



*A Message From Pastor K.*

## JANUARY 2024 NEWSLETTER

Dear Friends,

So, we are beginning a new year! And if you pay attention to the TV commercials, news, and social media, then you know that it is the obligatory time to start something new.

In reality, that seems kind of arbitrary. Yes, the number of the year did change (unless you follow the Hebrew calendar or the Chinese calendar), but does that really mean that somehow a “reset” button has been tripped on our daily lives? Of course, my Blue Cross health plan believes that, as well as the IRS. But what about the rest of our life experiences? Many of us are still recovering from illness, struggling with our finances, searching for work. Some are even living

through wars and imprisonment. How will January 1 be any different?

Will we hit the “reset” button on our unkept resolutions of 2023? Sometimes I lament over the improvements I attempted to make in my life that I was not able or willing to stick with. But I think that most of us just write our old resolutions off and try to come up with something new (often waiting for the new year to begin).

But if we don’t use the beginning of a new year as the official starting point for change in our lives, when would be a better time? Or, IS there a better time? Could it be the first Sunday of Advent (the beginning of the Church year)? Or perhaps, Easter Sunday? For

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### ***Finding Joy***

We are all born with a capacity for love and joy, yet many people feel they are controlled by a variety of moods and believe they have no choice in how they feel. Although we don’t always have the power to change our circumstances, we do have the power to change our outlook. If we want to feel better, we need to think better. We have to keep making the right choices. God wants us to feel joyful, and He calls us to be glad and rejoice in him (Ps 32:11), be joyful always, pray continually and give thanks in all circumstances (1 Th 5:16) and He fills you with all joy and peace as you trust in Him (Ro 15:13).

Finding joy in life begins with the thoughts you choose to think. No matter what is going on in your life, if you choose happy, hope-filled thoughts based on God’s Word, you will feel happier. You can jump-start

some people it might be their birthday. Or how about November 5th (I just randomly picked that, even though it just happens to be the date that Doc Brown first conceived of the Flux Capacitor in "Back to the Future")?

Or how about... Today? I don't just mean January 1st (or whatever date you happen to be reading this), but EVERY "today"! That would mean that EVERY day is an opportunity for something new in your life; something you've hoped for or hoped to do. It gets rid of the excuse of waiting for the "right day". And why not? Because God renews us each and every day (2 Corinthians 4:16 & Colossians 3:10), forgives us every day – freeing us from our sins (1 John 1:9), and encourages us to start anew following him (Luke 9:23).

But if we were to attempt to improve ourselves or try something new, where would be the best place to start? By nature, we usually think of something that we would do for ourselves. Something that we think would make us happy or prolong our lives. But perhaps we might instead try to discern what GOD has in

mind for us. What does HE think would be the best improvement or have the biggest impact on our lives?

But how would we know what He has in mind for us? Well... we could just ASK Him. I don't think that is a secret He would keep from us if we asked Him in prayer. And if you don't find yourself praying to Him on a regular basis, perhaps you could initiate that as your New Years resolution on January 1 (or... TODAY)!

May God bless you all in 2024!

Your friend & servant in Christ,  
Pastor Kanefke

*"Exhort one another every day, as long as it is called 'today'!" Hebrews 13a:3 (ESV)*

## Growing Together In Christ

### January Birthdays



Brian Towns	Jan 7
Caleb Nalley	Jan 8
Alyssa Foster	Jan 11
Fred Wiedenmann	Jan 11
Randy Smith	Jan 14
Vincent Jordan	Jan 25
Victor Allen	Jan 26
Kimberly Jordan	Jan 28
Kelley Wiedenmann	Jan 30

your day by thinking and speaking good things first thing in the morning. Try meditating on these words: This is the day God has made and I am going to enjoy it. (Ps 118:24)

I can handle whatever happens today because Christ is my Strength. (Php 4:13)

I enjoy being a blessing to others. (1Tim 6:18)

I am thankful for all God has done for me. (1 Th 5:18)

Expressing gratitude ignites the light within us and is a sure path to joy. It can be as simple as being grateful for the soup you had for lunch, that you have the sight to read this newsletter, or for the fresh air you breathe. Part of the journey toward joy involves being continuously aware of our blessings.

I challenge you to start a gratitude journal. For one month, at the end of the day, write down three things

that you are grateful for and bring you joy. It doesn't have to be anything fancy. It can be a notebook, a legal pad, or a bound journal where you like to record your thoughts. The important thing is to be consistent.

At the end of that month, please let me know if it has helped, if you've experienced any changes in your life either mentally, physically or spiritually. Hopefully, this will be a habit you will want to continue as the feeling of joy spreads through your life and overflows onto others.

Blessings,



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## *Bible Studies begin again*



Sunday morning bible study, at 9:15 AM will focus on "What's In the Bible?" You know the stories, but do you really understand what they

are about? Or are there things you would like to know about but have no idea how to find the information. Do you know all the books of the Old Testament and the New Testament? Come out and learn something new.

Our Wednesday evening bible study at 7:00 PM will begin again soon. Watch for information on when that will happen and please consider coming out. If you do not like to drive at night and would like a ride, please let one of the elders know.

**Worry is a conversation with yourself about things you cannot change.**

**Prayer is a conversation you have with God about things he can change.**