

## Happy New Year

Happy New Year, a wish we give each other, a time of good wishes for all... A time of renewed vows to get it right this year. A time of promises to ourselves and others, and sometimes God that we will change and become better people. We'll give up desserts, alcohol, and empty promises. But then life steps in and we are soon on the same path we were on in December. Or people become like me and avoid resolutions because we have failed too many times. Resolutions can be the promises we make to ourselves or even to loved ones but what about the promises we make in our faith life. I will pray daily, I will love God's people more, I will help the hungry, I will be kinder and more understanding. I will attend church or join a religious class. The promises we make to God. They are easy to make and easy to break and easy to ask forgiveness for. We have a God who made us mortal, a forgiving God, a patient God, a God who hears what is in our hearts. A God who knows our breaking point, a God who knows our sins, and a God who knows the plans he has for us. A God who we sometimes disappoint daily. A God who made us who we are. Remember Flip Wilson who would proclaim "The Devil made me do it?" An excuse for all kinds of things. We have the possibility for change in us not just on New Years Day but in every minute of every day we are given on this earth. We can do the things God calls us to, to feed the hungry, not only those that need food but those who need to hear the word of a forgiving God. Some hunger for food a real need, and others hunger for salvation and that is also a real need, and we are called to provide it.

If you make resolutions this New Years, may they be resolutions that make this world a better place. Give to the hungry, lift another person up, talk to the stranger in church, pray for the sick and the lonely and those in need of a friend. Pray for our country and the children in schools, pray for the depressed, and those that grieve. Pray for those who live with wars, and poverty, and terrorism. Pray for our world and all God's people, those that are sick in heart and mind. and for the children who deal with violence in their lives. May your resolutions and your prayers help all God's children the young and the old.

Father God, may you hear our prayers for those who are suffering, for those who grieve, for the sick and the lost. Lord may the violence and school shootings cease, may we find ways to reach those who are tortured by their thoughts and the sorrow and anger in their hearts and minds. May we be a kinder and gentler nation. Be with our church may we greet the stranger, feed the hungry, care for the sick and those in need. Be with our pastor and bless his ministry. Be with our staff and leaders, guide and lead them. Be with the sick and the lonely and those who are still afraid of a pandemic, may they find you waiting to strengthen and comfort them. Be with our children in schools keep them safe. Be with those in countries that suffer from terrorism, help the people in places like Haiti where violence rules and those countries that are at war, may they find peace. Be with the sick and lonely in our midst. May we be what you have called us to be, your people in this place and in this time. In Jesus name we pray.

Jeremiah 29: 4:11" For I know the plans I have for you ", declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you. Plans to give you hope and a future."

Grace Epperson