



THE MUSTARD SEED



A Vision of Hope for a New Year

Recently a professor at one of our universities in Iowa went negative in an article that he wrote in relation to how he sees the state of Iowa. In all of life, we are constantly challenged with whether we are going to go positive or negative in how we see others and ourselves. In my now much longer life, I am aware of the dangers of slipping into that cynical side of life in which everything takes on a negative perspective. Nothing looks good. All is bad.



One of the advent readings in December included these verses. Paul writes, "Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say rejoice. Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. Do not worry 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."

As we anticipate and plan for a new year, we are told in the Bible to live in an attitude of rejoicing, to behave with

gentleness towards others, to keep our minds from worry, to spend time in prayer knowing that God will give us peace, and finally, we are promised by

Jesus that He will keep our hearts and minds on His kingdom. As our congregation faces a new year, we are encouraged to go forward with great confidence, knowing that whatever we encounter in 2012, Jesus will be with us. He will be our eyes, mouth, feet, ears, and heart. He will lead us in hope, healing, and in His saving grace. In Christ, we can rejoice in all of life even when others want us to see only the negative.

Thanks to all of you for your strong faith, forgiving hearts, and your willingness to look out for the interests of others. In 2012, we as leaders commit ourselves to hold forth the power of the gospel of Jesus Christ. We also commit ourselves to be in prayer for all of you and to rejoice each day for the wonderful new life in Christ we get to experience in 2012.

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