



# ROSE CITY PARK UMC JANUARY NEWSLETTER

## It's 2021 Now What?

*(Editorial Note : I am a big fan of the Greater NW Area News (<https://greaternw.org/news/its-2021-now-what/>). Given this, I wanted to share this piece from the Rev. Carlo Rapanut from the Alaska Conference. He puts into the space of 2021 the many wonderings we might all have as we enter this new year. Enjoy.)*

I lay there in that hospital bed completely lost. I kept repeating these two words to no one in particular: Now what?

I realize now that these two words were forming a prayer. Now what? In a visceral way, prayer is naming what matters to you. Now what? is what mattered to me.

I had all this energy and passion and desire to give myself to something, and now I had nothing.

It was a gut-wrenching question, that Now what?

A full-bodied, desperate plea.

It was angry and impotent and honest.

I had no plan B.

Now what? was all I could muster up. (Rob Bell “Everything is Spiritual”)

These are words from Rob Bell’s latest book, “Everything is Spiritual,” which he says is “part memoir, part confession, part extended riff on the endlessly evolving nature of reality.”

In the early part (the book has no chapters), Bell talks about the time

when he contracted viral meningitis. The illness effectively put an end to the life he so passionately threw himself to – as leader-songwriter of his college band, Ton Bundle, which he was sure would be his ticket to a successful life.

Now imagine the conversation of the Magi at breakfast the day after seeing Jesus. “I had this dream.” “I did too!” “Me too!” “An angel warned me about going back to Herod, saying he is up to no good.” “Same!” “Ditto!” Now what?

It probably was not the first time these wise ones asked that question. When the star appeared for the first time back east, it capped years of waiting and affirmed years of research and calculations. Now what?

In multiple moments on the journey when they seemed lost or couldn’t find a water supply or were caught in the middle of a sandstorm or feeling homesick did they ask themselves Now what?

When they encountered an oblivious Jerusalem public, clueless about the birth of a great one in their midst and hinting at the Magi’s worst fear that their journey may have been for naught. Now what?

When their questioning led to a private meeting with Herod, erstwhile King of the Jews, who was suspiciously overly enthusiastic about wanting to be the first to know once they had found who and where the baby was. Now what?

When the star reappeared after their audience with Herod and after not seeing it since its rising. What’s more, it seemed to be moving, coaxing them to follow. Now what?

Think about it. This journey was not the only time Now what? was asked in the Christmas story. Mary, you are going to be with child. It will be the son of God. Now what? Joseph, your betrothed is pregnant. Marry her anyway for the child is the son of God. Now what? You need to travel to Bethlehem for the census – yes even if it is a long, treacherous trek – and Mary is almost due. Now what? Sorry, I can see that your wife is in labor but there is no spare room anywhere. We do have a stable, though. Now what?

Throughout scripture, we find story after story of moments where people encounter extraordinary circumstances. In anger, fear, desperation and hopelessness, they cry out: Now what?

This led me to reflect on 2020 and the multiple times we found ourselves in angry, impatient, hopeless and helpless Now what? situations.

A strange virus is spreading like wildfire in China with no known cure. Now what?

We now have a global pandemic. We need to shut down to slow the spread of the virus. We need to conduct our affairs, yes including worship, online. Our children will need to do online learning. We need to work from home. Now what?

This is going to take much longer than any of us thought. Our efforts are successful in flattening the curve but the reality is, without a vaccine, we cannot go back to normal. Now what?

The simple acts of wearing a mask and keeping a safe distance are recommended but pushed-back on by some as an infringement of rights. Now what?

For United Methodists reading this, General and Jurisdictional Conferences were postponed, delaying all critical decisions about our future and the our LGBTQIA+ siblings inclusion. Now what?

George Floyd is killed by police sparking nationwide protests against white supremacy and re-revealing the centuries-old, yet still uncontrolled, pandemic of racism. Now what?

The economy, especially small businesses, is suffering. Many have been laid-off and are unemployed. Now what?

The death toll continues to rise. ICU bed capacity is at maximum. Frontline healthcare workers are at the breaking point and have been for months. Now what?

The list goes on and I'm sure you have had more than enough of your share of Now what? moments from last year. And like me, I know you are tired of them.

Rob Bell goes on to share in "Everything is Spiritual":

I eventually recovered and went back to school, but that prayer stayed with me.

