

# Christ Lutheran Church

127 N. Spring St., Klamath Falls, OR 97601

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January 2018

One of the things people often say when the calendar flips over to a new year is something like: "I can't believe it's already 2018! It sure was a fast year!" Then someone responds: "Yeah, each year just seems to pass more quickly." I'm sure you've heard the conversation, and maybe you've said the same.

The New Year leads us think of times past, as well as new things to come. It also can remind us how quickly life is passing. Maybe this is why many people resolve to make the best of life at the beginning of each new year. They hope for a good year, maybe better than some they have experienced.

Psalms 90 captures these thoughts and puts our lives into perspective. It contrasts the brief span of our life to God's eternity: *"Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever You had formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, You are God... For a thousand years in Your sight are like yesterday when it is past, and like a watch in the night" (vs. 2, 4).* On the other hand: *"The days of our lives are seventy years; and if by reason of strength they are eighty years, yet their boast is only labor and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away" (vs. 10).*

The reason given for life's shortness and troubles is sin: *"You have set our iniquities before You, our secret sins in the light of Your countenance. For all our days have passed away in Your wrath; we finish our years like a sigh" (vs. 8-9).*

Therefore as we look to the future, the psalm leads us to pray for God's guidance and blessing as our merciful and loving Savior: *"So teach us to number our days, that we may gain a heart of wisdom... And have compassion on Your servants. Oh, satisfy us early with Your mercy, that we may rejoice and be glad all our days!" (vs. 12, 13-14).*

It is not exactly the popular perspective on life we are given at the turn of a new year. While watching the ball drop in Times Square, for example, we do not hear the announcer advising that we begin the New

Year with repentant hearts, praying for God's forgiveness and blessing in the name of Jesus Christ.

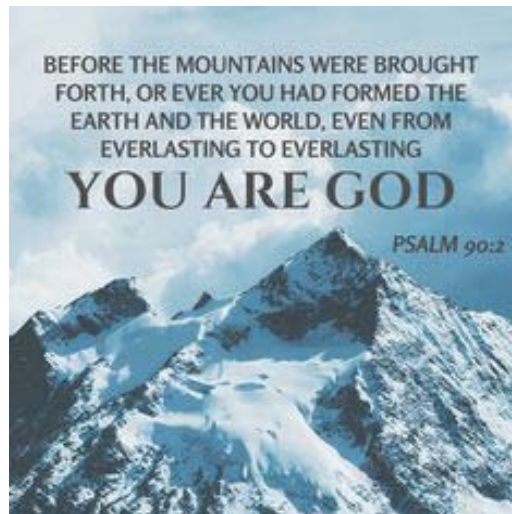
But in reality, this alone is where our hearts find true *"Satisfaction... joy... and gladness all our days."* Our hope does not hang on how well things may or may not go in the New Year – how successful or healthy we might be. In Jesus Christ, we have God's promise that, no matter what may come, whether good or bad, every day we are satisfied *"early with Your mercy."* We can begin each day assured that God loves us so much that He sent His Son to remove all our sins and the eternal death they would have brought us. In Christ, God forgives us and declares us to be His holy children – with the promise that, in heaven's bright future, we will know and share in His *"everlasting to everlasting"* love.

As we look back on the years we have lived so far in this world, truly we can thank God for His many blessings. Whether we face good or bad times in the future, we know He is our Savior and Provider who holds our future in His hands. *"He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?... For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 8:32, 38-39).*

One of the hymns in the New Year section of our hymnal, based on Psalm 90, concludes with the following verse. With the *"heart of wisdom"* God gives us, this can also be our New Year's prayer:

O God, our Help in ages past,  
Our Hope for years to come,  
Be Thou our Guard while life shall last  
And our eternal Home! Amen.

In His *"everlasting to everlasting"* love,  
Pastor Smith



# REDEEMED!

(A newsletter of our Evangelical Lutheran Synod's Board for Home Outreach)

There is a story of a pastor who, one day, met a young boy standing outside his church, carrying a rusty cage, in which several birds fluttered nervously.

