



What Will We Keep?

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With all that is disrupted these days, it's harder to look for what is good. We have to be more intentional about looking. Then, we are surprised to see the signs of life.

In Venice, the canals – usually murky and brown – are becoming clear due to the lack of boat traffic. As the sediment settles, people now see fish through the clear water. And dolphins! Dolphins are swimming where boats used to clog the waterways.

In China, the shutdown of industry has brought clean air. Smog has dissipated as carbon emissions drop, leaving unusually blue skies.

In large cities across the world, people join together in musical celebrations from their balconies. Isolated in their own apartments, they still find ways to play the accordion, to sing, or to dance with each other.

Home in Wisconsin, we're seeing signs of Spring. Green shoots are bursting through the soft soil. Even though the daytime temperatures remain chilly, parents and children bundle up to go outside and play because they're tired of being cooped up. They play. Together.

The health risks, emotional toll, and financial devastation of the coronavirus cannot be understated, nor swept away by an impromptu game of hoops with your children in the driveway. Still, I wonder, when the pandemic is all over, what will we choose to keep? What surprising consequences of our forced isolation will be worth holding onto?

Maybe our online worship services will continue as a supplement to in-person gatherings, because we found that they widened the worship opportunity for people who normally wouldn't come to our sanctuaries in person. Perhaps we'll keep our phone trees of care that have prompted us to reach out and check in with each other. I pray we'll recognize the harm to the planet that our unrelenting activity causes and give the Earth a break.

Or, when this is all over, we can breathe a sigh of relief and return to business as usual. We can resort to our old ways and habits without a second thought.

When this is all over, we will have a choice of what we keep and what we gladly toss. I pray we will be thoughtful about our choices.