

As often done this time of year, I'm reflecting on the past year and looking toward the next. It's obvious that 2020 was a challenge. As a planner, a person who likes to be in control and a mother who really enjoys those hours that my children are at school, there were some days when it felt a little unbearable.

But we adapted. The kids adapted.

We all learned a little more about the art of being flexible. It's not one of my favorite things, but I've learned to roll with change a little easier. In the hindsight of later years, I'm sure we'll even cherish the memories of the extra time we had at home with our children.

As a person who isn't overly social, I also learned that I really do NEED other people. Being a hermit isn't for me, after all! Learning this was surprising, but it led to one of my favorite things of this year—deepened relationships and new friends. In a time where we couldn't get together, being intentional about texts, calls and Zoom chats became important. It was our lifeline. And perhaps all of the insecurity and craziness caused us to be more openly vulnerable than usual. Instead of hiding the struggles, we talked about them. We prayed with and for each other. We learned we weren't alone and that admitting our own issues was really kind of freeing.

I had several relationships grow deeper this year and I'm so thankful for these friendships that helped carry me through. I'm actually grateful for this season that allowed these friendships to blossom in a different way. One of these friends I have the great honor of baptizing this week. This isn't how I expected this year to go, but I couldn't be happier to celebrate its end than with someone's new beginning in Christ! What a joy!

When I look back at the year, I find so many reasons to be thankful for the year we had. Was it tough? Sure! But in the darkness, the light of Jesus shines even brighter. He was the hope. He was the light. He was our strength. It's not always easy to see those things when times are good and easy, so I'm thankful for a little darkness to bring us closer to the Light.

This hymn is a great reminder as we close out 2020:

When upon life's billows you are tempest-tossed,
When you are discouraged, thinking all is lost,
Count your many blessings; name them one by one,
And it will surprise you what the Lord has done.

Count your blessings
Name them one by one.
Count your blessings
See what God hath done.
Count your blessings
Name them one by one.
Count your many blessings
See what God hath done!

Love you all!
Stacy