

Welcome For December 31 2023

On this final day of 2023 we welcome our Naches friend and pastor Scott Klepach. Scott has been pastor at the Naches Presbyterian Church (Peace of Christ) for 3+ years. He, and his wife Mack (Jaclyn Mack), have deep roots in the Yakima valley (and a mutual love of Garfield and Roller Coasters). Scott has been a reporter for the Yakima Herald Republic, an English professor at CWU, an associate pastor at Wesley United Methodist, a hospital and hospice chaplain at Memorial (he was a part of my exceptional team of chaplains). He continues to serve as a hospice chaplain for Astria. While Scott preaches here, I am doing the same in Naches. At the end of each year there is a natural tendency to reflect on the past, and consider what the months ahead will bring. Christians have a unique advantage at such times. We are able to look back with thankfulness for God's many blessings, including His grace and forgiveness. We are not weighed down by our failures, our regrets, the times we were less Christian than we had hoped. And, as we look to the coming year, we anticipate new adventures, stronger relationships, greater confidence, and growth in our faith. God has given us the gift of the Holy Spirit to encourage us, confront us, teach us, and change us.

These two verses from Paul's letter to the Philippians sum that up ... *"Brothers and sisters, I do not consider that I have made it my own. But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, ¹⁴ I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus."*

He provides the power, and desire, to press on ... The year on the calendar will change. By God's grace we will too. Others will make decisions that will impact us. Circumstances beyond our control will affect us. We keep pressing on to Jesus. He is the same yesterday, today and tomorrow.

Ending one year and beginning the next, growing in our love of God and others,

Curt