

September 1, 2013

Dear Members and Friends of San Francisco Chinese UMC,

Greetings in the name of our Risen Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ!

Since starting July 1st, I have enjoyed meeting many of you in a variety of different settings: Sunday worship celebrations, committee meetings, get-acquainted gatherings, Bible study, all-church family summer retreat, etc. You have begun to share your stories with me on different occasions, and for that I am grateful. Your openness in sharing about the church and yourselves has been tremendously meaningful to me. These are holy moments, and I trust they will help me be a more effective pastor. You will notice that I would put a lot of emphasis on care, nurture, and visitation. So I would welcome the opportunity to visit each of you at least once during the coming year.

I can usually be reached at the church from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., Tuesday through Friday. The office telephone number is 415-981-8408. If I'm not in, please leave me a voice mail on the answering machine. (I know, I don't enjoy talking to those machines either - but it is a way of getting in touch with your pastor.) If it is an emergency and I cannot be reached at church, please don't hesitate to call my cell at 510-517-0005. You may also shoot me an email anytime you want to communicate with me. My email address is: PastorAllenYC@sbcglobal.net.

I am thrilled and excited to be part of this community of God's people in San Francisco. It has been quite a ride. While I recognize that I still have a lot to learn, I am nevertheless thankful to be in ministry with all of you. I consider myself richly blessed to have received this new pastoral appointment, and I look forward to journeying with you on this adventure of faith. I pray we will help each other discover our own unique gifts and graces and how best to use them in the service to which we have been called by Jesus Christ.

By the way, are you a person who loves change? Or does the very idea of altering the way it's always been send cold chills up and down your spine - especially if it wasn't your idea? I'm the sort of person who likes everything to be orderly and predictable. If I have been meeting someone for tea every Wednesday for two years, I hesitate to reset my inner computer to adjust to a Friday meeting.

Everyone's feeling it. Some of us welcome it, even initiate it. Others dread it and will do anything to avoid it. But all of us must face it: change, big change.

Never before have there been so many changes occurring so quickly in how we live and work. Fortunately, all this change is filled with opportunities that can improve our lives. Change is like a wild horse. It can throw you, drag you, or become a trusted friend you can count on to carry you where you want to go. If you learn to ride, you may have to let go of what has been, even if you've grown to like it. You may have to take a different path than the one you imagined you'd be traveling.

But keep in mind that what at first seems new and unfamiliar, awkward and uncomfortable, will soon become familiar and commonplace - just as what we're used to now was once novel and strange. In reality, we've lived with change all our lives. We went to school for the first time. We drove our first car. We left school and took our first job. We've all survived such times of dramatic change and hopefully thrived, or at least learned from them.

I invite you all to ride the wild horse of change and get past the feeling of being out of control so that we can once again gain control and continue on our faith journey together. In the midst of

changes, let's be reminded of our unchanging Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of our faith. As the familiar hymn goes,

Yesterday, today, forever, Jesus is the same;

All may change, but Jesus never! Glory to His name!

---Hebrews 13:8---

Celebrating change in Christ's joy, peace, and love,

Rev. Allen Yan-Chamberlin

Pastor