



JANUARY 2021

The Spirit of St. Paul's

www.stpaulslutheran.ca

ST. PAUL'S LUTHERAN CHURCH, SASKATOON, SASKATCHEWAN

Pastor's Corner

“Rejoice in the Lord always; again, I will say, rejoice. Let your reasonableness be known to everyone. The Lord is at hand; do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 4:4-7).

These words from St. Paul in his letter to the Philippians are very profound. When he wrote them, he had a lot to be anxious about. In fact, at that time, he was locked up in prison for proclaiming the Gospel. Yet, even under these extremely difficult conditions, St. Paul encourages us to not be anxious and to rejoice always. We can do this because the Lord is at hand, he invites us to come to him in prayer, and he promises that he will guard our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus forever.

The Lord is at hand, so I rejoice as I reflect upon this past year. Yes, in 2020 the pandemic has affected our lives in so many ways, including our life together at St. Paul's Lutheran Church. As a congregation we have wrestled with some very difficult theological and practical matters and have made some very hard decisions. But the Lord is at hand. He continues to be in our presence as his Word is proclaimed,

in the waters of our Baptism, and through the forgiveness, strength, and life that he offers through the Sacrament of the Altar. The Lord is at hand.

I rejoice as I consider how we came together in 2020. That might sound strange since some of us have been apart since the early part of last year, but we have faced this adversity together and we are stronger because of it. St. Peter teaches us that just as the true character of gold is revealed in the refiner's fire, so the true character of our faith is revealed when tested by adversity, “In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, so that the tested genuineness of your faith—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ (1 Peter 1:6-7). Even in the most trying times, God keeps us in the true faith. The Lord is at hand.

I rejoice and I am filled with thanksgiving as I remember the loving work of so many people who supported St. Paul's ministry during the pandemic. I am thankful for all our boards, for the “Reopening Committee,” for our musicians, for our custodians, for the extra effort of Sandy, our Church Office Administrator, for my wife Natalie who volunteered many hours to

help with video recordings, and for the prayers and support of all of our congregation. The Lord is at hand.

In closing, I would like to share with you some words from Dr. Martin Luther on prayer and our lives together in Christ:

Never doubt that God in his mercy will surely hear you and say “yes” to your prayers. Never think that you are kneeling or standing alone, rather think that the whole of Christendom, all devout Christians, are standing there beside you and you are standing among them in a common, united petition which God cannot disdain. Do not leave your prayer without having said or thought, “Very well, God has heard my prayer; this I know as a certainty and a truth.”

The Lord is at hand. Rejoice in his grace and mercy and gift of everlasting life, and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

*God's blessings,
Pastor Keith*

Coming up

LWMLC groups from St. Paul's and Faith in Saskatoon as well as the group in Kerrobert, Sask., will hold a virtual renewal on Saturday, January 16 from 2 - 4 p.m. for those able to be online. For more information contact Verla Schmirler.

Reminders

- Please remember that, because we have a number of members with allergies to nuts, any foods brought to church events should be nut-free.

- Also, several have allergies to fragrances. Please consider them when choosing toiletries and whether or not to wear perfumes.

- LWMLC mites and offerings will once again be collected the first Sunday of each month when we return to worship in our church building. For now mites only may be given with your offering to St. Paul's as long as they are clearly marked as LWMLC mites.

Classifieds

Something to sell or give away? Need something? Services to offer to fellow members? Try The Spirit Classifieds first. No cost. Leave your ads at the church office or give them to the editor.



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Stewardship

It's a new year. It's a time when we take stock of the year past in order to improve the year to come. It's a time when we sit down to plan and implement what we want to accomplish and even change. Part of that is planning our stewardship for the coming year.

Often, we find this difficult and daunting and even joyless, but it doesn't have to be. In fact, it is really quite simple and full of joy. So, here are some tips to make that planning less stressful. You begin by answering these three questions:

Who are you?

To whom do I give?

And how much?

So, who are you? The Table of Duties in the *Luther's Small Catechism* informs us. Are you a hearer of God's Word? Are you a citizen of society? Are you a member of a family? Stewardship covers these three estates: church, society, and family. We don't particularly struggle to give to society or family. Our struggles, our difficulties, and our questions arise in giving to the Church.

