

Mount Hollywood United Church of Christ – Los Angeles
First Sunday after Christmas – January 1, 2017 – Communion
New Year's Day
Rev. Anne G. Cohen, Minister

Ecclesiastes 3:1-13

For Reflection

"Let our New Year's resolution be this: we will be there for one another as fellow members of humanity, in the finest sense of the word."

- Goran Persson, Swedish Politician (b.1949)

Base Camp: The Resistance

"For everything there is a season..."

A time to campaign and a time to stop campaigning;

A time to tweet and a time to act presidential;

A time to build walls and a time to tear walls down;

A time to grieve and a time to find allies;

A time to be alert and a time to rest;

A time to identify our values and a time to live those values in real life;

A time to recognize evil and a time to organize the Resistance to evil.

I grew up during the Cold War. I grew up understanding my country through the lens of who we were not: we were NOT communist, we were NOT Germany or Japan and certainly NOT Russia/USSR, we were NOT THEM. THEM were the BAD GUYS. WE were the GOOD GUYS.

And when the Cold War supposedly ended – we had work to do to find a positive identity – who we were when we were no longer just the opposite of our enemies. [You may remember that as teenagers and young adults our job was to self-differentiate from our parents – show how we were NOT like them – in order to find our own identity. In order to find myself I had to STOP getting arrested for civil disobedience. All my friends were GETTING arrested and I had to STOP in order to be different from my parents. Luckily I got over myself and found a positive identity that included permission to get arrested again. Anyway, as a nation we had to get over ourselves and do the same thing – grow up and find a positive identity.]

Part of that work was to affirm and confirm our allies – step up our work with the U.N. and international aid organizations. Part of that work was to live into our promise of refuge for refugees and a place of freedom for freedom seekers. Part of that work was to “ask not what our country could do for us but what we could do for our country.” (JFK adapted) Part of that work was admitting to our own tyrannical practices, our identity as an

Empire with occupation forces in foreign countries in the shape of military presence and multinational corporations – and do some withdrawal, do some boundary setting for ourselves.

Part of our identity work was fighting FOR things – like Civil Rights for people of color and women and LGBTQETC folks – and Economic Justice for our economically challenged populations. It was fighting FOR our planet and its diversity of creatures. It was pursuing scientific exploration, technological invention, and celebrating our expanding sense of the universe and our global family.

And, as most historical cycles go, there have been pendulum swings: a time for democrats and a time for republicans, a time for liberals and a time for conservatives, a time for the Tea Party and a time for the Coffee and Beer Parties, a time for reason and a time for insanity.

This century – the 21st – seems to be – so far – a swing to the political Right. We are in a time of White-lash and bravado, a time of terrorism and reaction in the form of Hot War against an undefinable enemy. It is a time of resurrecting Jim Crow and legitimizing hate, a time of closing our borders and pulling away the welcome mat, a time of targeted incarceration and impending registration of ethnic and religious groups, a time of repeating our human horror story and a time of desperate remembering, reminding, relearning the lessons of our past.

And, in the midst of these times, we are called to reassert our positive identity as a compassionate nation, an ally with the downtrodden and persecuted, a force for good to be reckoned with. We are called, once again, to resist Evil and mobilize to protect and save our human family from the self-interested, power-grabbing, sociopathic behavior of a few monsters passing themselves off as human.

Okay, that was a bit over the top. I GET that, as humans, we all have survival instincts and self-interests and occasional desires to overpower others. But it is up to those of us with some semblance of self-regulation to regulate those who have none. It is in our self-interest to do so. And that is a piece of our work in The Resistance.

I don't use the term "Resistance" lightly. Let's look briefly at where that term comes from in recent history:

Resistance movements during World War II occurred in every occupied country by a variety of means, ranging from non-cooperation, disinformation and propaganda, to hiding crashed pilots and even to outright warfare and the recapturing of towns. In many countries, resistance movements were sometimes also referred to as The Underground.

Among the most notable resistance movements were the Polish Resistance, including the Polish Home Army, Leśni, and the whole Polish

Underground State; the Soviet partisans[a], the Italian Resistenza led mainly by the Italian CLN; the French Resistance, Yugoslav Partisans, the Belgian Resistance, the Norwegian Resistance, the Danish Resistance, the Greek Resistance, the Dutch Resistance and the politically persecuted opposition in Germany itself (**there were 16 main resistance groups and at least 27 failed attempts to assassinate Hitler with many more planned**): in short, across German-occupied Europe.

