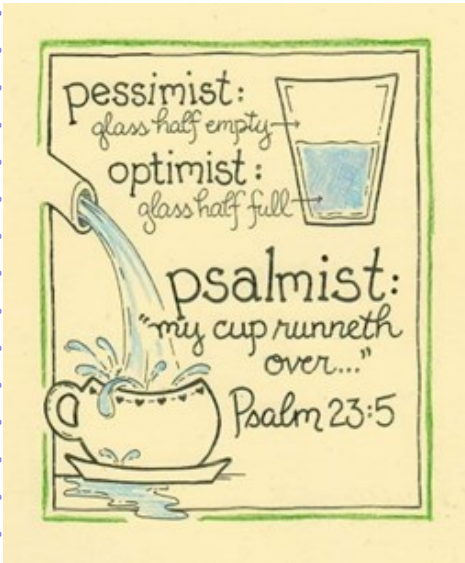


Eastminster Eagle

Volume 41, Issue 1

January 2024

Dear Eastminster Members and Friends,



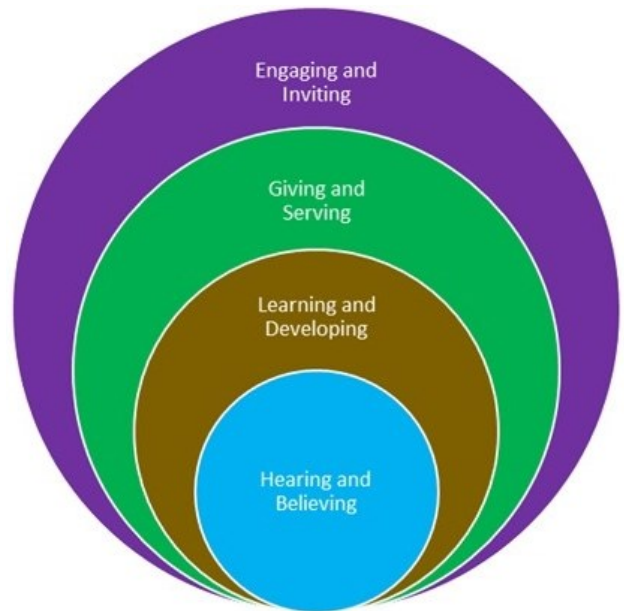
I am thrilled to begin 2024 as your pastor! As much as I love the Christmas season, I find the annual flipping of the calendar exhilarating. Each new year brings new possibilities and another chance to make life-giving changes.

I want to introduce you to a model for church vitality that I have been working on that I will believe will aid Eastminster to deepen its discipleship and grow as a community. I will be preaching on these concepts to kick off the new year. Let's call it "An Overflowing Church". Some of us are glass half empty folks and some are glass half full. God doesn't want us to be half full or empty.

God wants to overflow our cups!

The Four Levels of An Overflowing Church:

- 1) **Hearing** and **believing** the Gospel of Jesus Christ and that with God nothing is impossible.
- 2) **Learning** the Bible and **developing** a deeper relationship with God through prayer.
- 3) **Responding** to God by **giving** and **servicing**.
- 4) Overflowing Level: **Engaging** people with the Gospel and **inviting** them to join **Eastminster**.



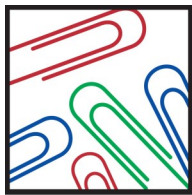
We are already working at the first three levels of an Overflowing Church. The more fully we engage in those first levels, the more natural the fourth level will become to us. Engaging people with the Gospel and inviting them to join our community will be what overflows in you as you grow in the first three levels. Engaging people with the Gospel and inviting them to church is the only tried and

Continued from page 1

true way to grow numerically as a church. It's how the church has grown since Jesus first invited his first disciples to follow him.

You will know you have grown mature in the first three levels when engaging people with the Gospel becomes second nature for you. Let's spend 2024 becoming filled to overflowing with the life of God!

Happy New Year!
Pastor Paul



Office Hours **2024 NEW OFFICE HOURS**

Monday & Wednesday:
9 am—4 p.m.

Tuesday & Thursday:
9 a.m.—2 p.m.

