

FOOTPRINTS

The monthly newsletter of

Followers of Christ Lutheran Church

A Congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

12357 S. 248th Ave., Plainfield, IL 60585-6701

Phone: 815-439-0700

followersofchrist3@yahoo.com

Bradley Haugen

www.followersofchristelca.com

Pastor

FEBRUARY 2018

Dear Followers of Christ,

As I anticipate the beginning of Lent this month, I find myself preoccupied with our experience of hunger. To be human is to hunger and thirst, both physically and spiritually. And I am made aware of the hunger that far too many children around the world experience due to lack of adequate food. Without proper food, children become malnourished and experience starvation.

Ministries like “Feed My Starving Children” make us painfully aware of the reality of hunger in our world. But they also provide the means to do something about it. I was privileged to be part of a group from our church that helped pack food to feed children in Haiti. The opportunity to serve actually satisfied a hunger I had to do something about the hunger problem. And my experience with Followers at “Feed My Starving Children” also made me hungry to do more. Thankfully, “Feed My Starving Children,” “ELCA World Hunger,” and many other organizations are responding, and in significant ways, helping to alleviate the hunger problem. Still, the need for adequate nutritious food remains staggering as children continue to be malnourished and face starvation on a daily basis.

In one way, our experience of hunger as Christians ought to point us to the hunger of our neighbor. It was, after all, God’s willingness to become human – to live and hunger and thirst daily as a person named Jesus – that compelled him to feed people. The church season of Lent, which begins this month, affords us the opportunity to consider our own hunger, as Jesus did. When we are hungry, anticipating our next meal, we may be reminded that others are hungry too. What of our daily bread that God has given us can be shared with our neighbor in need, who hungers too?

In another way, our experience of hunger as Christians ought to help us consider what our daily bread is, as Jesus also did. In his explanation of “Give us this day our daily bread” in *The Small Catechism*, Luther answers the question, “What is meant by daily bread?” In his reply he writes, “Daily bread includes everything needed for this life, such as food and clothing, home and property, work and income, a devoted family, an orderly community, good government, favorable weather, peace and health, a good name, and true friends and neighbors” (Luther’s *Small Catechism*, Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1979, page 20). Many of these needs are provided for in our lives, although not all of them may be. They are nevertheless the needs we ask God to provide for when we pray, as part of the Lord’s Prayer, “Give us this day our daily bread.”

The reality of sin, however, is that our hunger for daily bread easily gets twisted into the temptation to acquire for ourselves what we don’t actually need. During Lent we reflect on the temptation that we succumb to, but that Jesus resists. When Jesus is hungry, and it doesn’t appear that God was providing him his daily bread at that particular moment in the wilderness, the devil urges him: “Command these stones to become loaves of bread.” If Jesus simply fed himself at the devil’s bidding, Jesus would have no longer hungered to do the will of God, his heavenly Father. But by insisting that only God’s Word could provide the nourishment he awaited in the wilderness, Jesus, the beloved Son, maintains his trust in God above all else.

In C.S. Lewis’ classic book, *The Screwtape Letters*, one of the devil’s own demons named Screwtape is writing a series of letters to a demon he’s training named Wormwood. Screwtape reveals one aspect of the devil’s plot against humankind when he urges his trainee to fill people with worries about the future and fears of what might happen to them. The devil’s strategy is to discourage people from praying and patiently awaiting God’s will to be done in the present moment. Screwtape would also have people believe that God’s provision, the daily bread he gives us, is not enough for right now.

May it be different for us this Lent, however. May we instead experience our hunger as Jesus experienced his – as a hunger, first and foremost, for God and his Word – as well as a hunger for serving our neighbor.

Blessed Lent to you,

Pastor Brad