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**PRESIDENT'S LETTER - JANUARY 08  
HAPPY NEW YEAR!**

**SEEK GOD'S KINGDOM  
AND  
ALL THESE THINGS WILL BE ADDED TO YOU**

**Luke 12:22-31**

Many people are making all kinds of financial plans for the new year. People are considering tax strategies for the end of this year. Many are planning their IRA and Roth investment choices. Congregations are planning their budgets for the next year. There is a lot of financial uncertainty and fear in the hearts of men this year. It is a time of high anxiety for many. Perhaps that is why there are so many wild parties on New Year's Eve. People are anxious about their lives - what they are going to eat and where they are going to live. The more material things people have, the more anxious they seem to become. Jesus correctly notes, "For all the nations of the world seek after these things."

There is a thin line between a "realist" and a "pessimist". Sometimes I have been accused of coming from a long-line of pessimists. It is important that as a church body and congregations we carefully count the cost before we embark on building the tower. However, sometimes pessimism is, as Jesus identifies it, a littleness of faith. Anxiety and worry about the things of this world, including the finances of the CLC or our personal checkbooks, are a lack of trust in God and an over-concern with the things of this world.

We are to be different. Jesus has freed us from anxiety over things and delivered us from the worthless pursuit of things. However, because of our sinful flesh, all of us are afflicted with anxiety and seek after the things of this world. Just consider how useless this anxiety is. Consider how foolish it is to think that you are in control of the events of the next year. "Which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life?" In fact worry takes time off your life. The future of the CLC and our times is not in our hands. We need to number our days.

The answer to anxiety and depression is faith in the Creator-Redeemer God. Consider that God not only created this world, but He also continues to take care of it and to provide for all living creatures. Think about the fact that the Creator is the one who keeps this world going. God provides for the ravens who have no retirement plan, no bank account, no anxiety. God clothes the lilies with colors that far outdo any of the best of outfits. God takes care of the birds and the plants, surely He will take care of you. "O you of little faith!" You are the most valuable and most important part of God's creation. God gave His only Son into death for you. Will not God,

Who has taken care of your greatest need, also take care of these little things in life? The answer is to realize that we are not in control but to trust that God will take care of our tomorrows and the year to come. Therefore, Jesus says, do not be anxious about your life. The future of the Kingdom of God lies in the hands of the King of kings.

The answer to anxiety is to get our priorities straight. We need to dedicate this next year to seeking first God's kingdom of grace. The most important thing for this new year is that we rededicate ourselves to making Jesus and His Word the first and most important thing in our lives. If, as a congregation and individuals, we make God's Word the most important part of our lives, remarkable things will happen. Jesus will drive anxiety out of our lives this next year. The amazing thing is that when we put God's Word and Jesus first in our lives, God will add all these other things to us. God has met our needs in the past and He will meet them in the future. The thing to remember when God meets our needs is that His ways are not our ways and His thoughts are not our thoughts. God may do things totally different than we would do them in our lives and in our ministries.

This is a matter of faith. This is a matter of priorities. Seek first the kingdom of God. Choose the one thing really needful in life. God will then turn things around in your life. The tribulations and troubles have a way of making us focus on Jesus instead of focusing on the god of materialism in our lives. We do not know what the New Year holds for us. We do know that we have a Savior God who has delivered us from eternal death.

(Luke 12:32-34) "Do not fear, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. Sell what you have and give alms; provide yourselves money bags which do not grow old, a treasure in the heavens that does not fail, where no thief approaches nor moth destroys. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."

Humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God and He will exalt you in due time.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "John Schierenbeck".

John Schierenbeck

**Mundane Matters:**

Please remember to have your CBP figures into Pastor Mike Roehl's hands by the end of January. This presupposes that you have discussed the CBP material from the Board of Trustees with your congregations.