Rev's Reflections

What to look forward to

It's that time of year again. Lots of folks are looking back on the year that is coming to an end, while others are looking ahead, either as prophets of events to come, or proclaimers of trends that are already unfolding. As one who is paid to comment on events going on around us, I tend to be more interested in the latter. Or, maybe I'm more interested in trends because I am also an artist and designer. Whatever the case, there are a few things I'm keeping my eye on.

In decor, white-and-gray minimalism is fading as earth tones —from warm beiges to saturated hues — are appearing everywhere. Color drenched butter yellow kitchens with warm wood counters apparently will be *everywhere*.

Even in apparel, stark is out and bold is in. Pant legs are getting W-I-D-E while bold prints, especially warm-toned florals, are replacing all the gray, black and blue of the last decade or so. While big is in, it doesn't appear that we'll be seeing a return of 80's style shoulder pads but hey, you never know.

Despite the fact that many people — like me — are feeling nervous about traveling outside of the US, "literary travel" is all the rage. People are making pilgrimages. Not to religious sites, but to the settings of their favorite books, movies, paintings, even tv shows. Especially reality tv shows. I guess Joe and I were a little ahead of this trend last year when we were in Texas for Christmas and couldn't resist going to Waco to check out the real estate and business ventures of Chip and Joanna of "Fixer Upper" fame. (My review: bland and cliché.)

In religion, membership and participation in Christian churches has been in decline, fueling "replacement theory" at the root of Christian Nationalism. The net result is that fewer people are claiming Christianity while those who remain are more strident. That whole shift — according to a few watchers — is supposed to be slowing down, even as I write this, as "non-traditional" spirituality like Unitarian Universalism, Mormonism and Eastern traditions are gaining ground.

That remains to be seen.

But what I can tell you is this: We're seeing more families. We're seeing more men. We're seeing more involvement in the congregation and in the wider community. And it's not just us at UUCSC. All of my colleagues report similar circumstances in the congregations they serve. The world is changing so fast it's hard to know how to adapt, but if we can meet newcomers where they are, embrace the ideas and energy they bring to us, and make space for families to feel safe and included, we can all benefit from more vibrancy. More buzz.

If you are new to UUCSC, welcome! I hope that we will be able to help you live the kind of life you want to live. Even if it defies all trends.

In Peace,
Rev Denis