



## Christmas Lens

**Sekinah Hamlin**  
**Minister for Economic Justice**

I have an eye exam coming up this week, and I am really looking forward to it. I am curious to know whether my eyesight changed from last year or if it stayed the same. Of course, I am always excited over the possibility of selecting new and maybe even more stylish frames. Last year, I bought cool new frames that were bolder in color and shape than the previous year's edition. However, the most significant difference from one year to the next has to do with the lens. For the first time last year, I ordered progressive bifocals!

The presence of bifocals forced me into a new way of seeing the world. I had to learn how to look up for distance viewing and down for images that were closer to me. All the up and down movements took a toll on my balance and my glasses. My new glasses with the cool frames fell off my face more times than I could count! Although they were quite sturdy, the frequent encounters my glasses had with sidewalks and floors led to scratches and cracks that I delicately call "wear and tear." Thus, if this week's eye exam points me toward new glasses, they will be a welcome addition.

As the year winds down, perhaps you are feeling and showing signs of physical, emotional, and spiritual wear and tear. I know I am. We all can point to elements of our lives that show the scratches and cracks of 2020. Some of us have been struggling. Some of us have been in grief. One word that seems to convey what many have been feeling: lament. I am lamenting 2020 and I get the sense that you are, too.

Surely, many of us have joined the "hurry up and end 2020" camp. However, simply ending the year is not the issue; how we end the year is what matters. Seeing the end of the year through the Christmas lens moves us beyond hopelessly crossing off days of December to considering each day as an expression of God's love that is born in us anew. Through this great love, you and I can experience and exhibit renewed trust in the sustainable and transformative hope of God.

Regardless of the state of our physical eyes, and taking into consideration the wear and tear of our souls, Christmas conditions us to embrace God's perspective of humanity: the beloved community where everybody is valued, anybody can be loved, and nobody is trivialized. O Come, O Come, Emmanuel. Amen.

---

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Sekinah Hamlin is the Minister for Economic Justice for the United Church of Christ.

**LEARN** [ucc.org/justice](http://ucc.org/justice)

**DONATE** [ucc.org/donate](http://ucc.org/donate)

ARCHIVE  
**WFJ** [bit.ly/witness4justice](http://bit.ly/witness4justice)

*The United Church of Christ has more than 5,000 churches throughout the United States. Rooted in the Christian traditions of congregational governance and covenantal relationships, each UCC setting speaks only for itself and not on behalf of every UCC congregation. UCC members and churches are free to differ on important social issues, even as the UCC remains principally committed to unity in the midst of our diversity.*