



January 19, 2026

The Reality of the Darkness is the Reason for the Light

Every year after Christmas, probably like many of you, I write in a journal about our Christmas and the previous year. I started in 1984, the year our daughter was born, and have continued documenting our lives every year since.

At first, my summaries were simple. We bought our first house. I changed jobs. We took a trip to Florida. Another baby came. Mike changed jobs. We spent a couple weeks in Michigan. We celebrated milestone birthdays.

And slowly but surely, life became more complicated. The extended family grew. The kids flew through school. Friends and relatives left marriages, moved out of town, some died.

Throughout all of this, as Pastor Anne reminded us last week in her sermon, God is with us. Then. Now. And in all the events we remember to write down and all the ones we don't. I encourage myself to pay attention.

When I skimmed through the last few years of my summaries, I got a little sad. We used to share parts of Christmas with our extended families. Now, our parents have all died, our siblings either live far away or have big families of their own to be with. Maybe when I wrote the yearly summaries I idealized the year and Christmas. I suppose I will again this year. After all, we did have our entire immediate family with us. It was wonderful. Chaotic at times, but definitely wonderful. I am still recovering.

So why do I feel this darkness as I look back on the year? It's as if the weight of all those years are pressing me down. Maybe New Year's resolutions would help. I like the idea of looking backward and forward at this time of year. Looking back with gratitude, looking forward with hope.

The idea of looking back and forward, while sitting firmly in the present, lifts my spirits. Which brings me to two things happening at St. Andrews that I look forward to.

One is the weekly Centering Prayer. We gather in Pastor Anne's office on Wednesdays at 12:30, read a bit of Thomas Keating's words, then we sit in silence for 20 minutes. I try to do this at home every day, too. Being in prayer in silence with others connects us in some mysterious way. Centering prayer alone is not alone. It serves as a reminder that God is always with me. I need to slow down, quiet myself and my surroundings to remember God's presence.

Another thing I look forward to at St. Andrews is Arts on the Hill - Visio Divina. I think of Visio Divina as receiving an image and listening for God in that viewing. I like to look at the beauty of bare branches. We open our hearts, we look, we breathe. God is with us. The art that will be displayed in the narthex in May is meant to open our hearts to the heart of God, to the heart of the artist, to your own heart.

Ruminating on the past left me in darkness. Thinking about the future gave me light. Tomorrow everything may be flipped.

I recently listened to a reading of "The Journey of the Magi," a poem by T.S. Eliot. In the end, the reader said that the reality of the darkness is the reason for the light. This seems right, and I will hold these words close on these winter days.

~Written by Barb Perry

Click [HERE](#) to read previous "Faith Matters" articles



8190 Lincoln Rd. Beulah, MI 49617
231.882.4241
www.benziestandrews.com



Benzie St. Andrews | 8190 Lincoln Rd | Beulah, MI 49617 US

[Unsubscribe](#) | [Update Profile](#) | [Constant Contact Data Notice](#)



Try email marketing for free today!