents or a child with his/her age and requested item. If you would like to purchase a gift or a gift card for a child or a parent, please look at several ornaments and choose one that you like. Then sign up on a list that you’ll see next to the tree. If you prefer to purchase clothing for the children, contact Sharon at 571-236-9517 for size information.

The gifts should be unwrapped. The ornament you chose should be taped to the gift and placed under the tree. Gift card envelopes and their ornaments should be placed in the basket near the Angel Tree. All gifts should be brought to church on or before December 12.

If you can, share your love and help these parents and children to have a very Merry Christmas.

Thank you from the IUCC Mission & Service Ministry
Coffee Hour is BACK!

Did you hear? Coffee Hour is BACK!

If you have attended the most recent in-person services, you have probably noticed that Coffee Hour has returned. Isn’t that exciting? This also means IUCC needs you to return to volunteering until robots take over and do the work for us (not expected any time soon).

Coffee Hour is a wonderful service provided to you through both IUCC and donations of time and resources. Just think of the magic involved. You might find yourself snacking on my famous Pumpkin Chocolate Cookies that are endorsed by the mayor of Irvine, or you may just be sipping on a cup of fair-trade coffee. Whichever it is, you may notice someone doing the exact same thing right next to you. Because it is awkward to just stand around watching people, one of you decides to introduce yourself and a connection is made. These connections are what builds a community, and your community needs your help.

You can help produce the coffee hour magic by hosting, donating, or cleaning. If you host, you will get to see many smiling faces. Hosting is an AMAZING way to talk to many people in a short amount of time. If you are trying to promote an event, your ministry, or a comma group, there is no better way than hosting coffee hour. If hosting isn’t your thing or you don’t have time, no problem! You can still support coffee hour by donating consumables (snacks and beverages). If you are extra dedicated to giving back, why not consider helping with preparations or clean up?

There are many ways you can give back to fit your budget or schedule. So put down the pumpkin cookie...well actually take a second one, and then visit www.tinyurl.com/IUCCCoffeeHour to see how YOU can give back. You can always contact me if you have questions, comments, or concerns (jalexingaliucc@gmail.com). Thank you!

J. Alex Ingal,
Hospitality Chair
Babies will let anyone hold them and will let anyone feed them. Very quickly, however, even babies begin to know who their regular people are, and whether or not they are safe with them. Very soon, even very young children start shying away from strangers. Belonging and safety, or lack of safety, are closely related.

This need to belong lasts throughout life. Very early on we all belong to clubs, teams, groups, communities, gangs, pods, etc. and this continues for most people until death. Humans are built for connection. I’m 80 years old and my IUCC book club decided we “needed a name.” We are the Biblio-phillies – because we like to read and we like to horse around. We belong together.

I spent my career working with children/teens who were removed from their families because of abuse and neglect, and I was always fascinated by the strong pull of even marginal and destructive families. Kids liked me to drive them back to their neighborhoods, even though they were no longer able to live there, and even in crime ridden, poverty stricken neighborhoods the kids would get excited and want to show me familiar places and tell me stories about “their peeps.”

Thanksgiving and Christmas both provide wonderful opportunities to reinforce how welcome your children and teens are, and how they are part of a family, an extended family, a neighborhood, and a church community. It’s hard for many people to accept or understand, but in circumstances where children have to choose between love and belonging, they almost always choose belonging. This is true for many adults as well. It’s not just good to belong, it’s critical to belong. Even when they roll their eyes and groan and refuse to admit it – family pajamas, family rituals, family photos out where everyone can see them, family jokes – everything that says you are part of us, you’ll always be part of us, forms a foundation that lasts for life.

Use this month to find dozens of ways to remind the children and teens you love, that even when they stress you out, even when their behavior results in anger, even when they tell you how much better other parents are, even when you feel like sending them to their room – instead, keep them close, tell them whose ears or nose they have, tell them that whether they are with you or away from you, they are always yours.

No Christmas gift is better than this.
I love rainy days! As a child I was fascinated and found happiness in rain. Most of my adult life I’ve lived in Southern California, an area of frequent drought. One week several years ago had been especially difficult in my attempt to balance home, church, work, and three teenaged girls, one a foreign exchange student. Besides, it was soon Christmas with its many festivities. I felt worn, out-of-sorts, in both body and soul. With a deep sigh, I sat down to rest even though I certainly didn’t have the time for such an indulgence.

My weary eyes glanced out the patio door. The earth was parched, thirsty. Winds sucked in every drop of moisture. Patio plants drooped, worn from fighting the drying wind. Yes, the earth was parched, but so was I. Identifying with our dusty patio, I too felt covered with dust. That week I’d been in too much wind. A whirlwind.

You know what it’s like. Days filled with too many people, too many words and activities. Turmoil blowing from many directions. No soft, gentle breezes, but forceful winds of attack. The deluge kicked up loose dirt, enveloping, choking like a desert sandstorm, stinging the exposed skin of my vulnerable self.

