

# Twelve Gates of Grace

Presented by Pastor Scott Walters on 11/17/19

At Crossroads United Methodist Church

Waunakee, WI

Revelation is one of the difficult, even weird books of the Bible.

We don't read from it often; many of us actually avoid it.

Yet, it has a larger than normal impact on Western culture:

Dante, William Blake, T.S. Eliot, Ray Bradbury, John Updike  
to mention a few literary figures. Handel's Messiah and Julia  
Ward Howe's "Battle Hymn of the Republic" are all  
influenced by the Book of Revelation.

My suspicion is that there are two main reasons why we avoid  
Revelation

- 1] Its weird symbolism of 7 seals and twelve bowls and four  
horsemen, etc.; seems to invite us to a world of interpretation  
involving charts and graphs that is confusing.
- 2] The subject is scary and along with that, our world NOW is scary.  
"Love Does" growth group: participants were asked to share  
"which of the world's problems make you feel the most  
overwhelmed?"

Yet, I maintain that the Book of Revelation wasn't written to foretell  
the end of time but to unveil the truth about the challenges the  
churches faced and about God's presence with them through it  
all.

Friends, I believe that the goal of Revelation is to invite churches to  
move out of Babylon and into the beauty of the City of God.

And the beauty of God's city is not just about pie in the sky when we  
die.

It's also about those hints of the pie we experience right now; a life  
that basks in God's presence now.

Barbara Rossing has said that the "New Jerusalem is a welcoming city,  
not a gated community."

The O.T. prophet Ezekiel's Temple gate was shut so that "no one shall  
enter by it," but the vision of the twelve gates into New  
Jerusalem are perpetually open.

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A teacher of mine said that all too often there are those who invite others to the faith by saying, "Welcome, but you have to come in through my gate – understanding the faith the way I teach it and the way I live it;

Whereas God's vision is that of the ideal city is a city with twelve gates, which is God's symbolic way of saying, "We may all have the same goal, but there is more than one way of getting there."

John's vision of the New Jerusalem is just that: a vision of what "thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth" might look like. In reality no cause; no philosophy; no institution including the church, be it the worldwide church, the UMC, or Crossroads has reached the vision portrayed in the Book of Revelation.

But, there are those occasional "hints" of those 12 Gates of the New Jerusalem

See "2019 Crossroads Ministry Review"

Sunday Volunteers or Sunday Servers

We have a wonderful group of staff and ministers who help, with me, to direct the ministries of Crossroads UMC.

Tressie, Bill, Carly, Chris, Irene

Accountable Leadership Board; 5 new Board members who joined this past year.

The 12 gates of Jerusalem is a way of saying that God has a way of saying that everyone is invited to be a part of his kingdom.

Right now, as many of you know, the United Methodist Church in the U.S. is trying to find ways of fully including the LBGT community in the life of our congregation.

It is my policy to do that at Crossroads Church; as much as anything else, I want all of us to be on this journey – wherever it takes us – together.

It is my intention and that of the Leadership Board to provide gatherings to have conversations about fully including LBGQ persons in the life of this congregation.

I want us to be in conversation about this. Right now there is so much

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up in the air about our future that it is hard to say much except  
my approach the commitment of the Leadership Board.

My Vision for the coming year is based on the 12 Gates of Jerusalem.

This year I would like Crossroads to continue to be a gathering of  
people who are willing to serve others.

Not for the purpose of getting new members; for the sake of helping  
God's people as we find them.

Last Friday: Thanks to Jason Rahn in leading our group. As a result of their Growth group they are  
looking at ways they can make a difference in other peoples' lives. They are going to meet to talk about  
this: Frank Allis School; Waunakee Neighborhood Connection; WEB;

Talked about more systemic issues that maybe the church can address to make lives better.

How can you help? Be open to grow in your faith. Serve others, not  
so those whom we serve will join – they may or they may not –  
but serve as a witness to what this faith is all about.

New Leadership Board members: we have three openings and Gabe  
Murray will be graduating.

Friends, God wants to find a way to include each of us at the heavenly  
banquet.