So, what is our duty as members of the Church with regard to giving? Again, the Table of Duties, gives us a guide. If you are a hearer – a member of the Church who receives instruction – St. Paul taught: “Let the one who is taught the word share all good things with the one who teaches” (Gal. 6:6). This means the local congregation is primary.

Your pastor is the one called to preach the Gospel to you and administer the Lord's blessed sacraments to you. Your congregation is the place where those things happen. Thus, when God calls us to give to the Church,

He has the local congregation in mind. For “the Lord commanded that those who proclaim the gospel should get their living by the gospel” (1 Cor. 9:14).

How much do we give to the local congregation? Our only instructions are to give:

Regularly (1 Cor. 6:1–2);

Proportionally (1 Cor. 16:1–2; 2 Cor. 8:12);

Generously (2 Cor. 8:20);

Of our first fruits (Gen. 4:4; Prov. 3:9; Lev. 27:30); and

With a spirit of eagerness (2 Cor. 9:2), earnestness (2 Cor. 8:7), cheerfulness (2 Cor. 9:7), and love (2 Cor. 8:23).

In other words, giving to the Church is not to be an afterthought, given after everything else is spent. In this way, it is deliberate. We give regularly – weekly, biweekly, monthly, quarterly, or yearly – keeping in mind our own strengths, weaknesses, and limitations. We set it aside beforehand – before anything else is spent.

From those first fruits, we set aside a proportionate and generous amount. Ten percent was the standard for the Israelites. This was a command for the ancient Israelites. We can give as much as we want, but ask yourself: Is the job of the New Testament Church bigger or smaller than the job given to Israel?

And how are we to give it? We give it with eagerness and earnestness. We give it cheerfully and with love, not out of compulsion. For through the preaching of the Gospel and the administration of the sacraments, God has made us His children, forgiven us all our sins, given us

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Stewardship, continued

grace upon grace, promised us life everlasting with Him in His kingdom, and filled us with His own Spirit, the Holy Spirit. This makes giving a joy, as Jesus said, “it is more blessed to give than to receive” (Acts 20:35).

It's that easy. And it is joyful. For in stewardship, our gracious and giving Lord invites us to take part in the work that He accomplishes here on earth, providing for the ongoing preaching of the Gospel as well as those who are in need. Taking part in that makes all our work holy – work that is done in service to the Lord as priestly members of His kingdom.

*Blessings to you in this new year!
Board of Stewardship*

Financial update from Board of Stewardship

To the end of November 2020, we had a year-to-date deficit of \$10,389. This compares to a deficit at November 30, 2019 of \$1,829. Our donation revenue this year is down \$8,890 compared to 2019 and while we still have another month to make up some of that revenue shortfall, we won't have the usual number of in person worship opportunities as we have in a normal Christmas season. Our total revenue to the end of November 2020 is \$221,169 which is lower than the same period last year by about \$13,000 however the 2020 revenue includes \$26,800 of federal and provincial subsidy support. As we all know the COVID pandemic has not gone away and we will continue to face financial pressures into 2021. We do know that the federal subsidy program has been extended until next June unless extended further, however it has not been confirmed if the criteria and subsidy calculations will be staying the same. The board encourages your ongoing prayers and financial support through the rest of 2020 in order that we can maintain a sufficient cash flow going into the new year. So far, we have been able to carry on reasonably normal church programs and commitments and we hope and pray that will continue into the new year. Thank you for your prayers and support during these challenging times. We know God has blessed us generously in the past and His faithfulness will continue.

Board of Stewardship

2021 budget approved!

Voters have approved the 2021 budget by voting online and through telephone and have approved next year's budget. In favour 48, opposed 3. Thank you for your support of the congregation's programs and plans for 2021 and for your willingness to help us be a bit creative in getting the voting done this year.

A look back at 2020

In place of the booklet of annual reports a decision was made to invite those who usually contribute to write something for the January Spirit regarding the unusual year we have just completed and/or write a formal report to be posted on the password protected portion of the congregation's website. We share here what we received from various boards and groups.

Caring Ministry suspended activities

The Caring Ministry committee has existed for the past five years under the Board of Lay Ministry with the purpose of responding to short-term needs of congregation members. In the event of an injury, illness, recovery or other need, a volunteer coordinator is contacted (the coordinator's name and phone number are printed in the bulletin each week). The coordinator then matches up the request with someone from the congregation who has indicated they can help

with that specific need (for example, a meal, a ride to an appointment, snow shovelling or lawn mowing, etc.) We have had a few requests for assistance each year.

