

Anaheim SDA Church  
Mid-week Pastor's Update  
January 4, 2017



*“If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new!” (2 Cor. 5:17 NKJV)*

I pray that everyone has had a great New Years' celebration, and that your 2017 is off to a good start. As for us, it has been good, though both of our kids got sick with a stomach bug and have been off their appetites. ☺

As important as New Years is to many cultures, the Bible doesn't really address the concept, likely because years were measured in terms of how long the current king had ruled. Therefore, it could be “year 8” in a given country, and “year 50” in a neighboring one. The concept of unified time didn't come along until Rome ruled a vast swath of land, and it was important that time be kept uniformly. In the 6<sup>th</sup> century, that time began to be counted from the (then thought) time of the birth of Christ, the method that brings us to 2017 today. ☺

But the Bible does speak broadly of newness! And the yearly ‘newness’ that the world celebrates annually (but quickly wears-off by the 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> month) pales in comparison to the profound newness of life that is found in Christ.

In large part, the world judges us by our past accomplishments: how much education you have acquired, how much wealth you have amassed, what belongings you have bought yourself, etc. But what we find in the Gospel is that we are not defined by our past, but by our future! The Apostle Paul emphatically declares that it is not our gender, social status, or nationality that defines us, it is our identity in Christ Jesus! (See Gal. 3:28)

From a scriptural point of view, our identity, as well as our continued newness is found in our identity in Christ. I am a child of God, destined for citizenship in the Holy City for eternity! I can't imagine what self-concept could be a more healthy and optimistic one than that one.

Our God is a great believer in fresh starts, having brought about the best one, and truly the only one we will ever need! All other ‘new starts’ pale in comparison to this greatest one.

So praise the Lord for forgiveness, adoption, and soon translation to our heavenly home! Truly, our whole calling as Christians is simply to revel in this reality and encourage others toward it.

I pray that 2017 is a wonderful year for you, your families, and our overall community. Let’s never forget, though, that even the best year here would (and will!) be far outweighed by a single day in God’s presence (Psalm 84:10).

God bless you all.

Sincerely,

Pr. Mark Tatum

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**Prayer List:**

- Pray for our church families and community members to have a blessed 2017, and pray particularly for our ‘month of Spiritual emphasis’ in church, as we begin Friday-night Bible studies and Week of Prayer next week (see details in the announcement section below).
- Esther Sellers asks us to pray for her counseling patients, as several of them are going through hard times. One is homeless, and another’s mother just died recently. Please keep this and Dr. Sellers’ other therapy patients in mind.
- Please continue to pray for Giancarlo Angulo, who is gradually recovering from injuries due to the car accident he was in a few weeks ago. Pray for continued minimization of pain, and a full recovery for him. Thankfully, Margarito, who was also involved in the accident, has fully recovered.
- Praise the Lord that Vivian came through her procedure two weeks ago, and has been back with us at the food bank. Please continue to pray for her health as she serves so selflessly and generously.
- Praise the Lord Daniel Geli’s procedure to put a stint in his carotid artery was successful. Please continue to pray for his continuing medical concerns.
- Please pray for Nicole Hastings, Jennifer Hastings’ daughter, who is undergoing treatment for some health concerns.
- Pray for several ‘prodigal’ children of church members who have left the faith, whose parents are praying fervently that they come back. (The Lord himself knows this feeling many times over!)

- Please pray for church members and community members who are travelling over the holidays, that they may return safely and efficiently. We hope that all got to experience great moments of love and joy with their families and friends! What a blessing.
- Pray for our church as a whole, and all its volunteers, that we may work efficiently and happily in ministering to our members, families, and overall community.
- Pray for our leaders, both local and national, that they may make wise decisions, and that we may have a peaceful and stable society to do our Spiritual work in (1 Tim. 2:1-4, John 9:4)

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### **Announcements:**

**New Year's Eve Party a success!** Thanks to those who came to ring in the new year together with us. We enjoyed a communion service, refreshments, games, and a movie as we went late into the night! We hope everyone had a safe time, wherever you were.

**Adult Sabbath School:** Each week, our Adult Sabbath School program starts at 9:30 AM in the Sanctuary. These are the topics for this month:

- Jan. 7 – the Power of Personal Testimony (pt. 1) by Pr. Mark Tatum
- Jan. 14 – the Power of Personal Testimony (pr. 2) by Dr. Roger Tatum
- Jan. 21 – “Nutrients of the Soul by Dr. Israel Chambi
- Jan. 28 – “Key Nutrients that prevent depression” by Dr. Ruth Johnson.

In addition, remember that our Sabbath School quarterly theme for first qtr 2017 is “The Holy Spirit and Spirituality”! I can’t think of a better theme as we go into our New Year, and our month of Spiritual Emphasis. ☺

**Start Your Sabbaths in the Word!** We will be holding a weekly Bible-study on Friday evenings from 6-8 p.m., with Nicholas Tomeo and Pr. Mark. This Friday, the 6<sup>th</sup>, will be our first meeting. We will study some of the Old Testament prophets, beginning with Isaiah. Come and enjoy fellowship as we discern God's will for our lives. Refreshments will be provided as well.

**Church Potluck this Sabbath!** Being the first Sabbath of the month (and year!), we will be having our regular church-wide potluck after divine service this Sabbath afternoon. Bring a vegetarian dish, and come ready to enjoy good food and fellowship with our community. Christ came to (among other things) eat with us, and is still in our midst as we do so together!

**Up-coming Week of Prayer:** This January is going to be a month of Spiritual Emphasis for our church, where we “set our compasses to true north” in dedicating ourselves to God for the new year. We will be holding a nightly week of prayer at 7:00 p.m. each evening from January 9-13. Each evening will have a short review of Bible verses on

prayer, followed by a time of intercession and a capella singing. Please prioritize coming to this intimate bonding time as we draw closer to God and each other.

**Food Bank Hours & Distribution:** We are open every Saturday from 1:00 to 3:00 p.m. in the room adjacent to the fellowship hall. Please share about our Food Bank with your relatives, friends, neighbors, or anyone who might benefit from receiving food. We are also looking for people who can volunteer to take food on the weekends to homeless people (and we can suggest places to take it to). If you would like to volunteer, please contact Vivian Rodriguez at [\(714\) 404-2325](tel:7144042325) or via the Church Office.

**Food Donations and Volunteers Needed:** Our Food Bank is in need of donations of dehydrated Rice and Beans (not canned). You can drop off your donations at the Deacons' desk. We are also looking for people who can volunteer during the week to pick up food from grocery stores. If you would like to volunteer, please contact Vivian Rodriguez at [\(714\) 404-2325](tel:7144042325) or the Church Office.

**Pastor's Office Hours:** Both this week and next, Pastor Mark plans to be at the church from 2-6 p.m. on Wednesday and Friday. Feel free to come by to talk/pray/study the word together. If these times are not convenient to you, or you would like to schedule a special meeting at a certain place/time, don't hesitate to contact Pr. Mark at the information below.

**Weekly Pastor's E-mail:** If you know someone who benefit from receiving this weekly devotional thought, please have them contact Pastor Mark at [prmarktatum@gmail.com](mailto:prmarktatum@gmail.com), or [\(714\) 650-1245](tel:7146501245) with contact info to be added to this e-mail list.

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Alright! I think that pretty well sums-up what's going on at the church lately! Buy yourself an ice-cream cone if you read this far. As always, we pray that your week is blessed until we meet again. God bless you and yours in this New Year.

Sincerely,  
Pastor Mark Tatum