

**THE NEWS**  
of  
**East Washington Heights Baptist Church**

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*You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness. Ephesians 4:22-24*

## THE NEWS

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### *The Pastor's Message*

#### **“Adding Margin to Your 2017 New Year's Resolutions”**

By Rev. Kip Banks

What are your 2017 New Year's Resolutions? If you are like most Americans, losing weight is somewhere near the top of your list. You probably also have goals to do a better job with your finances in '17 or perhaps to quit a habit like drinking or smoking. While there are many items that you may have on your New Year's resolutions list, there is one that I encourage you to add and it is “margin.”

What is margin? Margin is the space that exists between you and your limitations. Most of us know margin as the whitespace that is held in reserve on a piece of paper for unanticipated situations, but this concept of margin applies not only to pieces of paper, it also applies to our emotional, physical, and spiritual lives.

Margin is the exact opposite of being overloaded and in his bestselling book entitled “*Margin*” Richard A. Swenson, M.D. says that we as a society have all but done away with margin and this has been tragic resulting in unprecedented levels of distress, pain and hyper-stress in the American population. Dr. Swenson came to this conclusion after years of practicing medicine and noting that the levels of stress in his patients were going off the charts because too many of his patients were leading overloaded lives.

How did we get to this problem? Swenson notes that at the core of the problem has been the wrong notion of progress. Advertisers tell us that to be made whole we need to have a bigger house or a bigger car or a nicer wardrobes and in order to attain these trappings of the American Dream we overextend ourselves and exceed our limitations. These limitations might be financial, emotional or even relational, but in order to reach this dream we exceed them.

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Indeed, the reason why so many homes were in foreclosure during the recession of 2008 is because too many people bought homes in excess of what they were able to afford and as a result the entire economy soured.

Swenson says that what we need is a different definition of progress and I agree with him. Instead of measuring progress by the size of our income or the size of our homes, we should measure progress in terms of how we are doing in relationship with God and our fellow man. For example, what good does it do to have a fabulous mega-mansion if you must work day and night to afford the mortgage? Or what good does it do to own an expensive Range Rover Sport Utility Vehicle if you can't afford to fill-it-up with premium gasoline? The answer is that it really doesn't make much sense at all!

And this is why we should work to add margins to our lives.

*How can we add margins? Here are some recommendations:*

## **Peace and Atmosphere**

- Slow down
- Learn to say "no"
- Control and restrict television watching and time on social media
- Enjoy the beauty of nature – the sunrise, the sunset
- Enjoy peaceful music
- Practice forgiveness, reconciliation and hospitality
- Help each other, emphasize service
- Encourage others
- Don't judge

## **Relationships**

- Cultivate a closeness with God
- Add quality time with family to your definition of progress
- Teach your children
- Enjoy family field trips

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## **Finances and Possessions**

- Cultivate contentment, desire less
- Resist consumerism
- Wage war against advertisements
- Buy things for their usefulness rather than their status
- De-accumulate
- Develop the habit of giving things away
- Simplify your wardrobe – give away excess
- Avoid impulse buying
- Avoid debt if possible

- Learn how to make do with a lower income instead of needing a higher one

## **Nutrition and Exercise**

- Exercise
- Bike or walk
- Make your recreation active rather than passive
- Develop healthy sleep habits
- Avoid overeating
- Buy locally grown food
- Garden

It is my prayer that you will have a happy margin-filled New Year!

*Pastor Kip Banks, Sr. is Senior Pastor of the East Washington Heights Baptist Church*

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## **The meaning of Epiphany**

Epiphany, which comes from the Greek word *epiphaneia*, means “an appearance” or “a revealing.” Centuries ago, the church set aside January 6, the 12th day after Christmas, to mark the revealing of Jesus as Christ to the wise men, who were Gentiles. Jesus’ first followers were Jewish, so the revelation of the divine Christ to the non-Jewish magi reminds us that Jesus came to earth to save the whole world.

Symbols of Epiphany include light, a star, a crown (or three crowns) and a globe or stylized portrayal of the world. The color of Epiphany is green to symbolize life, growth, hope, and eternity.

On the church calendar, the Epiphany season lasts until Ash Wednesday, which is determined by the date of Easter.

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## Hate vs. love

Civil-rights leader Martin Luther King Jr. compared hate to “an unchecked cancer,” saying it “corrodes the personality and eats away its vital unity.” Unfortunately, the destructive force of hatred is often evident in nations, communities, families, and even churches.

The obvious, though not always easy, antidote to hatred is love. As *The Message* translation of Proverbs 10:12 states, “Hatred starts fights, but love pulls a quilt over the bickering.” The image of a comfy quilt symbolizes the soothing impact that loving words and actions can have on enemies as well as friends.

Plus, it’s tough to share the gospel without showing love, which social reformer Elizabeth Cady Stanton called “the ‘open sesame’ to every soul.”

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*Happy Anniversary to all who were married in January!*

## Kindness counts

- Make blankets or scarves for homeless people.
  - Send a care package to someone who’s in college or the military.
  - Collect coins for a charity or cause.
  - When you can’t attend an event, give the tickets to strangers.
  - Provide tutoring or mentoring in your field of expertise.
  - Offer to babysit or pet-sit for free.
  - Send a note of appreciation to someone who’s made a difference in your life.
  - Share your gifts of music, reading or conversation at a nursing home.
  - Donate old sports equipment to schools.
  - Give someone the benefit of the doubt, maybe even a family member or yourself!
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## Before all else fails ...

