



June 17, 2020

## *TOWARD NEWNESS*

I have to admit, I didn't see 2020 coming.

On New Year's Eve, I didn't notice that the Swarovski crystal ball atop Times Square looked suspiciously like the tiny corona virus.

I didn't predict hospital surges, hundreds of thousands of deaths across the globe, economic instability, school shutdowns, recorded worship, masks, and the longing I have to hug my grandchildren.

I didn't see the disruptions: to family life, congregational life, work life, travel, the economy. Or that those same disruptions might also be a creative force reshaping ways to work, educate, worship, and provide care via telemedicine.

I didn't know then that an act of violence in a Midwestern US city would move witnesses around the globe to rise up and call out for dignity and justice, demanding a reframing of the iniquities of the past – as well as a new way of living into the future.

And on New Year's Eve, I didn't know how much more I would come to appreciate family, church, health, kindness, vegetables, and the pleasure of walking outside and hearing birdsong.

At the close of every worship service, we are instructed to bring our faith with us into our day-to-day lives. One of our most beautiful benedictions can instruct us as we live toward newness:

*Go forth into the world to serve God with gladness;  
be of good courage; hold fast to that which is good;  
render to no one evil for evil;  
strengthen the fainthearted; support the weak;  
help the afflicted;  
honor all people;  
love and serve God,  
rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit.*

The grace of Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with us all.  
Amen.

*Judy*

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