



Grace and peace in the name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Is it not amazing that God has chosen to partner with us in God's work of redeeming the world? That God has chosen, of all the ways that God could work out loving and redeeming the whole of creation, to work with and through us! What a staggering thought. To work with us -- frail, imperfect, sometimes lazy, often ambivalent -- for the sake of the whole world.

Of course, if it were just us at work in the world, we would certainly mess it up even more than we do. But God in Christ has made sure that there is grace sufficient for our mistakes and the inspiration of the Holy Spirit to guide our thoughts and actions. St. Paul writes it like this: "I always thank my God for you because of God's grace given you in Christ Jesus. For in Christ, you have been enriched in every way—with all kinds of speech and with all knowledge— God thus confirming our testimony about Christ among you. Therefore, you do not lack any spiritual gift as you eagerly wait for our Lord Jesus Christ to be revealed. God will also keep you firm to the end, so that you will be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is faithful, who has called you into fellowship with his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord" (1 Corinthians 1:4-9).

And so, as you look back on your year of ministry in 2023 and forward into 2024, I give thanks for the ways that you are partnering with God for the sake of the world. I give thanks for the proclamation of the Gospel that sounds forth from your pulpit, your people, and your presence in the community. I look forward to the ways you will proclaim the love, grace, and mercy of God in your corner of the world.

May the Holy Spirit continue to inspire you to ministry and mission.

Peace,

Bishop Barbins