

Dear Friends:

Happy New Year!

It's the time of year when New Year's resolutions are on many of our minds. I confess that I'm not one for New Year's resolutions. If in November I recognize that I need to change something about myself, why wait until January? There's more to it than that, though. My experience with new year's resolutions is not great. Most of the time, my will power gives out around mid-February.

This year, I'm trying something different. I'm turning resolutions into a kind of prayer exercise by focusing on this question: What does God want for my life this year? The past few days, I've been thinking about this question, and I've found it to be a welcome departure from the typical resolution question: what do I think I need to change about myself? For starters, it takes the pressure off of me to identify an area for growth, and it takes my will power out of the equation. And, the question is far more hopeful. It assumes that God wants something for me rather than assuming that I'm deficient in some way.

If you were to ask that question with me, think of the answers you might get. Could you hear God say to you, "I want to be in deeper relationship with you," or "I want to help you grow in becoming more grateful." It may be a simple rephrasing of a common resolution, but in those potential answers I hear so much more. I hear a God who meets us where we are and desires our flourishing above all else. How might God be trying to work in your life to bring you closer to the kind of life God has always intended for you?

Blessings as we begin 2024!

Grace and peace,

Kyle

Announcements

Here's what's happening in our congregation.

Unhanging of the Greens—January 7 following worship

Please come and help us put the Christmas decorations away this Sunday, January 7, following worship. Many hands make light work, so please join us, and let's get it done!

Come Sing with Us!

After such a wonderful Christmas Cantata in December, come sing with us in 2024! We're doing some amazing music by some of our favorite composers: Elaine Hagenberg, Dan Forrest, Lloyd Larson, Mary McDonald, and Dr. Scott AuCoin! Women's Choir rehearsals start January 11, at 7:30 pm. Palm-Passion-Easter Choir (SATB) rehearsals start February 8, at 7:30 pm. We'll also be joined by cellist Elina Lang, violinist Larisa Epps, plus brass quintet. Hope to see you there!

Ladies' Tea—February 3, 2024

Join us on February 3, 2024 from 2:00—4:00 p.m. for an afternoon of tea and fellowship at the Ladies' Tea. While enjoying tea, finger sandwiches, and desserts, we will have activities to get to know one another better and learn more about Christ's love for us. Tickets are \$10 per person, and can be purchased after the service starting on January 7. This is a great opportunity to invite friends and neighbors for a special afternoon event. We are looking for a few volunteers to host a table – see Krystal Doeblor (krystal.keeley@gmail.com) for further information about being a hostess. A hostess would be responsible for decorating a table, bringing a teapot and teacups and saucers for the table. An information table will be available after service on Sundays, starting January 7.

Serve God by Serving Others

Ginny's Pantry

The pantry needs 1 or 2 lb. bags of brown or white rice, regular sized boxes of breakfast cereal, spaghetti sauce (plastic jars or cans; no glass, please). Donation bins are located by the main entrance. Thank you for helping us serve our neighbors in need!

God is Changing Lives at First Presbyterian Church!

"We absolutely loved the church and environment. We felt so at home and thought the service was beautiful.

We'll be back."

- *a first time visitor*