

“Ah, Lord God! It is you who have made the heavens and the earth by your great power and by your outstretched arm! Nothing is too hard for you.” Jeremiah 32:17

Greetings to you, brothers and sisters in Christ, in this new year of 2023.

We have just celebrated the birth of our Savior! It was a very cold night as we gathered to remember our Lord’s birth with our songs and praise. We celebrated on Christmas day with a morning Zoom service. This service was well-attended, and those who attended were treated to a musical presentation by the four-year-old class from the nursery school at Resurrection Lutheran Church, one of our Pittsburgh Lutheran United Ministries (PLUM) congregations. It was a service of songs, lessons and praise. How quickly our Advent season flew by.

And now, we are several weeks into a New Year! As I look back on 2022, I see that we had much to celebrate, and a few challenges. We settled into a new normal in worship. We welcomed Pastor Alex and celebrated his installation in July. We came together and prayed for Pastor John, in his ongoing battle with Lyme disease. We celebrated baptisms, weddings, welcomed some new members and said our final goodbyes to those who entered the Church Triumphant.

We held three summer picnics at which we were able to share in fellowship time with our sister congregations. Our congregations served our Lord and our neighbors through many outreach projects, which included: Sponsor a Monster, Lutheran Church of Our Saviour’s Diaper Bank, our food pantries at St. Andrew and Bethany, Rise Against Hunger and the annual Thanksgiving Day dinner at Bethany. Several congregations held Pet Blessings for their communities and others hosted educational and fellowship events. Immanuel Lutheran Church celebrated their anniversary and East Liberty celebrated the sale of their property. Four of our young people at Christ began their journey towards their Confirmation. These are just a few of the things we did in which we shared our time and talents for God and with each other. We are so blessed! We, with the help of God, made what seemed impossible, possible.

When I was a little girl, one of my favorite musicals was “Cinderella”, by Rogers and Hammerstein. In it, was a song, “Impossible”. Here is part of the chorus:

“But the world is full of zanies and fools,
Who don’t believe in sensible rules,
And won’t believe what sensible people say.
And because these daft and dewy-eyed dopes
Keep building up impossible hopes,
Impossible things are happ’ning every day!”

All of our congregations of PLUM have done some impossible things and experienced spiritual growth in 2022. We have so many opportunities awaiting us in 2023. Where do you see our Lord leading us? “Jesus looked at them and said, ‘With man, this is impossible, but with God, all things are possible’.” (Matthew 19:26) What impossible things can we accomplish this year?

Blessings to you from your pastoral team,

Pastor Sue

During the coming months, we will journey through the season of Lent. We invite you to participate in the following presentations:

“Walking With Jesus”, a journey with Jesus through daily fasting and prayer for the 40 days of Lent. There are several options for participating in this time of fasting with Pastor Alex. Each week, there will be a mid-week Prayer Service on Wednesdays at 7:00 pm on Zoom. Look for details on our website, www.plumofpa.com.

“Bible People: Monologues for Lent by Steve Dornsbusch” is a series of six monologues based on Biblical characters. Join Pastor Sue as she leads a discussion of these monologues and the scriptural texts that they are based on. These will be held at two times on Thursdays: 2:00 pm and 7:00 pm. Details about this are also on our website.