Wait. What was that on the patio? A few drops. More. Some more. Steady, rhythmic droplets covered the cement. The rains came. The flowers drank. The dust fled as the earth bathed in heaven’s life-giving fluid. Leaves, blossoms, grass, rocks, cement … all shining in liquid freshness.

I envied them. Oh, God, rain on my desert. Rain on me. If I were a child I’d run out and play in the rain. Play in the rain? Could I … should I … why not?

I put on my boots, flung open the door, and heard myself say, “Here I come … ready or not!”

I was a child again. A child in my own backyard. Lifting face to the sky, the wet drops washed, cleansed me. All the dust of the week went streaming to the ground. Tears came, therapeutic tears. Opening my mouth, raindrops found their way down a parched throat, cooling and loosening its tightness. What a drink! Water dripped from nose, chin, elbows. My hair was soaked. Fun! Tears turned to chuckles.

Puddles beckoned. Lifting one foot, plop. Another one. Splat. Again … and again. What a splash! Water found its way into my boots. Toes wiggled in the wetness. My glee was that of a child. (Were my neighbors watching?) It was wonderful! Walking, skipping, running in the rain. I was refreshed, replenished, shining like the leaves.

Later, wrapped in a bathrobe and drying my hair with a towel, I recalled Peter’s words to Jesus: “Wash me, Lord. Not just my feet, but all of me.”

I had read those words before. Now I understood them.
As we anticipate the end of 2021 and the beginning of 2022, I thought it would be appropriate to share some of my thoughts about being in a state of “in-between,” that is, in transition as a Rite of Passage from a spiritual perspective. The end of the year is but the beginning of a new journey. In my opinion, there are no endings because the end of a season means the beginning of a new one. In terms of transitions and beginnings, there is a season and a time for every matter under heaven (cf. Ecclesiastes 3:1-8). As we contemplate the ending of 2021 and anticipate the beginning of 2022, it is important to honor and celebrate endings as we welcome new beginnings. In the journey of life we have many periods of endings such as changing jobs, the passing of a loved one, graduation, separation, divorce, marriage, retirement, relocation, and so much more. Sadly our society is driven by clocks, data, results, deliverables, and schedules. Our society does not encourage us to celebrate endings such as divorces, ending a career, dealing with the mourning process of grieving the loss of a loved one, or the loss of a friend as a function of our politically divisive landscape.

Many of us at IUCC are on a transitional journey of one form or another. We have seen the passing of loved ones, and others have moved on to other jobs. Some have left IUCC for a plethora of reasons, both good and bad. We have had changes in our congregational leadership, some of our children are transitioning to college life, and others have ended their college lives and are beginning careers. Are you currently on a transitional journey? If you are, these are times that can often seem difficult and we may be feeling disoriented, lost, and wandering aimlessly being concerned with uncertainty.

From a spiritual perspective a transition can be akin to the Genesis story of Creation (cf. Genesis 1:2-3) or the Death, Burial, and Resurrection narrative (Mark 15:37, 46-47 & Mark 16:6-7). A transition can also be seen through the eyes of astrophysicists. The Big Bang hypothesis proposes that the universe began as a single point, then expanded and stretched to grow as long as it is right now—and it is still stretching! In fact, the Big Bang hypothesis states that all of the current and past matter in the universe came into existence at the same time, roughly 13.8 billion years ago. At that time, all matter was compacted into a very small ball with infinite density and intense heat called a Singularity. In a nutshell, the universe is the byproduct emanating from the cosmic dark ages. A transition is a threefold construct that can be described as death/an ending, wandering/being in the void, and birth/a new beginning. A transition does not necessarily occur in a linear fashion, but rather as intertwined phases where the process or journey encompasses the physical, psychological, and spiritual. We experience daily deaths and births as evidenced by the cycles of the seasons, the 24-hours of the day that ends with the sunset and begins again, with the sunrise; nature is a perfect example of the cyclical nature and process of transitions.

I believe it is imperative to honor our transitions and celebrate as well as embrace the journey in the wilderness, that state of being “in-between” or being in the void because this is, perhaps, the most important part of the transitional journey. It is in this stage that we have the potential of being transformed before the arrival of a new beginning. Sometimes being in the wilderness or being in the void can be difficult because we tend to feel as if we are lost in the vastness of the ocean without a paddle. While in the void, it is best to allow the evolutionary process or journey to unfold as it was intended to unfold without rushing and resisting the change, because the more we resist the more unresolved the issues become and fear persists. One cannot force a flower to bloom or a child to walk before they are ready. When we force the process of transformation and do not allow it to go through its natural process, we cause more pain and suffering to ourselves and probably to others as well.
We Need to Get Rid of White Racial Guilt
White racial guilt is a serious problem. In addition to uncomfortable feelings, guilt distracts from focusing on racial justice. Guilt often harbors resentment underneath. Living with guilt can be difficult and painful.

