

Devotion, Week of September 7, 2025

Rev. Jeanne Simpson

What happens when your life gets turned topsy-turvy? Mine has been that way since March, when Jim went into a facility for “rehab” and never came home. It’s a very disconcerting time – all the daily routines are changed, he is not present at home but his things still are, I see him almost every day but he’s not the same person. This year we’ve faced all kinds of uncertainty and topsy-turvy events. Think about being a federal employee (who my husband was for 32 years) and getting an email that you’re fired, then getting called back, then being fired, and then at times being called back to dismantle the organization you used to work for. Are we getting COVID shots this fall or not? If so, how do we get them now? I’ve gotten used to just signing up at CVS while I’m picking up a prescription for my annual flu and COVID shots. But life is topsy-turvy.

I think about Jesus’ early followers. One minute they’re faithful Jews going to the synagogue and the next they’re thrown out because they believe that an itinerant preacher and healer is the Messiah. When they form early house churches, they no longer are willing to make sacrifices at the temples of the pagan gods, so many of them are thrown out of their labor guilds and can’t sell their products in the market place. Their neighbors shun them. Their family may disinherit them. Life becomes topsy-turvy.

So I fall back on the promises of Jesus – that he will be with us, during the topsy-turvy times. He will not forsake us. He will lead us through the valley of the shadow of death and we need not fear evil. He has sent the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, to be our helpmate and soul soother when we wake up in the dark of the night afraid and worried. I am learning to trust this promise and to take things one small step at a time, rather than getting overwhelmed with the chaos of many things that have to be changed. I pray each day for God to order my day, and I thank God each night that things have been accomplished, no matter how small. I am a worrier by nature, so it’s hard for me to let go of that. I look around the house and yard, I go through my emails and responsibilities at the church, Presbytery, and Synod levels, and I have a moment of panic. So I have to take a big breath and make a list of what I can do today. The rest has to wait. And sometimes I have to just take something off the list and turn it over to someone else or God. I can’t do it all, and God doesn’t want me to. God wants me to just breathe. So I hope you can just breathe this week in the midst of the topsy-turvy world we live in.

Jeanne