

PASTOR'S LETTER JANUARY, 2023 HAPPY NEW YEAR!!

IT'S TIME TO PARTY!!!



In Tony Campolo's book, "The Kingdom of God Is a Party," he describes how in the book of Deuteronomy all the people would bring in their tithe to the Temple in Jerusalem for a party. At this party, everyone was invited. No one was left out. Prostitutes, tax collectors, the poor, and the sick were all invited. This was a day for all creation to have a party and celebrate God's love and God's grace.

In many of our churches, we have forgotten how to party. Although our standing rules in The United Methodist Church state that we cannot have wine in the church, I have to wonder if a little wine wouldn't help our "sourpuss" religious attitudes towards God and others. If a little wine is good for the stomach, who knows, it may be good for the church.

Just after Jesus attended a party with a large group of tax collectors and sinners, the religious leaders of his day complained to Jesus that he and his disciples were not in line with many of the Jewish teaching and rules of the day. In essence, they did not like the fact that he was inviting the sinners to the party. It was their party and they wanted to keep it to themselves. Listen to Jesus' remarkable response, "...no one after drinking old wine desires new wine..." Simply put, Jesus was telling these religious people that his wine was the best because it was in harmony with God's desire to invite ALL people to the party (Luke 5. 29-39).

As I look across the Northern Illinois Conference of the United Methodist Church, I see a familiar problem. We have forgotten how to party. In each one of these churches the same proverbial phrase is heard, "If we don't get new people into our church, we will die." Of course, these new people have to look like them and talk like them, and walk like them.

What is the solution? We need to move away from our old humdrum attitudes and PARTY!!! And, we need to invite and welcome everyone to the party. Not just our church members, but EVERYONE. Keep in mind, this is the way it is supposed to be. When we gather together, it is a Celebration, it is a Party.

Let's Party,
Pastor Brett

JANUARY 2023 SERMONS AND SCRIPTURES

January 1 st	-- "Regrets, Regrets, Regrets"	Mark 14:29-31; Phillippians 3:12-16
January 8 th	-- "When Times Get Tough"	Job 42: 7-11 Romans 8:31-38
January 15 th	-- "Why Do Bad Things Happen To Good People?"	Romans 8:26-30
January 22 nd	-- "From Judging To Loving"	Galatians 6:1-10
January 29 th	-- "Whose Side Are You On?"	Matthew 16. 21-28