

# St John Church of Christ

January 17, 2021

Worship  
Service

Premiers  
Sunday at 11:00



## Meeting Online

Our online Adult Bible Study continues this morning at 10:30. It's based on John McKeel's recent book, *Peter the Friend of Jesus Speaks*. Our programs are available over the internet starting Sundays at 10:30 for Adult Class and 11:00 for Worship. Just visit

[www.StJohnChurchOfChrist.org](http://www.StJohnChurchOfChrist.org)

and select "Sermons" from the menubar at the top, or click this link to visit our page on YouTube:

[St. John Church of Christ](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC...)



## Blessings

John McKeel

"Ahhh chooo!" he sneezed and someone piped up, "Bless you!"

That's an old custom left over from when people believed sneezes were caused by demons and we needed God's help to overcome the sniffles. Perhaps times have changed. We no longer believe colds are caused by demons, but we also rarely think about blessings either.

The Apostle Paul began his letter to the Ephesians by declaring, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places," (Ephesians 1:3, ESV), but what does that mean? The New Century Bible changes the wording a little bit to have Paul say, "Praise be to the God." (So does the Contemporary English Version and other modern translations.) This recognizes that there are two Greek words in the New Testament translated "bless."

We know the first one from Jesus' Beatitudes (Matthew 5:2 ff.), where each phrase begins, "Blessed are ..." That word, makarios, has the sense "congratulations," "fortunate," or "happy." In other words, if you practice this quality, you will be happy.



The second word translated "blessed" is eulogetos. It is an adjective, a description, which portrays something as "worthy of praise." This is the interesting part: this word is only used of God the Father or Jesus. They are so fantastic that only They are truly praiseworthy. Everything and everyone else pales in comparison.

Now let's take our new-found knowledge and use it to help us understand what Paul was telling the Ephesians: God is blessed - He is worthy of praise! (Spend some time thinking about why God is worthy of praise.) God is blessed! But that isn't all Paul tells us. Out of His bounty of blessings, God gives some of that quality to us. His blessings rub off on us through our relationship with Jesus. To the extent, Jesus is Lord of our lives, we receive the blessings of God!

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Still there is more. We might think about earthly blessings: a new car, a shiny new gadget - my wish list goes on and on - but the problem with earthly blessings is: new cars become old, gadgets need to be replaced, and none of the possessions I might desire will ever really satisfy me. That's why the blessings that come from God are "spiritual blessings." They make me a better person. God's blessings just get better and better with time. But that's not all. These blessings aren't earthbound. They are "in the heavenly places." That means unlike anything else in my life, the blessings of God will travel with me into eternity! Now that's something worth getting excited about.



## By the Time You Are Real

In the children's story, The Velveteen Rabbit, the rabbit explains, "Generally, by the time you are Real, most of your hair has been loved off, and your eyes drop out and you get loose in the joints and very shabby. But these things don't matter at all, because once you are Real you can't be ugly, except to people who don't understand."



VBS in Reddy Palem, India

## Report from India

John has been teaching yearly at SIBI - the Sunset International Bible Institute in Sijngapore. There young men and women from all over Asia have been coming to train for two years for ministry in their home countries. Students have come from China, Malaysia, Vietnam, the Philip-pines, India and elsewhere.

We have had occasion to help one of John's students, Kiran Babu, in South India with food and Bibles. During the pandemic, John has even preached for the little congregation there using Zoom!

Kiran sends us a monthly newsletter. The December report had two special items to share. The first was a very successful Vacation Bible School, and the second was news of Kiran's marriage to Sowjanya. See the pictures below and pray for the Reddy Palem Church of Christ in South India.

If things improve, John is scheduled to return to Singapore to teach in October.



Kiran Babu

## News & Prayer Requests

Shelly and Richard are recovering from Covid-19. We have seen a sudden rise in the number of cases in our county following all the gatherings over the holidays.

Teddy reports, there is a good chance he will be able to go home this weekend after recovering from his triple-bypass. Please continue to pray for Teddy and Carol!

George & Shirley's son-in-law, Rick McGaugh, is recovering from his bypass surgery in Fayetteville, Arkansas.

Please continue to pray for John's friend Paul and his wife Bernice, as Paul battles cancer in Washington state.

The great granddaughter of Irene and Harold Hornbaker, baby Emerson Milton, is fighting cancer. She is receiving treatment in both Kansas City and Wichita depending whether it is radiation or chemo. She needs our prayers! Emerson is the daughter of Billy and Brianna Milton of Hudson.

Let's give thanks for the many blessings God continually gives us - even in these hard times! We've had many cases of covid in our community, but people are recovering and, finally, a vaccine is on the way.

Don't forget to pray for our new leaders this week as our country transitions into a new administration.