

Christ Moravian Church

WEEKLY PASTORAL LETTER

Watchword for Christmas Day

Jesus is the reflection of God's glory and the exact imprint of God's very being, and he sustains all things by his powerful word. Hebrews 1:3



Merry Christmas Dear Friends in Christ:

This very special and holy season for which we have prepared now arrives with Christmas Eve, Christmas Day and some holiday time after. I can't express to you how grateful I am for each one within the CMC family and how I truly miss not seeing each of you within these special holy days. Yet, we still come to know that the love of Christ and God's holy grace are wonderfully revealed in experiences as this. We find ourselves at an expectant manger awaiting a new birth of hope, peace, love, and joy found swaddled in the Christ Child.

I wished to highlight that the Christmas Eve worship video will be sent through the email network on Dec. 24th around 1pm. This will allow families and folks to experience this worship service within your holiday time frame. So many thanks go out to the amazing team of CMC folks who have assisted with the worship video. You will see the many who came to take part as safely as possible, and special thanks to Steve Blackwell who worked overtime to give this video those special touches.

As well, we will offer a special worship video for the weekend of Dec. 27th. The CMC worship team are taking a couple weeks away from these responsibilities, so the service to be shared on the weekend is from the 2020 worship archives and has been "tweaked" a bit for this second worship experience. Thanks to Steve Blackwell again for re-editing this video. It will be available at the regular worship time on Saturday afternoon.

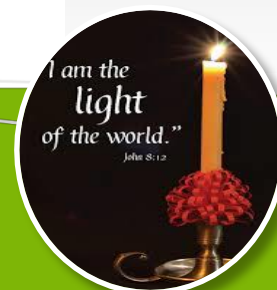
Lastly, I want to include a beautiful poem by a dear friend and colleague, the Rev. Larry Christianson. His poem, "Once Upon a Midnight Clear" nicely captures the spirit of this sacred and beloved time. May God's love and peace be with you all.

Christmas Blessings and Love,
Pastor Steve Gohdes

Upcoming

- | | |
|--------|-------------------------------------|
| Dec 24 | Christmas Candlelight Video Service |
| Dec 27 | CMC Archive Video |

For more information, visit our website @
www.christmoravian.com



ONCE UPON A MIDNIGHT CLEAR

The Rev. Larry Christianson

Once upon a midnight clear –
 Long ago and far away.
 A pregnant woman and a bewildered man
 on a night's dark journey.
 Mary and Joseph – alone but not lonely.
 with the Lord as companion.
 How silent was the night?
 How holy was the sight?
 No room at the inn.
 No vacancy other than a stable.
 Sounds not very calm,
 prospects not too bright.
 Love's holy child born in a barn:
 baby Jesus –
 asleep in heavenly peace,
 here at the dawn of redeeming grace.
 Shepherds search in fear and trembling
 for truth revealed
 and brokenness healed.
 Angels sing of peace on earth,
 good will to all,
 not just you and me –
 but all!!
 Right here – right now!!

Now upon this Christmas –
 We gather to travel with Mary and Joseph
 to the manger,
 to search with the shepherds
 and sing with the angels:
 “Glory to God in the highest,
 and on earth peace among all
 with whom he is pleased!”
 We gather to sing for joy and search for hope,
 to celebrate the birth of God's love
 in the Christ child –
 now and forevermore,
 free and unconditional!

We cling to all we hold dear:
 trappings and traditions,
 memories and meanings,
 special people of past and present.

Weekly Reminders...

- Thanks to all for your generous donations to “Warm Feet for the Street” and Mustard Seed supplies
- Indranie Perera continues to receive recycling for support of Sri Lanka

In All Things Love...



Children's Worship Bulletin

Jesus Presented in the Temple

Luke 2:22-40

Word Search

J O H I S R A E L D D L E F J
J M I A A P E H L O E O O M K
B R P W L H Z V V I I V V C K
K I K R V J P B E C G Z O E C
L G Y T A L S I Z A O H H U S
U H U E T I H I G R L U T F T
A T S M I I S M M E K E R Z Y
J E A P O E Q E O E O W D T V
E O C L N P C G D B O N H F S
S U R E O J Z R V J T N S M Q
U S I S P I R I T Z O M Q A N
S J F E P A R E N T S S H F T
P L I P P R O M I S E D E J P
B B C C K Z M A R Y P Y R P U
R O E M V M C H I L D P N O H

SPIRIT	RIGHTEOUS	PRAISED	COURTS	TEMPLE
CHILD	DEVOUT	LIGHT	JOSEPH	JESUS
PARENTS	SALVATION	ISRAEL	REVEALED	PIGEONS
SIMEON	PROMISED	DOVES	SACRIFICE	MARY

Christ Moravian Church
Calgary, Alberta

Decoder Puzzle

Each number represents a letter of the alphabet. Substitute the correct letter for the numbers to reveal the coded words.

