

The Net



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Hope: A New Year's Resolution by Father Jeremiah Williamson

You will most likely pick up this article after the season of Advent has passed. Perhaps even the Christmas season has faded into Epiphany. With all of the busyness of December giving way to the dark, cozy days of January, you have snuggled in to read the first parish newsletter of 2009. I'm glad you have. I'm glad we can share some time together before I arrive in person on April 1.

January sets the mind to the future in a way that no other month does. As we hang a fresh calendar we are reminded that we are given another first chance – a chance to make things right, a chance to change our lives in exciting or necessary ways, a chance to live more fully into God's dream for our lives. Sometimes we give "hope" exclusively over to Advent but hope is much too elusive; hope is present in every verse of our Holy Scriptures and in every word of our sacred Liturgy.

I first considered using this article, this opportunity, to introduce myself, present a bio. But the overwhelming urgency of hope compelled me otherwise. We are living in an increasingly desperate time – hunger, war, disease and unemployment dominate cable news cycles; I have known no better time to rekindle in our hearts, and in all hearts, the deep, persistent hope of the Christian life. So while we are bombarded with reasons not to hope, while we are constantly reminded that hope is not "real", I encourage you, as your Rector-elect, to make hope your most courageous New Year's resolution. In the midst of difficult economic realities, in perhaps the most uncertain era in recent history, I dare you to hold onto hope. Some days hope will come quite naturally and some days hope will be almost impossible to muster but on the difficult days defiantly hope all the more.

2009 will undoubtedly present us great challenges as a people, as a nation. But in the darkness of fear and uncertainty hope shines brightest. And so we choose hope. This year, as a parish family, you will welcome a new Rector, your sixth, me. I have great hope for our time together and I am sure you have similar hopes. We will, of course, face challenges and joy – in our lives, as a church family. But we will share both the challenges and the joy. Together we will journey into the future. The future is always dark, unknown territory. And so God has called us together to walk into this dangerous unknown – this new year, this new chapter in St. Andrew's history. And into these great unknowns we venture together, always together, boldly clinging to hope.

For amid the worst and most miserable conditions there is one element which is never allowed to disappear – the strength of a tenacious and unconquerable hope. – R.W. Church

