

Happy New Year! What an amazing (and interesting) Christmas season. The weather tried to shut us down, but we did not knuckle under. We defied Mother Nature and gathered for Christmas Eve/Day worship services. We were available to the community of Buffalo Center as we were the only church in town holding services. Thank you to all who helped make this season a great one. So many people were involved and therefore I won't try to name names. You know who you are. Thank you.

With that being said, I have a couple other items to share with you. First, please be in prayer for your church council. We are in need to people to answer the call to serve. Please do not look at this as a chore, job, something to get out of the way, or anything of the sort. **Serving on the council is a ministry opportunity to share your God-given gifts to help advance His Kingdom.** And that is not me trying to lay it on thick, but rather telling you the truth. We joke about being coerced or dragged onto the council, but I truly enjoy meeting each month and serving with these men and women (and yes, I wrote that with a straight face, because I am serious). Please do not dismiss this out of hand. Please be in prayer and listen to see if God is calling you to serve. God is doing a thing here and we need leaders.

Second, in about one and a half months, on February 22, Lent begins with Ash Wednesday. Yes, I know that we are still cleaning up from Christmas, but Lent needs to be mentioned now. I am working on details for our Lenten midweek services and will have those available for you soon and most definitely in February's newsletter. I have a couple ideas I am working on about which I am excited. Last year we worked through the book of Jonah. This year the focus will be more thematic. Stay tuned for more information.

Lastly, I want to close with these verses from the Word of God, 2 Corinthians 5:17-19, *"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation."* Ultimately, this is the mission of the Church, not my mission for this church but God's mission for HIS Church. You and I have been entrusted with this Good News. Let's move into 2023 with this in mind and live to the glory of God. In Jesus' name, Amen.