

Happy New Year to the Avoca Methodist Church Family!

January 2025

First, let me say “Thank you!” Your cards, letters, and gifts made Pastors’ Appreciation Month, my birthday, and Christmas so very special. I cannot begin to acknowledge each of them, but please know that every act of kindness is very much appreciated. Your words and acts help counteract the perfectionist voices in my head that repeat “You’re not good enough” and “You don’t do enough.” We have a wonderful church family, and I am thankful for each and every one of you.

Second, as we begin a New Year, many of us think about resolutions. Often we focus on weight and exercise. Sales of exercise equipment and gym memberships skyrocket. When I worked at PetSmart, Hills Science Diet put out a special New Years Pack for overweight dogs. It was just their regular food, premeasured into little plastic pouches (at a higher price, of course).

I would like to suggest a cheaper (free) resolution that is guaranteed to produce positive results. If you have a copy of “The Story,” you can read chapter 12 which will be the topic of my message on January 5.

If you aren’t reading along in “The Story” you can pick up a reading plan from the table in the Narthex. You can check off each passage you read, one day from Moses’ writings, one day from the Psalms, one day from the prophets, etc. Reading from each type of writing throughout the week helps keep you from getting bogged down in some of the genealogy and tabernacle details.

Another option, which I’m using for 2025, is a Bible from Voice of the Martyrs. It gives a daily Scripture passage and a brief meditation on those who suffer for their faith today.

Spending time reading the Bible, meditating on God’s message to you, and applying it to your daily life can be life-changing. I encourage you to build your relationship with God. Unlike many books, we don’t read the Bible just for its contents, but to get to know the author better. Yes, men’s and women’s names are assigned to the individual books, but I believe that each was inspired by God with the purpose of building a relationship with us.

Finally, I’d like to suggest another resolution. Choose someone to share your faith with. Be a friend to them, mentor them, invite them to church and events at Family Life. Be prepared for resistance; many people have been hurt by other people in church. We need to remind them (and ourselves) that there is a difference between God and the people of God. Does that make us hypocrites? No; it makes us human. We humans have bad days, limits to our patience, and sometimes the Devil gets ahold of us and we hurt each other. That is not God’s fault.

If you’re anything like me, if it’s not on your calendar, it’s unlikely to get done. Is being a disciple of Jesus in your plans for today? I pray that it is. It needs to be intentional, or it won’t happen.

Again, Happy New Year! And don’t forget to **B**ee **A** **D**isciple!

Pastor Barre

