

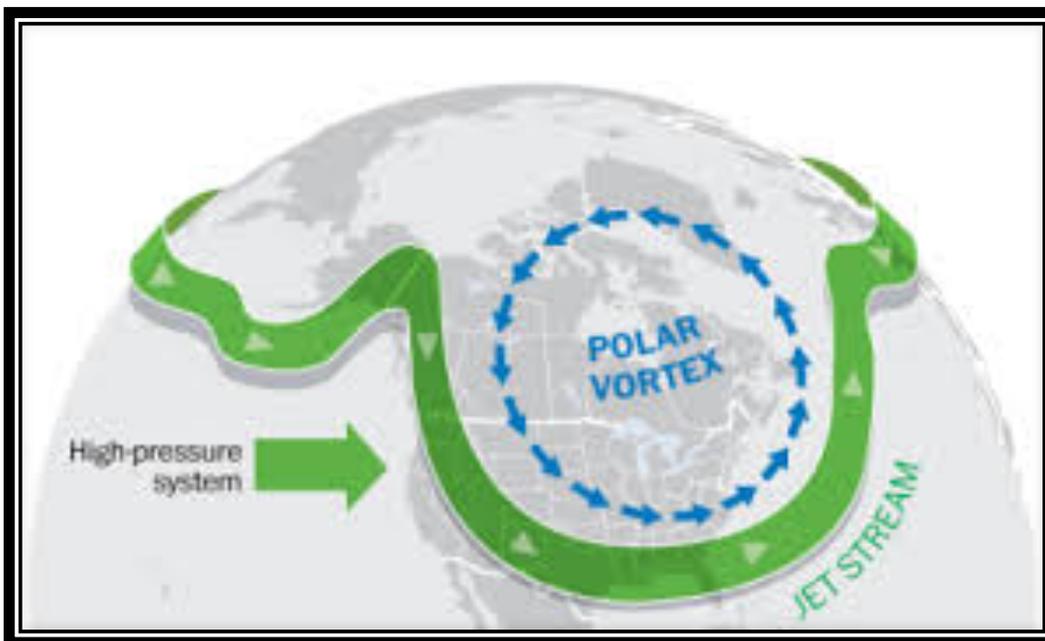
e – V O T I O N F O R J A N U A R Y 1 5 , 2 0 1 4

Dear Friends,

Today I am reading I Corinthians 1:1-9:

Paul, called to be an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and our brother Sosthenes, to the church of God that is in Corinth, to those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, together with all those who in every place call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, both their Lord and ours:

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. I give thanks to my God always for you because of the grace of God that has been given you in Christ Jesus, for in every way you have been enriched in Him, in speech and knowledge of every kind---just as the testimony of Christ has been strengthened among you--so that you are not lacking in any spiritual gift as you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is faithful; by Him you were called into the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.



Devotion:

If someone had mentioned to me the term "Polar Vortex" before last week, my mind would have gone to futuristic, Science fiction, or some such... But it was a reality--ask Mike and Lana Scott. That storm impacted the

routines of 2/3 of our country, closed schools and businesses, and brought travel to an abrupt halt. Just ask Mike and Lana.. And unfortunately the freeze froze our economy a bit, with losses of up to \$5 billion. People could not get to work. People could not shop, go to meetings, get home after the holidays, or reach vacation destinations. And I can only imagine the impact it will have on our utility bills.

During this especially cold time, I prayed for all of us, our families and loved ones, but I also prayed as I was reminded of the impact a freeze like this has on the homeless, the poor, the ill, the elderly, who may not have the resources to cope with such a situation. I read about a 48 year old homeless man who collapsed outside a homeless shelter in Madison Wisconsin, after he was turned away and told to walk to another shelter in -15 degree weather. No transportation was available to accommodate overflows in shelters--the cost was just too high. Doctors tell us that cold weather places stress on fragile hearts, increases the likelihood of heart attacks, and exacerbates other medical conditions.

I've been wondering if the cold has an effect on our hearts-- we can usually find an extra pair of socks, turn on a space heater, stay home and stay warm. How do we react to the threat of cold weather? What part do we play in the cost, either through action or inaction?

We are in the season of Epiphany in the church year. A light has been given so that salvation may extend to the end of the earth.

Its snowing again today and cold, but I'm wondering how far we are bearing the light and the message of salvation? How would we define the ends of the earth? What does that look like to us? Do we offer warmth and shelter to those whose hearts are frozen and need to be thawed?

These first few verses from First Corinthians tell us that the testimony of Christ living in us strengthens us. I'm wondering how that is playing out in our lives through our actions toward others and thus toward Christ? May we be light-bearers, salvation givers, and servants to those around us. :)

PRAYER REQUESTS:

- Please pray for Louise Scott, whose husband Walter, died recently. His funeral was Monday. Louise is a new visitor to our church, lives in the Tower at Appalachian Christian Village.**
- For our youth going to Resurrection and our Youth Ministry. A subcommittee of SPR is studying/listening/thinking/praying about next steps to recommend to SPR for youth ministry at First UMC.**
- For our children and parents going to RezKids, a new retreat ministry of Holston Conference, piggy-backing on Resurrection and offering a ministry to children and parents.**
- For our church, that God will work in our hearts, that servants will step up**

to volunteer in the places we need: teaching, reaching out to newcomers, sharing the gospel with the least, last and lost.

- For all soldiers home and abroad (Steve Robinson)
- For Barbara Marrs, having heart surgery next month and problems with her feet.
- For Jan Harlan-Gibbons with breast cancer; (Dee Minutolo)
- For D. Minutolo- guidance and patience.

CALENDAR:

- Wednesday niter starts back tonight!
- 1/16 7 pm Communications Pillar
- 1/25 Food Distribution at Food Pantry
- 1/26 Acolyte Training

"Preach the gospel at all times and when necessary use words."

-- St. Francis of Assisi

**Blessings,
Jane Taylor
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