



Raquette Lake Chapel Sunday Blast

February 4, 2024

"Happy New Year! (really?)"

"Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things." Philippians 4:8 (NIV):

"How are your New Year's Resolutions coming along?"

Ok... Not so good... What resolutions? ... I ran across this advice in a book about the turmoil within Christian denominations in the US. It sounded like good advice to start the 2024 New Year:

"Maybe it's time to press the pause button on social media. Put down your phone, close "X" (Twitter), and take a break from Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok. All of that will still be there when you return. Take a breath." (The Deconstruction of Christianity, Tim Barnett and Alisa Childers)

"Will this year be any less chaotic than the last three years?"

Probably not. In fact, it could be worse: 2024 is a major election year! Need I say more? A quick story:

Reverend Anderson navigated the winding road to her small country church early Sunday morning. As she drove, her peaceful reverie was interrupted by the chime of a text message. Glancing at her phone, she noticed a familiar name – Emily. "Not again," she thought to herself.

"Rev, can you believe what's in the news today? It's just too much!" the message read.

Rev. Anderson pulled over to a scenic spot by the river and replied, "Dear Emily, I understand the concerns of the world can be overwhelming. Instead of letting it consume your thoughts, focus on things that will enrich your soul. Let's meet after church."

"If anything is excellent or praiseworthy – think about such things."

Technology has opened up a world of information, good and bad. The problem I face, and I suspect many of you face also, is that there is just too much to absorb, let alone evaluate its value to us as faithful Christians. It's like trying to get a drink of water out of an open fire hydrant! The flood of information, news, opinions, and everything else is jumbled together so much we can't separate what we should pay attention to and what we should ignore completely. Everything is right in our face.

The moral of the anecdote about Rev. Anderson is clear: amidst the noise of the world, it's essential to shift our focus toward things that enrich our souls. By concentrating on prayer and scripture, community, and "praiseworthy" positive actions, we find the strength to navigate life's challenges with grace and purpose.

May it be so! Amen! – blessings, Vance

Prayer Box: let us pray for those recovering from illness and surgery; those who have suffered from natural disasters; those who have suffered from war and violence; those families who are struggling in their relationships. Lord, hear our prayers!