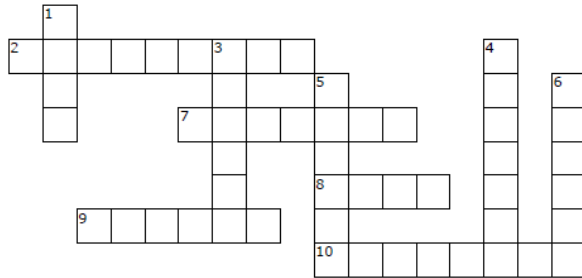
V	C	Y	U	K	S	N	Z	W	O	X	R	H	M	G	D	I	Q	T	P	J	F	L	B	A	E
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26

- 21-26-6-4-6 _____
- 21-10-6-26-20-13 _____
- 14-25-12-3 _____
- 6-17-14-26-10-7 _____
- 16-26-1-10-4-19 _____
- 19-26-14-20-23-26 _____
- 2-13-17-23-16 _____
- 20-12-10-14-17-6-26-16 _____

MARY	CHILD	PROMISED	DEVOUT
JESUS	TEMPLE	JOSEPH	SIMEON



Color Me! Crossword Puzzle



ACROSS

2. Deliverance from the penalty of sin
7. Something you said that you would do
8. The organs for seeing in the faces of humans and animals
9. A building dedicated to religious ceremonies or worship
10. The town where Mary, Joseph, and Jesus lived

DOWN

1. The mother of Jesus
3. The homeland of the Jewish people
4. A person who is not Jewish
5. The man who was promised he would not die until he had seen the Messiah
6. The earthly father of Jesus

TEMPLE	SALVATION	MARY	NAZARETH	ISRAEL
SIMEON	JOSEPH	GENTILE	PROMISE	EYES



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Simeon and Anna Thank God
Luke 2

From Thru-the-Bible Coloring Pages for Ages 4-8. © Standard Publishing.
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Standard Publishing, www.standardpub.com, 1-800-543-1301.

Focus on Luke 2:22–40

WHAT is important to know?

— From “Exegetical Perspective,” William R. Herzog II

Anna’s name in the Greek is Hannah. It is important to emphasize this in light of Luke’s allusive use of 1 Samuel 1–2, the story of the birth of Samuel to Hannah and Elkanah. What the two events share is the sense that God is doing something new to facilitate the fulfillment of God’s purposes in history. Both are transitional events. If Simeon spoke to God and then to Mary and Joseph, Hannah speaks “to all who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem.” The Word becomes public in a way it has not been. This means that Anna is more than a distant echo of Simeon, but has her own distinctive role to play.

WHERE is God in these words?

— From “Theological Perspective,” James C. Howell

Jesus was just a baby—and this is God’s shrewdest device. As Luther put it, God became small for us in Christ; he showed us his heart, so our hearts might be won. Infants wield a kind of power. Muscular men with calloused hands become gentle as pillows when handed a baby; potent people with gruff voices adopt a falsetto and coo to an infant. God came down, not to thrash evildoers or crush the Romans, but as an infant, to elicit love, to nurture tenderness.

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

Mary and Joseph bring Jesus to the temple for the required Mosaic ritual of purification. The birth of a child, regardless of family resources, brings with it responsibility. Jesus’ parents are acknowledging and honoring their faith commitments and their recognition of the special quality of their child. Further, this case reminds us that there are particular rituals available both to remind and to encourage mothers and fathers in their new tasks of parenting. The temple represents the presence of a much wider array of persons, a community, and resources to undergird them. That was important in the life of Jesus, and it is important for all of us in our continuing care of children.

NOW WHAT is God’s word calling us to do?

— From “Homiletical Perspective,”
Shelley D. B. Copeland

Perhaps this text is pleading with those of us in this generation to create a more just society for the children who come into the world through parents of limited means. We have questions with which to grapple. If Jesus were born today, to teen parents in American urban poverty, would he be better off now than he was 2,000 years ago? Will we answer the call to create a global community that makes sure all mothers and fathers have adequate health care, food, education, clothing, and shelter? When we consider the abundance of our nation, do faithful people of means have an obligation to the poor beyond offering them verbal blessings?

