



*Do not remember the former things, or consider the things of old.  
I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive  
it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert. — Isaiah  
43:18-19 (NRSV)*

This year I have thought more than usual about what it means to enter a new year, much less to celebrate one. Our world is in a chaotic state that seems all too familiar, a throwback to times we thought we had moved beyond. As we begin the third year of the pandemic, infection rates are at an all-time high. Our public discourse is tainted with racism, classism, and ignorant prejudices that seem to have been reawakened from years past. The Supreme Court is reconsidering privacy rights and body-autonomy issues that we thought were settled decades ago. Yet, at New Church we talk often about our identity as part of a new thing that God is doing in the world. What????

As I read these verses from Isaiah, I see this “new thing” in a different context. God is speaking to people lost in a wilderness, thirsting in the desert, and burdened with the struggles of life. It is precisely when we are disoriented, exhausted, fearful, and weighed down with our past experiences that God calls us to see the new thing that is already springing forth among us.

Yes, New Church, we are part of a new thing. We are called to see God’s graceful presence and to embody it in our world. We are, indeed, co-creators of the new thing that will bring direction, sustenance, and hope to this world that needs it so badly. Thanks be to God! Hope-giving God, in the midst of our struggle, open our eyes to the divine possibilities that are already among us. Give us the faith, will, and stamina to express a new thing in our lives, our relationships, our church, and our world. We pray through the power of your Spirit within and among us. AMEN.

Rev. Nan Baker

