

FIRST AND CENTER
Pastor's Blog
August 22, 2018



I've been thinking a lot about chaos.

I often do at the end of the summer, when my kids are going several directions at once (this year, one to Italy with a short transition from a summer spent in Michigan!), when the program year is starting up at church, when the rains have my garden full of weeds! I grew up thinking chaos was a bad thing, that we live in a linear world, where one thing at a time leads to another.

But, we don't. A few years ago, I discovered an amazing book by Margaret Wheatley called *Leadership and the New Science*. She writes about how discoveries in physics over the last 25 years or so have upended the linear as the basis for life and shown that chaos really is the way the world works! It's not bad, or an anomaly, but the norm. The book is terrific, but in many ways can be summed up by this blurb on the book jacket:

Relationships are what matters—even at the subatomic level.

Life is a vast web of interconnections where cooperation and participation are required.

Chaos and change are the only route to transformation.

She urges leaders to embrace that chaos is not only normative but, as the last line says, how new things get born! This takes "go with the flow" to a whole new level. Embracing chaos in an organization requires trust, and in the church, the trust begins by embracing the divine symbol of chaos: the Holy Spirit. In Celtic spirituality, the Spirit is often depicted as a Wild Goose, an untamed creature who flies as it will and disrupts by its very nature.

In a society in which most of us have been socialized to be orderly at all costs, moving *with* chaos as opposed to seeking to tame it is counter-intuitive.

This Fall, I am going to try to embrace my inner Wild Goose, seeking to relate to all of yours, too. God be with us all!

~ Rev. Shelly Stackhouse,
Transitional Minister