



HEARTLAND CONFERENCE

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
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Happy New Year!

As we celebrate the beginning of a new year and all of the promise that 2023 might bring, we also engage in the age-old practice of making New Year's resolutions. Some of these resolutions are of the nature of creating better personal habits: eat less fats, exercise more frequently. Some are more ethereal: be more forgiving, become closer to God.

What are some New Year's resolutions for church leaders—both clergy and lay leaders? A surf of the internet yielded a wide array of topics addressed in resolutions. Some contributors proposed as few as five, taking a focused direction. Others listed well over two dozen. Another approach was to make a list of non-resolutions—things that they would aspire to no longer do in the new year—sort of a minimalist approach.

I have attempted to create a list of 10 viable resolutions for our church leaders. It seemed that 10 was good enough for Moses.

10 New Year's Resolutions for Church Leaders for 2023

- Practice the best-possible spiritual care. Love your people.
- Focus/re-focus on vision and mission. Does your mission speak to what you are actually doing? If not, is your mission or your practice in need of revitalization?
- Strive for efficiency. Is your governance or administrative process in need of streamlining to be more effective? Are you able to quickly and effectively respond to our new era of fast and continual change?
- Be your community. Churches often strive for “community engagement” from a transactional standpoint. Learn how you can be an asset and then seek opportunities to contribute.
- Be in touch with contemporary culture. This will be an asset to efforts of community involvement.

- Identify areas for improvement. During my professional career, I had a supervisor who operated with the mantra “If it ain’t broke, break it.” Are there wasted efforts—“we’ve always done this”—in need of being retired?
- Engage in vibrant stewardship, one which treasures all gifts of all of the members.
- Make the tough decisions. We are amid challenging times which require courageous leadership.
- Invest in your spiritual gifts and those of your members.
- Be open to change.

May you be blessed and be a blessing in 2023.

Tom Hathaway
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