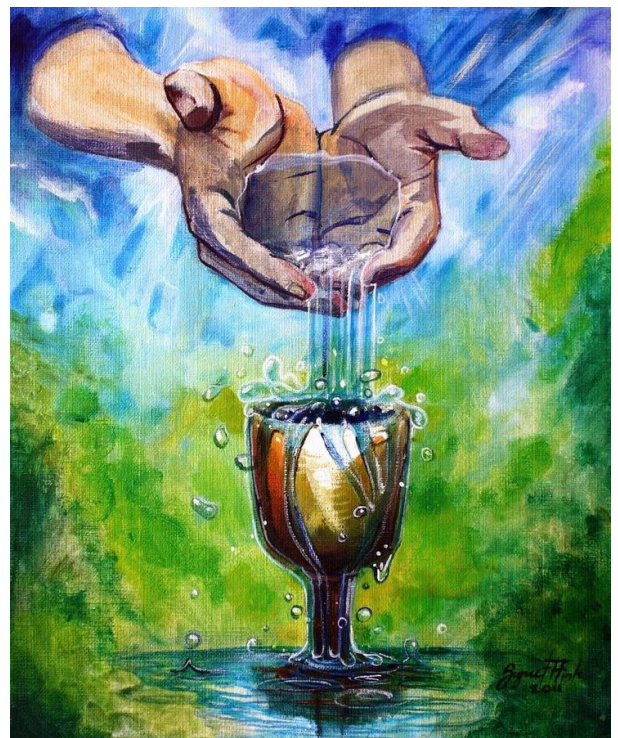
The office is closed on Friday.

YOU ARE INVITED

Have you ever wondered about the origins of our worship practices and liturgy? Why do we have certain parts of the service, sing specific hymns and anthems, and participate in some activities during the service? If you're curious and would like to learn more, the Searchers class invites you to join them starting January 7th. Everyone is welcome to explore and discuss these questions with us. During our meetings, we will learn about the different parts of the worship service, the history of liturgy development, and how we can improve and enrich our individual and collective worship experience. We will have breakfast at 9am, followed by our meeting at 10 am in the conference room. We hope to see you there!

Sermon Series for January: Overflowing Cups.

- 1-7. John 4:1-15, Acts 19:1-7
Overflowing Cups: Hearing and Believing
- 1-14. 1 Samuel 3:1-10, John 8:31-38
Overflowing Cups: Learning and Developing
- 1-21. Luke 9:10-17, John 13:3-17
Overflowing Cups: Giving and Serving
- 1-28. Luke 14:15-24, 2 Corinthians 5:16-21
Overflowing Cups: Engaging and Inviting



Resolve to Go Micro

Most New Year's resolutions are so major they seem made to be broken. Maybe that's why "micro-resolution" is the latest January buzzword. Setting smaller goals is more realistic and helps ensure follow-through, according to experts. People who try setting micro-resolutions say that approach is more positive and leads to longer-lasting change. For example, instead of attempting to lose 30 pounds this year, make a micro-resolution to walk 10 minutes twice per day and to snack on fresh fruit at least once a day.



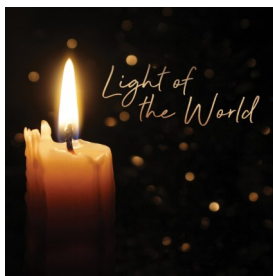
Micro-resolutions can also be helpful in matters of faith. If aiming to read the entire Bible in one year feels overwhelming, take five minutes each morning and evening to read a brief devotional or pray. If joining your church's missions committee isn't possible, try to talk to one new person each week about your faith or church. May God bless you as you take small steps that add up to big impact this year!

Our Source of Light

January 6 marks the day of Epiphany, when the wise men (who were Gentiles) came to worship Jesus and bring him gifts. During the church-year season of Epiphany, we remember that God's Son is the Light of the whole world.

