

2021 Greetings!

The beginning of a new calendar year invites us to reflect on what has been and what we are yet to experience. We begin this year mindful of the many lives that have been forever altered because of a failure to respond in humane ways.

This year, as we reexamine our faith and engage in a process of introspection, let us seek forgiveness and extend hope. In this moment, marked by both a global health and representational democracy crisis, I encourage us to think creatively about the ways in which we are still called to gather in community. While we may never know fully the ways in which illness, death, business closures, health and economic challenges, zoom fatigue, and social isolation have impacted our ability to be present fully with others, my prayer beloved is that we always remember that God is yet with us. Whenever, wherever or however we gather in 2021, let us draw strength, hope, determination, and perseverance from the *one who is* as we remember how God provided for Hagar and Ishmael, how the Divine used midwives to assist in life sustaining processes, and how lives were changed by encounters with Jesus.

Each day in 2021 is a moment in time when we too may be called to journey with persons who challenge us to rethink our biases, to listen to persons whose narratives may require us to engage in a collective process to dismantle systems from which we may benefit personally, to embrace persons whose perspectives may disrupt our notions of kinship, and to foster relationships with communities whose experiences may require us to deploy our points of privilege strategically. As Marian Wright Edelman prayed, "God, help us do what we know we have to do today. And leave tomorrow to You."¹

Yours in peace, service and justice,

Blessings,



Rev. Angela D. Sims, Ph.D.

President

¹ Jackson, Christal M., ed. *Women of Color Pray: Voices of Strength, Faith, Healing, Hope and Courage*. Woodstock, VT: Skylight Paths Publishing, 2005, 120.