Rituals and Offerings

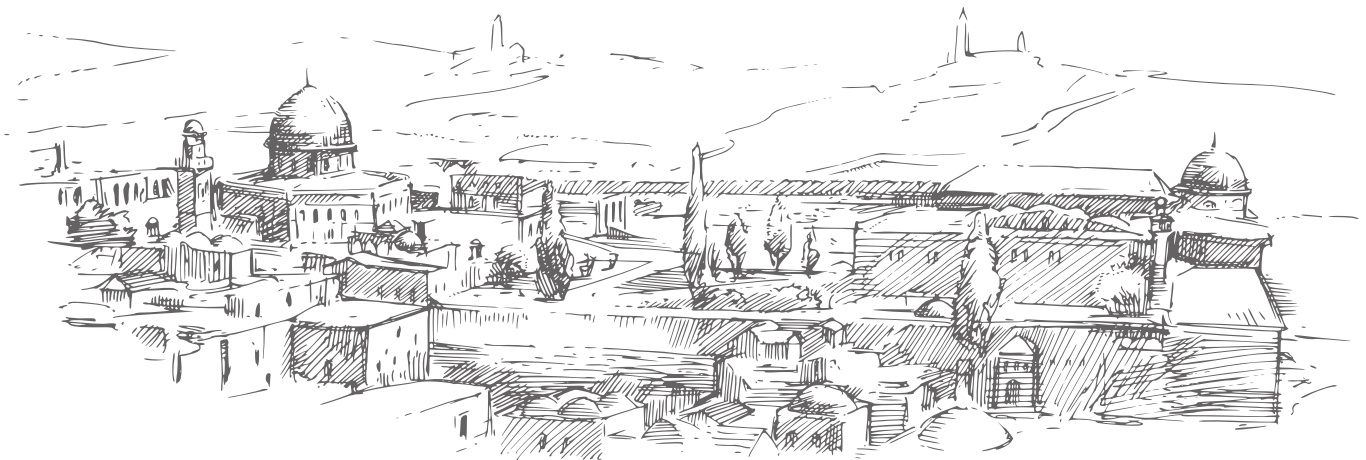
According to Luke, on the eighth day after his birth, Jesus was circumcised (v. 21). This was done to fulfill the law and follow the religious traditions of the Jewish people. At the time of his circumcision, the baby was given the name of Jesus.

Some time after Jesus' circumcision, Luke records that Mary, Joseph, and the baby Jesus enter the temple for the required sacrifices and offerings. Luke, in his story, combines the redemption of Jesus with that of Mary's purification. It is somewhat confusing when Luke writes "their" purification. As seen below, Jesus did not need to be purified, but Mary did. Jesus needed to be redeemed.

Jewish law stated that any woman who gave birth to a male child would be regarded as unclean for seven days, and would be required to stay at her home for an additional thirty-three days. On the fortieth day, a sacrifice for purification was offered, which could only be accomplished at the temple in Jerusalem (Leviticus 12:1–8).

In addition, the law required that the firstborn child had to be redeemed. Jewish teachings regarded all firstborns as consecrated to God, thus the sacrifice of all firstborn animals. Children were redeemed by the payment of five shekels (Exodus 13:13; Numbers 18:15–16). Mary and Joseph offered two turtledoves, which, as a less expensive offering, was allowed for the poor.

Children did not need to be present at the temple for their redeeming. Jesus' presence seems to indicate that Mary was making a special offering of her son to God for his service. This was similar to Hannah's offering of her son, Samuel (1 Samuel 1:11, 21–28).



Focus on

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.

WHERE is God in these words?

— From “Theological Perspective,” James C. Howell

We often think of the incarnation as an emptying: Christ, “though he was in the form of God . . . emptied himself, taking the form of a slave” (Phil. 2:6–7). But this Word made flesh isn’t a hollow vessel, an empty shell. The humanity of Jesus is full, it is Fullness itself. The emptying is not an emptying of grace. The Word made flesh *is* grace. The flesh is God’s glory. Jesus was not pretending to be human; he really did enter into our flesh of weakness, mortality, pain. There is no other God, no other secret truth about God.

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.

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?

The Word of God

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.

Pretend you are John’s original audience reading today’s focus scripture. Summarize John 1:(1–9), 10–18 in your own words so that you could explain it to your friends at that time.

The Word of God

Worship & Event Links ~ December 24th, 2020

Topic: CMC Bible Buddies

Hi Everyone,

Attached are lessons for December 27th- Nurturing Jesus: Luke 2:22-40 and January 3rd - The Source of Change: John 1: (1-9). 10-18

There will be **no Zoom meeting on December 27th**, but we will be meeting on January 3rd for anyone who would like to join in.

Link to join is below:

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81982362860?pwd=YjJQVmcxQTJGMVJIS01QSmt2MmozUT09>

Meeting ID: 819 8236 2860

Passcode: 603307

One tap mobile

+16475580588,,81982362860# Canada

+17789072071,,81982362860# Canada

Here is the link to Len Sweet's blog:

<https://youtu.be/qty2Gy7-zx8>

Many blessings to you and your family this Christmas,

Barb: -)

Links to Online Worship: Christ Moravian

<https://www.christmoravian.com>

Good Shepherd

<https://www.goodshepherdmoravian.org>

Millwoods

<https://www.mcchurch.ca/>

Rio Terrace

<https://www.rioterracechurch.org/live>

Moravian Church Northern Province

<https://moravianchristmas.org>