

[HINDSIGHT IS 2020 CONTINUED]

By Pastor Dana Rae De Tar

Throughout this year, time and time again we have heard that this is the end and have lived in a place of fear as we search the book of Revelation for answers and timelines of how the end will occur, all the while missing the book's ultimate message. Revelation, though it may be apocalyptic literature, was intended to be a book of hope. Hope to a people being persecuted, hope to a people whose world is crumbling around them, hope founded in knowing that in the end Jesus Christ is victorious! This message was true for John's initial audience, it was true for all those living through terrible wars like World War 2, it is true for us in this time of uncertainty, and it will be true until the day Jesus comes again. Each of us only has one lifetime to live: "Paul didn't have more time to get ready than many people do now, we all just need to focus on what we can do to get ready now." (Jr. Student).

So this year I am taking my students' advice. I have two resolutions for this year. First, to enjoy sharing every moment I possibly can with Seth and our soon to be baby girl. Second, to remember my high school graduation goal and bring it to life: "To walk and talk with God as Enoch did". There is only one God in control, and it is time for me to put my trust in Him.

Advent Candle Lighting @Home

This year, as part of our Advent Sermon Series in December we had several church members light their own Advent Candles in their own homes. With church being only online, it was so great to participate in the candle lighting virtually with one another. Thank you to all who participated!



HINDSIGHT IS 2020

Hindsight is always 2020. That statement has never been truer. Like most of us I looked forward to 2020 just for the novelty of the number. There was something about the change of the decade that made last New Year stand out above other New Years that I have experienced. Not because of anything special that 2020 promised; as far as I knew, it was going to be just like the last year.

2020 has not felt anything like perfect vision and, if anything, it has shown us what a challenge it is in this world to determine what is true and what is false. This year has been a swirling mess of not only a combination of germs and disinfectant but also a never-ending process of sorting through opinions and information to find the truth. Like most of you I have done my best to assemble a clear picture from the world's largest jigsaw puzzle of information. As we close 2020, I will be the first to admit that my picture is incomplete; not every piece has found its place, and many could even be upside down. There are a few things, however, that are crystal clear:

1. We don't have the answers
2. We aren't the ones in control
3. I am tired of people throwing random puzzle pieces into my pile that may or may not be even be a part of the set I'm working on!

This past fall quarter at Pine Hills I just finished teaching our unit on Revelation with our Jr. and Sr. high school classes. My goal this year has not been to teach our students Revelation, but instead to teach our students how to study and develop their own opinions and faith using their Bibles and, more importantly, their walks with God. As I graded their unit projects, I was so proud of them. Referencing our human desire to be right, one student stated in his report, "What bothers me is that no one else in the Adventist church, at least from what I have seen, says that they have a chance of being wrong. The book of Revelation...has been interpreted in many different ways and it has made people hate each other throughout history. It's not a bad book; it's a powerful book. It's important to study this book but I also think it's crucial to understand that we don't know everything about the book."

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INSPIRATION CORNER

Looking for Fun in 2021

2020 wasn't very much fun
Playing cops and robbers
Keeping the cops on the run
That mask got old real fast

Standing in the checkout line
Maintaining social distancing
To me just was not so fine
Afraid to visit a doc or a friend

Avoiding large crowds or meetings
Trying to learn how to zoom
No more in person greetings
More phone calls and internet

Visiting on Facebook and Facetime
Instead of face to face in person
Wearing a mask to me is a crime
All these were not my cup of tea

2021, I'm looking forward to you
Even if it means becoming immune
It will be worth us going through
When things will get back to normal

I want to eat in a restaurant again
Go to a real live musical concert
Shaking hands with a missed friend
And attend church again in person

I look forward to catching up
On all the things I fell behind
In smoothing out all the disrupt
Caused by having to play it safe

And if ever these times come again
Maybe the things we've gone through
Will serve to a helping hand lend
If we have learned our lessons

And although 2020 wasn't fun
It makes the anticipation better
I'm looking for fun in 2021
When I can retire my mask

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The Air Tree

When my husband lost his job at a Southern university because of religious discrimination in 1992, [we tried] to hold things together during the ensuing legal battle. Martin did some substitute teaching and worked as a van driver for a local ophthalmologist and ward member. I was in graduate school and had a part-time job at the same university that had fired Martin illegally. And to say that money was tight and hope was slim was no exaggeration. With two daughters still living at home, we were doing the best we could through the struggle.

I was especially concerned about Christmastime. As the season drew near, I asked our daughters if they wanted one more present or a Christmas tree. Naturally, they wanted both. I stared at a light-colored wall in our family room and came up with a bold plan. I would create a Christmas tree out of no tree. (This from the woman who has never met a Relief Society craft project she couldn't turn into a disaster. My strengths lie elsewhere.)

I bought a roll of fishing line for three dollars and a box of clear push pins for one dollar, then borrowed a neighbor's ladder and tacked the fishing line for each ornament to the ceiling at varying lengths so they came out in an approximate tree shape. Underneath the amazing display, I put the usual tree stand and filled it with water, which meant my sense of humor had resurfaced. Everything was there except the tree. And who needed an old tree, anyway?

