

JANUARY 2021

You have seen or heard the sayings going around at the end of 2020 that depict this past year as one we hope we can forget about. Or if an unfortunate event happens it is chalked up to, "Well of course, that's 2020 for you."

I don't think the church should adopt this mindset. We have never let the world and its sayings or feelings set our agenda. We never seek to echo back to the world the things it says nor do we take our cues from where the world leads. We look to Christ. We look to what He says in His Word. We echo back only those things which He says to us. He speaks, we listen, then speak back what He has said. This is the language of faith.

We do this with our own children and grandchildren and provide the example. We take the time and speak carefully to them over and over and over again so they get it right - "Papa, Papa, Papa, Papa..." We don't do it once and hope they get it right. We repeat it until they echo it back and know it by heart. So goes the life of the church. God speaks to us over and over again that we would know by heart and echo back His words of truth and wisdom with the result that the church is *like a tree planted by streams of water that yields its fruit in its season (Psalm 1)*.

A recent 2020 poll has shown that in the past year the only people who reported improvement in mental health from 2019 were those who reported weekly church attendance. This is not a coincidence. God echoes His promises of life and salvation in Christ to you over and over in church and feeds you with His life nourishing body and blood. This is of great benefit. Not only eternally but also temporally. When we are grounded by these gifts, we can speak rightly and echo back to a world which hopes only to forget the past year, saying, *We rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produce hope, and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us (Romans 5:3-5)*.

This is the language of faith. It speaks back what the Word of God says in the face of antagonism. It is a language that has to be learned so God calls us to hear it again and again. You have Christ and His Spirit. Rejoice. Whatever we experience is ultimately for our good and we can see by faith beyond the current circumstance. We await Jesus' return and depend on Him alone to be what He has promised to be for us - our Rock and Foundation.

2020 is not a year that should be forgotten. What has our Lord done this past year? Children were born into our families and He has baptized them. He has sustained our faith through His church during a time of uncertainty. He continues to have His Word preached and His sheep fed. We would not trade that for anything.

Don't buy into the world's desire to forget, but remember the Lord's faithfulness to you. Continue to come and hear it. He has spoken it over and over and we rejoice to echo back the words of faith - *Who is able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord? (Romans 8:39)*

A blessed 2021 to you in Christ,
Pastor Suggitt

LIFE QUOTES

“As the Church, we are created to stand against evil. We are created to speak truth ... and forgiveness. The truth is that abortion ends the life of a human being, and we should be unwavering in our opposition to it. But that is not the end of the story. We have been given the gift of Christ, and the power of Christ can wash our sins away.” Rev. Troy Tysdal, Church of the Lutheran Brethren – A Life Quote from Lutherans For Life • www.lutheransforlife.org

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