



# 'Till We Meet Again!

Week of January 16 and 17, 2020



REFLECTION FOR THURSDAY, JANUARY 7, 2020

## A NEW DAY

***<sup>44</sup>Then he (Jesus) said, "When I was with you before, I told you that everything written about me in the law of Moses and the prophets and in the Psalms must be fulfilled." <sup>45</sup>Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures. <sup>46</sup>And he said, "Yes, it was written long ago that the Messiah would suffer and die and rise from the dead on the third day. <sup>47</sup>It was also written that this message would be proclaimed in the authority of his name to all the nations, beginning in Jerusalem: 'There is forgiveness of sins for all who repent.' <sup>48</sup>You are witnesses of all these things. <sup>49</sup>"And now I will send the Holy Spirit, just as my Father promised. But stay here in the city until the Holy Spirit comes and fills you with power from heaven."***

**Luke 25:44-49 (NLT)**

Good morning my friends!

It was yesterday morning when I had a simple thought in my mind; "what topic would I like to share with my sisters and brothers in Christ in my "Just for You!" offering this week. The answer as you might imagine came quickly in witnessing in real time the events that occurred in our nation's capital yesterday afternoon.

We, the people of this broken and fallen world, have truly been through the "wringer" over the course of this past year. With our own eyes we have witnessed how a microscopic organism could nearly cripple the way humans interact and conduct daily life. With our own eyes we have seen people dying without the ability to have friends and family by their side and families and friends trying to grieve and mourn death in ways that are foreign and alien. With our own eyes we have witnessed the prejudices and injustices that continue to plague humanity. With our own eyes we have witnessed how easily people can move from being "impassioned", "enraged", "frustrated", and "angry" to becoming violent and out of control. With our own eyes we have borne witness to how the media and news outlets can truly "color" truths and validate inappropriate actions. With our own eyes we have witnessed how influential leaders can incite people to say and do things that stand opposed to the well being of our larger culture.

Make no mistake about this. These are not issues that simply occur within the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania or the United States of America, these issues are prevalent through the entire developed world.

Make no mistake about this; while the pace and frequency of these issues are at a fevered pitch in this world of immediate gratification and information, events like these have occurred throughout the history of this broken and fallen world.

Yes, this year has once again demonstrated to all the people of this world that we truly live in a broken and fallen world.

My hope and prayer would be that we

once again hear the words of our Lord and Savior as annotated in the gospel of Luke; “then he opened their minds to understand Scripture.”

Scripture shares with us stories about God’s desire for the world and human brokenness which inhabits God’s desire to be fulfilled. Time and time again, humans fail to live in accordance with God’s Will. Time and time again, humanity lusts for power, wealth, prestige, and honor over and above the welfare of one another. Time and time again humanity turns their collective “backs” to God and walks down the wrong road.

The Good News is that in every instance of these actions occurring, from the very onset of creation, God has walked with God’s people and has never abandoned humanity. As one of my professors used to say, “there is no sin that exists that is larger than God’s ability to forgive.”

Jesus speaks to the disciples after His three days in the tomb and among the first words recorded are “there is forgiveness of sins for all who repent (turn back to God).”

Now is the appropriate time for us to humbly come before God and ask for forgiveness of our sin. My guess is that none of you who are reading this reflection took part in the violent and deadly luting that occurred in the summer months of this year. My guess is that none of you who are reading this reflection took part in storming the capital of the United States and caused the death of people yesterday. Yet, we all have much to ask God for forgiveness.

Our hearts are often hardened to truly respect and hear those whose opinions and thoughts are different than our own. Our own prejudices impact the way we view “the other” and sometimes lead us to make inappropriate statements and carry inappropriate thoughts. Our voices have been silent when we see injustices in the world around us. In other words, we simply have failed to live out the commandments of our Lord and Savior, Love God and love our neighbors as we love ourselves.

Now, if you have read this reflection to this point, we are reminded of Christ’s command to proclaim to ourselves, to one another, and to the whole world that “there is forgiveness of sin for all who repent.”

We are witnesses to this eternal truth also. So, what will you do?

Until next time,

Keep trusting God, keep washing those hands, and ask for and proclaim forgiveness.

