

Our Year in Review

Greg Wallace Lay Speaker

Wow can you believe it another year past. Tomorrow begins 2018 and 2017 is history. I want you to think back and think of the memory about the church that stands out for you. I wont ask you to share that memory but take a couple of seconds to think back over the year and keep a mental note of what memory stands out the most.

How many of you here remember how our 2017 started out? Pretty much normal we had just finished Christmas and all of the trappings and January started out pretty good. Then how about February? Anything major that you can think of? February is when we learned about Pastor Cherie's change in appointment. What a shock. I know I was a bit concerned about what would happen. I think this clip gives a pretty good idea of what I was thinking. [Video 1.](#)

While my initial assessment of the situation was what I believed was an over whelming task, today's text gave me what I needed to get to a different thinking process From now on, therefore, we regard no one from a human point of view; This was an exercise in faith. It took a great team to get us through the rest of February and into April but we did it. We developed a plan and put in in place.

In April pastor Don came in and the church continued. Easter was just around the corner and before we knew it pastor Jerry was here. Hmm a new Pastor what will he be like? Are his sermons going to be long? What will he do different? Many more questions. I don't think it took too long for people to realize what a treasure we were presented with. We continued on from that point to where we are today. So relatively soon we got to the next line of todays scripture So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new! It wasn't a new start, but a continuation of what was put in place in February and March.

We have come a long way this year we should be thankful that the Cabinet took a leap of faith. Faith in us as a congregation that we would weather the storm of a midterm change. Faith that they would be able to find the best person to

continue our journey. Faith that God's plan for us will be continued into the future. John 1 gives us direction for our future In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ²He was in the beginning with God. ³All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being ⁴in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. ⁵The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

God gives us direction our prayers and faith sends us forward. Looking back can be a good thing. Happy times, accomplishments, new things we experienced. Remembering all of the positive things make us smile. But for some reason the bad things tend to hold in our memories more. Now think again about the most vivid memory of last year. Was it positive or negative. Trusting God should help you with the positive. When we are down to lift up our worries to God can give us a positive outlook in the worst situations. **Video 2** a young cancer patient is able to put a positive outlook in the worst situation. Even with a limited future God is a source of solstice and positivity.

So what lies ahead for Lake Street? What would you like our future to be? Thinking about the future can be an exercise that creates worry or it can create hope. Which do we choose? **Video 3** We can't live in the past but we can learn from it. Our future isn't written but I believe God has a plan for each and every one of us.

I know next year holds a number of changes for me. In 6 days I will retire from a career that lasted 38 and a half years. 4 and a half years ago I thought I had a plan for myself that included retirement, but through a series of events I was promoted instead of walking out the door. I did not anticipate this move I didn't ask for it. I was planning a different direction. For months I was praying for direction on where I should go. I thought I knew what I should do, but I believe God presented me with something completely unplanned. As I sat in the office as the promotion was presented to me I was not immediately sure this was what I was supposed to do. But as I sat there and listened to the reasoning behind the offer it was clear to me that this was the answer I had been praying for. Not my plan at all. I walked out of the meeting saying "well played God, well played. My

plan would have most likely taken me away from Lake Street. I would not have been here for the last few years. I believe Gods plan was to keep me here. It was to keep me in my current career. Both Lake Street and my job required some tough decisions. If I could have looked into the future I may not have accepted the new position at work. There were things happening that caused great angst and lost sleep. However no matter how difficult the issue was after it had been resolved, I could look back and say the outcome was better because I was there. God gave me guidance at work to deal with issues in a way that might not have been done that way by someone else. When Pastor Cherie informed me of her new appointment I was questioning my decision to take on the position of Lay Leader. Looking back I believe Gods plan for me was a much better plan than I had for myself.

The last year at Lake Street was not what was planned by the leadership of this church. I am sure if you talk with anyone from Church Council, SPRC, Finance, or any other team they will tell you 2017 was not planned in 2016. God gave us guidance in the toughest times. He gave us hope as his plan for us took shape right before our eyes. We are ending the year strong and in February I don't know if anyone could have predicted it.

Our past is past and our future is yet to come. We need to trust that God's plan for us is just that. Gods plan not ours. We are in a great place to start 2018. Prayer, Love, Hope, and Trust are the things to build on. God is there for you outside of this place and God is present in this place. It's necessary to have a plan for the future. A roadmap of where we want to be. But God could throw a couple of detours our way. Our job is not to let the detours get us down. Enjoy the trip and look at the different scenery along the way.