

January 2026 Newsletter

2025 is now gone. It is done and over with. You will be able to recall good, maybe even great, memories of what has passed. Some memories of tragedy, sorrow, and pain will linger throughout 2026 and maybe even beyond. Like the shades of night most of what we have gone through will disappear. I know... Google has already been making photo albums for you, tagging the ones you love and highlighting some of the important events of the last year. With the flip of a page, the turn of a calendar, it seems that all we can do is look forward with hope. 2026 has already started. Some have good news already and some not so good news.

While much of life stays the same – doctors' appointments, hair appointments, your jobs, coming to church, I know that changes can happen. Celebrating the new year is often one that brings hope and joy for possibilities of health, friendship, and peace. The hymn we sang for our New Year's Eve service recalls that the altar of our Lord is decked with light. We gathered here to worship the one who brings His gifts and newness of life to you.

It is here that we bow before the cross. We bow before the Lord our Maker and our Redeemer. Like memories of this last year, we recount all the mercies that our Lord has showered upon us. Specifically, that He gave to us mercy and grace through His death on the cross and resurrection from the tomb. And yet we know that just as some face cancer, sickness, and disease, know it doesn't just go away that the turn of a page, so our sins do not disappear because of a different date on the calendar.

Isaiah, Jeremiah, the prophets of old, the disciples, the apostles, and now pastors, have and continue to call you to repentance. You get to examine yourself on bended knee before our Lord, confess your sins. You get to offer up prayer in faith that God would Guard and keep you this coming year and all the days of your life from giving into temptation, from despair, from despising His word, from seeking help from other gods, from finding comfort in the temporal goods and monies of this age, from illicit and unholy relationships, from hatred and anger, from stealing and coveting. You get to offer prayers and songs of thankfulness and praise for His provisions, His mercies, for the forgiveness of your sins. You get offer up prayer that your new year if filled with God's strength and that He keep you in the one true faith and guide your footsteps in His ways, through His word, by the Holy Spirit, who has made you new through the blood of the Lamb. 2026 is the year of our Lord, just like every other year. God's peace.

Pastor Ficken