

First and Center

Pastor's Blog

January 2, 2020

For all that has been
THANKS
For all that will be **YES!**

These words by Dag Hammarskjold have been my new year opening prayer every since I first read them many years ago.

I begin the new year with thanks for all that has come in the past year. I have a "Joy Jar" filled with notes about what people/events/places/experiences gave me joy in the past year. I try to take some time in the first couple of weeks of the new year to look back over these and give thanks for them.

Then, there is the "to all that will be, yes" part. Sometimes folk start the new year with an attitude of negativity. "What do I have to stop doing in 2020? Eating too much? Not exercising? Not being nice enough to family/friends/co-workers?" Certainly, we should all be regularly taking stock of our lives to see what might need to be changed. But to begin a year seeing only the negative does not set a very good mental or spiritual pattern.

What if we worked on the openness implied in the words, "to all that will be, yes?" It doesn't mean that we will be necessarily happy about all that will be in 2020. Bad stuff will happen along with the things I put in my joy jar. What this means is that I enter the year open to possibility, hoping for good for me, my family, my church, the world. In so doing, I put myself in a place where God can use me for that good, even in ways I might not predict or necessarily desire!

The "yes" doesn't mean I am available constantly for everyone who wants me for something. The "yes" is to God, saying I am ready and open and listening for where God needs me to be in 2020. It actually implies attention to God and not just the noise around me.

How are you beginning 2020? Are the words "thank you" and "yes" part of your entry spirit? Happy New Year.

~ The Rev. Shelly Stackhouse,
Transitional Minister