



October 29, 2025
A Note from Pastor April

Dear Friends,

I was only two months into my very first ministry job as a youth pastor when I was invited by the senior high youth to a “meeting.” When I walked into the room, six high school girls had set up a whiteboard and prepared a bit of a presentation for me.

It was an intervention.

They began with a short list of things they liked about me, their new youth pastor.



Then they moved on to the much longer list of things that needed to change — and soon. At the heart of what they were asking of me that Friday afternoon was this: *Treat us differently.*



I had entered youth ministry assuming I could relate to these students the same way I had as a high school teacher.

“No more name tags,” they said. “No more activities that feel like school. We have real questions about God — and we also really want to have some fun.”

Before leaving, they offered one word of encouragement: “We think you can do it! But it’s not gonna be easy.”

After sitting in my car for about thirty minutes, crying and feeling like a total failure, I began to think about what they had said. They were right. I had made a lot of assumptions

— about youth ministry, about leadership, and about what people needed from me. **The only way forward was to listen — to open my heart and mind to what I couldn't yet see, and be willing to learn.**

The heart of our mission as followers of Jesus is to *make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world*. And being a disciple is always about learning — seeing what we couldn't see clearly before.

Transformational learning theory — one of the best-researched frameworks for understanding how people actually change — tells us that **the most important factor in long-term growth is our capacity to question our own assumptions.**

That might sound simple, but most of us know how hard it is to actually live that way.

Not long ago, a parishioner mentioned that I always seem so sure of what I'm saying. I laughed, because the truth is I'm a work in progress, just like everyone else. The most important lessons in my life have come when things didn't go as I hoped — when I missed something, made an assumption I didn't question, or simply couldn't see what I couldn't yet see.

Over these past months, as we've been talking about our church's financial challenges, I've been learning again to question my own assumptions. I tend to focus on what's possible — on where I see the Spirit moving. Those are good instincts, but they can also make me hesitant to slow down and face hard realities.

Through conversations with many of you, I'm realizing how important it is that we look at the *whole picture*, that we take time to question our assumptions about how things have always been, and discern together what's right for our future.

I'm deeply grateful to be surrounded by people who are willing to have these honest, courageous conversations. To ask hard questions. To listen to one another. To imagine new ways forward that are sustainable and faithful to our values.

This, friends, is the work of transformation. It's the humility to admit that we don't have all the answers. It's the courage to face our blind spots and listen to the quieter voices among us.

Just as I once had to learn from six teenage girls who saw something I didn't, we too are invited in this season to learn from one another — especially from those who see the world differently.

That has been the heart of our **Origins series**: telling new stories, questioning our assumptions, and remembering



that God's truth often emerges when we dare to see differently.

As we move toward our final week of Origins this Sunday, we embrace the word *Imagine*: an invitation to integrate what we've learned into the future that God is calling us to create together.

This Sunday is also All Saints Sunday, when we remember and honor those who have gone before us — the saints of this church and of our lives — whose faith, courage, and imagination helped build the community we now call home. They believed that transformation and change were possible. They dreamed of a church that would outlive them, continuing to grow in grace and love long after their time. **During the service, you will be invited to light a candle in remembrance of your loved ones**, those whose lives continue to illuminate the path of faith for us all. As we remember them, may we draw strength from their example and imagine the kind of legacy we, too, might leave for those who will come after us.



I also want to invite you to join us for our **All-Church Conference on Sunday, November 16 at 5:30pm**. This is our annual all-church meeting to vote on our leaders for the following year, our pastors' salaries, candidates who have felt a calling to ministry, and to talk honestly about our future — to invite truth, to do the hard work of repair, and to imagine how God might be calling us to move forward with faith, creativity, and courage.

Together, we can listen for the Spirit's voice guiding us toward what comes next.

In the spirit of transformation and discipleship,

Pastor April



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