

On Bobbins, Geese, and Tomatoes

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Often, the chance to write for Witness for Justice is one I enjoy. Mostly I write dry(ish) policy briefs, and the chance to flex my sartorial and theological muscles in a less restrictive format is welcome. But right now, we're in the middle of a global pandemic, on the verge of what could be a contested election, after a summer of civil uprising, and facing economic hardship as a result of the pandemic and our government's failed response. How could I offer wisdom and guidance on these weighty matters? What insight could I have? Many mornings I wake up and immediately feel the heaviness of it all settle on me, like an unwelcome and smothering blanket (not a weighted blanket, which I hear are heavenly). Each day seems to unspool with an uneven thread. If you've ever threaded a sewing machine you know that if you don't thread the bobbin just right, things will get tangled quickly. And right now, it feels like the bobbin of the world hasn't been threaded right.

I reached out to a small group of interfaith partners who have become dear friends. We connect to each other in the virtual space of group text, tenderly offering words of encouragement, cute puppy pictures, and uplifting poems. "Have a Mary Oliver" my friend quips, as she posts for the 100th time Mary Oliver's life-giving poem "[Wild Geese](#)," which reminds us that who we are is loved, no matter what, and we don't have to pay penance for that. I show up in planning meetings, now conducted on Zoom with people's lives briefly glimpsed, an unmade bed (mine!), a kid who is unexpectedly released from online school, soft kittens entranced by the computer glow, and disdain of the meeting agenda. We wrestle with how to show up, how to turn our lofty dreams into operationalized realities, each person touched by an earnest yearning to see a just world and overwhelmed with the enormity of the task. Our meetings do double-duty: holding that faith aloft while being bogged down by the realities of our world. I make a tomato sandwich, grateful for the last of the summer tomatoes that held on until the first frost, a little piece of lingering summer and sunshine.

Maybe it's the grace of the tomato that makes me realize something for my Witness for Justice column: Sometimes showing up is all we can do. Making a choice and drawing a line in the sand that says I won't be mired in hopelessness. I'm not at all sure that each choice I make is right; if anything, the impermanence and fragility of our world has become the surest thing in the universe. All I can say is I keep showing up, hoping that when I'm too tired to pray, my actions will be my prayers.

So, dear reader. I'm asking for your grace today, to leave you with simple unfigured words and a request: **That you keep showing up, with buckets of grace and compassion for yourself and for those you love. That as each day comes with its share of joys and sorrows, that you remember**

you don't have to astonish or astound or prove your worth with perfection. You're enough. You showing up is enough.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Katie Adams is the Policy Advocate for Domestic Issues for the United Church of Christ.

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