The pastor inquired, “*Son, where did you get those birds?*” The boy replied, “*I trapped them out in the field.*” “*What are you going to do with them?*” “*I’m going to play with them for a while, and then I guess I’ll just feed them to an old cat we have at home.*”

When the pastor offered to buy them, the boy exclaimed, “*Mister, you don’t want them, they’re just little old wild birds that can’t sing a lick.*” The pastor replied, “*That’s ok. I’ll give you \$5 for the cage and the birds.*” “*Okay, it’s a deal,*” the boy said, “*but you’re making a bad bargain.*” The exchange took place and the boy went away whistling, delighted with his crisp new \$5 bill.

The pastor then walked around to the back of the church property, open the door of the small wire coop, and let the struggling creatures soar into the blue.

The next Sunday, the pastor took the empty cage into the pulpit and used it to illustrate his sermon about Christ’s coming to seek and to save the lost – paying for their sins with His own precious blood.

“*That boy told me the birds were not singers,*” said the pastor, “*but when I released them, and they winged their way heavenward, it seemed to me they were singing: ‘Redeemed, redeemed, redeemed!’*”

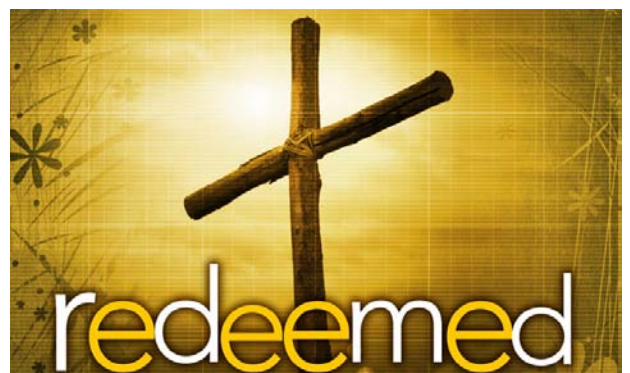
To “redeem” simply means to “buy back.” When you hand the cashier a coupon, the store is literally *buying back* the coupon’s stated discount price.

You and I – along with everybody else – had been trapped by sin; sinful from the moment of our conception (Ps. 51:5), and condemned for eternity. But God, our heavenly Father, had such a love for you and me, and all mankind, that He sent His one and only Son, “*born of a woman, so that He would be born under the law, in order to **redeem** those under the law, so that we would be adopted as sons*” (Gal. 4:4,5 EHV). He was born to be our Substitute! With His perfect life, His innocent suffering and death on the Cross, and His victorious rising from the grave, Christ **purchased (redeemed)** our pardon! We are free and forgiven!

Now our song echoes the song of those liberated birds: “**Redeemed! We have been redeemed!**”

As we enter all the unknowns of this New Year, we do so with the utmost confidence, because our gracious and almighty God, who *does know* what the future holds, has purchased us and fashioned us into new creations, in Christ!

Now our lives have purpose, as we serve our gracious Savior-God, and we proclaim the Good News of Jesus; reaching out to others with the same amazing love He has showered upon us!



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Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1 <i>New Year's Day</i>	2	3  Youth Catechism 4:00 PM	4	5  Jesus Cares Ministry 2:00 PM	6  <i>Epiphany of Our Lord</i>
7 <i>Epiphany 1</i>  Worship with Communion 9:30 AM Worship at Crystal Terrace 1:00 PM	8  <i>Happy Birthday Ray Ohlde</i>	9  Council Meeting 5:00 PM	10  <i>Happy Birthday Diane Bliss</i>  Youth Catechism 4:00 PM	11  CLWMS Meeting 3:30 PM	12  <i>Happy Birthday Cathy Tousey</i>	13
14 <i>Epiphany 2</i>  Worship 9:30 AM Sunday School & Bible Class 10:45 AM Worship at Crystal Terrace 1:00 PM	15	16	17  Youth Catechism 4:00 PM	18	19	20  <i>Happy Birthday Kayvon Klein</i>
21 <i>Epiphany 3</i>  Worship with Communion 9:30 AM Sunday School & Bible Class 10:45 AM Worship at Crystal Terrace 1:00 PM	22	23	24  Circuit Pastors Conference Hillsboro, OR	25	26	27
28 <i>Epiphany 4</i>  Worship 9:30 AM Sunday School & Bible Class 10:45 AM Worship at Crystal Terrace 1:00 PM	29	30	31  Youth Catechism 4:00 PM	<p><i>“For I am persuaded that neither death nor life... nor things present nor things to come... shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”</i></p> <p><i>(Romans 8:38, 39)</i></p>		

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