It gradually morphed from an anguished, bitter cry to a question, a quest, a line of inquiry.

As the emotion ebbed from it, curiosity emerged. Now what?

It's like those two words grew into the question they'd always been.

I started paying attention to my life in new ways.

I started looking for clues and direction.

I started listening more.

I went back to my journal from this day a year ago and my entry simply has a drawing of a star and the words, "The star has moved (is moving) again..." The star in the Magi's story was an invitation to



journey. So was their dream, and that of Mary and Joseph. Anything that comes our way, expected or unexpected, can be and, dare I say, should be seen as an invitation to journey and to ask the question “Now what?”

Yes, we may start out from a place of anger, frustration, confusion and helplessness. For that is normal. Rob Bell reminds us in this same book that “it’s at the end of ourselves that new futures open up.” Naming the fact that something in our lives has come to an end is the first step in moving and accepting and grieving that end.

Susan Beaumont, quoting William Bridges’ work in the book “How to Lead When You Don’t Know Where You’re Going: Leading in a Liminal Season,” states: “Transition depends upon the ending of what was: saying goodbye to the old building, letting the old leader go, releasing the identity attached to the old roles. The starting point for any kind of transition is not the outcome you are moving toward, but the ending that you must make to leave the old situation behind.”

So go ahead and be angry and frustrated; hopeless and helpless. For endings are painful and we need to grieve the loss. But let’s not stay there. After we name the desperate situation with a deep Now what? cry, may we step out into the unknown with a curious and open Now what?

From disorientation to discovery.  
From confusion to curiosity.  
From weariness to wonder.  
From exasperation to excitement.

Beloved, how might we enter into this new year, into the unknown that these stars – these major life-altering events of 2020 have brought us into – no longer with anger, despair and resignation, but with hopeful curiosity and openness to possibility, of what might be birthed in our midst? For remember, as the wise ones of old believe; when a star appears, someone or something great is being born.

Star of wonder  
Star of light  
Star with royal beauty bright  
Westward leading  
Still proceeding  
Guide us to thy perfect light

**Rev. Carlo Rapanut**  
**Conference Superintendent**  
**Alaska Conference**



## Happy New Year RCPUMC

As my time as your board chair draws to a close (technically it already has) I wanted to express my sincere thank you for nominating me to this position last year. I know that we didn't get to fulfill any of our plans as a congregation due to COVID restrictions but I hope that the duties I performed meet your expectations.

I took my position seriously and my biggest accomplishment was working out the ability for us to stay together as a congregation over the summer after losing Karen Ward as our pastor and before we had Dan Benson join us as our new pastor. I look forward to supporting the new board members as we work on getting back into the building and having worship in person before year's end.

Thank you for your support.

Sheryl Shake



## Board Update Kay Pettygrove

We not only survived 2020, but are still standing and standing strong as a congregation. Well done good and faithful servants! As happens each year at this time, there are changes to the membership of the board that we would like to inform you about. First, a very heartfelt thank you to those board members whose terms expired on December 31st:

Sheryl Shake as Board Chair. Sheryl did an amazing job of navigating an unexpected change in pastors as well as everything that COVID brought to our church building and congregation. She was the perfect example of grace under pressure. She has done an amazing job of navigating us through very difficult times and leaves some big shoes for me to fill! Thank you Sheryl for your calm leadership during unprecedented times in the life of our congregation.

Lucy Sagoo served a three year term on the Finance Team of the Board. Lucy did an amazing job of serving our church through her input regarding our finances, to managing our church Facebook page and developing our webpage all while carrying a full load at school.

Lucy is an incredibly bright, talented, articulate young woman who has an amazing future ahead of her. I for one, cannot wait until she runs for mayor....Lucy you definitely have my vote!

Harriet Jackson served a three year term on the Personnel Team on the Board. As a former Principal, Harriet brought a wealth of valuable experience and perspective to the board. Always a careful thinker, Harriet's contributions were always well thought through and full of wisdom. Her perspectives were always spot on and when she spoke, we listened!

We have three new board members coming on the Board, effective January 1, 2021; Julie Fleming, Ruthanne Bennett and Ernesto Quilban. We aren't sure which areas they are going to be serving yet, but will let everyone know, once that has been determined. We are thrilled to have them on the Board and look forward to their input and perspectives!

