

New Year's Message

FROM THE PASTOR

Happy New Year!

The thing I like most about New years is not so much about parties but rather it is a time of hope and new beginnings.

The New Year fills me with optimism and enthusiasm for what may lie ahead. It is as if opening to the first page of the calendar allows us to set aside the challenges, disappointments and hurts of the past year and look forward to a new beginning. It is in fact what our past month of Advent and Christmas has been all about. Maybe that is why the church calendar always begins approximately a month before our standard secular calendar year. It gives us a little extra time to plan and prepare for this new beginning. It was good this past Advent spending time of active prayer and meditation discerning what I feel God has called me (and us) to do and who God has called me (and us) to be. Once again, the Spirit has spoken to me in a powerful way and I look forward to sharing the journey with you.

As we look forward to our New Year I encourage each of us to consider our individual and personal role and to actively participate in the growth and sustainability of the St James community of faith. This may include planning and/or growing a ministry, reaching out to those in need, inviting friends and family to St James, reaching out to former members or your unchurched neighbors to visit us, encouraging generous giving, and sharing your St James story in the community.

The reality is that St James needs and more importantly calls you to be an active part in its important role in the community and it cannot do it without you. Just as Christ could not carry on his ministry without his disciples, St James cannot carry on without your active participation in spreading the good news. This approach to ministry more closely reflects the way Christ's own ministry was carried out. It will create wonderful opportunities for all to participate each according to their individual gifts of time, energy, talent, treasure and other resources as they are able in various and appropriate ministries.

As we speak of gifts, Jan 6 is Epiphany a time when the wise men brought gifts to the baby Jesus. I so much enjoy the whole idea of Epiphany and all the symbolism that goes with it. First, there was the arrival of the wise men on Epiphany, Jan 6. They traveled across what was then the entire world on faith, following a star to a place where, when they arrived, they were struck by a vision of hope and love so simple and yet so profound it changed their life. During this season of Epiphany, we too are invited to come to that place where our lives may be changed forever.

We also in the first week of Epiphany celebrate the baptism of Jesus Christ. It is in that very same baptism that we too are baptized and called to be disciples each of us according to our gifts and abilities.

This is for me an exciting time. A time when the world so desperately needs to see hope, so desperately needs to see the love of Jesus. We are called to be the face of Christ, to be that light for the world to see. I think to myself "what an overwhelming task" but I realize that we do not go alone nor are we expected to do it all. We go knowing that God stands before us and behind us, that God will give us the words to speak and the strength to do God's will each according to our gifts and abilities. We are called to reach out to change the life of one person, who will change the life of one person, who will change the world. I always remember this wonderful quote "We are not called to do everything but we are called to do something."

Remember that whoever you are and wherever you are on life's journey, you are surrounded by God's unconditional love, boundless mercy, and unending grace. There is a place for you here in at St James.

May this Epiphany season fill you and us with hope, recognizing and acting on our call to be disciples.

Happy New Year!! Take care and be well, Peace

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Please consider signing up as Usher & Greeters and/or Scripture Readers.

Scripture Readings for January

Sunday, Jan. 3

*Jer 31:7-14 or Sir 24:1-12
*Ps 147:12-20 or Wis of Sol 10:15-21
*Eph 1:3-14

***John 1:(1-9), 1-18**

Where is the Child

Sunday, Jan. 17

*Isa 62:1-5
*Ps 36:5-10
*1 Cor 12: 1-11

***John 2:1-11**

Extravagant Sign

Sunday, Jan. 10

*Isa 43:1-7
*Ps 29
*Acts 8:14-17
***Luke 3:15-17, 21-22**

Affirmed by Love

Sunday, Jan. 24

*Neh 8:1-3,5-6,8-10
*Ps 19
*1 Cor 12:12-31a

***Luke 4:14-21**

Good News, Good Ways

Sunday, Jan. 31

*Jer 1:4-10
*Ps 71:1-6
*1 Cor 13:1-13

***Luke 4:21-30**

Prophet on the Edge



In Memory of:

Cheryl Beattie from the Beattie Family
Dennis Patelczyk from Kevin Patelczyk
Florence Fitz-Roy from Doug Bishop
David Osterland from Bill & Lynette Oserland and
Sue Routheaux

Thank you for helping to decorate our Sanctuary for the Christmas Season.