



## Newsletter February 2015

The past four months have flown by with the usual parish life plus the challenges and opportunities that come with interim ministry. For this, I say, "Thanks be to God and to God's people of Peace."

In this fourth month of interim ministry, three themes – *Steadfastness, Patience and Hopefulness* – keep coming to your interim shepherd's heart and mind.

**Steadfastness.** Just as Jesus said to his earliest followers, he has said to us: <sup>5</sup> I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing. (John 15:5) As the body of Christ, his Church, Peace abides in Christ. We are kept connected – fed, nourished to flourish -- through worship, learning, witness, service and stewardship. Remaining steadfast isn't a fleeting thing; steadfastness involves commitment, dedication, resolve, persistence, determination and clarity of purpose and direction. Steadfastness in Christ runs strong through the vines and branches of Peace. Your commitment to making disciples, generation to generation, is evident in the variety, consistency and generosity of Peace in your mission and ministry here and abroad.

**Patience.** Steadfastness and patience go hand in hand. Think of the early church waiting for Jesus to return. The Lord Jesus could not return quickly enough for those who were learning to live the new life in Christ. Think of the vine and the branches bearing their fruit. All good growth comes in seasons, and the fruit of that growth is something we await with joy and anticipation, and even a bit of nervousness. So it can seem to be with us these days, as the call process proceeds. We live in trust that our Lord is preparing the next right pastor-shepherd for Peace. Likewise the Lord is preparing Peace to recognize, receive, respect and rally 'round a new servant-leader who's sent by the Lord. Every time God's people of Peace pray for the call process, it is an act of holy patience.

**Hopefulness is the soil in which steadfastness and patience flourish.** God's word for Peace in this and every season is a word of hope – hope in the future that empowers us in the present. The words we often use to call each other to worship are words of profound, practical, hope:

*God is good -- All the time.  
All the time -- God is good.*

It's in this holy hope, the hope made really present in Word and Sacraments, this holy community of Peace will remain steadfast in commitment to Christ and patient in making Christ known in everything we say and do.

**As Peace's shepherd and partner in ministry these past four months,** I'm grateful for all that the Lord continues to be and do in you. As the interim continues, it's important to keep steadfastness, patience and hopefulness in balance and perspective. The annual meeting will be a time for expressing and celebrating and committing to another year of *steadfastness, patience and hopefulness*. Please prayerfully ponder anew how you'll be abiding in the Lord at Peace – with steadfastness, patience and hopefulness – in 2015, and know that this interim shepherd loves you so much.

In Christ,

*Pastor Cathi*

