

words of Chapter 21, though, gives hope to any followers of Jesus the Christ. The idea of God dwelling with humanity should bring comfort to any Christian experiencing difficult times. The image of God wiping away our tears and death, crying, mourning and pain will be no more, must give solace to Christ's followers. Read again Verses 3 and 4. Take time to thank God for his mercy for each and everyone who calls his name. Reflect on the darkness of our times and pray that God's light will bring clarity into our world exposing the devastation caused by the darkness. Record your thoughts here

Thursday, January 1

Read John 1:1-18. Within this prologue of John's Gospel, we do not find another birth narrative as in Matthew and Luke's Gospel. Rather we find a rich source of beliefs about our God and Jesus our Savior. From these verses we learn that Jesus, like God has always existed (verse 1), that Jesus is the light of God shining in the darkest corners of our human existence (verse 5). We learn that the Christ was involved in creation (verse 10) and that through Christ we are given the power to become children of God (verse 12). Even though John's presentation of how Christ came into the world lacks the warmth of Matthew and Luke's birth narratives, John's words certainly give Christ's followers hope. What are your thoughts? Write them here giving praise to our loving Creator and Christ our Lord and Savior.

Friday, January 2

Pastor Jack, at the end of Sunday's message suggested that since we represent the living body of Christ in the world, that there may be a thin space between us and the divine that is actually between each of us as Christ's representative in the world. The message ended with this question: Could it be that Jesus is closer than we think? What do you think? Write your thoughts here.

Message Notes December 28, 2025

*Our Advent Pilgrimage – Destination: The New Jerusalem and Central UMC**

- I. December 28th! Do you have all the _____ and _____ taken down and put away?
 - A. I always feel a little morose when packing up our _____ Scene, especially _____.
 1. Seems a little _____.
 2. Seems wrong to _____ wrap the baby Jesus in tissue and store him away in a box.
 3. When there are gifts we've received still around, we've, at least symbolically, packed away the most _____ gift of all, _____.
 - B. Today we are once again guided by two Johns; John of Patmos, the author of _____ and John the writer of the _____ that bears his name.
 1. Throughout this series of message, the prophecies and proclamations have all been two-fold, sort of a _____ news-_____ news announcement.
 - a. In Revelation there is a pattern repeated of _____ and eschatological _____.
 - b. Eschatological simply means _____ things or _____ times.
 2. The victory of Christ over _____ ushers in a new creation of heaven and earth and God's reign is insured and there will be ultimate _____.
 3. The _____ parts of Revelation are resolved with a kingdom of _____, righteousness and God's _____ presence.

* John 1:1-18 and Revelation 21:1-6

- II. The first eighteen verses of John's Gospel talk about the _____ of Christ in very different ways from Mathew and Luke's Gospels.
- A. The Christ, that ever eternal essence of Jesus, was in the beginning and that Word was life and the life was the _____ of the world.
1. In verse 5 we read, "The _____ shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not _____ it." (John 1:5)
 2. In my conversations with many people, they are _____.
- B. Christmas serves as a reminder that God _____ to the darkness in our world through Emmanuel – which you may remember means _____ is with us.
1. Jesus as the word of God in flesh reminds us that we _____, are the _____ body of Christ in the world.
 - a. Christmas is a _____ from God, reminding us that God is with us.
 - b. It is our responsibility as followers of Jesus the Christ to make sure this _____ from God is a _____ that keeps on _____.
 2. We've talked a lot about "thin places" where we can encounter God and Jesus in _____ and _____ ways.
 - a. But could it be that thin places exist _____ as well, friends?
 - b. Could it be that _____ is _____ than we think?

Daily Devotional Guide

The following is a daily devotional and study guide meant to enhance your understanding of the message and grow as a Christian.

It is offered for your personal reflection or to share with others.

Monday, December 29

Pastor Jack began the message with the idea of taking down Christmas decorations is a sad event. It's a bit strange taking down the decorations that celebrate the birth of Christ while gifts we receive are still in sight, perhaps even displayed for people to see. (See the new bracelet my spouse bought for me?) Certainly, taking down Christmas decorations can remind us of the "let down" that many experience following Christmas Day. We work so hard and are so busy leading up to the holiday that we forget that Christmas is a "Holy Day." In centuries past, Christmas was just the beginning of celebrations as in *The Twelve Days of Christmas*. Have you ever experienced the "post-Christmas let down?" Have you ever felt sad while taking down the decorations? Think about these ideas and write our reflections here.

Tuesday, December 30

It was mentioned that the Advent Messages presented dual messages of judgment and mercy. It has even been suggested by some worship experts that Advent is actually a "little Lent." While this past week's message looked forward to the blessings of Christ's victory over evil in the world, the battle between good and evil was hard fought according to the Book of Revelation. IN John's Gospel Jesus is the Word and he was the light that need to shine in the darkness. That image implies that there is judgment needed to determine the darkness in our world and within each of us. Meditate on the need for both judgment and mercy. Do they go hand in hand? Does mercy always follow judgment? Will God extend mercy to all people? Pray for God's wisdom as you write your thoughts here.

Wednesday, December 31

Read Revelation 21-1-6. If you have time, scan through the preceding chapters leading up to Chapter 21. There are a lot of frightening images offered throughout the book Revelation. The