

Trinity Tribune: January 2025

Trinity Ev. Lutheran Church
Paola, Kansas

“New Year’s Resolutions”

It’s quite common to start New Year’s resolutions around this time of year. A new year means a new opportunity to review the past year, reflect on it, and decide what changes or new habits you would like to make in your life.

I’ll be honest about this one thing: I have not always been impressed with resolution-making. I’ll chalk it up to youthful sarcasm and pessimism about human nature. It is true that many people don’t follow through with their resolutions. As Lutherans, we can recognize that the human will is weak with sin: “For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I keep on doing” (Rom 7:19). However, this does not mean that we should give up on resolutions as entirely useless and impossible.

The first and foremost thing to recognize is that salvation is entirely in God’s hands, and our hope rests solely in the resolve of Jesus Christ to save us. When or if we fail resolutions, we do not lose that promise of salvation.

We can make resolutions because they deal with time. When God created this world, he did so with an eye to time. Not only is there evening and morning, each day, but he set up the sun, moon, and stars that they would “be for signs and for seasons, and for days and years” (Gen 1:14). Christians ought to reflect on the time that God has given us by thinking about the day, week, month, and year.

These have their own loops, their own cycles. There are times of rest and work in each, times to do reflect. Sometimes we begin with rest (Sunday of the week), and sometimes we end with rest (nighttime of the day). We celebrate festivals roughly monthly, and then towards the end of the year there is “the blob”: two weeks where you forget what day it is as you recover from the Christmas holiday.

Nonetheless, marking time is good. Even though the new year is somewhat arbitrary, not tied to the solstice or equinox, it is a day where we can say that the old year is finished, and a new year starts. It orients us in time and allows us to look backwards and forwards.

Looking backwards on New Years is just as important as looking forwards. We ought to observe our own little slice of history, what the past year meant for us. It had blessings and failures. We can confess our sins, rejoice in the Lord’s mercy and grace, and consider how better to love and serve our neighbors.

Which leads to our looking forward. Another year is coming toward us. How can we be good stewards of this gift of

time, and use it to bless the Lord and serve our neighbor? It’s good to plan, to stretch for something a bit out of reach, to plot out our love and service, to retool. The new year is a gift from God, an assist on this meditation.

Ephesians 5:15–17 speak to this, “Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, making the best use of the time, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is.” The NKJV says, “redeeming the time,” perhaps a better translation that emphasizes buying back or ransoming something from slavery to sin. This then is tied in with the exhortation to understand what the will of the Lord is: God does not want us to spend our time in sin or in sloth but rather in that which builds one another up in love.

St. Paul gives Timothy three vocations to meditate on: the soldier, the athlete, and the farmer. Each deal with time, to a degree. An athlete strives against time, to run or compete fast. A soldier has a time of service, and times of active or guard duty within that service. Outside of that time, he may rest.

The farmer is the one that deals most with time, as the farmer must in different seasons plant, cultivate, prune, and uproot or destroy (in harvest). This echoes what Ecclesiastes 3 says, “For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven: a time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up what is planted” (1–2).

We can push this analogy into our own lives. There are times to start, to grow, to shrink, and to stop things in our lives. We can ask ourselves these four questions:

What do I want to start this year?

What do I want to do more of this year?

What do I want to do less of this year?

What do I want to quit doing this year?

Although we could be asking these questions every day of our life, New Year’s is a day set aside to ponder them anew.

God be praised for another year of His grace and kindness. God be praised that He gives us the new year to stop, reflect on the past, consider the future, and ask for His wisdom. God be praised that we live under His grace, that He forgives our failures, and He sustains our hope. May God give us another year of wisdom as we wait for His return in glory.

Colossians 4:5, “Walk in wisdom toward outsiders, making the best use of the time.”

Yours in Christ,
Pastor Woelmer



Birthdays

- January 1 Bryce Peckman
- January 2 Jan Minden
- January 2 Anisha O’Barto
- January 2 Tara Smith
- January 4 Cathy Hieber
- January 4 Jessica Parks
- January 4 Stan Plummer
- January 4 Dustin Prothe
- January 5 Levi Alcorn
- January 6 Matthew Richardson
- January 7 Caylin Garrison
- January 7 Sunnye Oswalt
- January 8 Mike England
- January 8 Cormick Ferrell
- January 8 Linda Ferrell
- January 8 Michael Kriesel
- January 9 Jobie Debrick
- January 11 Phyllis Trickett
- January 12 Devon Smithhisler
- January 12 Donna Erwin
- January 13 Bill Dillenbeck
- January 13 Lorri Jenson
- January 14 Paul Deering
- January 14 Bruce Nowasell
- January 15 Chancie Minden
- January 15 Cooper Minden
- January 17 Lindsey Hall
- January 20 Zachary Donahue
- January 21 Jody Burnett
- January 22 Rick Holte
- January 24 Trent Fleming
- January 25 Mike Koelsch
- January 25 Aubry Peckman
- January 25 Joel Plummer
- January 25 Mike Thompson
- January 26 Gregg Hall
- January 26 Michael Thoden
- January 27 Suzie Prothe
- January 28 Jimmy Massey
- January 29 Lindsey Holtz
- January 30 Elbert Jones
- January 30 Mason Kunard
- January 30 Mitch Plummer
- January 31 Morgan Richards

Anniversaries

January 11 Jeron and Kendra Fuller (21)

COFFEE HOUR

Everyone is invited to stay for Coffee Hour in the Gathering Room following worship. Our thanks to those that provide snacks each Sunday. The signup sheet to provide snacks for Coffee Hour in 2025 is on the counter in the Gathering Room. Consider signing up to honor birthdays, wedding anniversaries, etc.

**ADULT BIBLE CLASS:
“Survey of the Bible”**

We have begun a new Bible study, a Survey of the Bible! Although there are 66 books in the Bible, we will be combining a few and (hopefully) make it through the whole Bible in a year. We will also be alternating between Old and New Testament books.

Join the Adult Bible Class at 9:00 a.m. on Sundays in the Heritage Room to learn more!

NEW MEMBERS

On November 17th, we welcomed Mike Puckett, David Puckett, and Laura Gibson through Adult Confirmation. Welcome! On January 12th, we will welcome Zachary Donahue and Noah Kwasiborski also through Adult Confirmation. Welcome!

PORTALS OF PRAYER

The quarterly issue of the devotional booklet Portals of Prayer for January thru March is available in the rack in the Gathering Room, in regular size, large print, and “digest” size. A great way to keep close to the Lord!





In Christian Sympathy

Doris Rodewald

November 13, 1926–December 6, 2024

*“He that abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit;
for without Me you can do nothing.”*

John 15:5

Bill Koelsch

April 6, 1944 — December 25, 2024

*“My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they
follow me.”*

John 10:27



Lent Begins on March 5

Easter is late this year (April 20th)! That means all the dates for Lent are pushed back as well. Other dates for Lenten services and dinners are March 12, 19, 26, and April 2, 9. Church services throughout Lent will be at 7:00 p.m., with a Lenten supper before each service.

Pay attention to the bulletin for the theme and opportunities to provide suppers.

Voters Assembly, January 19

The first quarterly meeting of the Voters Assembly for 2025 will be on Sunday, January 19, following the worship service. The Church Council will meet in advance of the Voters Assembly, on Tuesday, January 14 at 7:00 p.m.

YOUTH SWEETHEART DINNER

Save the date! The Trinity Youth will host their annual Sweetheart Dinner on February 15th. The food and decorations this year are going to be *New Orleans* themed! There will be a 3-course dinner with live entertainment! Keep an eye out for times and how to purchase tickets.

Trinity Tribune

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