

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

JANUARY 2018

Dear Followers of Christ,

In the fifth chapter of his letter to the Romans, St. Paul writes these words: "...suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us" (Romans 5:3-5NRSV).

Looking back on the year 2017, all of us have experienced suffering of some kind. We don't have to go looking for it; suffering has a way of finding us. Pain, illness, grief, loss, worries, and despair, as well as strained and broken relationships, have touched each of our lives in 2017. We find ways of enduring the reality of suffering in our lives—of having endurance—but we likely also have a desire for this New Year, 2018, to go differently. We might make some New Year's resolutions, after all. But, as we all know, New Year's resolutions can only take us so far. We might resolve to get to the gym more often, or to watch what we eat or how we treat people. We might actually improve in those areas of our lives – and those are good things. New Year's resolutions and goals can be helpful.

But when it comes to our hope as Christians, St. Paul reminds us that we do not produce that hope ourselves. We can't resolve simply to do better in the New Year, and find the hope we're looking for that way. We will be disappointed if we do. Rather, the hope that we're looking for actually comes from God. When we endure suffering and are impacted by suffering, as all of us are, our hope is from God. Why? "...because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us" (Romans 5:5NRSV).

God's love in Jesus Christ—given through the Holy Spirit—is the source of our hope, even in our suffering. This is a hope that does not disappoint us; a hope sustained in us by our God whose love overcame sin, suffering, and even death itself. May our New Year begin and return – time and again – to this hope.

Happy New Year!

Pr. Brad