



## Wednesday Prayer

2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Christmas – In the beginning

***In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it. John 1:1-5***

We hope for a new beginning. God has come down to earth in the baby Jesus and we celebrate the coming of a new year. Love was shared in new ways this year, mostly out of necessity rather than our own choosing. And the light shone through.

In one virtual presentation I gave, a grandparent shared “Zoom has been our lifeline. We gather with our grandchildren to help with their spelling and reading assignments so mom and dad can work.” In a virtual Bible study before Thanksgiving, we discussed how important “house churches” have been throughout history. The Word is with us wherever we are.

This summer, churches came together for neighbors they had never met but whose trauma was broken wide open with the killing of George Floyd. Food & basic living needs were provided, shelters expanded services, mental health resources were provided, buildings were repaired, comforting words were spoken. Neighbors came together to be the Word.

Throughout 2020, preventing sexual exploitation and trafficking has continued with virtual trainings and events, bringing people together from across the country in new ways. We are learning how critical it is to address systemic oppression and how it's inextricably linked to sexual violence. Futures without Violence has a 3-part video series “[Voices from our Movement: Ending Racism and Oppression as the Heart of Our Anti-Violence Movement.](#)” In video 1, Amita Swadhin shares, “If we want to end sexual violence in the United States, we have to grapple with the history of racism and colonization and slavery in this country. It's actually part of the work together. ...and that burden is also on our white allies, to help us undo this very violent system we are living in and which people of color are suffering the most.”

This is the beginning for some – the beginning of learning how the systems we have lived comfortably within have hurt others. My prayer for 2021 is that our work together and our work in homes and churches across the country will be strengthened by our resolve to work against racism and all forms of oppression. “*What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people.*”

**God, giver of life and light, shine in our hearts as we begin again. May your Word lead us in our work to protect children and give us strength. Amen.**

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Written by Joy McElroy, Cherish All Children Executive Director, and community advocate for racial justice.