Ponder the gifts of Epiphany with these two reflections, written centuries apart:

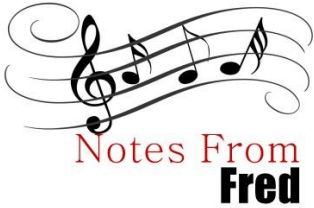
Your light, dear God,
surpasses all other light,



because all light comes from you. Your fire surpasses all fire, because your fire alone burns without destroying. The flames of your fire reach into the soul, consuming the sin and selfishness that lie there. But far from damaging the soul, your fire sets it ablaze with love. What moved you to enlighten me with your truth? The fire of your love was the reason. You loved me so much that you could not bear to see me confused and perplexed. Can I ever repay the burning love which you have given me? No, because I have nothing of my own to give. Yet you assure me that the love which you put into my soul is repayment enough. You desire only the joy of seeing me receiving your gift. What more perfect Father could there be!

—Catherine of Siena (c. 1347-1380)

Epiphany beckons us to come to the light of Jesus Christ. Epiphany calls us to stare into that light until our inner darkness is fully expunged. Epiphany then sends us out into a dark and weary world as women and men with shining faces, until we say with the apostle Paul, "It is the God who said, 'Let light shine out of darkness,' who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" [see 2 Corinthians 4:6].—Jason Gaboury, campus minister in New York City



I would like to extend a huge thank you to the Choir, Melody, Pastor Paul, Chandra Anderson, the instrumentalists, liturgists, Christmas Wreath Candle Lighters, and all of you who were present in the congregation. This year has been quite interesting and rewarding for all of us, and I deeply appreciate the support that everyone has given throughout the year.

I am eagerly looking forward to a great new year, with Pastor Paul's leadership and example guiding us. As New Year's Eve approaches, it's also an ideal time to reflect on the past and reminisce about the highlights of the year. On New Year's Eve, many of us sing "Auld Lang Syne." I know it's not a sacred song but in honor of our members and Pastor Paul who have Scottish ancestry I thought they and those of us from other ancestry might like to know a little more about the song.

New Year's Eve is a special time with several traditions that are easy to understand. For instance, counting down the seconds until the calendar changes. However, some traditions are a little less straightforward, such as singing "Auld Lang Syne," or at least humming along while it plays on TV in the background. In case you don't know the lyrics to this song despite it being played every year, don't worry. The words auld lang syne literally mean "old long since," but in practice, it means "old times, especially times fondly remembered," and an "old or long friendship." It comes from the Scots language, and the expression was first recorded in 1660–1680.

But why do millions of people sing it on New Year's Eve every year? It all started with Robert Burns, the national poet of Scotland. In 1788, Burns wrote the version of "Auld Lang Syne" that we've all come to know. He published it in 1796. Since the first known recording of the expression came about more than a century earlier, it's clear it wasn't an entirely new concept.

Although Burns gets the credit for "Auld Lang Syne," no one knows who actually first wrote the poem. Burns himself didn't claim the ditty. Instead, he said he took a fragment of a folk song that he'd heard and built more lyrics around it. It's believed that the chorus and first stanza came from elsewhere, while the rest is a Burns original.









The chorus and first stanza are the parts that people typically know if they know any lyrics at all.

The final day of the year is an appropriate time to look back at the past. That makes the theme of "Auld Lang Syne" suitable for seasonal use. However, that doesn't fully explain why a centuries-old Scottish folk song became such a New Year's Eve hit in America. One of the reasons that "Auld Lang Syne" became part of the New Year's Eve tradition in the USA is because of mass media. A popular New Year's Eve broadcast on radio and then television hosted by Guy Lombardo and his band, the Royal Canadians, ran from 1929 to 1976. Lombardo came to

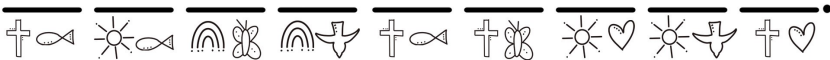
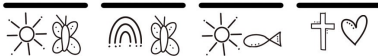
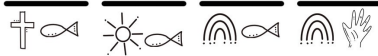
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Puzzle!

Use the grid to discover what James 5:13-18 advises when challenges loom.

	A	F	L	P	T
	C	H	N	R	W
	E	I	O	S	Y
					

P



“I do not at all understand the mystery of grace — only that it meets us where we are but does not leave us where it found us.”
—Anne Lamott

“Although no one can go back and make a brand new start, anyone can start from now and make a brand new ending.”
—Carl Bard

“Carry out a random act of kindness, with no expectation of reward.”
—Princess Diana

“In the depth of winter, I finally learned that within me there lay an invincible summer.”
—Albert Camus



Christianity affirms that at the heart of reality is a Heart, a loving Father who works through history for the salvation of his children. Man cannot save himself, for man is not the measure of all things and humanity is not God. Bound by the chains of his own sin and finiteness, man needs a Savior.
—Martin Luther King Jr.

