



City of Saint Hedwig

Mayor's Message for the New Year 2024

December 13, 2023

As the new year approaches, we know we are in for a controversial year in 2024. If next year is anything like the past election, we are in for a bumpy ride. So, what do I wish for in the coming year – I wish for peace.

I wish for peace around the world, and particularly pray for peace in the Middle East and an ease to the suffering of the innocent victims on both sides of the conflict.

May there be peace in the Ukraine and freedom from tyranny for her people.

But most of all I wish for peace in the U.S. Especially, peace at the polls and a return to civility of discourse.

Civil discourse refers to respectful conversation aimed at fostering understanding and constructive communication, where individuals within a group share different perspectives, enhancing the learning experience. It is a fundamental aspect of freedom of speech. The U.S. Supreme Court described civil discourse as "robust, honest, frank and **constructive** dialogue and deliberation that seeks to advance the public interest". In contrast, uncivil discourse contains direct insults, unwarranted attributions of motive, and open contempt.

Civil discourse requires mature individuals capable of rational and autonomous thinking. It is the responsibility of all members of society to actively participate in productive and respectful discourse – in other words, let's try to respect each other's right to have an opinion, even if it is not the same as ours. As the saying goes "I may disapprove of what you say, but I will defend to the death your right to say it." Isn't that what this country was founded on – freedom to believe and expression? Isn't that what we defended when we served in the military – I thought it was.

So, I look forward to the coming year – as we grow as a city, and we welcome new challenges and opportunities. I look forward to the upcoming year and hope people will engage in the electoral process and debates that we are so fortunate to have in this great country; but I also hope we can honor this great democratic freedom in respectful and civil interactions.

To everyone, I hope your holidays are merry and bright, your new year is prosperous, blessed, and peaceful.

Mayor Dee Grimm RN, JD

Municipal Court Judge
City of Saint Hedwig