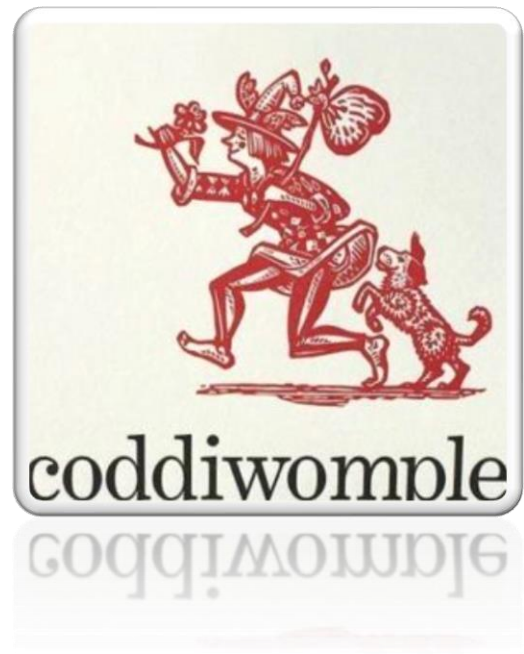


**FIRST AND CENTER**  
**Pastor's Blog**  
**January 2, 2019**

New word for a new year: “coddiwomple.” It is English slang meaning “to travel purposefully toward an as-yet-unknown or vague destination.” Even though I think I have a pretty good idea of what much of 2019 will look like for me, I am old enough to know the truth of another old saying, “If you want to hear God laugh, make plans.” True that. What happens between the totally arbitrary dates of now and December 31, 2019 includes much that is “as-yet-unknown” and decidedly vague.



If I decide I will be a coddiwompler, then, I need to travel **purposefully** into this vague unknown, not just let myself be carried along on the current all the time (though I do recommend that for occasional stretches of every year).

What does it look like to travel fully with purpose? I am thinking it has to do with paying attention. Sometimes I feel that many of us go through life in reactive mode: something happens and, unprepared, we simply react. Not always well. This year, I am hoping to make some effort to pay attention to the journey. Not to shape it so much as to closely observe how things are shaping up and discern my part in them with care. Especially, to make the effort to discern where I think God may be tweaking, nudging, or perhaps pushing or pulling me in a direction I had not planned or did not foresee. In that case, my purpose is to remain open to the as-yet-unknown and not afraid of it or seek to be in control of it.

It's Epiphany, a time when we renew our baptisms, so I think I will try coddiwompling into 2019 holding on to the truth that I am baptized. Which means loved and valued and forgiven even before I mess up (which I certainly shall at some point). Purposefully paying attention and expecting God to be up to something amazing. Happy New Year!

~ The Rev. Shelly Stackhouse,  
Transitional Minister