

Happy New Year from First United Methodist Church - DeRidder!



2023

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!

~2 Corinthians 5:17

 First United Methodist Church
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Pastor's Ponderings!

January? 2023? How in the world did that happen? It only seems like yesterday that we were celebrating AND wringing our hands about the coming of a new millennium! Have you thought about your New Year's Resolution? What is a New Year's resolution anyway? Definition is: a firm decision made on New Year's Eve or New Year's Day to do or refrain from doing something over the course of the coming year. Some people ask, why bother? You only break them anyway.

I tend to break it down this way for myself. I am setting goals. I have set goals for myself for years related to physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually.

Physically - I have come to realize and accept my body does not process food and the quantities of food in the way it used to when I was in my 20's and 30's (you think?!). So, my goal, is to eat less in the evening and to: eat to live and not live to eat.

Mentally - I want to keep my mind sharp - so my goal is to make sure I get at least 7 hours of sleep each night as much as possible and to exercise both sides of my brain (play sudoku and play a musical instrument).

Emotionally - Covid taught me to stay in better touch with my friends. So, once a month, I will get together with an "old" friend(s) either in person, zoom or Facetime and do a better job of keeping up.

Spiritually - I will take at least 15 minutes each day (even if it is 5 minutes three times a day) to either read a devotional, pray, and/or read Scripture. If I am awake 17 hours a day (since I hope to sleep for at least 7 of them), out of the remaining 1,020 minutes of the day, surely I can give God 15 of those minutes! Nothing big and dramatic. All of them are doable. And if I am able to do each of them, the improvement of my own body, mind and spirit will be amazing!

1 Corinthians 6:19-20 tells us, "Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body." What happens if I don't do all of these things each day? The world will not end and tomorrow I will try again. God has gifted each of us with beautiful bodies. It's up to us to honor God through our bodies and to utilize them the best way we can in each stage of our life and to glorify God in the process. When we do, it is good for God and good for us.

What are your hopes and dreams in 2023? What are your goals? I pray they bring you hope and peace. Can't wait to do 2023 and ministry with you!

*Love and peace,
Laraine*

MOMENTS

There are moments where time stands still: *Ted and I, holding hands, pledging our love to each other in our wedding. *The day I asked Jesus into my heart, changing me forever. *Holding my daughters in my arms for the first time.

I had a day like that just before Christmas. After a year of symptoms, pain, discovery of a brain tumor resulting in radon radiation treatments, all accompanied by the outpouring of much love and support from family, friends and church families, it was time for THE final report. I anxiously waited inside MDAnderson. My oncologist walks through the door smiling widely. Before he even sits down, he says, "I don't usually get to bring such happy news into follow-up appointments. Your MRI could not have looked better. The tumor is much smaller and will continue to shrink. The treatment worked perfectly. I consider you free and clear and won't need to see you for a year!"

Praise God! Amazing! The best Christmas present possible!

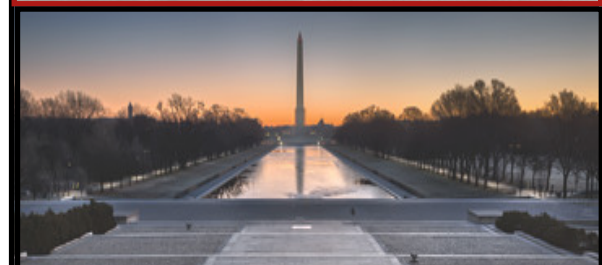
Though you and I have gone through tragedies and great losses in the past, God answered yes to prayers for healing in this situation. I don't understand how some situations are heart-breaking and other times are joyful. He says in Proverbs 3:5, "Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding..." Also Scripture: "His ways are not our ways." Why?

1.He is infinite; we are finite. 2.He knows the end from the beginning while we see just a short part of the now. 3.He knows the whys, while we grasp for wisdom. As I rejoice in my gift of healing, I praise God for ALL He is. Think about this: First, His Son dies for me! Then He heals my earthly body! And one day, I get to join Him forever! What a wondrous God we serve!

~Mary Allen


**Church Office Closed All Day
Monday, January 2, 2023**

*Women's
Prayer Breakfast
Thursday, January 5, 2023
Conference Room
8:30 AM*




**Church Office Closed All Day
Monday, January 16, 2023
in observance of
Martin Luther King, Jr. Day**

**Sunday,
January 29th
Fifth Sunday
Potato Bar for the
Honduras Mission
Trip!
11:15 AM
Gym**



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