



First Presbyterian Church, Union MO

Message from Pastor Bill Vincent

Volume 71; Jan. 2023

Advent: it means coming. We look forward to it every year with excitement and eager anticipation as we prepare for the celebration of Christ's coming at Christmas.

Yet, not everything that is "coming" is something we look forward to...in a good way. Sometimes, what's "coming" can breed fear, heighten anxiety, tie us up in knots.

A new year is "coming." Does that evoke excitement...or dredge up dread?

Sometimes, as with trying to diagnose a disease or illness, the greatest fear is not knowing: I don't know what's coming, I don't know what I'm facing...and I don't know what to do.

I share with you two insights that have dawned on me that can be helpful as we face what we don't know is coming.

1. In Acts 8:26-40 we read a story of Philip being directed by God, first to go to a particular road, then to go up to a particular person. Each time, Philip doesn't have a clue what will come next. He simply obeys God's instructions, one step at a time.

I may not be able to see as far down the road as I would like, but God can. And I need to trust that God will guide me – and I need to be open to how God will guide me – in the way God would have me go...even if God only reveals to me one step at a time.

2. That trust is what is voiced by Teresa of Avila when she writes,

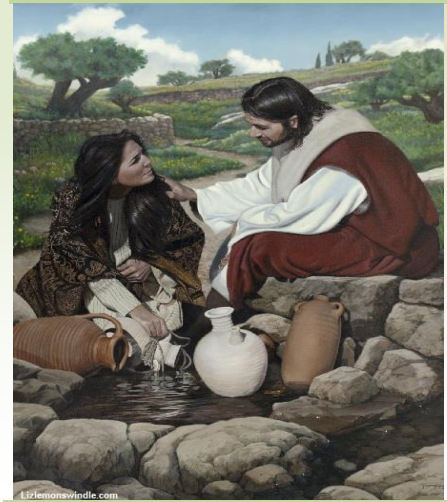
Nothing can trouble
Nothing can frighten
All things pass
God never changes

We may not know what's "coming." But God is with us...always – and that never changes. And God is good...always. "Therefore," as the psalmist says it,
*...we will not fear, though the earth should change,
though the mountains shake in the heart of the sea;*

...
*God is our refuge and strength,
a very present help in trouble.* (Psalm 46)

Therefore, we need not fear, but we will forge forward in faith...come what may, in the new year, and beyond.

*Peace in Christ,
Bill Vincent*



Thank you!

Thank you to our church family for our Christmas gift! Thank you for your thoughtfulness and your generosity. We'll use the gift for something special and think of you when we do!

Blessings to you all!
Pastor Bill

Congregational Meeting:

The Session has called the Annual Congregational Meeting for January 29th, immediately following worship, to receive the 2022 Annual Report.

(Note: If weather interferes with our plans, February 5th will serve as our back-up date.)

Martin Luther King, Jr. Celebration

Sunday, January 22, at 3 p.m.

East Central Community College Theater

Hosted by Neighbors United – Undoing Racism

Glenda Volmert, Executive Director of CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocates)

will be given the Human Rights Award

Happy *New Year*
2023

Worshiping and serving God, loving, and accepting all



A reminder:

Prayer concerns can be shared with me via email or phone before worship (preferably by Saturday evening); or you can write them down (legibly, please) on a piece of paper and place them in the basket that will be located near the entrance to the sanctuary.

Pastor Bill

Sunday Worship service will be Streaming live on Facebook on Sunday at 9:00 am. The bulletin will also be available on Facebook and the church website (www.unionfirstpresby.org), posted by 8 am Sunday morning.

Link to Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/firstPresbyterianChurchUnion/>

Bulletin can be found here: <http://www.unionfirstpresby.org/church-bulletins/>

WORSHIP NOTES:

JANUARY 1 - 1st Sunday after Christmas (New Years' Day)

NO IN-PERSON WORSHIP!

We suggest you check out the following online opportunities:

John Knox Presbyterian Church, Florissant MO

9:30 a.m. worship

<https://www.facebook.com/JohnKnoxPresbyterianChurchFlorissantMO/>

St. Mark Presbyterian Church

10:00 a.m. worship

<https://www.discoverstmark.org/>

Southminster Presbyterian Church

10:00 a.m. worship

<https://www.southminsterstlouis.org/>

Steelville Presbyterian Church

10:30 a.m. worship

<http://steelvillepresbyterian.org/>

JANUARY 8 - Baptism of the Lord

First in a series on the Sermon on the Mount: Matthew 5:1-12

Communion

JANUARY 15 - 2nd Sunday in Ordinary Time

Second - Sermon on the Mount series: Matthew 5:13-20

(Martin Luther King Jr. holiday)

JANUARY 22 - 3rd Sunday in Ordinary Time

Third - Sermon on the Mount series: Matthew 5:21-48

JANUARY 29 - 4th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Fourth - Sermon on the Mount series: Matthew 6:1-6,16-21

FEBRUARY 5 - 5th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Fifth - Sermon on the Mount series: Matthew 6:19-34

Communion

FEBRUARY 12 - 6th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Sixth and final in Sermon on the Mount series: Matthew 7:12-29