



THE OPPC REVIEW

December 31, 2020

Happy New Year to all our Friends!

Accept please this prayer of thanksgiving for our faithful God.

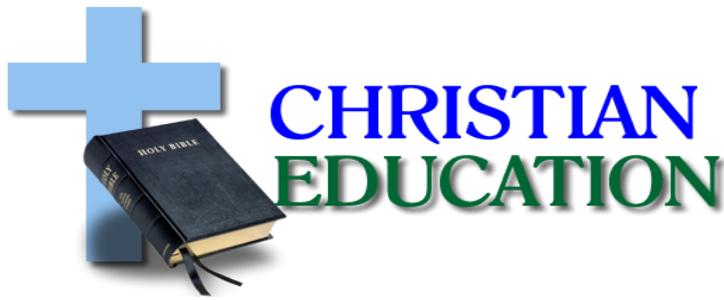
You could let us continue to shuffle
through the world's deserts,
God of Christmas,
 but you choose to walk with us
 beside the rivers of life.
You could forget who we are,
 but you adopt us into your family,
 your children of hope and joy.
You could decide we are not worth all the love
or all the agony of caring,
 but you redeem us and make us whole.
Blessed are you!

It was only the other day
the angels were singing of your birth,
Tiny One of Bethlehem,
and now, here you are,
running swiftly toward us:
 to melt our frozen faith,
 to comfort us in our loneliness,
 to lead us into life in your kingdom.
Blessed are you!

At the edge of a new year,
we wonder what life will be like,
and what do you do,
Gathering Spirit?
 You water our parched souls with laughter;
 you teach dance steps to those
 too weary to tap their toes;
 you fill our emptiness
 with overflowing gladness!
Blessed are you!

By Thom Shuman

Best to you always, and to all you love.



Bible Lesson
January 3, 2021
Second Sunday after Christmas
The Source of Change
John 1:1-18

Adapted from Feasting on the Word, winter 2021
By Deborah Pendry

Today's scripture passage is a familiar one and the favorite of many of us. It is also complex and could be the source of discussion for many weeks. We have only a few paragraphs so our discussion will concentrate on two words—Word (logos) and Light. (If you would like to do a deeper study on this passage, make a list of every single word or phrase in these 18 verses that describes Jesus. Write a list as you read. You should have over 20 words and phrases which tell us something about Christ.)

Think of a time when you were in complete darkness, possibly after a storm. Think of a time of mental or spiritual darkness. And then think of the relief brought by the light! How did you feel? What did you do? Did you generate the light yourself? As you read the focus Scripture, think about what it means to have the light that is Christ in your life.

Compare the passage you just read with Luke 2:6-14.

What are the similarities and differences?

How does each text inspire faith and add to the church's proclamation of the gospel?

Which is more meaningful to you?

The beginning of the Gospel of John is very different from the other Gospels. John identifies Jesus as "the Logos" or Word, from the start of time. John wants to establish the truth that Jesus is God in the flesh. Matthew and Luke begin with Jesus' genealogy and birth. Mark begins with the baptism of Jesus.

To introduce Jesus to his readers, John uses a word and concept familiar to them. John wrote to Jewish Christians who were undergoing persecution and experiencing hostility within the Jewish community. When John identifies Jesus as the Word, he is pointing his Jewish readers back to the Old Testament where the Word of God is the personification of God's revelation (Psalm 33:6 and 107:20).

The author of the Gospel also wrote to the neighbors of the Jewish Christians—Gentiles. John's use of the word Logos connects Jesus with a commonly held Greek philosophical concept. The Logos was the tool through which God created and communicated with the material universe. Gentiles, of that age, would perceive that Jesus was the mediator between God and creation.

If you were in John's original audience, how would you summarize John 1:1-18 so that you could explain it to a friend?

What are the most important characteristics of the Word?

How does the Word interact with people?

The Word of God became flesh in the person of Jesus, but his own people did not accept him.

Why was Jesus shunned by the world and his own people?

Why is he still shunned by today's world?

What can we do differently so Christ is not rejected?

WHAT is important to know? — From “Exegetical Perspective,” William R. Herzog II
John uses logos to express a most astounding Christology, “and the Word became flesh and dwelled in our midst, full of grace and truth” (my translation). As Genesis 1 begins with creation, so John 1 begins with a new creation (1:3). Clearly, the hymn proclaims the activity of God in the coming of the logos. The coming of the true light into the world (1:9) inspires not only conflict and rejection (1:10–11) but acceptance and empowerment (1:12–13). What counts is God’s authority to enable all people to become children of God. This is the empowerment brought by the logos, and it is a direct challenge to the violence, privilege, power, and oppressive rule found in John’s world.

In what ways does God enable people to become children of God?

How is God’s empowerment a direct challenge to the violence, privilege, power, and oppressive rule?

SO WHAT does this mean for our lives?— From “Pastoral Perspective,” William V. Arnold

The second half of John’s prologue is a powerful and graphic theological description of the unfolding process of God’s love revealed in Christ. The outcome of that process is new comprehension of who we are. In like manner, this theological description can serve as more than a theological statement. It also can be a pastoral word for us—bearing in mind that the word “pastoral” does not refer only to ordained clergy. We all are called to be pastors to one another. As pastors of the Word, we are called to recognize the helplessness of many who do not even know what is possible. Our recognition of their helplessness, combined with an awareness of God’s recognition of our helplessness, can become an occasion—or perhaps a call—to offer them good news.

What does it mean to you to be a child of God?

