

December 29, 2011

Dear KNC,

The year of our Lord 2011 has now drawn to a close and a new year waits to unfold before us. With the change of calendar it is common to reflect on all that has transpired in the past year.

The challenges were many but the presence and the power of Jesus was prevailing, overcoming and victorious! I praise Him for who He is and all He has done for me personally, my immediate family, my extended family and you, my beloved church family.

As you have heard me say on numerous occasions, I will forever be amazed by the power of the Gospel of Jesus Christ! I have dedicated my life to it and my passion burns feverishly within. I love to preach it, teach it, study it, stand on it, offer it, hide it in my heart, be transformed by it, and witness him change whosoever will allow Him entrance into their lives! It alone has the power to convert broken-sinful man into the likeness of Christ.

I still believe that Christ has the power to transform our culture one heart at a time, one marriage at a time, one home at a time one community at a time. What a humbling and incredible responsibility that Christ has entrusted to you and me the Keokuk Nazarene Church.

We have accepted as our calling to whole heartedly Love God and others. Jesus commands us to, “***Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind***”; and, “***Love your neighbor as yourself.***” That describes a life that has been changed by love, hence our passion and our purpose. Like Aslan in C.S. Lewis’s Chronicles of Narnia, *the gospel is good but not safe*. It saddens me when anyone turns away from his pervasive love, however Christ himself warned all would be followers to count the cost of discipleship before following him. Though his love is liberating and radical it is also shocking and offensive.

The gospel is encapsulated by John in chapter 3 verse 16 of his account. “***For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.***” The Word does not say “*God loved*” the world. It says “***God so loved***”- “***so loved***” so much that he had to take action. No other world religion is driven by love. He loved you the moment you were conceived, no matter what you’ve done, where you’ve been, or how big of a hole you’ve dug for yourself. You are a “***so loved***” man or woman. That is the message of Christianity that is the gospel, that is why we exist. As long as we have breath, let us deliver that message to the one seated next to you in church, your family, and neighbor and around the world.

What if 2012 is the **best year** this church has ever known? What if more names are written in the Lamb’s Book of life than ever before? Our mission is clear; reaching those who do not yet know Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord and helping them become Christ-like disciples. Let us do so in faith, humility, purity, and with whole hearted devotion.

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ.” Ephesians 1:3

I love you one and all!

Pastor,
Dana