



## A NOTE FROM THE PASTORS' OFFICE

### All Things New

Pastor Joel Smit

*After a very long year with much uncertainty and many cancelations of events and gatherings, all will be glad to turn the calendar to a new year. The new year brings renewed optimism and resolution for what lies ahead. Yet there remains much uncertainty and a sense that many of the problems of the last year carry on into the next. So where does our hope truly lie? This article from Dr. Mark Ross and Ligonier Ministries helps us to realize the tension of living in the “already and the not yet” of our present situation, while keeping our hope and trust firmly planted in Jesus Christ – who makes all things new.*

I recall quite vividly from my early childhood a curious impulse that I developed at the closing of one year and the coming of the next. From the anticipation and excitement that I saw in others around me, and perhaps from a measure of media hype, I had a sense that at midnight on New Year's Eve, something truly amazing would happen, something that would totally transform things, something worth celebrating in the biggest way. We watched with excitement as the ball began to drop down the pole. But as the stroke of midnight approached, I would run to the far end of the house where, from a darkened room, I could peer out into the night sky with eager longing, expecting that something quite magical would happen. I could hear from the TV the cheers that went up from the crowd in Times Square as the new year dawned. But to my surprise and disappointment, nothing ever happened in the night sky. The cosmos, it appeared to me, was oblivious to our new year, and it stood unyielding against all our hopes for something really new. You might say I was experiencing my first encounter with the sense of futility that the Preacher of Ecclesiastes discusses: “What has been is what will be, and what has been done is what will be done, and there is nothing new under the sun” (1:9).

I do not know just why I had this childhood expectation that a new year might bring a new beginning. But in myself as well as in others, I have often found that same hope emerging when something new is going to happen: a new car, a new house, a new job, a new therapist, a new spouse, or even just a new diet and exercise regimen. Almost as often, though, I have found that the cosmos remains unyielding to our hopes. The ball may drop, and the crowd may cheer, but what has been is what will be, and what has been done is what will be done, and there is nothing new under the sun — or so it seems.

We recently marked the beginning of a new year, and probably for all of us there is that longing for things that are new, for a life that is new. Our hopes are kindled high by the promises of the gospel. But looking back on previous years, we have known that hunger before. Where can we go for satisfaction of that desire? Where can that which is new and lasting really be found?

The exodus of the people of Israel from Egypt marked a whole new beginning for them, one that would deserve annual commemoration in full. It stood at the head of the new year: “This month shall be for you the beginning of months. It shall be the first month of the year for you” (Ex. 12:2). It marked the transition from slavery to freedom, from days of oppression in a foreign land to life as possessors in the Promised Land. At the heart of this great deliverance was the promise of God to Abraham, the blessing to him and to his descendants after him that they would become

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exceedingly numerous and inherit the land flowing with milk and honey. The fulfillment of this promise was advancing. Time, as it were, began there. It was the birth of a new day, a new era, a new nation.

So pivotal was this event in God's revelation of Himself to Israel that the meaning of His personal name is tied to the exodus (6:2–8). In those great acts of love and deliverance, "the Lord" was revealing Himself in ways that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob never knew (v. 3). By those acts, Israel would know that He is the Lord (v. 7). By those same acts, Egypt would know that He is the Lord (7:5). Moses would later exclaim that nothing like this had ever happened before (Deut. 4:32–40).

Though the course of the ages afterward, and Israel's repeated failures, seemed to mock the new beginning made in the exodus, yet the events of those days truly did mark a new beginning, or perhaps we might better say, foretold a new beginning. The Passover feast prophesied a greater exodus. It spoke of the Lamb who, in future days, would take away the sin of the world. It found its fulfillment in Christ, who transformed that feast into a remembrance of Himself until He comes to make all things new. My childhood longing lives on. It was no futile hope. Thanks be to God.

\*This article is abbreviated for space. The full article can be read at: <https://www.ligonier.org/learn/devotionals/beginning-of-months/>

## Wednesday Night In Person & Online Devotion & Prayer



Smyrna Pres is continuing its Wednesday Night Devotion & Prayer Time on-line & in person. Pastor Joel is hosting weekly meetings at the church and Zoom calls in an effort to connect the church body while we are apart. Join us in the choir room or at home online **Wednesday nights from 6:45 - 7:30 pm**. All meeting details and reminders for this gathering are sent by email. If you would like to be added to the list, please email [info@smyrnapres.org](mailto:info@smyrnapres.org). We'd love to have you join!

# CHURCH NEWS

## Lord's Day Service

Smyrna Pres continues to offer in person and virtual worship on the Lord's day at 11:00a.m. Please remember there are measures in place to limit person-to-person contact. You can find more in-depth information on our web-site. If you plan to worship by watching the live-stream or through the Listen Line (712-432-3410, church code 04410). You can also find the service on YouTube, Facebook, Twitter, and Sermon Audio. Links to all of them can be found on our website's Live-stream Page <https://www.smyrnapres.org/live-stream>.

## Sunday School

We will have a kick off breakfast Sunday, January 3rd at 9:30 am in the Fellowship Hall.

## Oasis Ministry

Share your joy in Christ with our church family during the month of December by becoming an Operation Christmas Cheer Volunteer. By praying for one another & sending cards of encouragement, you can help make someone's heart merrier during this season. For more information e-mail the Oasis Ministry at [oasis@smyrnapres.org](mailto:oasis@smyrnapres.org).

# January 2021

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
				31	1 HAPPY NEW YEAR	2
3 11:00 a.m. In Person & Livestream Worship Service	4	5	6 King's Kids & Youth 5:45 pm- 7:30 pm  Devotion & Prayer 6:45 pm- 7:30 pm	7	8	9
10 11:00 a.m. In Person & Livestream Worship Service	11	12	13  Devotion & Prayer 6:45 pm- 7:30 pm	14	15	16
17 11:00 a.m. In Person & Livestream Worship Service	18 Martin Luther King Day	19	20  Devotion & Prayer 6:45 pm- 7:30 pm	21	22	23
24 11:00 a.m. In Person & Livestream Worship Service	25	26	27  Devotion & Prayer 6:45pm- 7:30pm	28	29	30
31 11:00 a.m. In Person & Livestream Worship Service						

**NOTE: Many events & activities outside of the 11 a.m. worship will be canceled/postponed until further notice. Some may be offered virtually.**

# JANUARY BIRTHDAYS

- 5 Ann Marie Kelly
- 5 Hill Johnston
- 6 Ann Burnette
- 10 Wayne Hughes
- 12 Nathan Hughes
- 16 Pat Jackson
- 17 Bill Pruett
- 17 Molly Jackson
- 18 Lee Bradford
- 21 Lindsay Kate Hines
- 22 Rob Funk
- 23 Jackson Grantham
- 24 Stuart Ogburn
- 29 Andy Fogarty
- 30 Elijah Fogarty

# Monthly Scripture



“I will praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.”

Psalm 139:14



# Winter Word Search

Find and circle the list of words in the word puzzle below.

Bitter  
Boots  
Coat  
Cocoa  
Cold  
December

Earmuffs  
Fire  
Frozen  
Gloves  
Igloo  
Mitten

Scarf  
Shiver  
Skate  
Sleet  
Snowman  
Sweater

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

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**RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED**