

Pastoral Letter.

Dear Friends,

What would we like our story to be this year? Just a month into the new year perhaps absence of staying power means that, for some, resolutions made have been broken, gym membership taken out has been cancelled, and fad diets begun have been abandoned. For some the new year brings much happiness, there is a lot to look forward to with anticipation and excitement. Meanwhile, for others, the new year already seems old and terrifying, as the threatening shadows are already beginning to appear on the horizon. Still others find the new year to already be overloaded with burdens and anxieties that do not belong to it. Yet the new year affords us the time and space to reflect on what we would like new, and what to change and adapt. Change in turn brings opportunities, new experiences and beginnings, that can be transformational. In Philippians 3:13, Paul says that: *forgetting those things that are behind...I press on towards the goal to which God in Christ has called me.* Here Paul is content to let go of the past, embrace the new, growing into a fuller understanding of the Christ who called him on the Damascus Road. Regardless of the challenges, his attitude was not about calculating or looking back on how well, or badly, he had done, but a determined effort to stay focussed, and keep steadfast in his walk with Jesus.

Friends in our faith journey, it is so easy to get distracted and lose focus due to the varying circumstances of life - however, the encouragement for all of us as we journey through 2018 is that we stay focused on Jesus Christ. Whatever we faced in 2017 we cannot be tied to the past in such a way that we are imprisoned by it. This is a new year, let us accept and embrace change and the new opportunities it presents.

What would we like our story to be this year? I pray that, as Paul, it would be to give ourselves the permission to let go of old habits, attitudes, methodologies, and actions that can be counterproductive. Let us keep going forward with renewed commitment; growing in our faith and discipleship, as we walk the way, living the life of Jesus today, not yesterday.

I leave you with something to reflect on - *The secret of change is to focus all of your energy, not on fighting the old, but on building the new* - Socrates.

Every blessing

Irene