

Stranger in the desert

By Anna King.

Say hello to my little friend!

I'm Anna King. And a member here at Shalom. For work, I report for public radio. When I was researching a recent story, I was trying to find an analogy for a stranger in the desert. Something that stands out.

Then, my mind flipped back to the times in the fall, I'd seen this beetle at remote farms and out on the Hanford Reach. I've even seen it in town.

It's called the darkling beetle. It looks strange against the pale palomino-colored sand of our desert. Like an alien. Dropped down. It doesn't fit in.

But then I got to thinking about our upcoming stewardship campaign. And that's kind of like Shalomites, or the people of our church. We often don't fit in with our surroundings.

We stand out for our values of:

- Progressive Christianity
- Open and affirming of all
- Taking the bible seriously, but not always literally
- Peace with justice; and
- Meeting people wherever they are on their spiritual journey.

My favorite thing about this guy is when this beetle gets scared – it puts its hiney in the air. I've been known to do a yoga down-dog when life gets a bit too stressful too. Bet some other Shalom peeps are with me.

This beetle is an unlikely hero. But it's a part of our desert home.

We're going to learn more about it in the upcoming several weeks. And we're going to dig into the concept of "emerge." This pandemic has been stressful. But we've come up and out from underground into a new way of getting along.

I hope you'll dare to NOT fit in.

I hope you'll EMBRACE the strangeness of your fellow members of Shalom.

I hope you'll DRUM UP from underground and the leaf litter to stand up for Shalom.

I hope you'll know you're just what Jesus was looking for. What God CREATED.

We might appear different from other desert dwellers. Stand out. But we are of this desert. And we belong.

Emerge! We're bugging you with love to support Shalom.

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