



The CommUUnicator

Newsletter of the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Waynesboro

To Everything, Its Season

When I think of Pete Seeger's song "Turn, Turn, Turn" (1959), it is usually the Byrds recording from 1963 that I hear in my mind's ear. That recording is one that has been used once in a memorial service here. And at some other memorials I have read from the biblical text its lyrics are drawn from. But tonight, I've been listening to Marlene Dietrich singing – also in 1963 – poetically modified German lyrics, backed by a studio orchestra conducted by Burt Bacharach.

"Für alles Tun/ Glaub', glaub', glaub'! Auf dieser Welt/ Glaub', glaub', glaub'! Kommt die Zeit,/ Wenn es dem Himmel so gefällt." In backtranslation to English, the meaning shifts a little, but it is still beautiful: "For all that you do/ Believe, believe, believe/ In this world/ Believe, believe, believe/ The time will come, When it pleases Heaven// The time of plenty, the time of need/ The time of worrying about daily bread/ The time to eat, the time to fast/ The time to work, the time to rest." In Marlene's sultry tones. I played it on a loop, over and over.

It's been recorded in other languages, each translation or performance changing something and still somehow remaining true. It felt particularly apt this week, having just spent last week with my brothers and brother-in-law at our father's house sorting memories from junk, hauling away the latter and devising ways the former might find a meaningful place in our homes and those of relatives or in the lives of strangers or neighbors for whom some items might fill a need or give pleasure.

My brothers and I have never been in open conflict with each other, but we also were never close until COVID 19 came along, and our mother

was twice hospitalized with little hope. As we came together in those circumstances, we found something we never expected: though our paths to get there and our timelines were our own, we now fully agree on both politics and spirituality in ways that are very different from our parents and yet still grounded in core values we first learned from them. In the larger family, we've experienced times of estrangement, gradually then followed by rapprochement. Distance and closeness, each in its time. Sometimes the sequence or how long we have to wait is not what we want. But things always change. In their own time more often than when we want them to.

I got home Sunday evening in 19° weather and walked into a house that was only 45°. My boiler wasn't working. So it was time to sleep with a heating pad under nine blankets. My plumber/heating man came the next morning and made quick work of getting heat back in my house. The cycle between unpleasant realities and better ones continued. While the repairman fixed the furnace, his son treated my deck steps, covered in ice that merged them into a slide of sorts, not as a weather disaster but as an opportunity for taking joy in what life presents. His dad took a video to share with the lad's mom.

We don't know how long it will take to emerge from the shadow the President of our country has cast over the land. And yet, we find ways of building solidarity and community with those with whom we share key values. The cycle affirms the value of hope. Turn! Turn! Turn!

Peace and Blessings,
Rev Paul