Guilt Is Created From A White Identity – Guilt By Association
White guilt comes from White identity, which is both a non-scientific social classification and an agent that corrupts our true identity. Our White identity is an inherited identity, a living relic of the past. This past has slavery and colonialism for its foundation. This ever-present foundation must be dismantled.

Taking a close look at White identity, we see that it is, in many ways, the very opposite of the values we hold dear and that are expressed by the church to which we belong. White identity has subtly become a part of our individual self-identity. Our identity becomes corrupted without our even knowing. Getting rid of White identity enables us to break the shackles and be free from White guilt.

The Nature of Our Self-Identity
Self-identity is how we see ourselves. It is the image we have of ourselves - who we are, where we belong, and where we fit in. It contains our self-worth. Our self-identity determines the relationship that we have with others. It determines the relationship we have with ourselves in terms of positive and negative self-talk, how we care for ourselves, and for how much we value ourselves.

The Determinants of Self-Identity
Self-identity is relational to other people, especially in the beginning of our lives. Later, other factors are involved. Geographic area, level and quality of education, social status, and life experiences are important. For example, being fired from a job, can suddenly create a new self-image that centers around being a failure.

Our values and affiliations are important determinants of our self-identity. Part of our identity is as progressive Christians, followers of Jesus, with agape love being at the center of all we think and do, as much of the time as possible. We belong to a church that is open and affirming, that is dedicated to racial justice. Our self-image, in its plasticity, incorporates all that our church stands for.

Our White Identity Is A False Identity – The Myth of Race
Race is a social construct that perpetuates White supremacy. There is no scientific, no biological basis for racial designations. Because our country began with slavery and colonialism, White men had all the power, being in control. Most all of the white people benefited from this control by having privileges that were not afforded to slaves and indigenous people, and later to Asian and European immigrants. Owning a home, getting a good education and having access to good jobs, were part of their white privilege.

White men have been reluctant to give up this power and have done a great many things to stay in power and to enjoy white privilege. The South was devastated by the Civil War. In 1865, the Ku Klux Klan was created to keep Blacks in their place and to harass and even hang Whites who were sympathetic or who helped the freed slaves. Jim Crow laws were developed in order to sustain the power that White men had created in slavery and colonialism. Franklin Delano Roosevelt’s New Deal was administered in such a way that Blacks were virtually shut out from receiving the economic benefits. In order to hold onto white supremacy, with its White privilege, nearly 3,500 Blacks were lynched as a form of social control.

The GI Bill and Today’s Economic Disparity
The GI Bill, after World War II, was administered in a similar fashion as the New Deal, virtually blocking 1.2 million Black veterans from receiving benefits. The GI Bill is generally credited for the current economic disparity between Whites and Blacks. White families have 10 times the net wealth compared to Black families. The median annual income of a White family is $76,000 compared to $46,000 for a Black Family.

Systemic Racism
All of the structures - all of the institutions in our society - support White supremacy, keeping Blacks at a disadvantage, as well as all other people of color. In schools, while Black boys comprise 8% of the student population, they make up 25% of those suspended from
Being in transition can be frightening and uncertain. Being in transition is akin to being a caterpillar crawling on a beautifully decorated tapestry in that a caterpillar only sees changes of surface or colors randomly taking place and not fitting together. In contrast, the transformed butterfly above can see how all the randomness fits together into a pattern, and that pattern can be thought of as a purpose. There is a purpose for all things and we may not be able to see how things fit together while we are in the caterpillar stage. However, what a caterpillar would see as a death the Master sees as a butterfly.

I have found, after much thought, reading, and contemplation what it means to be in transition. I discovered that the key to transition is acceptance, but acceptance does not mean that we give up, throw in the towel, quit, or allow ourselves to be a doormat for people to step on. Acceptance, spiritually, means fighting the good fight, finishing the race while keeping the faith (cf. 2 Timothy 4:7) as we act justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with the God of our understanding (cf. Micah 6:8).

Acceptance means noticing and calling out a wrong when we see an injustice done, speaking up when appropriate, and doing what is good but removing ourselves from the results. Refusing to take our control from the equation that describes the transitional process from “what once was” to “what will be” is a form of addition to the Self, and this condition can lead one to disaster and despair.

Therefore, acceptance in tandem with honoring the process is the key to transition from the ending of a season to the beginning of a new one. Remember God is in the Pause... Are you honoring the process and allowing life to unfold as it was intended, or are you trying to force your desired outcome? How are you dealing with your transitions as we anticipate the end of 2021 and the beginning of 2022? Remember that a transition is a Rite of Passage—an initiation. Jesus experienced it and so did the Apostle Paul, Buddha, and the Prophet Mohammad... They left us a map, but a map is not the journey, just like the menu is not the meal. We have examples, but each of our transitional journeys is personal and individual.

Reference