

Everything Old is New Again: The Power of Words

Over the past year, I've challenged myself to consider what it means to age "abundantly." As a board member at Pilgrim Manor in Grand Rapids (a senior community that is part of United Church Homes, affiliated with the UCC) I was invited to join a bloggers' group. This has made me reflect on my own aging, and the passage of time. Today's Faith for Thought comes from my recent blog submission: Everything Old is New Again.

These days I find myself reminiscing about my grandparents. Perhaps this is a characteristic of aging; perhaps I'm just caught up in remembering. My grandparents lived lightly on this earth. They didn't acquire unnecessary "stuff;" they composted their kitchen scraps to use in their garden; they reused paper bags, candy boxes, and bits of yarn. They were consummate recyclers. Their example, old as it is, is new again.

My adult children are part of a generation enamored with a new-fangled appliance—the Instant Pot. Correct me if I'm wrong, but those shiny new kitchen helpers look suspiciously like the dreaded pressure cooker of my childhood. I remember dramatic meal preparations as the pot was watched so as to avoid a catastrophe of pressure. Everything old is new again!

And baby names! I've lost count of the number of newborn Evelyns I know. From my generational perspective, that's a "grandma" name. My own generation fills my phone contacts with Laurie, and Karen, and David. In 50 years our senior housing will be filled with folks named Brooke, and Tiffany, and Justin. But today, the newborn nurseries in hospitals are filled once again with Evelyn, Emma, Noah, and Isabella. Those old names are new again.

On a recent Sunday morning, NPR aired a story about pronouns. Those little words; she, he, him, her, his, hers. Neatly divided into male and female references. But, in today's culture, there is a lively discussion about the very absence of a singular, non-gendered pronoun. Merriam Webster's word of the year for 2019 was announced as the pronoun "they" in usage today as that absent singular non-gendered pronoun.

According to TIME magazine (December 13, 2019), one of the reasons for this distinction is: the "singular *they* is being used by individuals — who might identify as transgender, non-binary, agender, intersex or even cisgender — who don't feel like a gendered pronoun fits."

But here again, the old is new again. ([READ MORE](#))

~ Rev. Ruth Fitzgerald