Your intern minister says goodbye to a congregation quite different from the one they(my pronoun) found.

Transitions

tran·si·tion

noun
noun: **transition**; plural noun: **transitions**

1. the process or a period of changing from one state or condition to another.
   "students **in transition** from one program to another"
   - a passage in a piece of writing that smoothly connects two topics or sections to each other.
   - MUSIC
     a momentary modulation from one key to another.

verb
verb: **transition**; 3rd person present: **transitions**; past tense: **transitioned**; past participle: **transitioned**; gerund or present participle: **transitioning**

1. undergo or cause to undergo a process or period of transition.

Source: Oxford Online Dictionary, 2021

It has been quite a year. Events around us are still moving, creating a collective anxiety that both challenges us and reminds us of the fragility of the space between who we are and who we thought we were.

We are giving birth to a new era and a new identity. Those of you familiar with the birthing experience will also notice that at a certain stage of labor is called “transition” for a reason. Your body shifts from contracting and working towards opening up the womb to being ready to push out the precious cargo we’ve spent so much time incubating.

That is where we are now, that transitional place. We are ready to push back out into the community, open up our homes and selves to the wider world. We are ready for the challenge to care deeply for our community, our planet, and our next generation.

Like newborns, we will see the world as something entirely new. We will experience life with a ferocity we’ve not felt in a long time. But until then, it HURTS to push for some, it’s a challenge to PUSH for others, it’s easy for the lucky few. It’s how we work together, how we welcome others, how we ask for help, that gets us through the birthing experience.

How we are at the small scale is how we are at the large scale, author Adrienne Maree Brown says. When COVID arrived, this congregation took time to name their fear and disappointment, grief and anger at politics, the pandemic, themselves, and the world. Being fully in this transitional state also allowed the congregation to open themselves up for change. And at the right time, the congregation bore down and delivered.

You took on digital worship, you took on loss of income, and you took on ME!
I don't know if I am the baby minister you birthed- I don't think so.
It's the community that helped each other in disaster, that welcomed new members and INCREASED when others were shut down. It's a community that literally stepped up to give by igniting a shared plate program that supported others affected by the pandemic. That's what YOU gave birth to, a new identity filled with the wisdom of its members.
And finally, that Fellowship rebellious streak took this congregation to the edge of new and forward thinking worship by engaging in the acknowledgement of Indigenous owners and recognizing that anti-racism is an action, not a book.
So, as I leave you all for an unknown world, very different from the one I started seminary in, from the one I came from to be here as an intern. One surety in this topsy turvy sideways world is who this congregation has become. You gave birth to a new identity, one that represents the pioneering past with a diverse and inclusive future, giving you space to scale up and out. You recognized opportunity where there was chaos. That is hope, personified. That is you, identified. Be YOU. Be well. Become.

Blessings to you all, *Minister* Sangye

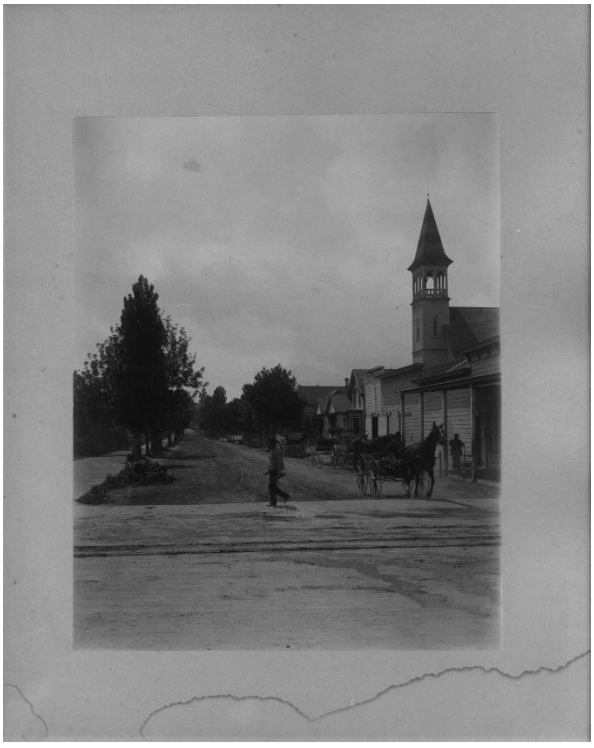


Figure 1: Unity Church, 1877 Downtown Santa Cruz