Answers: Pray in faith. Pray for each other. Pray earnestly.

Saturday Morning Breakfast

We continue to serve the neighborhood sausage, eggs, and pancakes every Saturday. Our numbers remain solid and are moving upward most Saturdays. So many of our guests really want a kind “ear” that they can share with. It is shocking to me how many people are lonely and have no one to listen to them. We also see acts of kindness among and between our guests.

Clothing is in huge demand, especially men’s clothing. Shoes are also always needed. The book rack perpetually needs refilling and we also hand out a great many “to go” food containers.

Come and spend an hour or two with us some Saturday morning. You’ll be amazed at how much fun you’re having and the camaraderie we all have with each other.

	Servers	Guests	Total
11/25/23	16	71	87
12/2/23	14	46	60
12/9/23	9	56	65
12/16/23	15	68	83



Making the Most of Ordinary Time

In liturgical churches, more than half of the church-year calendar is labeled as Ordinary Time. Although that merely means the weeks are designated by ordinal numbers (First Sunday after the Epiphany, etc.), people may assume that “ordinary” means not special, or not a church holiday.

Ordinary gets a bad rap, but it represents the bulk of daily life. Not all days contain mountaintop experiences that warrant Facebook posts. Yet “simple, consistent, sometimes boring faithfulness” can lead to out-of-the-ordinary results, according to blogger Karl Vaters. “When you’re following God’s will for your life and you string a bunch of ordinary but necessary actions together, extraordinary things can happen,” he writes at ChristianityToday.com.

Likewise, although Christians may strive to be radical, out-of-the-ordinary followers of Jesus, everyday discipleship leaves a powerful legacy. In *The Ordinary Christian Life*, pastor Michael Horton extols the value of “the regular preaching of Christ from all of the Scriptures, baptism, the Supper, the prayers of confession and praise, and all of the other aspects of ordinary Christian fellowship.” He says the result of participating in “the ordinary life of the covenant community” is quite extraordinary: “steady maturation in Christ.”

—adapted from *The Wired Word*

Hymns for Every Occupation

Some hymnology humor. I was given this by someone and gave it to the choir years ago and in trying to organize my home office, I ran across it. It also has appeared on Preaching.com. Fred

- | | |
|---|---|
| Astronaut: "Nearer My God, To Thee" | Mountain Climber: "The Rock That Is Higher than I" |
| Baker: "I Need Thee Every Hour" | Newlywed: "I Need Thee Every Hour" |
| Barber: "A Parting Hymn We Sing" | Obstetrician: "He Is Able to Deliver Thee" |
| Baseball Batter: "Seek Thee First" | Optometrist: "Open Mine Eyes that I Might See" and "When I Can Read My Title Clear" |
| Builder: "How Firm a Foundation" and "The Church's One Foundation" | Paratrooper: "Now on Land And Sea Descending" |
| Canoeist: "Flow, River, Flow" | Philosopher: "I Am Thinking Today" |
| Carpenter: "The Nail Scarred Hand" | Politician: "Standing on the Promises" |
| Children's Librarian: "We've a Story to Tell" | Real Estate Agent: "I've Got a Mansion" |
| Chiropractor: "Awake My Soul, Stretch Every Nerve" | Sail boater: "Deep River" |
| Civil Engineer: "When I Survey the Wondrous Cross" | Sceptic: "Almost Persuaded" |
| Dentist: "Crown Him with Many Crowns" | Shopper: "Sweet By And By" |
| Electrician: "O Joyful Light" and "Send the Light" | Speech Therapist: "He Never Said a Mumbling Word" |
| Fisherman: "Shall We Gather at the River?" | Steeple Builder: "Lift High the Cross" |
| Golfer: "There Is a Green Hill Far Away" | Stonecutter: "Rock of Ages" |
| Gossiper: "Pass It On," "It Is No Secret," and "Oh, For a Thousand Tongues" | Switchboard Operator: "There's a Call Comes Ringing" |
| Historian: "Tell Me the Old, Old Story" | Tailor: "Holy, Holy, Holy" |
| IRS: "All to Thee (I Owe)" and "We Give Thee but Thine Own" | Voice Teacher: "Sing Them over Again to Me" |
| Jogger: "The Path of Life" | Watchmaker: "Take Time to Be Holy" |
| Lifeguard: "Come to the Water" | Watchman: "Silent Night" |
| Long-Distance Trucker: "On the Highways and Byways of Life" | Weatherman: "There Shall Be Showers of Blessings" |
| Mathematician: "10,000 Times, 10,000 Times" | |
| Medical Technician: "Revive Us Again" | |



