

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

What will the new year bring? We do not yet know for sure, but we know that already this year, we have experienced something that has never before occurred in the United States. The news reports and photos from January 6, 2021, are fresh in our minds. Like many of you, I was taken aback by what happened at the Capitol building in Washington, D.C. Congressmen, congresswomen and others have stated that they never imagined a scene like that in our nation's capitol. Perhaps you were taken aback, as well. It is a new year, but I hope, not a new year filled with the unrest and violence that we experienced in 2020. My prayers are for a new year filled with peace.

My sermon today, includes a reference to the new year and words from a comic strip entitled, Mutts, by Patrick McDonnell. While you will read more about this particular comic strip in my sermon, I would like to share yet another Mutts text with a relevant message. It appeared in the *La Crosse Tribune* on January 4, 2020. Here is the text--

Earl, the Jack Russell Terrier, says to his friend, Mooch, the tuxedo cat, "How Can we Make this Year **Better** than Last Year?" To which Mooch replies, "How can we **Not!?!"**

May we look to the new year with hope, and make it a better one by using our spiritual gifts for the Glory of God. May God fill this year with many examples of justice and peace throughout the world.

Peace,

Pr. Cathy