



Thriving into the Future

I can't remember a time when 'the future' held so much meaning, and tension, simultaneously.

Amid all the political uncertainty, environmental instability, and inter-cultural crises – there is an understandable tendency toward fear and overwhelm. People, exhausted by the barrage of extreme opinions, find themselves hungry for a place to pause from the ordeal and to connect with live, caring beings.

We all need to make sense of the world and it's contradictions.

We need places to regroup and reorganize, and then ways to move forward, together. Living with meaning, and taking effective action in the world, are powerful tools for moving through an uncertain time.

Westwood has provided a nurturing home, for free thought and liberal community, for nearly four decades. Members and friends have made a difference in the lives of others (both within and beyond this community), through caring connections, inspiration to broader understanding, and projects of justice and generosity. This is a heart-warming legacy, worthy of our enduring commitment.

I am so heartened by the willingness, this year, to explore our future together. It's a brave move – to ask the real, hard questions out loud: What really matters? How will we move forward, toward a vital, relevant, inspiring future, in a changing time? What resources do we need to thrive? How will we live out our values – visibly and unapologetically – in our lives, and in the broader community? In ways that inspire hope and shape a sustainable future? This is the most powerful work of religious community, a bold way to seek truth – and to ensure a thriving future.

As you choose where to focus your efforts and resources in this coming year, I encourage you to invest, heartily, in this community we have shaped together. The future of Westwood may involve some shifts and adjustments – but the heart of this community is true ... focussed on what does. really. matter. Care and respect for one another. A healthy reciprocal relationship with our natural home. And justice for all.

May it always be so,
Reverend Anne Barker