



On social media, there are many funny/not-so-funny jokes about the year 2020 being a complete disaster. Many people joke that they want a refund for 2020 or just want to cancel 2020 and get to 2021. Indeed, 2020 has been a tragic year. Racism, coronavirus, climate change plus many other local and personal tragedies.

In some ways, it feels apocalyptic, as if the end times are upon us. Are these signs from God that the world is ending? Yet we forget that in our collective story as an earth community, we have faced many epic calamities before. Yet, we persisted. Earth gathered up its desolate parts and greened again. Humans, flora and fauna have created, mourned, adapted and created again.

And what of God? Where is God in all this? Perhaps a better question is where isn't God? Everywhere you look, there are wellsprings of kindness, healing, justice, and peace even in places that seem most inconsolable. In Kenosha, Wis., two people gave their lives to save others. Health care and educational staff risk their own health for the sake of others in need. God is in the hearts of each one of these people.

God is in our own hearts as well. With immeasurable love, God holds us and comforts us. God lights a fire within us to become advocates for others. God reminds us of our gifts and talents and awakens us to live our lives in full color. And God calls us to a deep silence within which we can stretch out our arms and hold the suffering and the joys of the world.

As we continue to make our way through 2020, gingerly perhaps, let us make this a year to remember because of our loving and generous response to God and to one another.

For prayer: Imagine you are sitting at spacious table. One by one, place before you on the table the things which have broken your heart from this year. Place them gently, lovingly, care-fully. Invite God to pray with you over each of these. After some time, ask God to help you begin to place on the table the moments, events, people, animals, thoughts, feelings, and actions that have been woven with the love of God. Again, pray with God over each of these. Offer words or a gesture of gratitude for all that the table holds and to God who holds us all.

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