

SPOTLIGHT

ON SAINT JAMES LUTHERAN CHURCH
BALTIMORE MARYLAND



JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2024

NEW YEAR - SAME LORD

When looking forward to a new year, we often do so with hopes of “new things.” We hope for new experiences, new adventures, a new anything; except this year maybe old is the new “new”. After a few years like 2020, 2021, 2022 we pray 2024 brings us familiarity and comfort. For Christians, familiarity is what the Lord promises and embodies. His promises, presence, and comfort is the same year in and year out. All Christians of all ages and backgrounds can be assured of this Biblical fact. *“Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.”*

Hebrews 13:8

Of course, even while we pray for old the familiar, we will undoubtedly face new challenges this coming year. For Christians and especially pastors, the words found in the second letter to Timothy from the apostle Paul should guide us as we continue through the wilderness of this world.

We should hold fast to God’s Word, but especially these words from 2 Timothy 4:1-5 *“I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom: preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching. For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears, they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths. As for you, always be sober-minded, endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.”*

Saint Paul writes those words specifically to a young pastor named Timothy but they can be adopted by any pastor and even all faithful Christians should note them as well. In our current world, no other word could encapsulate the current state of affairs. People are constantly searching for truth but often settling upon that which satisfies the itchiness of the sinful ear. With the words from 2 Timothy chapter four, you can

be assured of the vocation and what to expect from your pastor (*me*) this coming year. As faithful congregation members, your vocation is to adhere to and seek out sound teaching, even if it is unsatisfactory to your itching (*sinful*) ears. God’s Word is not conformed to our wills, wants, or desires; rather, our wills, wants, and desires ought to be conformed to God’s Word. In the year 2024, endure sound teaching, curb your own passions through God’s Word and sanctification, turning away from those who preach and teach country to Scripture. We have had enough misinformation, myths, and malicious musings this previous years. Our help is in the Name of the Lord, who made heaven and earth. Therefore, let our souls, hearts, and ears find satisfaction in the Lord’s steadfast faithfulness. He is the only reliable One. Amen.

In Christ,

Pastor Bednash

JESUS CHRIST IS THE SAME YESTERDAY, TODAY, AND FOREVER.

HEBREWS 13:8