

A LETTER FROM DR. SEAN LUCAS

January 4, 2018

My dear Friends:

Welcome to 2018! I wish this new year wasn't so stinking cold, but so far it has been a great year! And I'm looking forward to what God has for us in the coming year. But before we talk about this year, I just want to thank you for this past one. You have made my first year at IPC extraordinary: the congregation's engagement with God's Word, the session's leadership and support, our staff's partnership in the Gospel, all have been tremendous. And our giving in December, so vital for our ministry year, was significant. Thank you for making this past year such a good one.

I can't wait to see how God is going to work, though, in this coming year. I'm extremely excited about our series in Mark's Gospel on Sunday mornings this year. As I've been reading and re-reading Mark, along with other biblical and theological sources, I have personally re-engaged with our Savior in real and meaningful ways. Indeed, my main prayer for 2018 is that God will continue to draw me into a real, vital, personal relationship with Jesus. And I'm hopeful that Mark's Gospel will be the means of that grace for me and for you too.

And then, on Sunday evenings, I'm looking forward to restarting Sunday Evening Praise on January 14. After much prayer and thought, I've decided to do a series called "Every Square Inch: Christ's Lordship Over All Things." Central to our Reformed faith is the idea that God is sovereign over all things. But that's not simply true in terms of his providence; it is also true in terms of our discipleship. Christ came proclaiming that the Kingdom of God is here in his person. So, what does it mean for us that Christ is our King, that he has all authority in heaven *and on earth*? What does it mean for Christ to be Lord over our hearts, but also over our pocketbooks? Over our friendships, but also over our work? Over our amusements, but also over art? That's what we'll explore on Sunday evenings.

Too, on Wednesday nights in January, we'll be looking together at how the Gospel relates to racial and ethnic division. What we will find is that God's mission for his world is to form one new humanity in Jesus Christ—and that divine mission is throughout Scripture, from Genesis to Revelation. If that's God's mission, then that must be ours. It is not enough to be new people for a new Memphis abstractly considered. Rather, we must live and love locally, witnessing to the Gospel's power to shape us as a people that reflect the racial and ethnic diversity of our neighborhood.

And this doesn't even get to our Missions Conference in February or our Evangelism Conference on Wednesday nights in August, to the 50th anniversary of Camp Palmer this year, or to hopes and plans for future ministry throughout our city. Will you join with me in praying that God will not leave us unchanged this year? Will you join me in praying for us to become new people for a new Memphis?

In the grip of God's grace,



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