

Christian Heritage Class

Our 34th Year Learning about Our Lord Jesus Christ and His Church through an in-depth study of Church history, theology, art, music—and pilgrimage travel

Topics for April through May 12, 2024

17. April 14. The Pilgrimage to the Holy Land. Ten years ago, in a more tranquil time, during the season of Pentecost, members of the Presbyterian Church in Haddonfield, had the chance to visit the Holy Land with our pastor Bill and our friend and guide, Hela. In this illustrated presentation, we will travel again through the Galilee to Nazareth and Cana, up to Caesarea Philippi, back to the Sea of Galilee, then down the Jordan River to the Dead Sea. Members who traveled with us are particularly invited to come and reminisce and share!

18. April 21. No class.

19. April 28. The Holy City and the Dream of Zion: The Earthly Jerusalem and its Heavenly Counterpart *“The Mountain of the House of the LORD shall be established as the highest of the mountains, and shall be raised above the hills.” Isaiah 2:2* The greatest world significance of Jerusalem “consists in the conviction that the fulfillment of history depends on the fateful transformation of the earthly Jerusalem into a screen onto which over-powering millennial fantasies can be projected. The *end of history* is conceived variously by the monotheistic religions: For Jews it is the *arrival* of the Messiah (at the Golden Gate). For Christians it is the *return* of the Messiah—and the subsequent battle of Armageddon when angelic forces vanquish those of Satan. Jerusalem as it sits on its hill takes on a transcendent place in the imagination as the “earthly reflection of heaven”—but it is a “heaven” that casts a notable shadow on the earth.

20. May 5. Communion Sunday. Eschatological Expectations: The Church and the Last

Judgment When asked by a student what he would do were he to learn the world was going to end the next day, the great Reformer and Bible scholar Martin Luther is said to have replied with a smile: “Even if I knew that tomorrow the world would go to pieces, I would still plant my apple tree.” The early Christians, finding Christ’s Second Coming delayed as the first century A.D. transitioned to the 2nd, understood that Christ’s “imminent” return did not necessarily imply its “immediacy.” Throughout the centuries people have tried to predict the actual day of the Second Advent, from various motives. Often the results are good: more Christians pay attention and go to church. Passages in the New Testament steer attention to the dawn of a new era—fulfilled with Jesus’ Second Coming (and the Judgment). These are some key passages in Jesus’ teaching.

21. May 12. “How Great Thou Art”: The Theology of Salvation (soteriology)-“No one doctrine tells the *whole* story.” As with our attempts to describe God (“the Absolute Unity Being” to the scientists) any description of God’s gracious act of Salvation in Jesus Christ requires symbolism and metaphor as well as a diligent search of Scripture. Each of the man-made theologies is an attempt to describe something so wonderful and effable that we are reduced on the whole to symbolism and metaphor. **Each theology is/was appropriate in its time and place.** None of them alone is sufficient. Through the centuries, using Scripture of Old and New Testaments, and from the writings of the Apostles and Church Fathers **several types of “soteriological” explanations have been bruited to help understand the atonement—that is, the theology related to the meaning and effect of the death and resurrection of Christ:**

