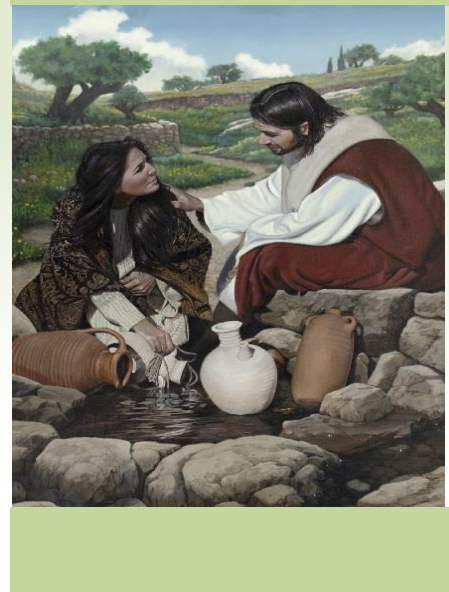




Message from Pastor Bill Vincent

“March comes in like a lion and goes out like a lamb.” How often have we heard that description of this month – although I must admit I don’t remember it always being very accurate.

This month of March we celebrate Holy Week: the week in our church calendar that marks the final days of Jesus’ earthly ministry. We celebrate his triumphal entry into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday. We mark his last meal with his disciples in the upper room on Maundy Thursday. We remember his cruel and undeserved death on a cross on Good Friday. ... And we rejoice in his victory over death on Easter!



As I reflected on our celebration of Holy Week and the common ascription for the month of March, I was struck by a certain parallel between the two.

“In like a lion...” Jesus’ entry into Jerusalem must have been like that. The cry of the crowd must have been deafening – at least to those in the midst of it – like the mighty roar of a lion. The symbolism of his riding a colt and the cries of the crowd proclaimed his regal splendor. And the lion has traditionally been considered a very regal animal. “King of the beasts,” we say. And as we follow the story, Jesus certainly demonstrated a lot of power by flexing his muscles, both physical and mental: he turned over the tables of the money changers and parried every thrust of the authorities’ attempts to ensnare him with questions and arguments. “*And after that no one dared to ask him any question,*” the scriptures say.

“In like a lion,” it seems.

But then things changed. Jesus shared that fateful meal with his disciples and spoke of betrayal and cowardice on the part of his closest followers. The authorities caught up with him in the Garden of Gethsemane and had him arrested. His disciples fled. He was summarily tried and quickly convicted and sentenced to die a painful death. He kept silent through most of it, said very little. “*Like a sheep that before its shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth.*” (Isaiah 53:7)

“Out like a lamb”?

At the beginning of his ministry, the Gospel of John records John the Baptist pointing to Jesus and saying, “*Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!*” “Out like a lamb.” The Lamb of God. Sacrificed on our behalf. Died in our place. The Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world. The Lamb of God, who, in dying, offers us life.

“Out like a lamb.”

But, of course, the story does not end there. Three days later, the tomb in which he was laid is found empty, and there are strange reports of people who have seen him. He is risen! He is alive! And, in him, we too are alive!

“In like a lion and out like a lamb.” ... And then a return...much like a lion, but with a difference. Regal: a king and a ruler. “Crown him with many crowns.” But also kind, gentle, and tender – like a lamb. The lion-like Lord. The lamb-like comforter.

This March, let us worship he who came in like a lion and went out like a lamb ... and then returned, and lives even now in our midst, like both. He is risen! He is alive! Alleluia!

*Peace in Him,
Bill Vincent*

SAVE THE DATE:

Our joint Maundy Thursday service will be Thursday, March 28th at 7:00 p.m. at the Pacific Presbyterian Church (410 W St Louis St, Pacific). Communion will be served.

Easter Lilies:

The Easter season is approaching, and we are in need of Easter Lilies to be placed in the Sanctuary for the Easter Service. If you would like to purchase an Easter Lily in honor of or in memory of someone there will be a form available for this purchase on the table in the Northax. The deadline for ordering the Lilies is Sunday, March 17, 2024. The cost of the Lilies will be \$13.00 this year.

You may take the Lilies home following the Easter Service on March 31, 2024.

Presbyterian Women:

The March meeting of Presbyterian Women will be held on Friday, March 22, 2024, at 9:00 A.M. The Hostess is Deanna Vincent and Co-Hostess is Susan Buchanan. We will meet at the home of Deanna Vincent in Washington. The address is 1101 West 5th Street, Washington, MO.

The Bible Study is Lesson 4 and will be led by Karen Calvin.



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/>