

THE ANNOUNCEMENT & SETTING EXPECTATIONS:

This Sunday the church heard an announcement about a matter of great importance. While we do not intend to make this CG a stand-in for a group grief processing session, we did want to acknowledge the weight of these things on us and that we are likely in a variety of places in terms of our individual responses. Again, please be encouraged that whatever you feel, the Lord knows your heart and the Holy Spirit intercedes for you. And we, the elders of the church (and the other counseling or support services we desire to make available), are here to process and pray with you.

We do not expect you to process this or feel any particular way by a certain point in time. Please, be gentle with one another and yourselves. As things may come up in conversation this evening and in other group settings, please consider the following guides to help us care for each other well:

- Share as you feel comfortable.
- Really try to understand others. Don't just evaluate them or what they are saying.
- Be willing to be challenged by someone's perspective or to ask forgiveness if you offend them. Be quick to offer one another grace.
- Please refrain from making unhelpful generalizations about this topic (I.e., People who think _____ about this are stupid.) or from trying to speculate on what may or may not be true (Note: if you have information you think is important for the investigation, please bring that to Pastor Travis (specialcase@ctkcambridge.org) or Dana Russell (report@ctkcambridge.org), the Cambridge Police (Detective Matthew Grassi: mgrassi@cambridgepolice.org), and our future third party investigators).
- Remember that Christ is our hope in all this. Don't exclude him from the conversation in the way you treat others.

Our discussion tonight will still center on the sermon and the text, but in a way that directs our hearts to process some of what we've heard in connection with God and this passage. If sharing makes you uncomfortable, please feel free to refrain.

DISCUSSION:

Discuss the question cluster below

(As much or as little as works for your group and in any order you like)

Feel free to break off into smaller groups if it helps you share more personally

We're continuing in our sermon series called, "All Things New." In it we're focusing on Scripture's very last chapters (Revelation Ch. 21-22), which show us the culmination of the whole biblical story. What we see there is a vision of a new reality. In particular, it's a picture of the new heavens, the new earth, a new city and the new dwelling of God with his people. It's a picture meant to get us dreaming about a future with all things made new, including

ourselves. The hope is that this vision of the future will start to shape our present in new ways, changing us and our world.

Note, for more comfortable sharing, it may be best to break into smaller groups to discuss

I. This week, our passage (Revelation 21:15-27) continued giving us a vision of God's new city, with its massive, scale, beautiful structure and unique nature. Through that we learned how God has so much more in store for us than we let ourselves expect and that he loves to move toward us, by removing anything (especially sin) that would get in the way of us being with him. Let's discuss how these things impact our lives, particularly in light of the announcement that was shared on Sunday.

A. What feels most powerful, imposing or even threatening about this situation right now?

1. *In what ways might God be inviting you to see his future for you and his power as incomparably stronger, greater and more certain?*
2. *How might he invite you to life up your head, for a minute, and see him and what he has in store for you in the midst of this?*

B. The passage also showed us how in God and the Lamb being the temple (v.22), there is no more space between us and God in this new place. How might it help you right now to know that God's deep desire and ultimate plan is to be close to you?

PRAYER

Please close your time together by praying for one another, ideally in groups of 2-3. This section offers a couple short guided prayers for you to use if you need help filling the prayer time we set aside.

PRAYER:

- **Thank:** Thank God that he is greater and has so much more for us than we can ask or imagine.
- **Confess:** Confess the ways we underestimate God and assume he doesn't have much for us or can't do much in this situation.
- **Ask:** Ask God to sustain all those involved, our church and ourselves in this time. Ask for God's grace and closeness in this time.