



Pastor Steve Nelson's weekly blog

St. Mark's Lutheran Church, North St. Paul, MN

January 12, 2012

A new year indeed!

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St. Mark's Lutheran Church, North St. Paul, MN

January 12, 2012

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Pastor Steve Nelson's weekly blog

St. Mark's Lutheran Church, North St. Paul, MN

January 12, 2012

A new year indeed!

2012 is supposed to be the year the world ends. I've heard that the Mayan calendar has predicted it, and something about the earth's passage through the Milky Way could cause a reversal of the poles. Which would mean I would finally enjoy going "up north" (if it meant going south, get it?) In case the world does end on December 21, I think I'll hold off on Christmas shopping until after, just in case.

We Christians live with the expectation of Christ's return and the end of the world as we know it. Probably the oldest Christian prayer in the Bible is "Maranatha." Wikipedia says this about the petition:

Maranatha (either *את אנרמ*: *maranâ' thâ'* or *אתא נרמ*: *maran 'athâ'*) is an Aramaic word occurring twice in the New Testament (see *Aramaic of Jesus*) and also in the Didache which is part of the Apostolic Fathers' collection. It is transliterated into Greek letters rather than translated, and is found at the end of Paul's *First Epistle to the Corinthians* (1 Cor 16:22). The NRSV translates it as: "Our Lord, come!" but notes that it could also be translated as: "Our Lord has come"; the NIV translates: "Come, O Lord"; the NAB notes:

"As understood here ("O Lord, come!"), it is a prayer for the early return of Christ. If the Aramaic words are divided differently (Maran atha, "Our Lord has come"), it becomes a credal declaration. The former interpretation is supported by what appears to be a Greek equivalent of this acclamation in Book of Revelation 22:20 "Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!"

Today, however, news of the world coming to an end usually is not well received. Perhaps it is a measure of how much we enjoy this life that we are frightened to think of it ending. Yet the Bible reminds us that the only thing lasting in this life is God. The rest all passes away. Maybe the world will end for us in the crashing of the heavens. More likely this world will end when I take my last breath. Either way it is always good, they say, to begin with the end in mind. Whether it comes from our Bible reading or news of the Mayan calendar, it is helpful to think—always—about where we are going and how quickly this life passes. (Made all the more personal for me on this my birthday weekend!)

More new year news...

Last weekend our family celebrated the marriage of my son Thomas in Appleton, Wisconsin. He and his wife Maria make a great couple. I decided that I enjoyed marrying off my son more than my daughter. The groom's parents are like honored guests. We provided a groom's dinner, but otherwise most of the planning and arranging was done by the couple and the bride's family. This made it a relaxing, joyous family reunion for the Nelsons and an introduction to the bride's wonderful family. A nice way to start 2012, especially with the fine weather.

More new year news...

At St. Mark's this is the month we prepare for the Annual Meeting on Sunday, January 29 at 11:30am. The Annual Meeting is when reports are made about the past year and decisions made for the next, like the adoption of a budget, election of leaders, and other business. On Sunday, January 22, the budget for 2012 will be presented at a forum in the Fireside Room after each service. If you are curious or have questions, this is the opportunity to have them answered in preparation for the vote on the 29th.

The last word department:

It's been said that in the first year of a marriage the man speaks and the woman listens. In the second year the woman speaks and the man listens. In the third year they both speak and the neighbors listen. May that not be the case for you!

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