



January Edition 2022

I'm sure this past week you have heard from a family member, friend, or maybe read an article from a smart device about new year resolutions. Each year newspapers and bloggers hype up a new list of resolutions often suggesting a happier or better you in the upcoming year. Whether it's starting a new habit or stopping/changing a routine, bloggers suggest these resolutions might help one with physical or mental health, relationally, financially, and the promises go on and on. This past week I read a *Pickles*- comic strip with the famous retired couple Earl and Opal walking down the street with the following discussion:

Opal: Earl, are you making any new resolutions this year?

Earl: Maybe...Maybe not. Why do you ask?

Opal: Oh, don't worry, there's no right answer. I was just curious.

Earl: I know there's no right answer. If there were, I'm sure you'd have given it to me.

Thinking about new resolutions and goals, something stood out studying a few of the traditional, post-Christmas Gospel readings often read in worship. There is a theme or at least a dimension of this word "desire" throughout them.

- In Luke 2:21-40, Jesus is presented in the temple and we are introduced to two unique, yet faithful characters Simeon and subsequently Anna. Simeon has this desire to see the consolation of Israel and is promised to see the messiah before his death. Throughout Anna's actions of constantly fasting, praying, and never leaving the temple, it's easy to note what and who Anna ultimately desires.
- In the next story that follows, we read about Jesus who is no longer an infant but a youth at the temple. Once again, you can see Jesus' ultimate desire as he finds himself at the temple courts, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions (Luke 2:46). Or, looking at the same passage and what I'll preach on this morning, it's not what Mary and Joseph most desired, but a who they most desired. It's not what they forgot, but who they forgot and desired back.
- Or, some churches will celebrate Epiphany Sunday, and we know the wise men or magi story by memory. Nevertheless, these foreigners who were far removed from Jewish heritage had one and only one desire as they traveled countless days. That is, to worship the newborn king.

I'll let your friend or even your most trusted newspaper columnist come up with the classic as well as a new goal this New Years that you can either test out or leave it. However, I believe God wants to know what do you truly desire. As we move forward in 2022, what is it that you desire for yourself, your family, and our church family? So what do you desire in your heart or what is it that you meditate and think about? This is a perfect time of the year to do some self-reflection and prayer about the things you desire. Some of us can use this to clean and purify our hearts and minds. Some know exactly what we desire, and now by taking the time and naming it can offer power and direction. Others might be afraid to recognize what we desire, because in doing so, the Holy Spirit might cause us to take some responsibility and actually do something about it. The Psalmist says it beautifully "Delight yourself also in the Lord and He shall give you the desires of your heart" (37:4).

Although we might have chuckled earlier at Earl's comment that his wife would give him the right answer (that is, a new year resolution), desires work differently. One's desire cannot be given to us from anyone else, not even Opal to Earl, but come deep within us. So what and who is it that you desire? If it's Christ, there are many promises given to you and maybe none greater than the promise of Emmanuel- God with us. As we begin this new year, let me share a famous prayer by the spiritual giant, Thomas Merton:

"My Lord God, I have no idea where I am going. I do not see the road ahead of me. I cannot know for certain where it will end. Nor do I really know myself, and the fact that I think that I am following your will does not mean that I am actually doing so. But I believe that the desire to please you does in fact please you. And I hope I have that desire in all that I am doing. I hope that I will never do anything apart from that desire. And I know that if I do this you will lead me by the right road, though I may know nothing about it. Therefore will I trust you always, though I may seem to be lost and in the shadow of death. I will not fear, for you are ever with me, and you will never leave me to face my perils alone."

Prayers and Praise to God from the Past Month

Ernest Sarkissian, upcoming tests and treatment for his right eye, Asya Teruni (husband)
Chris Harris, skin cancer removed and doing well, Church Family
Mya Seitz, praise to God for good report on colonoscopy, Church Family
Justin, young man diagnosed with ALS and has only months to live, Elizabeth Larson (boyfriend's brother)
Meghan Cusack, COVID, Susan Cusack (daughter)
Kim and Mike, both have COVID, John Blasi Sr. (daughter and son-in-law)
Justin, COVID, John Blasi Sr. (grandson) **Jared**, COVID, Dean Brown (grandson)
Lauryn Kay, exposed to COVID, Church Family **Kyle McDaniel**, COVID, Zach (cousin)
Carlene Griggs, back home from rehab and recovering well from a fall, Church Family
All the communities and people effected by the Tornados
Family and Friends of Rev. Dr. Charles Hamilton, in the death of Charles, Former Fort Myers Christian Church Pastor
Joanne Minor's New Contact 201 West Hartley Dr., High Point, N. Carolina 27265 Apt.105
Carol Krueger, recovering well at home from a fall, Church Family
Rev. Ed Bodanske, PRAISE to God that all the cancer screening and biopsy came back negative, Church Family
Kenneth and Shirley Runyon, Kenneth has had a couple falls, Church Family
Howard Hein, praise for overall good report regarding his lung cancer, Steve L. (friend)
Christy, back home from the hospital after being in the hospital with double pneumonia and COVID, Dean Brown (daughter)
Jaymie Lacombe, removed cancerous cells, Joyce and Sandy (niece/Mickey's daughter)
Benik Minasyan, upcoming cancer surgeries, Asya Teruni (father)



We welcome Katy Sumrow, who is a professional vocalist on rotation at the Church of the Resurrection, to FMCC on **Jan. 16**. She is from Gdansk, Poland, and at an early age, she received a full music scholarship to the Chopin School of Music. Upon graduating she signed a contract with the Warsaw Philharmonic Choir and toured through Spain and Germany. Ms. Sumrow performed in the Polish Requiem with Leonard Bernstein and Liv Ullman at the Teatr Wielki in Warsaw on International television. Ms. Sumrow's repertoires as a soloist include Baroque, Opera, Jazz, Spiritual and Broadway.



Sunday, Feb.13, will you be ready for some.... "Souper Bowl Sunday"? Starting in the middle of January, we will collect soup and other nonperishable items for our annual fundraiser to support the Gladiolus food Pantry. Mary Burns, from the local pantry, plans to join us on this Sunday.



In December we raised funds to purchase **89** board games for Tanglewood Elementary. On Christmas Eve, we raised over **\$550** for families and communities effected by the recent tornados.

January Birthdays and Anniversaries

Kenneth Runyon	7th
Bob Skaggs	11th
Steve Weaver	13th
Scott Hamm	17th
Steve Larson	20th
Millie Dalrymple	21th
Roy Dalrymple	23rd
Roy and Millie Dalrymple	24th
Bob and Hildur Skaggs	31st