NOW WHAT is God’s word calling us to do? — From “Homiletical Perspective,” Shelley D. B. Copeland

When the light comes, one must choose either to stay in the anonymity of darkness or to move forward in the familiarity of light. Darkness is somehow relaxed and distant. Light is intimate in the midst of visibility and understanding. The question we each must answer for ourselves is, would you rather live your life in the dark or in the light?

As believers, of course we want to live in His light but how does one live in His light?

Is it by doing, by being, by thinking, by feeling or by “acting like it”? We had a lesson a few weeks ago and I mentioned our identity in Christ. Our identity shows in the light and it will look like Jesus to the world.

Father, plant your Word in our hearts so that Christ’s identity shines out of our lives constantly, in all we do, think, act and feel. Amen.



We are overwhelmed by your generosity and love shown to us through the Christmas Staff Love Offering. It is an honor to serve the congregation of OPPC, and we are thankful for the chance to engage in ministry with you. With grateful hearts, Pam, Pheona, Julie, Jon, Vernon, Sonja and Tom.

ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING SUNDAY, JANUARY 17TH AT 11:45 A.M. IN SANCTUARY VIA ZOOM.



A new year is starting but the great needs of our neighbors continue. We will continue in 2021 to collect canned and other non-refrigerated foods for the Orange Park Clothes Closet and Food Pantry. Our support for the children attending Montclair Elementary School kicks off in January with a drive for much needed personal items (listed below) that the school nurse will distribute discreetly to those in need. Bring your donations to church on Sundays or to the "Donation Drive-In" from **10:00 am -11:00 a.m. on January 5th and on February 2nd**. The food and other items will be collected in the front parking lot on Park Avenue.

Items for Montclair Students:

- "Any and all" size belts (gently used ok)
- Boys underwear sizes 6, 8, or 10 (must be new)
- Girls underwear sizes 8, 10 (must be new)
- Jackets of all children's sizes, boys or girls (gently used ok)
- Boys and girls socks, all sizes children and adult



TWO CENTS A MEAL CONTAINERS can once again be brought to worship or to the church office. You can also send a check to the office, if that is more convenient for you. The money collected is used for the Jamaica Mutual Mission trip expenses.

COME JOIN THE TEAM!

The Missions Team is seeking additional voices to join us in discerning the needs of our community and world; and how God is calling OPPC to respond. Please prayerfully consider volunteering to help on Missions. Or join one meeting to learn more before deciding. Call or email the church office or Marjorie Phillips.



DR. TIM AND GALY CARTER: Dr. Tim Carter took a nasty fall down the stairs of his home this past summer and ended up needing back surgery. Between surgery and Galey's excellent nursing he is walking and moving around like it never happened. He is truly a walking miracle. As Dr. Tim tells the story, the surgeon who mended his back spoke perfect Russian to Galey and teased that he was afraid the surgeon was trying to "steal" Galey away from him. He is always in good spirits and giving God the glory for his continued health and good fortune. He is so uplifting that he could easily be a motivational speaker. Galey loves to work in the garden and has several lovely citrus fruit trees. Please keep Dr. Tim in your prayers because the Parkinson's Disease is causing some health

problems.

BONNIE MCCROSKY: OPPC and its family have meant everything to me for the past 53 years. It helped raise my 6 wonderful children and there is no end to thanks in my heart for what God has brought.



JACK AND DORIS WELKENBACH: Jack and Doris are joyful this Christmas season. Jack says the Lord has been good to them. They pray that all are safe and have a happy holiday season. They look forward to when we can all be together once again as a church family.

Power of Prayer

Please be
praying
for.....



Parkwood Baptist Church congregation, Meagan Smeaton (aka Ms. Sweet), Tim Wilson, Jeff & Pat Phillips, Bill Phillips & Family, Ekaterina Bykova, Lourene Plunkett Collins, The Family of Mickey Christopher, Alecia Bryla, John Adkins, Lil Johnson, Uncle Glen's Family, People in the Caribbean, Judy, Alyce's Family, Barbara, Catherine Nadeau, Russ McKinney, Ed & Joan Poole, Ron Yrabedra, Katy Johnson, Carolyn Stevens, Carol Wallace, Anthony, Marvin and Family, Rod Varella, Ava Long, Debbie Mueller, Janet Hayes, Bill Lewis, Janet Hayes, Jennifer Theurer, Ray Bandy, Anne, Maureen Chrul, Lynn & Niece, Sharon Goodroe, Susan Hurst, Ann Marie, Brian Jackson, Bonnie Gorman,

Jack & Doris Welkenbach, Mike Tomasso, Ben, Lily, Kathy Daly, Sherry, Baxley, Rosalie Johnson, World suffering due to Coronavirus, Marcia Gross, Leon England, Tina, Foster, Christine, Linda Coday, Harald & Ingeborg Steinbrecher, Tom, Darlene Davenport, Kash, Rachel Magnaso, Kevin Grandstaff, Linda Crimm, Sean Hritz, Melinda, Marge Shultz, Michael Jackson, Carlye Ellison, Evelyn, Brenda Mauk, Don Aycock, Ed Hayes, Brenda, Pam Caster, Karen, Habel, TS, Joey Scott, Joan, Rita Eddins, James Rinker, Harold Wood, Dylan Williams, Sid & Carolyn Sewell, Jean, Danielle Hinson, Mo Moore, Pat Rabb, Myra, Millicent Sirch, Ken & Jerri Arsenault, Wayne Moore, Ruth Wall, Timmy Jerrell, Nancy's mom, Mary Lee, Gary Koontz, Dick Burke, Shawn & Melissa, Rrene Hewett, Steve & Anne Poole, Rhonda Hyler, Dottie & George Lane, Ray Kerbs, Patricia, Paul, Allison, Dyna King, Hayden, Betty Turnage, Gloria Hess, Ray Patterson

