

FOOTPRINTS

The monthly newsletter of

Followers of Christ Lutheran Church

A Congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

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DECEMBER 2017

Dear Followers of Christ,

Happy New Year!

Of course, it's not yet January 1, 2018, but a new church year begins on December 3, 2017, with the season of Advent. The word "advent" literally means "arrival" or "coming." During Advent, we hear the biblical story leading up to the coming of Jesus.

Entering a new year in the church, beginning with Advent, is not the same as watching the ball drop on Times Square at 12AM on January 1st. Our New Year's traditions may include making "New Year's resolutions" of what we plan to do differently during the new calendar year. Oftentimes, however, we don't keep our resolutions beyond January, and settle to "do better" next year.

As we begin a new church year and hear the biblical story leading up to the coming of Jesus, we don't have to make any "New Year's resolutions." Instead, we can take a look at our lives as they actually are, not as we think they should be. The season of Advent marks a new beginning and an opportunity to prepare ourselves for God to show us once again how much he loved us by becoming one of us.

We don't need to earn or prove ourselves worthy of God's love. Instead, we can let Advent help prepare us for Christ and his promise to forgive our sins, to calm our fears, to comfort us in our sadness, and to restore our hope.

Contrary to the hustle and bustle of the holiday season, I am also thankful that the church season of Advent gives us a chance to pause before Christmas. During Advent, we have an opportunity to look together once again at the Bible's story leading up to the coming of Jesus.

Advent invites us to pause and see how the world that Jesus entered over 2000 years ago was filled with violence, fear, sadness, suspicion, expectation, and disappointment—much like our world today. Once again, looking together at the story leading up to the coming of Jesus, we see just how much we're in need of Christ, our Savior.

Amidst everything happening during this holiday season, I pray that the four weeks of Advent would give you a much-needed pause before Christmas. During that pause, may we pray, worship, celebrate, and find true hope in the promise Jesus has made to come into our lives.

In hope of Christ's coming,

Pastor Brad