Pastor Devotions – Unprecedented?!

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By Pastor Bridget Sheely
Racine/Sumner Center UMC,
Stewartville UMC Children’s Ministry Coordinator

Well folks, the time has come around again where we close the door to yet another year, 2021 and open the window to welcome the fresh breezes of a new year, 2022.  It is natural this time of year to reflect on what was and what is to be.  As I ponder the past, there is one word that keeps bubbling to the surface.  “Unprecedented.”  We are living through an unprecedented global pandemic.  The weather around the world has become unprecedented. We have even experienced tornados in December right here in Minnesota!  And let’s not even open up the can of worms of the political discourse and volatility in this country.  If we aren’t careful, we will all fall into an unprecedented valley of stress and anxiety.  But that truly does not have to become our fate.

Friends, I invite you to take a breath and allow yourself to release what is wearing you down.  I want you to remember that from the beginning God’s people have lived through “unprecedented” times.  Noah and his family survived the flood, and their faith grew stronger.  David, a small shepherd boy, stood against the giant Goliath and in an “unprecedented” act came out the winner.  Then God showed his favor on the boy and made him a king.  A young virgin was visited by an angel and was chosen to become the mother of God’s son. Now that is most definitely unprecedented!

What we must keep in mind is that through life’s trials and tribulations God is there.  He is with us each and every day and He will guide us through.  Most importantly is that we keep Him in our presence.  In the book of James it is written:  James 1:2-4 (New Revised Standard Version) “2 My brothers and sisters, [a] whenever you face trials of any kind, consider it nothing but joy, 3 because you know that the testing of your faith produces endurance; 4 and let endurance have its full effect, so that you may be mature and complete, lacking in nothing.”  Did you catch that?  Let endurance have its full effect and consider it nothing but joy.  Have you ever considered that those valleys that we all travel through on our way to another mountain top to be joyful?  You see, God has given you free will and that gift allows you to choose your own mind set.  You can choose to be bitter, angry and defeated or you can choose to find joy and peace in what may seem like ashes.

So, I challenge all of us!  This new year let us find “unprecedented” amounts of joy, peace, kindness, compassion and love on our daily journeys.  Let us all pledge to be leaders in setting a new precedence of following the teachings of Jesus Christ and being that beacon of light in our communities, workplaces and homes.  Let us come home to Christ in unprecedented numbers and make national news by bursting the walls of churches across this great land and showing the world that through it all God is with us!  Now that would be an unprecedented movement worth joining!!