



Heart Beat Newsletter

Zion United Methodist Church
Loving God, Loving People, Serving the World



April, 2023

Pastor Carol's Comments

You may remember a time when the entire focus of Palm Sunday was Jesus' entry into Jerusalem. In some churches, the congregation would gather outside and process into the sanctuary. In the church I grew up in (and in most churches I've been part of since), the children entered with palm fronds in hand. (The idea of my three brothers armed with palm branches always made my mother nervous!)

But, you may have noticed that we now refer to the Sunday before Easter as "Palm/Passion Sunday." While the service still begins with a remembrance of what we call "The Triumphant Entry," the service proceeds towards a focus on Jesus' Passion. This change wasn't an arbitrary one. It also wasn't designed to make sure that people who couldn't (or wouldn't) attend Holy Week services would get a "dose" of the Passion story before celebrating Easter (although that is a plus). Instead, it is intended to make the last Sunday in Lent conform more closely to its original purpose.

In the early church, Lent was primarily a time when people were prepared for baptism, with even more intense preparation during Holy Week. The Church also deepened its practices of prayer, fasting, and ministry to those in need during the 40 days of Lent as an example and show of support for those preparing to be baptized. After Christianity became the legal religion of the Roman Empire in 380 AD, it quickly became the religion of nearly everyone in the Empire. Few people came to the faith as converts. Lent became less a time of preparation for baptism and more about practices that help strengthen the spiritual lives of lifelong Christians.

In our present day, conversion to the Christian faith has once again become more common. In response, in the early 1960s, the Catholic Church changed Palm Sunday to Passion/Palm Sunday in order to more closely align worship with the mission of making disciples of Jesus Christ. Other denominations followed suit, including the UMC in 1992.

So, while we continue to begin the last Sunday in Lent with palms, we also allow it to lead us into the holiest week of the Christian year. May you be blessed as we complete once again our journey to the darkness of the cross and then into the light of the resurrection.

News Around Zion

Holy Week Services

Our last "Hard Words" Bible Study session will be Tues., 4/4, at 2:30, when we focus on the word "crucify." This word is so much a part of our Christian vocabulary that we may not take time to consider what it truly means. In preparation for Bible Study, Pastor Carol handed out a (graphic) description of what crucifixion does to the human body. Email her if you would like a copy to use as part of your own preparation for Good Friday.

We will observe Holy (Maundy) Thursday on 4/6 at 7:00 with Communion (which is open to all) and the Stripping of the Chancel. We'll hold our Good Friday "Service of Shadows" on 4/7 at 7:00 p.m., telling the Passion story in music, Scripture, and a symbolic darkening of the sanctuary. Then, after the turbulence of Maundy Thursday, the violence of Good Friday, and the sorrow of Saturday, we arrive at Easter on Sunday, 4/9! All are invited to join Zion for this joyful celebration of Christ's resurrection!

Lenten Symbols in the Sanctuary

During Lent, as the events in Scripture have led us towards Jesus' death and resurrection, we've had a growing display of items symbolizing the encounters Jesus had on his way to Jerusalem. Here's what each item represents.



Stones (Matthew 4:1-11): After fasting for 40 days, Satan suggested that Jesus turn stones into bread.

Water Fountain (John 3:1-17): Jesus told Nicodemus that no one could enter the kingdom of God without being born by both water and the Spirit.

Pail: (John 4:3-30): Jesus met a Samaritan woman at a well and offered her living water.

Woven Mat (John 5:1-21): The man whom Jesus healed at the pool of Bethesda took up his mat and walked.

White cloth (John 11:1-45): Lazarus, whom Jesus raised from the dead, was wrapped in burial cloths.

Palms to come on Palm/Passion Sun. (John 12:1-2, 12-19): Palms symbolized a king's military victories and the Jewish people's nationalistic hopes for independence.



Thank you from St. Paul's Community Center

St. Paul's Community Center sent a note of thanks for our generous donation of clothes from our Christmas "Mitten Tree" (which included socks and underclothes in addition to gloves, hats, mittens, and blankets).

They noted that our support helps them serve the community by providing shelter for 35 individuals per night all year, additional "Winter Crisis" overnight shelter, rehousing and outreach services, lunches, financial management services, and other essential services like laundry, an address where mail can be delivered, food, clothes, showers, and more.

"Directions" Meetings Resume

We will resume our "Directions" meetings after worship on Sunday, 4/16. Although Zion's pastoral leadership will change this summer, its mission of "loving God, loving people, and serving the world" will not! So, plan to come to the meetings (lasting less than an hour) to discuss current ministries and future opportunities for service and spiritual growth.

Ready to Take a Walk?

Registration is now open for the summer Emmaus Walks. The Men's Walk is 6/11-14 in Bryan; the Women's Walk is 7/13-16 in Maumee. Interested? See Cassie for more info.

Holy Week Quiz

1. What do palm branches symbolize on Palm Sunday?
 - A. A symbol of victory in the Roman Empire
 - B. The Latin word for "return"
 - C. The hearts were considered "kingly food."
 - D. All of the above
2. What was Judas paid to identify Jesus to the Romans?
 - A. 20 pieces of gold
 - B. 20 pieces of silver
 - C. 30 pieces of gold
 - D. 30 pieces of silver
3. Which was not said by Jesus the night before he died?
 - A. All those who use the sword will die by the sword.
 - B. The spirit is eager, but the flesh is weak.
 - C. Physician, heal thyself.
 - D. Friend, do what you came to do.
4. What does a Good Fri. Tenebrae service always include?
 - A. A drama about the last seven words of Jesus
 - B. A reenactment of the Last Supper
 - C. Extinguishing of candles
 - D. The receiving of ashes
5. Why are eggs associated with Easter?
 - A. They symbolize new life.
 - B. The shell surrounds a body inside, like Jesus' tomb.
 - C. They represent Easter joy when dyed pretty colors.
 - D. All of the above

Answers at the bottom of the left column.

the-united-methodist-holy-week-quiz
 https://www.umc.org/en/content/complete-answers-to-
 Learn more about each answer at
 Holy Week Quiz Answers: 1:A 2:D 3:C 4:C 5:D

Church Information

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<http://www.zionumcwhitehouse.org>

Find us on Facebook: whitehousezionumc

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Upcoming Events

- Tues., 4/4 2:30-3:30 p.m., Bible Study
4-6 p.m. Food Pantry
6:30 p.m. Girl Scout Troop #10143
- Thurs., 4/6 7:00 p.m. Holy Thursday service
- Fri., 4/7 7:00 p.m. Good Friday service
- Sun., 4/9 Easter!
- Tues., 4/11 6-7 p.m., Girl Scout Troop #16232
- Sun., 4/16 "Directions" meeting (after worship)
- Tues., 4/18 2:30-3:30 p.m., Bible Study
4-6 p.m. Food Pantry
6:30 p.m. Girl Scout Troop #10143
- Sun., 4/23 "Directions" meeting (after worship)
- Tues., 4/25 6:00 p.m. Girl Scout Troop #16232