

Something Old Something New

One of the joys of my work as your Associations General Minister is the “surprise” of Sunday mornings. Every Sunday as I drive to a new church building, a new church community, to worship, to preach or to officiate an installation or ordination, I am delighted to find a living faith community.

What strikes me first is the church building many of which are a combination of old and new, a merger of tradition and innovation. New atriums added to historic buildings, new entryways and new architectural features complimenting the old, new AV equipment and screens, all refresh, repurpose and enhance the building as well as the ministry.

I am intrigued by this fusion of new and old, and I wonder if our buildings can be examples of how merging tradition and innovation can enrich and enhance not only our buildings but also our ministries, our worship experiences and more. Every Sunday I am reminded that these buildings reflect the possibility of *“both and”* rather than *“either or,”* that they represent the value of merging convention and creativity offering countless possibilities.

One of the tensions with which we live in the church is the tension between tradition and innovation. The church as an institution struggles to preserve tradition, for that is what institutions do. Yet, the church as a community of faith struggles to be reborn and renewed, for that is what faith does. Our Easter faith always calls us to resurrection, rebirth and healing to start over and again.

As we continue to renovate our church buildings, blending old and new, beautifying and enhancing, can we do the same with the other parts of our congregational lives? Can we continue to merge tradition and innovation to enrich our worship experiences, our congregational life together, our mission and evangelism and more? In our divided and broken world can we do *both and* instead of *either or?* *Either* or divides and polarizes, limits and confines, while *both and* connects and joins and offers myriad of possibilities.

It is my hope and prayer that we continue to grow into a community of faith where *both and*, tradition and innovation merge in order to enrich, connect, enhance and renew; that we will see the promises and the possibilities the Spirit sets before us. And, I especially hold in prayer the OH Conference Vision of shared ministry as we strive to walk the unfolding journey of this collaborative ministry, one that blends tradition and innovation with a myriad of possibilities and promises.

I hope you are enjoying a wonder-filled summer!

From Nayiri Karjian, AGM