In an effort to slow the spread of COVID-19, the provincial government mandated certain precautions in 2020. After considering which activities could still be safe to carry out amid changing regulations, the Caring Ministry committee suspended activities to minimise the potential

risk to our volunteers and congregation members.

We thank the Caring Ministry committee: Daryl Walter, Dianne Gilbert, Ron and Ludy Jeschke, Angela Neufeld, Verla Schmirler and Pastor and Natalie Keith, as well as all those members of the congregation who have offered to assist as needed. On behalf of the committee, we look forward to days when we can once again safely gather and resume regular activities.

Challenges for the Board of Evangelism/ Public Relations

The year of COVID-19

As a board director for St. Paul's Lutheran Church I have been given the option to write an informal "Annual Report" for *The Spirit* or a more formal report for the office. I have chosen the first option. Having gone through a good portion of 2020 under the challenges presented by COVID-19 and having just passed through the Christmas season, I am writing this as I would write a letter to my family by sharing the highlights of the year of 2020.

Two tasks that touch every month of the church year are:

1) The monthly newsletter: Special thanks to Marion Hollinger for using her talents to provide this well-done communication with us.

2) The large church sign: Special thanks to Ron Jeschke for the meaningful messages and maintenance of this sign.

January was a busy month preparing for the Mission Service Fair at St. Paul's, January 26, writing the annual report for 2019 and beginning to advertise regarding Rev. Mike Kuhn's visit to St. Paul's in February.

February's highlight was seeing months of planning finally completed and having Rev. Kuhn from Lutheran Bible translators of Canada come and share his involvement in the work of translating the Bible into the heart language of the Nizza people in Galim, Cameroon. Approximately 65 attended. Thanks for your support.

March, as we all know, life at St. Paul's began to change with COVID-19 taking over. The board had it's last in-person meeting on March 17. Greeters for Sunday service were cancelled, the last date

for volunteering at Friendship Inn was March 25. We continued our support for the QEXCA community association by advertising in *The Spirit* for volunteers to help rebuild their skating rinks.

April, St. Paul's members were encouraged through *The Spirit* to put out their Easter Crosses as our witness to the community. Easter cards, 70 in all, were sent to shut-ins, new members and to keep in touch with members who need encouragement. Since St. Paul's was unable to have a voters' meeting for elections, all boards were asked to commit to another term in office. Thanks to Dianne, Lisa, Sherry and Stephen for your added commitment.

May, June, July and August can best be viewed as a summer break with the exception of our connecting with you through articles of encouragement written for *The Spirit*.

September, since the pandemic was going on longer than first expected, an evaluation was done of the board's responsibilities from the perspective of what can be continued from home such as administrative tasks, what needs to be put on hold such as greeters, volunteering at Friendship Inn, etc. and what are our meeting options to function as a board. Since some of our work is not critical at this time or does not work well with pandemic restrictions, it was concluded that we would work on an as-needed basis and we would connect through emails for any decisions that needed to be made.

The Board of Evangelism/PR has been connecting with the local Community Association, QEXCA, to build a relationship with our

surrounding community. September 15 Pastor Keith and I met with their President Bob Mcnaughton, via a three-way phone call to talk about how we might serve each other. To date we share newsletters, they willingly post our worship service times and we share volunteer opportunities for them through our newsletter.

October, thanks to Sherry Gore, "Give, Thanking God" food drive was encouraged through our October newsletter asking our congregation to make donations to the Saskatoon Food Bank. Helpful suggestions were given how this might be accomplished through the grocery store of our choice.

We also submitted the Board of Evangelism/PR's budget for 2021.

November, attended a Parish Planning Council meeting via "Go to Meeting" from the comfort of my home computer.

December, shared another request for volunteers in our newsletter received from the QEXCA community association.

On behalf of the congregation at St. Paul's Lutheran Church, mailed out 62 Christmas cards using the same criteria as the Easter card mail out.

Thanks to everyone for your support of the projects of this board.

