

A progressive Lutheran minister's season of questions



Highland Views

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Guest columnist

While one season opens the door to invite the next to come out, the cycle of the year moves us along at a steady pace. For many of us, the open door invites us out into the creative colors and wild wonders of nature. Spring is itself a pilgrimage. For others, the season is primarily inward, a personal journey into self-reflection, an inward invitation to a pilgrimage of faith. Whether our steps take us deeper inside ourselves or

free us to enter a wider world is our choice. And there's no reason we can't do both.

A retired Lutheran minister wrote to me after reading my latest book (a collection of "Highland Views" columns). Her comments are an open invitation for Christians or all people of faith to consider serious questions. Secular folks will find much to engage as well.

The Rev. Susan Strouse, author of "The INTRA-faith Conversation," was the pastor of a Lutheran church in San Francisco for many years. I gave the sermon there one Sunday, enjoying a good exchange with her congregants afterward. In the last few years our paths have crossed through social media.

Susan's response began in the context of the season

leading up to Easter:

"For Christians, it is the season of Lent, a time of introspection and soul-searching. How appropriate that I have just finished (reading your book) ... each of these columns is worthy of contemplation."

Susan goes on to explain how she "came to a point of knowing that I no longer accepted a lot of the tradition in which I had been raised, educated and ordained. Unlike you, I stayed in the Church – although it has always been a love/hate relationship."

Susan continues to step deeper into her honesty: "I find myself chafing against the traditional Christianity I thought I'd put behind me." The "exclusive language"

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