

Good afternoon, Sisters.

While you're receiving the chapter logo, I just want to take just a minute to explain to you the next piece of our afternoon together, for about the next half hour. After spending a few minutes giving a general reflection of our chapter theme and logo, we will listen to the artist Alana Lewandowski's musical setting of our theme and then after that song we'll have a short pause and then Joanne and Catherine will invite us to share a word, a phrase, or an insight about the theme and logo in our small groups-- much like we did this morning. Then if anyone from the small group wishes to share anything with the larger group you'll be invited to do so.

Sisters—Behold, God makes all things new, Listen.

These words from the book of Revelation are not only a reminder to us of God's promise but also an invitation to remember and respond to the truth that this promise is continually being fulfilled. God is in the process of making all things new-- in our life, in our congregation, and in the world.

When the Planning Committee met last month one constant of our time together was to visit and revisit the input and hopes expressed by all of us after our last communal gathering. In these pages, and pages, of collective wisdom arose an overarching theme -- that we continue to be the living presence of Christ for the world by realizing something new. That this time in our history be a time of transformation. Our God is a God of surprises. We spoke and prayed about several possible scripture passages for our chapter theme but when this verse was voiced:

Behold, I make all things new, Listen!

It was for all gathered a breathless moment and yet a moment filled only by the breath of the Spirit. It perfectly captures our dependence on Divine Providence, which is rooted in the hope we hold in the newness God brings to every situation. It is realized in the lived gospel message of transformative love, in our long loving gaze of the divine.

A new creation affects the way we live. As Catherine reminded us this morning--it gives us an opportunity to make space to see what is right in front of us.

Behold, I make all things new, Listen!

This is God's truth anticipated from the beginning. It is god's invitation calling us to deeper levels of truth - where God dwells.

These truths are captured in our Chapter logo. The image of the seedling and deep soil reminds us of the possibilities of what we are yet to become. It reminds us of the transformative call of our God and our lived hope to do and be something new. It calls us into the experience of life and to listen as growth happens-- nourished by all that God provides. To be grounded in the sacred work of our call.

The circular transparent layers remind us all of what we are and all that we are called to be individually and congregationally--and that what we are called to be will happen as a moment is built upon moment and grace is built upon grace. May the many layers of what we are and what we become always reflect the light of Christ to others.

And so, sisters may we open our hearts and minds to God's invitation to be transformed by what we hear—

Behold, Sisters, I make all things new, Listen!

Alana Lewandowski: Behold

1. Behold, I make all things new.
Behold, I make all things new.
Behold, I make all things new.
Let there be light, let there be light.

2. God unseen is taking form.
God unseen is taking form.
God unseen is taking form.
Let there be light, let there be light.

3. First and last is surging forth.
First and last is surging forth.
The first and last is surging forth.
Becoming light, becoming light.

4. Behold, I make all things new.
Behold, I make all things new.
Behold, I make all things new.
Let there be light, let there be light.