

## A Time to Plant: “Ten Resolutions”

*The following “resolutions” were offered at the conclusion of the sermon delivered by Harry Strong on New Year’s Day 2012.*

... Don’t feel badly if you neglected to bring Epiphany gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh to lay at the feet of the Christ Child this morning. I have a hunch Jesus will be a lot more pleased if, humbly – on bended knee, we offer Him the following gifts instead:

1. I will try to remember, in my thoughts, words, and actions, that I am only one member of the Body of Jesus Christ; and though I bring my own experience, perspective, and needs to an issue, I do not have a patent on the truth and I must be responsive to the good of the total community, all of us seeking to be submissive to the will of God.
2. Conscious of Christ's call to go forth into the world spreading the Good News of the Gospel, I will support the mission and outreach of the church in every way I can.
3. I will try to remember that I am a citizen in a global community with limited resources - and I will seek to conserve, share, and be a faithful steward of all of God's gifts.
4. In seeking to love my neighbor as myself - I will strive, wherever, whenever, and however I can, to enhance the dignity and self-worth of others.
5. Although I can never completely escape the competitiveness that pervades so much of life (and there will always be *winner*s and *loser*s), in so far as possible with me, I will try to make every decision that effects the lives of others on a WIN/WIN basis instead of WIN/LOSE.
6. Particularly in times of national or international conflicts or crises, I will remind myself that the goal of my efforts and the goal of national policy (so far as I can help determine it) is RECONCILIATION.
7. As bid by my Lord Jesus Christ, I will pray for my enemies.
8. Recognizing that we live in a complex world, and that God sometimes calls the church to be prophetic, I will try to keep my own mind open to unpopular positions or perspectives that are different from my own.
9. At the same time, in an attempt to work for more effective dialogue and communication among all people, I will restrain my remarks, I will understate rather than overstate my analysis of situations, and I will avoid the use of emotionally charged phrases such as “ALWAYS” and “NEVER.”
10. When speaking of my church, my government, and people in any and all communities of which I am a part, I will try, as hard as it may be, to speak NOT in terms of "THEY" but of "WE."

Today our Lord greets us not from a manger but from His Holy Table. As we humbly partake of the BREAD and the CUP, even though we’ll be standing rather than kneeling, let us strive to offer Him **these 10 gifts** throughout the year that unfolds before us. Amen.