PJ



#### REFLECTION FOR TUESDAY JANUARY 12, 2021 AND IT IS GOOD!

##### ***Genesis 1:1-5***

***<sup>1</sup>In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, <sup>2</sup>the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters. <sup>3</sup>Then God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light. <sup>4</sup>And God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness. <sup>5</sup>God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day.***

This is the first of two stories of creation in the book of Genesis. I am drawn much more to this text for many reasons. To begin there is absolute chaos, the world is a formless void, and from that God creates. Jewish lore reports

that out of this deep primordial ocean, which was to the ancient Israelites the epitome of chaos, God masterfully and intentionally creates. Some believe that God spent eons planning everything out and had 974 creation attempts before God was satisfied with creation! God was intentional about creation and was satisfied that it was good.

That is wonderful news for us! Amid all the chaos in the world, God believes we are good. That we were good at creation and that we continue to be good. Amid the chaos we call life, we are good. All of us. Every single one of us.

And that is the hard part, isn't it? We are all good. The people who stormed the capital, the people that are planning attacks on all fifty capital buildings, those who are planning attacks on our nation's capital as we have a new president sworn in are good too. I have a very hard time wrapping my hands around that concept as I am sure many of you do too. How can they create chaos and be part of God's good creation?

I go back again to the first account of creation in Genesis. The priestly writers who likely wrote the first creation story were writing during the days of the Babylonian exile. There was total chaos, the Temple was destroyed, the Israelites had no power, they had no control over their calendar or the god's that were worshiped by their captors. Perhaps in prison with only a slice of sky visible from the deep and the only sign that the Lord is yet creating order out of chaos according to Richard Boyce and so, this is a story for those days when we despair. Boyce goes on to say:

*No, this creation story is a way of holding onto hope when all signs of order in our lives have been destroyed and we must look out for signs of the creative work of God beyond our control. If God is still creating order out of chaos in the succession of night and day, maybe God will one day create order once more out of chaos in the lives of God's people. Hold on and do not lose hope. (pages 221 and 223)*

God is still in control and creating, taking chaos, and making it good. That offers me a hope be-

yond hope that life will go forward. I pray that gives you hope too. As God's hands and feet in the world, we too have a role to play. We are called to respect all people as God's sons and daughters, even if they are creating chaos, even if they look and talk different than us, we are all God's children. We are all part of the same family. We will not always agree and sometimes we will absolutely disagree. At the end of the day as night falls, we are still children of the same God. The God that creates light out of darkness and declares that all creation is good.

In Peace,  
Pastor Suzanne

## OFFERING ENVELOPES

### LIGHT OF CHRIST

LoC offering envelopes are ready for pickup. If you would like your offering envelopes, you can pick them up on Monday, January 18 between 10:00 AM and noon in the new fellowship hall. If you can't come at that time, call the church office and your envelopes will be put at the back door for pick up at your convenience.

### ST. PETER'S

St. Peter's offering envelopes will be available for pickup on Saturday, January 16 from 10:00 AM to noon at St. P in the lower level elevator lobby.



"You can't be an usher because you think offering plates are Frisbees®."  
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### WORD IN SEASON

Word in Season is available and can be picked up on the back porch of Light of Christ.

### MAT MINISTRY

UPG mat making has resumed. Plastic bags for plarn making can be picked up on the back porch at Light of Christ.





## THIS WEEK IN THE UPG JANUARY 16—JANUARY 23

### Saturday January 16

4:45 PM      Worship  
("LiveStream" Facebook from LoC)

### Sunday January 17

Worship available on YouTube  
10:30 AM      46ers Zoom

### Monday January 18

Rev Dr M.L. King Jr Day Church Offices are closed  
7:00 PM      Coffee & Conversation (Zoom)

### Tuesday January 19

9:00 AM      Staff Meeting (Zoom)

### Wednesday January 20

7:00 AM      Fellowship Meeting

### Thursday January 21

6:30 PM      Bible Study (Zoom)

### Friday January 22

### Saturday January 23

4:45 PM      Worship  
("Livestream" Facebook from St. JW)

### Sunday January 24

Worship available on YouTube  
10:30 AM      46ers Zoom

### UPG CHILDREN'S ACTIVITIES

Recently our children gathered on the lawn of Light of Christ to play yard games and have fun solving clues with a scavenger hunt that ended on the steps of the church doors. We continue to find ways to let the children know we care for them and are thinking about them while our buildings are closed due to the virus. On January 17<sup>th</sup> a fun walk is planned for all ages at the Bethlehem Township Municipal Park from 1:00-2:30 PM. More details to come.

