

**April 8, 2018**

### **In the Interim...**

In her book of essays on science and religion, *The Luminous Web*, Barbara Brown Taylor notes that quantum physics says that in regard to the world, we have been living under an illusion, a false belief in separateness. Ever since Sir Isaac Newton proposed three hundred years ago that the universe works like a great big clock, we have believed in the idea of separateness. According to Newton, the world is a collection of individual gears and springs that act in perfectly predictable ways. You can take them apart and put them back together again with no effect on the whole. To understand the clock, you only need to understand the parts, and the parts behave in regular, predictable ways.

But then something happened. Earlier in this century came the discovery of subatomic reality, and it dispelled our thinking about separateness in the world. We now know that the universe behaves much more like a body than a clock. It is not possible to understand the parts of creation without understanding their relationship to the whole. As Brown Taylor says, we are all knit together in this invisible web of relationship that has an order but is never entirely predictable. Every time a hurricane floods North Carolina or a fire burns California or an earthquake rocks Japan, the whole web shakes.

Quantum physicists call this chaos theory. Sociologists call it systems theory. Really it is that great mystery of God that binds us together whether we know it, feel it, like it, or not. Most of the time we think it is an illusion that everything is connected, but really it is our separateness that is the illusion.

Financial uncertainty, acts of violence, and partisan politics are creating an anxious system in our country. In times of difficulty, we tend to focus on individual parts and particular concerns and fail to see connectedness with one another. These days, may we not so much focus on differences but help each other imagine solutions. May we celebrate a risen Lord who unites us all in a web of unity.

Wanda Neely