

Eastern Mission

Apostolic Lutheran Church of America

January 2022

THE YEAR OF OUR LORD

As we reflect on the last year, we see that many things have happened. Many of our loved ones have left this world, many new babies have been born, and many discouraging changes and yet also encouraging changes in our government. There's been abundant joys and abundant sorrows. But as believers we have an anchor, a hope in God through faith in his son Jesus that whatever happens we can have peace. We know that God is in control and loves us. Paul says in **2 Corinthians 4: "(7) But we have this treasure (Jesus) in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not ourselves. (8) We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; (9) persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed; (10) always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body. (12) So then death worketh in us, but life in you"**. We know that in this life we will have troubles, sorrows, and persecutions, but when we have Christ living within us, we can be confident that though this mortal body dies we are given new life in Jesus. We see that when Jesus is manifested in our mortal bodies (our flesh) and our own wants and desires are pushed aside, it works life in those around us: **"So then death worketh in us, but life in you" (2 Corinthians 4:12)**. This becomes a daily experience that when we are a living sacrifice as Paul says in **Romans 12:1: "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice unto God, which is your reasonable service"**. I believe this means that moment by moment we are to put aside our own desires and wants for the sake of serving God and our neighbor. We are always to put others before ourselves which Paul says is our reasonable service. And when we set out to serve as we should, and find that we fail in so many ways, I say unto you to not become discouraged because in your failures Jesus is exalted, and through our weaknesses we are made strong. Jesus came to save sinners, of whom Paul says he was chief in **1 Timothy 1:15: "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief"**. I encourage you this year to continue to serve and strive to walk obedient to God's word and His calling. As Paul says in **2 Corinthians 12: "(9) And he said unto me, 'My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness'. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. (10) Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong"**. Therefore, let us as brothers and sisters in Christ love one another, pray for one another, comfort one another in our sorrows, troubles, sicknesses, etc... knowing that we all can have the peace of God that passes our understanding. Knowing that whatsoever happens in this life we have a far better place waiting for us on the other side, where Jesus is waiting for us and where we will be reunited with all our loved ones that have gone on before us. As we begin a new year let's remember that it is the Year of The Lord. **2 Timothy 4:8: "Henceforth there is laid up for me (us) a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me (us) at that day: and not me (us) only, but unto all them also that love his appearing"**. Let us therefore wait with patience in the advent of our Lord our Savior Jesus' second coming to take us home to be with him forever and ever.

Happy New Year and God's Peace.
Ken Matson