The effect was nothing short of breathtaking. The fishing line blended into the beige background of the wall, and the ornaments appeared to be hanging in the air. I had never seen anything like it.

On the top of the tree (i.e., the ceiling), I tacked the cornhusk angel given to me by Miss Jean Dugat, my high

school journalism teacher, whose skill and love of words still keep me employed.

Our next-door neighbors were properly impressed with my efforts. Chuck Pryor said he'd figure out a way next year to use fiber optics to add Christmas lights. (He didn't, but our oldest daughter constructed her own air tree later and had lights on it.)

Denise Grayson, our neighbor down the street, brought over a box of two-inch wooden toy soldiers for the tree; they were perfect because they were light—the push pins couldn't hold too much weight. Denise also named the tree the Famous Air Tree, and to this day, that's how we remember that little bit of defiance from the Kellys. We were not about to be defeated by religious bigotry and tough times.

Sermon Notes



Jan 2: Pastor Mel
Jan 9: Pastor Mel
Jan 16: Pastor Mel
Jan 23: Pastor Mel
Jan 30: Pastor Mel

Auburn SDA Community Church

12225 Rock Creek Road,
Auburn, CA 95602
Phone 530/885-4232
Lead Pastor—Mel Baga

Youth Pastor-Dana Rae DeTar
Office e-mail -
office@aubstda.net
Website - www.aubstda.org
Newsletter Editor -
Michael O'Haver
E-mail -
GodsScribeMike@gmail.com

Jan's Healthy Recipes

Black-Eyed Peas & Rice

A traditional Southern dish often served on New Year's day is Black-Eyed Peas. It can be served various ways—By it's self, as a soup, over rice, or over various meats.

Ingredients:

- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 2 Tablespoons vegetable oil
- 2 (15 ounce) cans of black-eyed peas, rinsed and drained
- 1/4 cup teriyaki sauce marinade
- 1 teaspoon salt-free Creole seasoning
- 1-1/4 cups water (more if making soup)
- Rice if desired
- 3/4 cup chopped cooked meat of choice

Toppings:

- Chopped tomatoes
- Sliced green onions

Directions:

Sauté chopped onions in hot oil in a median sauce pan over median-high heat for 3 minutes.

Add peas and rest of ingredients. Bring to a boil, reduce heat and simmer, stirring occasionally for 15 minutes.

Serve over rice if desired with chosen toppings.

This makes 4 servings.

This is a quick and easy recipe that takes 30 minutes to make

Keeping New Year's Resolutions

6 Tips for Keeping New Year's Resolutions

By Amber J. Tresca

1 - Be Realistic

One thing about being able to achieve goals is that they need to be realistic. Goals can certainly be ambitious, but remind yourself not to try for something that's too far afield or unrealistic. The surest way to fall short of your goal is to make your goal unattainable. Strive for a goal that is attainable, such as avoiding that problem food more often.

2 - Plan Ahead

New Year's Eve probably isn't the best time to start planning for the next year. Waiting until the last minute means that decisions may be based on the mindset for that particular day rather than a more measured approach. Instead, a New Year's resolution should be planned well before December 31 arrives. If it's already too late for planning to start something by January 1st, pick another date—February 1st, your birthday, the anniversary of your diagnosis—whatever date is meaningful.

3 - Outline Your Plan

Sewing a dress without a pattern isn't going to yield the best results, and neither will basic life choices on half-formed and half-thought-out ideas. Instituting changes includes making plans about how to deal with the temptation to skip an exercise class. This could include calling on a friend for help, practicing positive thinking and self-talk, or reminders about how lifestyle choices affect you.

4 - Make a Pros and Cons List

It's important to consider all the angles of a resolution. Maybe the time is right, and maybe it's not: give that idea a thought before diving in. It may help to see a list of pros and cons on paper to strengthen the motivation. Develop this list over time, and ask others to contribute to it. Keep the list handy and refer to it when the need to reaffirm a resolution strikes.

Church Birthdays

Ava Gradek.....Jan 01
Matthew Stokes.....Jan 01
Dianne Binder.....Jan 06
Mark Porco.....Jan 07
Cherie Blasquez-Tracy...Jan 09
Maria Messner.....Jan 12
Melba Spycher.....Jan 15
Olivia Genobaga.....Jan 17
Keith Brower.....Jan 18
Nancy Fowler.....Jan 18
Heidi Rose.....Jan 21
Rafael Ojeda.....Jan 21
Cara Roderick.....Jan 30

ARC & ACS on Pause

The Auburn Renewal Center and Adventist Community Services are both on pause the next few weeks in January.

The ARC is planning to reopen in mid to late January and ACS is planning to reopen on January 25 & 26. Continue to be safe and well.

5 - Talk About It

Don't keep a resolution as a secret. Bring family and friends into the fold, and with their help, goals will be easier to achieve. The people who care will be there to support the resolution to change habits for the better or to improve overall health. The best-case scenario is to find a buddy who shares the same New Year's resolution and to motivate each other.

6 - Track Your Progress

Keeping track of progress can be a big help on the journey. Make note of each small success made toward reaching the larger goal. Short-term goals are easier to keep, and small accomplishments will help with motivation. Keeping a food diary or a symptom journal may also help in staying on track.

