Rev's Reflections

New Year's resolutions have always made me cringe a little. They remind me of being in seminary, doing field work, internships, and residencies and being required to set goals and outcomes at the beginning. I was required to figure out what I would learn before even having the experiences that would teach the lessons.

I don't know about you, but in situations in which I am in relationship with others (isn't that every situation?) I've NEVER learned what I thought I was going to learn. Because people — thankfully — are full of surprises.

Flipping the page on a calendar feels so arbitrary relative to the goings on of the world and any one life, that stating expected outcomes for the coming year feels like an exercise in futility.

This year, a friend posted on social media about planning to use the new year to "reset" a few things in his life. They looked at a few areas that weren't working as well as they'd hoped and then granted themselves permission to start all over again, or abandon the effort completely. Resetting is a chance to have a fresh start, without all the baggage that goes with resolutions.

Since July, when I was on vacation, I have been walking 10,000+ steps every single day, counted by my phone. Instead of watching the daily "streak counter" number continue to rise, along with the fear that I will break the streak, I just reset it on January 1. No more pressure there.

Now, the trick is to see where else I can push reset buttons that are more figurative, but as effective. Personally, I think it begins, ironically, with my calendar, and giving myself time between appointments so that I can arrive on time.

My hope for all of us is that we can approach this new year as a chance to reset. With joy, openness, and enough generosity of spirit to be able to forgive ourselves.

Happy New Year!

In Peace,
Rev Denis