

Dear Flock,

The turning of the calendar to the new year is such a poignant time of reflection. Like Advent leads the way in having us think about what we can do to prepare for the coming of Christ's kingdom, so the new year invites us to look back over the past year and dream about the coming one. I ritually take some time to jot some things down in my journal:

As I look back across the last year, what were the significant things that happened in my life? The accomplishments? The failures? The blessings? The hard things? The changes? For what am I thankful and for what am I not? How am I different, changed, new at the closing of this old year and the opening of the new? What changes have happened in the world for good or ill? What looks hopeful as the future unfolds for myself and the world?

Anybody can do this. But, for the Christian, an important ingredient is to look over the landscape of these things under the light of God's grace. Imagine God's grace shining on each experience like a floodlight, because we're promised that is the reality. From Christmas to Easter and beyond in the Church, we are assured that we are held in God. God is our past, our present, and our destiny and nothing, nothing can separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord. No disappointments. No failures. No sadness.

I know that God's grace will shine across the landscape of your new year. It will for us as a congregation. And it will for us as a globe.

Yours,

Pastor Dan