The Word of the Lord
And I heard a voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" Then I said "here am I! Send me." (Isaiah 6:8)

*In His Service,
 Clara Zirk, Dianne Gilbert,
 Sherry Gore, Lisa Bracewell
 and Steven Loewen*

2020 activities, challenges and successes from the Board of Stewardship

The year started out like any other year with the usual slower start as we entered the new year—but how quickly that was to change! In February we started hearing about this strange disease affecting people in other continents—the name of which most of us could hardly pronounce! What are the chances of it spreading around the world and indeed into Canada? By March we were seeing cases of Covid-19 showing up in the United States with some states dealing with shutdowns and other restrictions to contain the virus. Canada soon started reporting cases with Saskatchewan being no exception. By the end of March there were schools closing and widespread shutdowns of public gatherings. Retail shopping became a different experience. Public worship services were also affected with in-person worship cancelled across the province. Wearing masks became more common and ultimately a requirement. In this context, we, as a worshipping community obviously needed to make some serious adjustments to our basic operations including assessing our ability to continue paying salaries, paying our bills and meeting other commitments. The Board of Stewardship's response included an analysis of the impact of three or four projections of reduced offerings over several time period scenarios. We decided we could withstand a "shock" of reduced offerings for several months but would need to be vigilant of our cash flow situation and be able to respond accordingly. We encouraged our members to continue their offering commitments as God had blessed them by mailing in their offerings or dropping them off at the

church as they were able. We also reminded members to consider the pre-authorized remittance method of giving that has been available for a number of years to help support our ongoing financial needs. Several additional members signed up for this option and we are blessed with that much needed support. The board also set up additional giving method opportunities within a few weeks of the Covid onset including an option to make online donations through Lutheran Church—Canada—which are sent back to congregations—and an e-transfer capability. These additional methods of giving ended up being significant sources of revenue for us through the year.

Additionally, the board researched and made applications for provincial and federal subsidy programs for which we qualified. To the end of October, we received just over \$27,000 of federal subsidies. There will be additional subsidies received for November and December.

An important project the board is responsible for is the coordination, development, and recommendation of the annual budget to voting members. This year was an additional challenge without the ability to hold in-person meetings for much of the year. Nevertheless, we were able to coordinate budget submissions from all the boards to develop a budget proposal for 2021. A plan was put together to send the proposed budget to members who have email addresses inviting them ask questions they might have and to vote electronically on the budget for next year. For those members where we don't have an email address, the proposed budget was sent by Canada Post and they were

then phoned to get their vote. We thank all those involved in assisting us to coordinate this effort. It was different but worked in the absence of in-person meetings!

Throughout all this uncertainty and challenges, we are thankful for the blessings we have received. God's people have remained faithful in their opportunities for worship—both in person when they were available and online. While we don't know how long these challenging times will continue, we do know that God is faithful to His people and will see us through to when our lives become more normal.

Thank you to the members of the board for responding to these difficult challenges and working through options and programs available to us. We also thank members of the executive who have supported the board, especially our treasurer, Wendy Schuler, who spent many hours researching and making applications for subsidy programs.

Finally, we thank all members who have supported the work toward the congregation's goals and ministry programs this past year. We are especially blessed by your faithfulness!

*In His Service
Board of Stewardship*

Jesus wants to become part of your life, not to demand something from you, but to give something to you — the gift of Himself, the gift of eternal friendship with Him.

What we cannot do God did for us. Jesus left His heavenly home — not to survey our problem but to solve it.

from You Are Precious by Alma Kern

Board of Christian Education and Youth looking back

It definitely has been an interesting year! Just when we thought we were settled in what we were doing, God had other ideas. Good thing He knows what He is doing, even when we don't!

St. Paul's first Mission Fair was held on January 26, with hopes of encouraging new members to join the boards. The first two months started off as expected with the usual Bible studies, confirmation and Sunday school classes, but were flipped upside down in March. Bible studies, except for the Men's Breakfast, paused until October. Confirmation classes switched to an online format and Sunday school classes ended.

For October and November, two Bible study groups started on Tuesday, one online and one in-person, both reviewing upcoming Sunday lessons. With the new restrictions at the beginning of

December, only the online study continued.

After their studies were completed, there was a private service held for five confirmands. Sam Harper, Meghan Harvey, Lance Neufeld, Micah Poier and Rachel Zlipko were confirmed. Five other students started their instruction in October.

Sunday school classes did not resume but a number of activities, crafts and educational website addresses were submitted in the Spirit newsletters over the year for at-home family learning. At the end of November, Jesse Tree Advent project kits were mailed to each of the children and Jesse Tree Advent devotional booklets were sent to youth members. At the beginning of December, the Children's Bulletin became available on the church's website.

