

Greetings from Rev. Nayiri Karjian, Our Associations General Minister

Greetings, and thank you for the warm welcome many of you continue to extend to me since my arrival on February 1. I am deeply grateful to experience, in this frigid February climate, the warmth and heart of your extravagant welcome. Thank you!

I am excited to be in OH, to be part of the active, engaged ministry of EOA and WRA. I am delighted to be part of the ongoing journey of "imagining a new conference." I am glad to be where God is still speaking, Christ is still living, and the Spirit is still transforming and doing a new thing.

On this transfiguration Sunday, as I ponder the transformational journey from the valley to the mountaintop, I am reminded once again how central transformational experiences are to our lives of faith and spirit.

The biblical story at heart is about transformation. The bent over woman stands up straight. The blind man's eyes are opened. The leper's skin is cleared. The dead rise. The Hebrews move from slavery to freedom, from exodus to the promised land. Jesus is crucified only to rise to new life.

This biblical story is our story. We too discover that our spiritual lives demand the transformation of our hearts, lives and world. We journey from the shadows of pain and sorrow, toward the light of healing and rebirth. Just when we despair, when we're ready to give up, we cannot handle one more crisis, God somehow touches our lives, and we begin to see the light at the end of the tunnel and the Spirit's possibilities spread before us.

Ohio UCC, as well as Conferences and Associations around the country, are imagining a new way of being and doing ministry. This transformational journey is exciting and inspiring as it takes us from the valley to the mountaintop and back again, reminding me that God is still doing a new thing, still calling us how to be the Church, the embodiment of the Good News of Love, in this age, at this time, in this place.

These are exciting and challenging times. These are times of living the story of our faith, of sharing our own stories with one another, and of continuing to write the story together, creating new narratives toward a bright and healing future.

Thank you for receiving me with warmth and openness. I look forward to getting acquainted, to hearing stories and writing the story as we journey together.

Blessings and courage,

Nayiri Karjian, AGM