

According to Mark . . . January 2020

It seems like just yesterday we were welcoming in the new millennium. And here we are now welcoming in 2020, which for you numbers fans only happens every one thousand and ten years when the last two numbers of the decade and year matches the first two numbers of the millennium and century. Life's little coincidences can give us distraction and fun for sure.

But with such fun and frolic comes the more sober task of self-improvement, the dreaded New Year's resolutions. Who came up with that idea, anyway? Well, we can thank the ancient Babylonians of about 4,000 years ago when they made promises to their Gods in an 11-day festival and hopes for a good year of crops (they celebrated the New Year in March). Julius Caesar moved the first day of the new year to January to honor Janus, the Roman god of beginnings. And so we begin our cycle of making promises...in hopes of a good year...

And we probably don't pray for a good harvest, living in Townsend. And our promises are more to ourselves these days than to God. Why is that? Well, for my part, I don't want to get too ambitious with too many things that I might get overextended, do a few things part way, and then the whole house of cards collapses.

That sounds familiar, doesn't it? We want to do better, be better, but we don't want to make that too well-known even to ourselves, because it's hard to change. Turns out that simply wanting to change is not enough. We need to make it stick. One way to do this is to share our resolution with others. It's all about accountability and encouragement. AA was the first to understand that we need a place of belonging but also confession and monitoring. I was a member of Weight Watchers for a while and it really made a difference, having a group and meeting to go to each week.

So let's try making a New Year's resolution for what we can do with our church and faith lives. What do you want to do more (or less) of? What might challenge you outside your comfort zone? Whether it's learning more about yourself or others, opportunities abound at TCC. Come work at a church supper; wash some dishes and support the event, serve others and see their joy, or just come and connect with people you haven't seen in a while. Volunteer for our visitation (Stephen) ministries and spend time with people who helped build TCC and make it what it is today. Come and get hugs and smiles at Church school by being a shepherd or teacher – there are no wrong answers in the eyes of a child, they simply want adults to be with them and show love. Or drive someone to a medical appointment when they need a ride or companionship – we will be doing more than ever this year with the Senior Center in activating outreach to our neighbors. Loneliness is the #1 health problem in 38% of people over the age of 65, and we need to start doing our part to serve that need.

So resolve to do something new. And don't worry, you can't disappoint when you're volunteering. We need your encouragement and to reclaim our role as "The Church that does stuff" as we face new challenges of what church looks like in the 2020s. So let's embrace it with the fun and frolic it deserves!

Come to church on January 5 and throw your time and talent commitment card in the offering plate and let's have some fun as we welcome in the new decade!

Pastor Mark