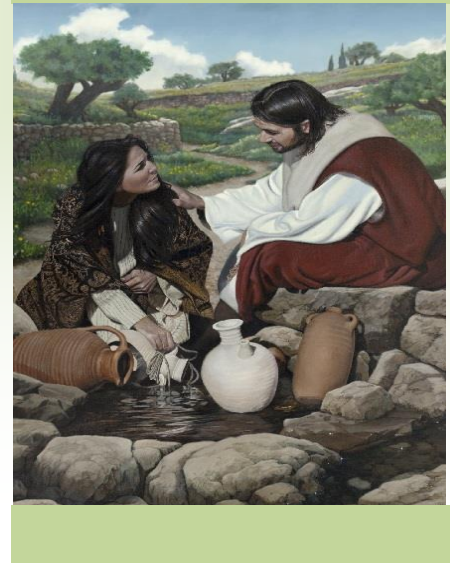




Message from Pastor Bill Vincent

A solar eclipse – like the one to occur on April 8th – is a wondrous celestial event. Many people are excited about its occurrence and plan to travel to see it.

Such was not always the case. For many, in centuries past, a solar eclipse was an occasion of great surprise and terrible fear. A solar eclipse could throw people into a panic, believing some evil, sinister force was devouring the sun, stealing the people's light.



Nowadays we understand the causes and dynamics of a solar eclipse. The light is not being stolen, the sun is not being devoured. It is being blocked for a while, so that we do not see it directly. But solar experts will point out that it is precisely during a solar eclipse when you can observe things about the sun that you couldn't see before (or at least, couldn't see nearly as well).

Like the corona, the “sun's volatile, superhot atmosphere” (NASA article). You can see the corona during a solar eclipse: its wispy majesty, its volatile beauty. And in seeing, understand something more about the sun and its work and its light.

I wonder.

We have our every-day ways in which we see and understand God's light in the Son: by reading the Bible, by worshiping together, through prayer, in a particular relationship. Ways in which we discern the light of guidance and presence, assurance and life, and see it all clearly, ‘directly’.

But are there times when something in our lives blocks the light from our familiar sources? When, try as we might, the scripture passage we are reading just doesn't speak to us? When a relationship that was always so dependable seems to waste away, and the light we typically discerned in that person seems to be blocked? When our prayers seem rote and the silence sounds empty and the light we typically associate with prayer ceases to shine? And somehow, the ways we have always experienced the Son's light become blocked.

In those times, are there ways by which we can see the light in a different way? Maybe not as directly as we are used to seeing, but still seeing the light of the Son?

Is there a ‘corona’ of God's light that we may be missing...if we are not alert to that possibility? Like the possibility that the light of God's love and grace may be shining, not in the absence of hardship, but actually in the midst of hardship? Like the possibility that the word of God's light and life may be spoken by the person we dismissed years ago?

The light is there...always. The Son is there...always. We can rely on that faith. But note: it is a faith, not that the light will always shine in a particular way, but a faith that the light will always shine, come what may.

And who knows? Through that ‘eclipse’ we experience, we may even learn and come to understand something more about the God we worship, the Son we follow, the divine light that shines...always.

We just may need to be open and alert to seeing the corona.

*Peace in Christ,
Bill Vincent*

SAVE THE DATE:

The **Celebration of Life Service** for Jack Vancil will be held on Saturday, April 6, 2024 from 12:00-3:00 P.M. at the Hickory Ridge Lodge located in the Meramec State Park south of Sullivan on Highway 185 South. A Luncheon will be held at Noon. Donations of Relish plates, Potato Salad, Potato Chips or other Salads would be appreciated.

Jack is the late Husband of Barbara Vancil and the Son-In-Law of Bonnie Woodruff.

All are welcome to attend.

Presbyterian Women:

The Presbyterian Women will meet on Friday, April 26, 2024 at 9:00 A.M. at the home of Karen Calvin serving as Hostess and Dorothy Clarkson as Co-Hostess. The Bible Study will be Lesson 5 led by Carol Gruber. Karen's address is 1304 Running Creek Ct. in Washington, MO.



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/>