

Stardust

June 10, 2018

Rev. Lyn Cox

The story of the universe's origins fill me with awe and wonder. How about you? In particular today, the scientific story of the universe leads me to reflect on time and change, two concepts that seem to have very immediate relevance for us in our daily lives.

In this morning's story, we talked about what happened between the first few seconds of the universe to eight and a half billion years later with the formation of a young planet earth. Within a fraction of a second after the big bang, sub-atomic particles formed. Within a few minutes, the universe had Hydrogen and Helium. Yet it took a couple of hundred million years for the universe to generate light in what we think of as visible wavelengths. Some changes seem to happen instantly. Some take a long time to manifest.

Science gives us evidence for a lineage that traces back to the beginning of time. All of the elements in our bodies came from that first generation of stars, cooking Hydrogen and Helium into things like Carbon, Oxygen, Iron, Calcium. To quote Carl Sagan, we are made of star-stuff. Everything that makes up the molecules of us, the ground we walk upon, the water we drink, the food we eat, the clouds in the sky--every atom of everything we can see, touch, or know was once part of the burning heart of a star. You are part of the universe. You are part of the story of time and space, change and revolution, cooling down and burning bright again.

Time and change are especially on our minds today. Our time together is short. This is my last Sunday in the pulpit. I have one more duty to discharge, but for the most part, after today, I will be out of sight until the end of my contract at the end of July. That is a change in itself. We are also aware that this congregation has become a community of experts on transition. There are more changes ahead. Rev. Dr. Tony Johnson is an excellent minister to accompany this congregation in your coming festival of discernment and transformation.

I believe you have many reasons to be optimistic and excited about the future. I also recognize that you are in the midst of a lot of change. You may be feeling like a

Hydrogen atom in the burning heart of a primordial star. Going from gas to liquid to solid doesn't sound comfortable or easy. Yet I know that you are resilient and strong, and that becoming the community you are called to be means facing the future with courage.

The stars twinkling in the night sky are fiery suns, turning matter into energy every second of their existence. Change is the heritage of the universe. Embrace the changes ahead of you with the same sense of awe and wonder that you bring to the constellations, to the sunrise and sunset, to the visitations of comets. As Ms. Frizzle from the children's show, *The Magic School Bus* says, "Take chances! Make mistakes! Get messy!" You are made of star stuff. Now is the time for this nebula of stars to burn brightly and give birth to something new.

Time and change are related to space. The matter and energy we have moved in our shared ministry this year propels us into different directions. We will have space between us. I will be disconnecting on social media, and I will not be intentionally in contact with members and friends of this congregation after the end of July. We will each be moving into different adventures.

Let us give thanks for all of the twinkling and transforming we have done together in the last year. I am so glad that I had the opportunity to be your minister. Thank you for trying new things. Thank you for being generous with your time, talent, and treasure. Thank you for the energy you have for pursuing your mission of building bridges, supporting ministries from the Poor Peoples Campaign to Covenant Groups to Religious Exploration. There are so many ways to build bridges. Thank you for supporting your talented and dedicated staff team, who have been a joy to work with.

Serving with the Unitarian Church of Harrisburg has made me a better minister. I hope I have been able to reflect back to you the beauty, strength, and creativity I have found here. I love you and I believe in you. Go shine brightly.

So be it. Blessed be. Amen.