

January 2015

From the Desk of Rev. Chuck

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Dear Friends,

I trust you and your loved ones had a joyous and safe New Year celebration as you looked forward to a whole new year filled with great and exciting possibilities. For many people the expectation of what the new year will bring to them is an adventure, an opportunity for starting over again, to try new things, to gain new experiences.

I often wondered what it would be like if, on December 31st, we were all given a crystal ball in which we could see how our lives would unfold in the coming year? Or would you want to? A case in point:

In 1995, Katherine Aney was on her way to a Weds night class being held here at the church when out of no where a drunk ran a stop sign and broadsided her car, leaving his bumper on the road as he sped away. Sitting there hurt, dazed, and in shock, she waited for the police to arrive and investigate the accident. The car was driveable so she came to class.

As soon as the class ended it was evident that she was in a lot of pain so she asked if I would take her to KMC for a check up. We arrived at KMC around 9:30 p.m. and she did not get seen until 2:00 a.m. the following morning. By 3:30 a.m. all the test results were in and she was released with a prescription for pain medication, which we got filled at the all night pharmacy. When I finally got her home it was almost 4:30 in the morning.

Now, I don't know about you, if both of us were given a crystal ball and were shown this experience, would we have chosen to go through it? Or would we make the decision to be somewhere else, doing something different?

Now I have patience for many things, one area in which I do not, is a hospital waiting room, especially when it takes almost five hours to get seen by anyone. As I paced and paced the more anxious I got, and when I pace I pace with my hands in my pocket playing with the coins. Little did I know I was creating more anxiety for Katherine because I reminded her of her father and his impatience with his children. This set into motion a whole gamut of past emotional experiences for her that told her she was no

good.

Wow, what an opportunity for the both of us. It was a sign, although it didn't look like one at the time. A sign that our lives were about to change that summer night in 1995.

You see, Katherine Aney is KD Vargo, my wife. The hit and run accident by that drunk driver, although an experience she would not have chosen, did in fact become a blessing in the form of a settlement that allowed her to return to school so that she could complete her degree at BC and then Cal State Bakersfield.

Today is a day of choice, as all our days are. Sometimes many of life's decisions are painfully difficult to make, for none of us knows what lies ahead. The jolt of coincidence can nudge us in the right direction. Even the strange, the unplanned, the painful, and those things we call errors can evolve into a blessing.

Friends, you never know what blessings the universe and the Lord of your being will give you, they are all around and can be found in any of your experiences, if you but keep watch. Jesus explained this to all who would listen, when He said, "*Watch therefore, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming*" Matthew 24:42.

No matter what the year may hold for you, what new adventures await, know that you will be guided in understanding what you need to do to take care of yourself. As you begin to trust your instincts, your feelings, your thoughts, you will know when to go, to stop, to wait. You will learn a great truth: God's plan for good in your life will happen in spite of you, not because of you!

As the new year unfolds for you in a series of experiences remember these three things: 1) Stay open to all outcomes, not just the one you feel is the right one; 2) Maintain a peaceful mind-set about the experience and the outcome that is a product of that experience; and 3) Trust! Each day affirm, "Today I trust God will guide me to what is the highest and best for my spiritual growth and well-being."

It is my prayer that each of you find the adventure that is you during the coming year. Happy New Year!