



Raquette Lake Chapel Sunday Blast

January 12, 2025

"Re-Make and Re-Center"

We should be encouraged to hear and read so many uplifting secular and religious speeches, sermons, and articles about how the new year 2025 brings us opportunities to reclaim our values, rebuild relationships and friendships, and start anew! But we say that every New Year, right? Will this year be different?

U.S. Surgeon General, Vivek H. Murthy, in his leaving his post, urged Americans to rethink their lives by focusing on *relationships, service, and purpose*. He wrote of his father's experience in a close-knit Indian village, where community bonds provided fulfillment despite widespread scarcity. He further claimed that *the erosion of these bonds is a root cause of widespread pain and unhappiness in the U.S.*, which is worsened by economic hardship, negative news and social media, and social pressures to strive for fame, wealth, and power.

[source: <https://people.com/surgeon-general-vivek-murthy-americans-closing-letter-rethink-how-we-are-living-our-lives-exclusive-8770191>, accessed 1-7-2025]

We do not have to look far in scripture to find the same message:

- **Relationships:** John 15:12 - "My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you."
- **Service:** Galatians 5:13 - "You, my brothers and sisters, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the flesh; rather, serve one another humbly in love."
- **Purpose:** - Ephesians 2:10 - "For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do."

In today's world, living Biblically calls us to embrace *love, service, and purpose* in all aspects of life. Relationships, as guided by John 15:12, center on loving others as Jesus has loved us—unconditionally, selflessly, and sacrificially. This love invites us to break barriers of division, mend broken bonds, and create communities where compassion is the rule, not the exception. In our daily interactions, we are reminded that the measure of love we give is the reflection of Christ's love within us.

Service and purpose flow naturally from this love. Galatians 5:13 challenges us to use our freedom not for self-indulgence, but to humbly serve others in love. True service reflects a heart aligned with God's will, lifting others in times of need. Ephesians 2:10 reveals our divine purpose: as God's handiwork, we are uniquely created to carry out good works that bring His light into the world. Whether through acts of kindness, pursuing justice, or simply living out our faith, we fulfill the purpose for which we were lovingly designed, becoming vessels of grace and hope in a world longing for renewal. May it be so. Amen!

Prayer box: let us pray for all those who grieve, especially Connie, Margo, Carol, and Gina; pray for those affected by wildfires in California and extreme weather in southern US; pray for healing for Patti, Holland, Steve, John H., Debbie, Maggie.

Lord, hear our prayers!