

First United Methodist Church

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Happy New Year!! Yes, 2018 has quietly slipped away into the pages of history and 2019 is boldly before us proclaiming, or asking the question, "What are we going to do together this year??" That's a great question to ask...and especially a great question to answer. So, what are you and the "new year" going to accomplish together?

Now of course, this is the season of New Years Resolutions. You know, the resolutions, or goals, of losing weight, getting in shape, spending less, etc. Certainly, goals are a good thing to have, but unfortunately it seems that many new years resolutions are broken or ended long before the end of the first month of the new year is over. If resolutions work for you, that's great!! I hope you achieve all your new years resolutions.

For me, personally, I stopped making new years resolutions years ago. Yes, I still have something that guides me for personal growth and development for the year to come, I just state it in a way that works better for me. What I do is pick a word for the year. This is something I first heard about 4-5 years ago. Simply picking a word to guide and focus one's life and energy for the year to come.

Three years ago when I knew I was going to be moving and stepping back into the local church ministry, my word was "Do Not Be Afraid!" OK...so that's four words! 😊 But the point was that I knew there was going to be change in my life and I didn't want to approach the change with fearfulness filling my heart. Instead I read books and article concerning dealing with change, found Bible verses that I could lean on, and I talked to people, all things designed to help me be "less afraid" of the unknown of my future. That focus helped me in many ways in that transition year of my life.

Yes, I have a new word for this year. My word helps me reflect on and move toward the person I want to become, rather than focusing on negative traits, patterns, or behaviors that are already in place. After all, I am a work in progress. God is the potter...and I am the clay. Part of my daily prayer comes from the hymn **Have Thine Own Way, Lord**, "God, mold me and make me after thy will."

So, how about you? Do you have a word for the year? Or maybe it's a phrase. Do you have something that will guide you and hopefully motivate you, or intentionally help you think about growth and positive direction for the year to come. We're just barely into the new year. It's not too late. Actually, it's never too late to find ways to allow God into our lives in order to help us become the people that God wants and sees us to be.

Again, I say "Happy New Year!" But maybe I should also say "Happy New Word!" May this year and word help you become the person God created you to be. Oh, and by the way, my final thought is this. Find someone to tell your word too. Allow that person to check in with you from time to time and ask about how your word is guiding and shaping you in this year. Yes, it's a risk to do this. But it's a risk that pays significant benefits in living into your word. So, one final time... "Happy New Year!" and "Happy New Word!"

Serving Together,
Pastor Keith