

Pastor's Corner December 2017

So this is December, and what have you done? As you look back on 2017, what have you done this past year? Hopefully, a lot of immensely enjoyable things. Hopefully, you laughed a lot, loved a lot, and lived a lot. Hopefully, you created so many wonderful memories you'll have trouble remembering them all.

Maybe, however, 2017 presented you with some difficult things. Maybe you cried too much, lost too much, sorrowed too much. Maybe you hurt, struggled, and agonized too much. Maybe some of the memories of 2017 won't be so pleasant for you.

Maybe 2017 was just another year for you. Nothing particularly wonderful and memorable, but nothing particularly difficult or forgettable, either. It was just another year, filled with the same old, same old, day after day. Not a bad year, to be sure, but not one of the really great ones, either.

No matter what 2017 was for you, no matter what you have done this past year, now it is December, and this year of 2017 is coming to a close. Will you be looking forward to 2018? Will you wish that 2017 would never end? Do you wish the year was over already?

The year is winding down to its close, no matter what we think about that. The clock ticks on, the days go by, the calendar turns another page. This is December, the end of the year.

Except, that is, in the church. December contains the beautiful season of Advent, and Advent, as well as being a season of waiting and watching, is also a season of beginning. Advent is the church's New Year, only it's not one day, it's a season. Four Sundays, and the weeks in between.

Advent reminds us that with God, all things are made new. What we see as an ending, God sees as a beginning. The beauty of Advent being is December is precisely this, that while the calendar says ending, God is saying beginning.

As people of faith, as disciples of Jesus Christ, we are not people of endings, we are people of new beginnings. We are people who know that God is always, constantly, continually, making all things new, including us.

The surest sign of God making all things new is the birth of Jesus. Nothing is more new than the birth of a baby. New life made flesh, new possibilities, new opportunities, new realities, all there, all waiting to be lived out, in each new baby.

The culmination of Advent is Christmas, when God, the Almighty, the Creator, the Lord of All, takes on our reality, takes on our humanity, takes on our human flesh, and becomes one of us. In the newness of new life, God, who makes all things new, makes our deepest reality new.

God makes the whole world new, in this one baby, born so long ago, so far away, to such a young couple in such a small village, in such a small country. Under the shadow of the old worldly vision of empire and oppression, God comes to make us new, with a new vision of community and freedom.

So this is December, and as much as we think about what we have done, it is so much more fulfilling to think about what has done, and continues to do, in the person of Jesus Christ. The year may be over, but God is never over. God is always present, always active, always making us new, always doing new things, always giving us divine hope to move into God's new future. Merry Christmas!

Peace,
Pr. Paul