Christian Education Looking Forward

To download and print out the Children's Bulletin, go to the church's website (stpaulslutheran.ca), click the COVID button, and click Children's Bulletin Qtr. 1. This contains all the bulletins from December 6/20 to February 28/21. The dates they are to be used are written sideways down the centre of each bulletin. New quarters will be added as needed.

We will continue to work on a Kid's Corner for the church's website as well as creating a private Facebook group which will include activities for kids and a place to connect with each other.

The board is continuing to investigate new ways to reach our younger members with the Gospel of Christ. Any suggestions from our St. Paul's families as to what would work best for you would be very much encouraged and appreciated!

*In His Service,
Denise Timm*

Board of Lay Ministry Review of 2020

As we all know the year 2020 has been a year unlike any other that we can remember with many challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic on an individual level and for the congregation of St Paul's.

The primary challenge faced by the Board of Lay Ministry included the question of how to carry out its main responsibility to provide for the spiritual welfare of Pastor Keith and the members of St Paul's in the face of the pandemic. Throughout 2020 the Board of Lay Ministry met with Pastor Keith with the focus primarily on the subject of providing ongoing ministry to the members of St Paul's during the pandemic.

Thanks to the strong leadership provided by Pastor Keith, along with members of the Board of Lay Ministry and other select members of the congregation, we were able to provide worship opportunities in various forms throughout the year despite changing government restrictions and protocols with respect to worship services. Prior to the pandemic, normal worship services were held until April. However, with the arrival of COVID-19, in-person worship services were suspended as a result of government restrictions. In the absence of in-person worship services Pastor Keith provided

worship services online until we were able to have in-person worship services in July, all be it under the restrictions and protocols put in place by the provincial government. At the same time Pastor Keith continued to provide online worship services for those members who were not able to attend worship services in person. Both the in-person worship services and online worship services took place until November when further restrictions were put in place by the government and we decided to go back to solely online worship services for the remainder of year. The amount

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Lay Ministry, continued of time and effort required by Pastor Keith in organizing and providing these various forms of worship services as well providing for the spiritual care of St. Paul's were significant and are greatly appreciated.

During the year the Board of Lay Ministry established a sub-committee to work with Pastor Keith in preparation of commencing in-person worship services in July and we thank these individuals. The members of this sub-committee were Keith and Marilyn Wallace, Elton and Sandy Harper, Mark Zlipko, Daryl and Cherryl Walter and Barry Walter. A significant amount of time and effort was contributed by everyone on the subcommittee.

A significant contribution to both the online worship services as well as the in-person worship services has been, and continues to be, made

by Laura Neufeld, Ken Nietz and Lisa Poier. We want to thank them for their contributions as well as the others who have been part of the music ministry. Finally we would like to thank the members of the altar guild and usher teams who have been a constant presence in the in-person worship services.

Going forward the Board of Lay Ministry will continue to work with Pastor Keith in his ministry at St Paul's. Currently Pastor Keith prepares online worship services and continues to spend considerable time in other areas of his ministry to the members of St Paul's including Bible studies, confirmation classes, home visitations and providing communion to members privately. The board continues to monitor the recommendations and restrictions put in place by the provincial government with respect to worship services and will make changes to the protocols that are currently in

effect when appropriate.

We all look forward to the day when we once again have normalcy in our lives and we are all able to once again worship with one another in person.

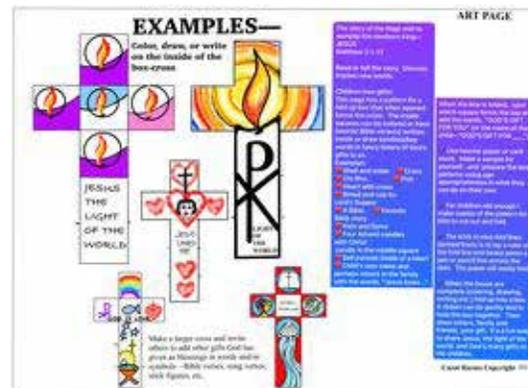
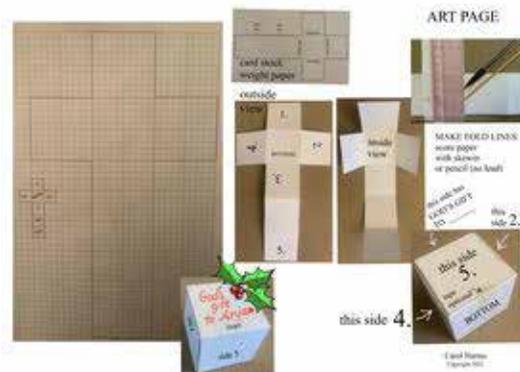
We would like to thank the members of the Board of Lay Ministry for their service over the past year. Members of the Board in 2020 were: Barry Walter and Art Timm (Co-Directors), James Dietrich, Les Hollinger, Owen Mitchell, Chad Timm, Daryl Walter.

