

HEARTBEATS Staying Connected 2/28/2022

Dear Friends in Christ,

ONE AT ONE – *Every day this week beginning on Tuesday, March 1 you are encouraged to pray for one minute at one o'clock. This week, pray for the people of Ukraine. Pray for a just peace that allows the people to retain dignity and hope. Ask God to guide leaders in equitable decisions that put the needs of people ahead of geopolitical agendas.*

There's a phrase that comes up a lot lately, that I think is being used inaccurately or incorrectly. I read it in news articles, and I hear it from news stations and commentaries. It's the phrase "the new normal" and it's being spoken with regard to the pandemic. In particular, it is used with reference to the wearing of masks. But, again, I think it is being used inaccurately.

The phrase, "the new normal," refers to something that has or is changing, but is not going to go back to what it was before. For example, cell phones are the new normal. Nearly everyone has them. Fewer and fewer homes have "land lines" that are connected to telephone wires into the house. Cell phones have replaced separate cameras for many. Most of our children and grandchildren today don't know what an answering machine is because our cell phones take the message for us. No one is calling us to return to the past (though I did hear someone who frequently misplaces her phone jokingly say, "Maybe someday they'll figure out a way to attach the phone to the wall so we don't lose it.") and it seems highly unlikely that we will. Cell phones are the new normal.

But wearing masks doesn't fit with that expression. While there may be some who, in the future, continue to wear masks as a way of protecting their health, most of us would like to shed them. We want to return to a time when we could see everyone's face and don't have to breathe through a piece of material. In fact, we're seeing counties and states across the country relaxing the requirements for masks. We are going back to what was normal—the old normal. This is not the new normal!

In Christ's love,
Pastor Jeffrey