Your 2021 Board is as follows:

Dan Benson - Pastor

Kay Pettygrove - Board Chair

Chris Anderson - Board Co-Chair

Larry McDowell - Facilities

David Ball - Facilities

TBD - Facilities

Kathy Green - Finance

Donan Mathew - Finance

TBD - Finance

David Whitaker - Personnel

Meara Creed - Personnel

TBD - Personnel

Patricia Holman - Representative to Annual Conference

Julie Fleming - TBD

Ruthanne Bennett - TBD

Ernesto Quilban - TBD



As soon as we have determined which areas our new members will be working on, we will publish a list of all the board members contact information.

I encourage you to contact Board Members with concerns and ideas. We are here to serve you and cannot do that without good communication between all of us. I will be submitting regular updates (at least quarterly) regarding what the Board is working on. I sincerely hope that you, the congregation of RCPUMC will choose to let us know what you are thinking, positive or maybe even not so positive. We can't address problems/issues that we aren't aware of.

Finally, I want to make sure that we all know that COVID restrictions still apply at the church building itself. We are all looking forward to the time that we can gather together again as a church family. Hang in there...we get closer to that time every day! It appears that with the vaccines there is hope in the horizon. I know that this has gone on far longer than any of us imagined and it is starting to wear on all of us. If you are struggling with the isolation COVID has brought, please let me know. The board will try to work with you and get you connected to other members of our congregation. If you can think of creative ways we can continue to stay connected we are all ears and would LOVE to hear your ideas! We are looking forward to an amazing 2021!!!

Happy New Year and may it be a year full of joy, peace and (hopefully sooner than later) togetherness!

Blessings,

Kay Pettygrove

2020 Board Chair

503.504.6548\*\*

kayp1024@gmail.com

\*\*Texting or email is the best way to get a hold of me during weekdays. It can be difficult for me to catch a phone call during the day at work.

## **Thank You RCPUMC!**

As usual our congregation never ceases to amaze! We delivered the gifts that you all were so generous in giving to Lala Rodrigues on Christmas Eve. She was overwhelmed with the vast amount of gifts.

We received this email from her Christmas morning:

"Yesterday was amazing. Your congregation are the definition of generous.

*I'm still in shock from everything...I opened the Instapot and about fell over with excitement. Thank you again. My heart is so warm right now. I was gifted a fake Christmas tree and it is filled with all of*

*the many presents the girls just got...it looks crazy now with the amount of gifts. I am so forever grateful the girls will have so much fun trying to open them today. I love it. Wishing all your congregation the warmest of holidays and I hope you get to eat some yummy food too! Merry Christmas!!! Lala Rodrigues*

You all provided every single gift on her wish list as well as \$275 in gift cards to Fred Meyer, and various restaurants so she can order take out meals. Thank you to each and every one of you for being the hands and feet of Jesus. Please keep the Rodrigues family in your prayers. She is on a list to get into low income housing, but it looks like she will be in her current situation for a while. We will be following up with her on a regular basis and will keep you all posted as to her progress!

Again...words cannot express gratitude for your generosity. RCPUMP people are simply the BEST ever!

## **Zoom Link For Service**

Please email the office to get added to the email list to receive the Zoom link and the Order of Worship each week Or if you are looking for the link last minute, please contact Pastor Dan at [pastor@rosecitypark.org](mailto:pastor@rosecitypark.org).



While our building continues to operate with much less activity than usual, that doesn't mean we haven't been busy keeping facilities up to date. I want to give a big thank you to Larry McDowell, David Ball, Tim Dole and Laurie Paulsen who have helped with facilities projects to help keep things up to date. We will continue in this work as new projects come up—which tends to happen in a 100 year old building!

## **Congratulations Lucy Sagoo!**



The Rose City Park Memorial Scholarship Committee is proud to announce our award recipient for Winter 2021.

Lucy Sagoo is finishing her senior year at Reed College. She continues to work hard toward fulfilling her educational goals, and we ask you to wish her well.

Scholarships are made possible by the generosity of our church members. If you would like to show your support by making a donation or setting up a memorial contribution, please contact the church office.



Just as a reminder, the prayer chain is available to those that would like to request prayers. Also, if someone would like to join the prayer chain all they need to do is send a request to be added to the email address below. [rcpumcprayer@gmail.com](mailto:rcpumcprayer@gmail.com)

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