

Dream Deeply in this New Year

By Bishop Richard E Jaech, Synod Bishop, published in January 2022 newsletter

Dear Friends in Christ,

When our family gathers with relatives and friends at this time of year, we like to ask each other the question, “What are you looking forward to and hoping for in the New Year?” On the one hand, it is a chance to talk about actual plans that have been made, such as an up-coming trip or a project that will be started.

It is also a chance to talk about dreams and hopes that are not yet definite, but deeply desired. “I am going to start taking better care of my health this year.” “I hope for more satisfying work this year.” “I plan to work towards better communication with my family.” Our hopes and dreams can even turn to our whole world and the myriad of needs and possibilities that are before us. “This is what I hope for in the world this year.”

What are you looking forward to and hoping for in the New Year?

One of the things that gets in the way of our hopes and dreams is the fear that change is not possible. Everything seems to be stuck in a rut of constantly repeating, destructive patterns in our lives, our relationships, and the world. There is a voice inside us that says, “Nothing will change for the better. My dreaming is foolish.”

At the opposite end is the fear that change is relentless and out of control. The world seems to be falling apart. Consequently, whether we fear that change is impossible or that change is beyond anyone’s control, we hesitate to hope too deeply for something, for fear of being disappointed.

“Behold, I make all things new.” That is the promise that God speaks in the Book of Revelation. It is a cosmic promise that foretells a new heaven and a new earth. Yet it is also a down-to-earth promise of blessings right here and right now for God’s people in our everyday life.

What are you looking forward to and hoping for in the New Year? There is something about the turning of the calendar that makes us think about new beginnings. Starting a New Year is a natural time to dream for the future.

God takes our hopes and dreams seriously. God opens up paths for us that we would never expect. The writer of Ephesians says, “Now to God who by the power at work within us is able to accomplish abundantly far more than all we can ask or imagine, ... to God be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations.” (Eph. 3:20-21)

Dream deeply in this New Year. Dream and pray and act with courage. God dreams with us and for us and God fills us with power and blessing.

In Christ,

Bishop Rick Jaech