



Welcome to 2024!

I've been blessed to attend a number of different churches as I moved from place to place. I've also been blessed to remain in touch with friends from each church for many years.

My friend Crystal - from my church in Pennsylvania - sent me a photo of her jacket and a close up of the beautiful, no two alike snowflakes.

It made me think about our world and how when we take the time to examine anything closely we can see God's hand.

It feels like there is so much turmoil in the world and yet there is more beauty and kindness. We just need to tune into it and trust.



The Good News:

My goodness, we could use some, right? Seems the news is all gloom and doom, but there's a lot of great news in climate justice. Here's just one of the great stories from 2023:

"In Kenya, Maasai women have found an eco-friendly solution to an invasive and hazardous plant. Parts of the opuntia cactus are edible, but its outer layers are covered in spikes and harmful to livestock which try to graze on it. A group of women are now transforming the prickly pear into a bio-gas and preserves. It is bringing them a form of employment and a method of empowerment."

You can read more great stories

here: <https://www.euronews.com/green/2023/12/29/here-are-all-the-positive-environmental-stories-from-2023-so-far>



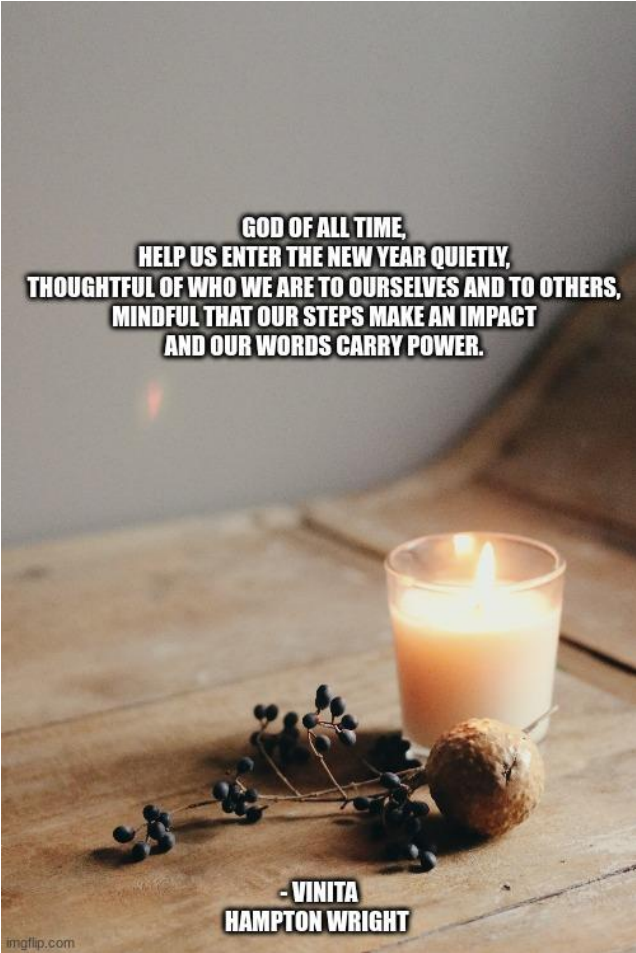
Disrupting the school to prison pipeline:

This is one of those issues that feels so big and overwhelming. I often wonder what I can do. One way is to serve on a school board, but that's a

big ask. Another option is to write to your school board and share more about how you'd like to see programs that provide more care and treatment over punishment. When we can identify the problem, we can solve it together. Making sure kids are getting enough to eat, that they feel safe, and that they learn to self-regulate is a great start.

I have a friend who teaches meditation in the schools and it's such a terrific way to help kids who are feeling anxious, overwhelmed, angry, or out of control. Here's a bit more about that: <https://ptaourchildren.org/meditation-not-detention/>

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**GOD OF ALL TIME,
HELP US ENTER THE NEW YEAR QUIETLY,
THOUGHTFUL OF WHO WE ARE TO OURSELVES AND TO OTHERS,
MINDFUL THAT OUR STEPS MAKE AN IMPACT
AND OUR WORDS CARRY POWER.**

**- VINITA
HAMPTON WRIGHT**

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