

Two Statements of Faith and Hope

Segments taken from each

Sage-ing International

This precarious time can be likened to watching the repetitive cresting of ocean waves. One wonders what is in the crest before it hits the shore, and then after it rolls back leaving the sands shifted forever in ways that can never be the same. People are questioning the narrative of our previous ways of living. Many people are looking inward as well as outward, examining inquisitively and contemplatively. We are searching for answers that will hopefully radically shift humanity.

Joanna Macy teaches, "Out of this darkness a new world can arise, not to be constructed by our minds so much as to emerge from our dreams. Even though we cannot see clearly how it's going to turn out, we are still called to let the future into our imagination. We will never be able to build what we have not first cherished in our hearts."

Is it possible that we can see this time of pandemic as an Era of Awakening? ... It is certainly an invitation to pause, listen, reflect and perhaps discern the question of how we can free ourselves from the past—the old systems that led to this point in time...

There is an emerging invitation within this expansive intercontinental occurrence in ways that are beyond fear, beyond gratitude for safety and comfort, and even beyond hope.

Question: What hidden blessings wait to be recognized, and perhaps will inspire us to take positive action?

What blessings do I identify now that I didn't realize even two months ago?

What yearning do I feel developing deep within during this time?

Investing in self-care, spending more time in nature, connecting in creative ways with family, friends and neighbors are restorative behaviors to nurture by contemplatively reevaluating our values, prioritizing what is genuinely important to act on, and by dreaming new visions—no matter our age. Every step we take in creating a constructive path forward helps us to reorient our compass for a personal and collective life-giving "North," as we discover how to be a powerful presence that facilitates healing in our world.

Question: How will I choose to "be" in this present moment?

The National Council of Churches

As people and communities of faith, we know that God is with us, and that we are all in this beautiful creation together. A central message of the ecumenical movement has been the resolve to stay together despite our differences. When we do so as a society, we are able to coordinate and extend our response to the pandemic and, in seeking to remedy the

weaknesses and faults in our society that this pandemic has exposed, insist that those who are suffering be placed at the center of our concern.

Now is a time to imagine a bold new future, and a way forward that considers the best interests of all of God's people. The pandemic is a crisis and all crises provide opportunities for change and renewal. People seek and need connection with one another and they desire to collaborate to build a new future that integrates justice and peace with health and well-being. We celebrate that and we are committed to participating as full partners in working for the beloved community.