Many countries had resistance movements dedicated to fighting the Axis invaders, and **Germany itself also had an anti-Nazi** movement. Although Britain was not occupied during the war, the British made complex preparations for a British resistance movement. The main organisation was created by the Secret Intelligence Service (SIS, aka MI6) and is now known as Section VII. In addition there was a short-term secret commando force called the Auxiliary Units. **Various organizations were also formed to establish foreign resistance cells or support existing resistance movements**, like the British Special Operations Executive and the **American Office of Strategic Services (the forerunner of the Central Intelligence Agency)**...

After the first shock following the Blitzkrieg, people slowly started to get organized, both locally and on a larger scale, especially when Jews and other groups were starting to be deported and used for the Arbeitseinsatz (forced labor for the Germans). Organization was dangerous, **so much resistance was done by individuals...** There were many different types of groups, ranging in activity from humanitarian aid to armed resistance, and sometimes cooperating to a varying degree. Resistance usually arose spontaneously, but was encouraged and helped mainly from London and Moscow.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Resistance_during_World_War_II

It sounds like a spy movie – which is exactly where spy movies came from – art imitating life. Note that we talk about movements and organizations – but much of what happened was begun and done by individuals who then found a way to cooperate in their efforts. And they didn't have social media.

There is already groups on Facebook called The Resistance, The New Resistance, The American Resistance, The Resistance to Donald J. Trump and others with monikers that I won't repeat here. There's also an improv/comedy club here on Hollywood Blvd. called The Resistance – where politics and the arts embrace. So, keep in mind that we have a head start on this round of the fight against tyranny.

There is an event January 19th called National Resist Day.

RESIST in any peaceful way you can, online or in person. Wear a RESIST Symbol sticker to work or organize an event in your local community to connect with other Resisters. Be creative! Even just being very active online that day

(promoting a peaceful message to RESIST) is helpful too. Big or small, all your actions count!

Check it out. <https://www.facebook.com/events/385497458467755/>

There are folks going to Mosques on Inauguration Day January 20th to socialize, pray, organize and generally resist the inauguration. Jim Burklo writes:

Progressive Christians will stand in solidarity with Muslim brothers and sisters in mosques for Friday juma'a prayers on Jan 20. If you plan to join in this effort, let me know - and if you need contact info. for mosques in S. Calif., let me know. Before a visit to a mosque it is best to make contact with its leaders. This is a project of Progressive Christians Uniting.

<http://myemail.constantcontact.com/Keeping-Hope-Alive-This-Christmas.html?soid=1101259633550&aid=lm3oTCMEyq4>

And the day after the Inauguration is the Million Woman March on Washington with events all over the country including L.A. with a pre-march rally in Pasadena.

<https://www.facebook.com/events/1194698843945459/>

<https://www.facebook.com/events/1211228062281167/>

Jim Taylor and his students are putting together an online YouTube station to put resistance messages out on social media. Our PSA's could air on their station.

Mt. Hollywood UCC is already a basecamp of operations for culture shift.

This is a place where we can find support and resources for resistance.

And if anyone thinks this is not something Jesus would do – then that person needs to think again.

This is the season. 'Tis the season. Thanks be to G-d.

Scripture Reading for Sunday January 1, 2017 – Christmas 2 – Year A

Ecclesiastes 3:1-13

1 For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven:

2 a time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up what is planted;

3 a time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up;

4 a time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance;

5 a time to throw away stones, and a time to gather stones together; a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing;

6 a time to seek, and a time to lose; a time to keep, and a time to throw away;

7 a time to tear, and a time to sew; a time to keep silence, and a time to speak;

8 a time to love, and a time to hate; a time for war, and a time for peace.

9 What gain have the workers from their toil? 10 I have seen the business that God has given to everyone to be busy with. 11 He has made everything suitable for its time; moreover he has put a sense of past and future into their minds, yet they cannot find out what God has done from the beginning to the end. 12 I know that there is nothing better for them than to be happy and enjoy themselves as long as they live; 13 moreover, it is God's gift that all should eat and drink and take pleasure in all their toil.