In the book of Judges, the warrior Barak would go to battle only if a certain female leader went with him. Who was she?

- A. Rebekah
- B. Jael
- C. Michal
- D. Deborah

(Answer: D (See Judges 4:1-10))



Scripture Readings for January

1	Isa. 62:1-5, 10-12	12	Gen. 6:1-8	23	Gen. 15:1-11, 17-21
2	1 Kgs. 19:1-8	13	Gen. 6:9-22	24	Gen. 16:1-14
3	1 Kgs. 19:9-18	14	Gen. 7:1-10, 17-23	25	Gen. 16:15-17:14
4	Josh. 3:14-4:7	15	Gen. 8:6-22	26	Gen. 17:15-27
5	Jonah 2:2-9	16	Gen. 9:1-17	27	Gen. 18:1-16
6	Isa. 49:1-7	17	Gen. 9:18-29	28	Gen. 18:16-33
7	Gen. 1:1-2:3	18	Gen. 11:1-9	29	Gen. 19:1-29
8	Gen. 2:4-9 (10-15) 16-25	19	Gen. 11:27-12:8	30	Gen. 21:1-21
9	Gen. 3:1-24	20	Gen. 12:9-13:1	31	Gen. 22:1-18
10	Gen. 4:1-16	21	Gen. 13:2-18		
11	Gen. 4:17-26	22	Gen. 14:(1-7) 8-24		



One hooky day a year

On a random Saturday, I threw the to-do list out the window, packed up the kids and headed to the mountains. Because Saturdays are usually for catching up on chores, my sons were surprised by their new, carefree mom. We played, laughed and explored — all with no agenda. I introduced them to the concept of a hooky day.

As a child, my parents allowed me one of those per year. It wasn't a sick day but a day off, just because. I could take it any time (but not to avoid a test), and I didn't need to plan ahead. It was okay to wake up one morning and play hooky.

Proverbs 17:22 (NKJV) wisely states, "A merry heart does good, like medicine." What will you do with an impromptu day off? Will you set your own pace walking through a park? Maybe stop at a restaurant you've wanted to try? Whether a fun day off includes spending time alone or with a friend, make the most of it as a God-given gift. —Janna Firestone

Three Powerful Prayers

Amy Carmichael (1867-1951), an Irish Protestant missionary, served in India for 55 years. Much of her work was with children, especially rescuing them from sexual slavery. Carmichael wrote 35 books and many articles about her mission work. The Church of England remembers her on January 18, the anniversary of her death.

The following brief but powerful prayers are attributed to Carmichael:

May thy grace, O Lord, make that possible to me which seems impossible to me by nature.

Holy Spirit, think through me, till your ideas are my ideas.

God, hold us to that which drew us first, when the cross was the attraction, and we wanted nothing else.

First, contact

In *Unclean: Meditations on Purity, Hospitality and Mortality*, Richard Beck writes powerfully about Jesus healing a leper in Matthew 8:1-3. "What is intriguing about this story is the sequence. Jesus touches the leper first. Then the command 'Be clean!' is offered. That is, Jesus' first move is into ritual defilement. By first touching the leper, Jesus...[is] standing in solidarity with the unclean." Beck finds this "striking" because typically we expect purification before contact. But Jesus' actions reverse the pattern: "Contact occurs first."

How fortunate for us, too, that God didn't wait to reach out to us until he had cleansed us of sin. God didn't save us from afar and only then come to live among us. Rather, "God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8, ESV). And continuously, Jesus loves us, comes to us and touches our hearts, even when we are at our worst—straying from God, trapped in sin, unworthy, unclean, unrighteous. For it's not our righteousness or purity that heals and saves us, but Christ's.

