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FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK

*"For everything there is a season,
and a time for every matter under heaven ..." –Ecclesiastes 3:1*

It's a new year, which means it's time for pork and sauerkraut, college bowl games, and of course, resolutions. To be honest, I usually don't make resolutions, which allows me to claim (somewhat misleadingly, I suppose) that I haven't broken many. But for some, New Year's is a time to make promises to ourselves and others. Those promises often include losing weight, exercising more frequently, reading more books, etc.

Whether we make resolutions at the beginning of the year or not, the turn of the calendar (much like a birthday), allows us to take stock of where we've been in the last year and look forward to where we're going. That's why, even though I am not much for New Year's Resolutions, I do appreciate a practice that I learned in my days as a United Methodist.

For many in that denomination, the new year provides an opportunity to recommit to their relationship with God through a prayer composed by John Wesley, the man attributed with starting the Methodist movement. Although we Lutherans insist that our relationship with God is dependent on grace and not our own efforts, the Wesleyan Covenant Prayer, as it's called, provides us an opportunity to recommit to God out of thanksgiving for God's great love and grace shown to us over the years, so I share it here.

"I am no longer my own, but thine.

Put me to what thou wilt, rank me with whom thou wilt.

Put me to doing, put me to suffering.

Let me be employed by thee or laid aside for thee,
exalted for thee or brought low for thee.

Let me be full, let me be empty.