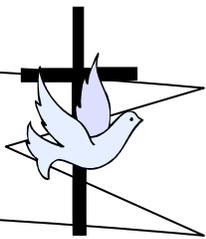




The St. Mark Messenger



Rev. Paul Schuenemann

Pat Pritzlaff, Editor

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“I am with You”

As we enter into a new year, the year 2023, we do not know what the future holds. But we must leave 2022 behind and embark into the unknown days of 2023. As we stand at the threshold of a new year, it is a little like the children of Israel paused on the threshold of the Promised Land after journeying in the wilderness for 40 years. Moses speaks to the people in Deuteronomy 31:6 “Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or terrified because of them, for the Lord your God goes with you; he will never leave you or forsake you.” They are uncertain as to what they will encounter in the Promised Land, but Moses assures them that God will be with them. As also we move forward into uncertain days, we can be assured that God goes with us.

We have just celebrated the Nativity of our Lord Jesus. We heard that reassuring story of God’s love for us in that God came down into our sinful world to be our Savior from sin and eternal death. Jesus was and is Emmanuel, God with us. In the opening chapter of his gospel John states, “The Word became flesh and dwelt among us.” And the Incarnate Lord Jesus still dwells with us in the pages of His Holy Word and in the Holy Supper, where He comes to us wrapped in those humble forms of bread and wine. And Jesus’ parting words to His disciples at the end of Mathew’s gospel are “And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

So we can move forward into this new year with assurance that God goes with us. We do not know what its days will bring, but each day will be another day of God’s grace for us. He will bless us with His forgiveness secured through our Savior Jesus and will renew within us the promise of life eternal.

A blessed New Year to all of you in Jesus, our Emmanuel,
Pastor Paul

HIS UNFAILING PRESENCE

Another year I enter
Its history unknown;
Oh, how my feet would tremble
To tread its paths alone!
But I have heard a whisper,
I know I shall be blest;
"My presence shall go with thee,
And I will give thee rest."

What will the New Year bring me?
I may not, must not know;
Will it be love and rapture,
Or loneliness and woe?
Hush! Hush! I hear His whisper;
I surely shall be blest;
"My presence shall go with thee,
And I will give thee rest."
--Unknown Author