In *Too Busy Not to Pray* (InterVarsity Press), Bill Hybels cites reasons that prayers may seem to go unanswered (unconfessed sin, selfishness and so on). The most common cause, though, is prayerlessness:

“People often tell me how they have attempted to address a pressing need,” Hybels writes. “They have gone to counselors, read self-help books, claimed biblical promises, practiced self-discipline, confided in Christian friends, practiced assertiveness or submission or self-denial or positive thinking, even read books about prayer — and their need is still not met.” But when asked if they’ve prayed “fervently and regularly” about the matter, the answer is usually no.

James 4:2 says, “You do not have because you do not ask God.” So instead of thinking “When all else fails, pray,” try this: “Pray before all else fails.”

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## **"The name above every name"**

O what is Jehovah El Shaddai to me?  
My Lord, God and Savior, Immanuel, He;  
My Prophet, Priest, Sacrifice, Altar and Lamb;  
Judge, Advocate, Surety and Witness, I AM;  
My Peace and my Life, my Truth and my Way;  
My Leader, my Teacher, my Hope and my Stay;  
Redeemer and Ransom, Atonement and Friend;  
He's Alpha, Omega, Beginning and End.

—Rev. John H. Sammis

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*Happy Birthday to all who were born in January!*

**"WHAT'S GOING TO BE THE CHANGE FOR THE NEW YEAR?"**

**2017 CHURCH THEME: "THE YEAR OF TRANSFORMATION"**

EVERY YEAR THERE IS THIS TRADITION IN AMERICA IN WHICH A PERSON TRIES TO CHANGE AN UNDESIRED TRAIT OR CERTAIN BEHAVIOR THAT EITHER DISPLEASES THEM OR THEY FEEL IT NEEDS IMPROVEMENT.

WHERE IS GOD IN THE CHOICES OR MOVES THAT YOU MAKE?

THIS MONTH WE ARE GOING TO TAKE A LOOK AT TRANSFORMING OUR HEALTH AND BODIES (JAN-FEB)

-CHURCH-WIDE FAST & BIGGEST LOSER CAMPAIGN

-HEALTH SCREENING, MENTAL HEALTH WORKSHOP

-WEEKLY UPDATES ABOUT HEALTH & WHOLENESS (DIABETES, FITNESS, ETC.)

-PLANS MADE TO PLANT EWHBC HERB GARDEN

-BEGIN RECYCLING CAMPAIGN

-CHURCH LEADERSHIP RETREAT

-PREACHING SERIES ON MOSES & TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP

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## *Ponder This!*

### **The Choice Is Yours**

**Attitude** is a choice: If you have any responsibility for others—as a parent, a boss, or volunteer leader—the attitude of your people is a reflection of your own. The people you lead reflect the attitude you possess.

God chooses what we go through. We choose how we go through it.

**Character** is a choice: Gifts and talents are given to us, but character is developed by us. We cannot rise above the limitations of our character.

How you spend your spare time is a test of your character. Character is the sum total of all our everyday choices.

**Self-discipline** is a choice: Hold yourself responsible for a higher standard than anybody else expects of you. Train yourself to make good use of your time. Study yourself, identify your strengths, and build on them.

No life ever grows great until it is focused, dedicated, disciplined.

**Commitment** is a choice: It usually begins with a struggle. It has nothing to do with talent or ability. It is not a matter of conditions but of choice. Start with the little things. Trust in God.

Nothing of worth or weight can be achieved with half a mind, with a faint heart and with a lame endeavor. **John Maxwell, *The Choice is Yours***

### **Special dates in January 2017**

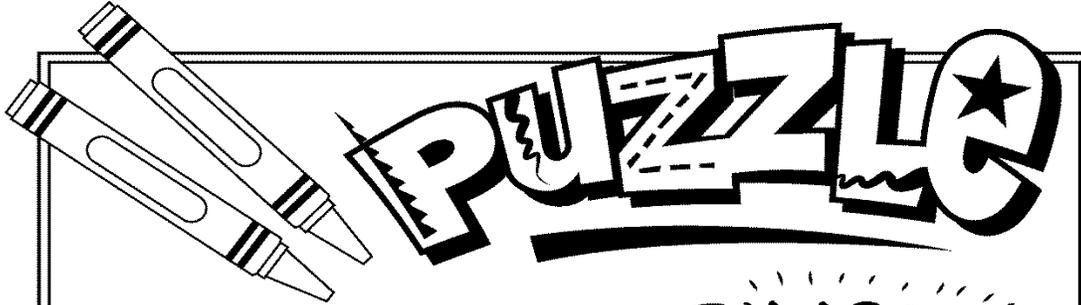
*Jan. 8 - Daniel Fast Begins*

*Jan. 16 - Martin Luther King Jr. Birthday*

*Jan. 20 - Inauguration*

*Jan. 28 - Church Retreat*

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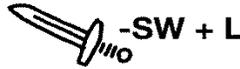


# LET THERE BE LIGHT

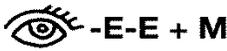
In a world of darkness, God guides us so we can walk in his ways.

*Directions: Write the name of each picture, subtracting and adding letters as indicated. Then fill in the blanks to complete 2 Samuel 22:29, NIV.*

“ Y O U , \_\_\_\_\_ , A R E



\_\_\_\_\_ ; T H E



\_\_\_\_\_ M Y



\_\_\_\_\_ D +  +  - T + S

I N T O \_\_\_\_\_ .”



2 SAMUEL 22:29, NIV

Answer: “You, LORD, are my lamp; the LORD turns my darkness into light.” 2 Samuel 22:29, NIV