Notes, Continued from Page 4

be known as “Mr. New Year’s Eve” because of the broadcast. Mr. New Year’s Eve himself is responsible for popularizing “Auld Lang Syne” every year on his annual show. If anything can make an 18th-century Scottish song popular in the modern era, it’s the power of television.

Burns wrote several verses to the song referencing Scotland, but the ones most people know and sing in this country are just the first and refrain. Burns also submitted the song to Thomson, whose stock in trade was settings of the songs by established composers of the day, such as Haydn, Pleyel, and Beethoven. It was for the Thomson version that Burns substituted ‘my dear’ for ‘my jo’, and it was Thomson who set the lyric to the well-established tune.

“Should auld acquaintance be forgot,
and never brought to mind?
Should auld acquaintance be forgot,
and auld lang syne.

CHORUS: “For auld lang syne, my jo, For auld lang syne. We’ll take a cup o’ kindness yet, For auld lang syne.”

The title of the poem in Scots can be translated into standard English as "old long since" or

more loosely as "long, long ago," "days gone by," "times long past," or "old times." Therefore, the line "For auld lang syne" in the chorus can be roughly translated as "for the sake of old times."

As Christians, we look back on the past to help guide us to the future; we remember those who have passed on to the presence of God and our friends now and past, as everyone with whom we spend time leaves a mark on us. The tradition in Scotland is to hold hands in a circle when singing the song on New Year's Eve.



Pleasant Grove Food Pantry for month of November, 2023



<i>Date</i>	<i>Families</i>	<i>Adults</i>	<i>Seniors</i>	<i>Children</i>	<i>Total Persons</i>	<i>Pounds</i>
11/6	205	358	141	226	725	10480
11/7	274	525	144	439	1108	13958
11/13	203	337	135	267	739	9185
11/14	242	511	131	377	1019	10233
11/20	222	369	155	282	806	10634
11/21	251	504	142	381	1027	10992
11/27	191	291	128	217	636	8390
11/28	261	539	124	397	1060	11684
Totals	1849	3434	1100	2586	7120	85556



JANUARY BIRTHDAYS

Vicki Thiebaud	1-2
Jo Byrd	1-4
Elizabeth Kelleher	1-5
Judy Moreland	1-5
Ian Venegoni	1-5
Janice Bell	1-12
Dick Knox	1-15
Tom Pappas	1-16
Gary Holloman	1-25
Lois Byrd	1-31



JANUARY ANNIVERSARIES

Susie and Jim Fielding 1/26



Eastminster Session

Chandra Anderson
 Melody Davis
 Philis Knox
 Dick Knox
 Tom Pappas
 Sean Turner
 Fred Watkins
 Patience Uche
 Darlene West



Pastor	Rev. Dr. Paul Burns
Director of Music	Fred P. Watkins
Organist	Melody S. Davis
Administrative Assistant	Chandra Anderson
Hostess/Housekeeper	Minerva Hernandez
Child Care Provider	Betty Crabtree

Happy New Year ♪ Happy New Year ♪ Happy New Year

HIGHLIGHTS from the STATED SESSION MEETING

December 17, 2023

- ◆ The new elder training is on Saturday, January 6, 2024 at St. Mark from 8-12;
- ◆ The new elder examinations will be on Sunday, January 7, 2024 after worship in a Called Session Meeting;
- ◆ The incoming elders will be ordained and installed on Sunday, January 14; Pastor Paul will be commissioned on January 14, 2024;
- ◆ The January Session Meeting is on Sunday, January 21, 2024; and
- ◆ The Session retreat will be on Saturday, January 27, 2024 at 10:30; Outgoing elders, please try to attend.
- ◆ Heard a report from Jim Lee on the Zoom meeting of Grace Presbytery on December 7, 2023
- ◆ Report on insurance costs for 2024.



Special dates

- ◆ New Year's Day, January 1, 2024
- ◆ Epiphany, January 6, 2024
- ◆ Baptism of the Lord, January 7, 2024
- ◆ Martin Luther King Jr. Day, January 15, 2024
- ◆ Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, January 18-25, 2024