As there were no elections held this past year due to the impact of COVID-19 the current Board of Lay Ministry will remain in place into 2021 with the exception of Les Hollinger. We thank Les for his contributions to the board during his many years of service.

Art Timm and Barry Walter
Co Chairs, Board of Lay Ministry

You may or may not remember Rev. Dr. Leonard Harms who served Lutheran Church-Canada as head of missions. His wife, Carol, created many designs and other artwork. They are now living in Oregon and Carol has been sharing her artwork via Messenger. Lately she has been creating ideas for children that can be of interest to adults as well. Below is one of them. The resolution is poor but hopefully you can gain something from these pictures and create your own cube with a message.

Marion



A COVID adventure

Did you discover anything new or different during these months ruled by this virus? If you did, please share.

Here's a little adventure your editor had.

In the week before Christmas the only way to get together with my daughter and granddaughter, Connie and Marissa, was outdoors. The temperature was pleasant so we decided to go for a walk...with masks in place since sidewalks aren't wide enough to physical distance.

In the past I had heard of the Moose Jaw trail and knew a portion

had been preserved to the east of Circle Drive Alliance but had never been there. Since we were starting out from my front door just to the south of that church and residence we decided to explore, heading east on Hunter Road. Then at Patricia Roe Park we turned north and found the entrance to Mark Thompson Park about half a block north. (I include that information in case you, too, want to go exploring.) The park is prairie and bush and some very deep ruts that make up the trail. There are information boards and paths to walk.

In the late 1800s the CPR ended at Moose Jaw. From there Red River carts and covered wagons were used to take people north and west. They headed mostly north and a little west from Moose Jaw to the curve in the South Saskatchewan at Elbow. Then from there north to Saskatoon and beyond to Batoche, Prince Albert, North Battleford or Edmonton. Traffic was so heavy that it wore deep ruts that exist to this day. I will leave any further details to you to discover if you decide to go exploring.

Marion

Every ending has a new beginning

by Lorraine Weir, Winnipeg

“Moses my servant is dead. Now therefore arise, go over this Jordan, you and all this people, into the land that I am giving to them, to the people of Israel.” Joshua 1:2 ESV

Joshua was a faithful servant to God. Moses had died. Joshua was to move God's people into the Promised Land. Distress was present. After all, Moses had done incredible things for God's people; plagues of deliverance from bondage, parting of the Red Sea, getting water from a rock and the Ten Commandments.

As the old year comes to an end and a new one begins, doubts overwhelm our hearts as we contemplate what lies ahead. We pray that this year will be a better one. Joshua fearfully thought; “Where do I begin?” But God made it simple, as He does for us every day. He told him, arise and cross. Joshua

could not remain where he was and fulfill the purpose God had. He had to choose to act upon the commands of the Lord going forth to obey all that He had commanded him.

Joshua also had to cross the Jordan River. This river was the only thing standing between God's people and Canaan. Stepping out into the waters of faith, allowed Joshua and the people of Israel to cross over into God's calling. He could not allow the Jordan to keep him from obeying God, no matter how impossible it seemed. He had to leave the “how” to God.

When they stepped out into the water, God dried it up. God takes our Jordans and dries them up when we move forward in faith with Him. It was the step of obedience that

cleared a path to walk. If we cannot face the waters of difficulties in the land of comfort, how will we ever face the enemies in the land of war? God will always meet us with obedience.

There will always be new battles ahead, new enemies to face, fears to conquer and new land to tread upon. With this New Year before us, let us say with Paul, “Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own. But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead” (Philippians 3:13).

Heavenly Father, thank you for making all things new. We pray for Your Holy Spirit to be with us and guide us this New Year. In Your Name, we pray. Amen.

