



FIRST and ForMOST

April 2011

FROM OUR BACK-UP PASTOR

Rev. Bob Harris

Dear Friends,

Lent is a time when we are more intentional about recognizing the evil in our world and in our own spirits. We pray with Psalm 51 that the Lord would create in us a clean heart and renew us.

Lent traces the final weeks of Jesus' life, culminating in Holy Week's dramatic sweep from Jesus' triumphant entry on Palm Sunday to the darkness of Good Friday. Death appeared to have the last word. In the struggle of good vs. evil, the darkness won again.

As you continue your own Lenten discipline, I encourage you to sense this drama in your own lives. Observe the powers of evil working, tempting you in your greatest power and talent to go the wrong way.

Identify with Jesus as he gathered with his disciples on Thursday, as he was arrested, tried, and then executed. Evil still has immense power! Come to Maundy Thursday and Good Friday services to remember.

But remember: it's Friday, but Sunday's coming! God overcame the worst that could happen!

One of my mantras as a leadership coach is "describe what you observe and start a conversation." One of the most important jobs of any leader is to encourage people to face and understand their situation. Only when leaders are clear about both the good and bad can they take action to make things better.

As you look around, what do you observe? What do you observe in your community, in the broader world, in your family, and in this church? What things are awful? Where is the good?

News headlines focus on what's bad, of course: earthquake in Japan, civil war in the Middle East, bombs in Afghanistan, a shooting in DC, the latest celebrity on drugs.

What good news is there? When I asked the FPCA Session to notice signs of the wind of the Holy Spirit blowing here in this church, they responded with

- The redecorated sanctuary
- An increasingly international church
- Newcomers returning and joining
- A strong staff – the energy Chris and Susi bring
- Vital worship

What do you see? In the midst of the evil you observe, what are signs that God is doing something new, perhaps something new *through* you!

Look around. See God's hand at work. And plan to celebrate resurrection power on Easter! Engage in conversation with fellow members about how you see God working. Bring friends to hear the good news that evil does not have the last word.

I look forward to continuing our Lenten worship and *study*.

Your friend and back-up pastor,

Bob Harris

PHILIPPIANS LENTEN STUDY

During the season of Lent (March 13 through April 17, 2011), we will be studying the Book of Philippians. All age groups are welcome and encouraged to participate. We have six Sundays to study four chapters so please bring in your questions.

Philippians is a letter written by the Apostle Paul to his most beloved congregation. Paul adopts the friendship letter writing style and the letter is very personal. This seems odd because Philippi is a Roman colony and the Philippian church is largely gentile. Paul, of course, is the Jew's Jew (Philippians 3:5-6).

This is not the only irony in Philippians. Philippians is known as a joyful letter. What pastor has not prayed this prayer:

Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 4:4-7 NIV).

Why is this ironic? Paul is a prisoner for Christ. Likely chained to a Roman guard and under sentence of death.

Please join us for our discussions. Come join in the joy!

Dr. Stephen W. Hiemstra

Our Back-Up Pastor, the Rev. Bob Harris, will be out of town from April 15-23. He is attending to some family business in Missouri. Susi Ennis will oversee worship and other concerns during Holy Week.

PREACHING SCHEDULE for APRIL 2011

April 3, 2011: Fourth Sunday of Lent (Communion)

Scripture Lessons: Ephesians 5: 8-14, John 9: 1-41

Sermon Title: **"THE BLIND MAN WHO SAW"**

He had been blind since birth. Was it God's judgment? What would Jesus do?

Rev. Bob Harris, Preaching

April 10, 2011: Fifth Sunday of Lent

Scripture Lessons: Ezekiel 37: 1-14, John 11: 1-45

Sermon Title: **"WHEN WE FEEL HALF DEAD"**

Burnout, lethargy, the feeling that nothing we do makes any difference. Many of us feel that way at times. Ezekiel's vision of a valley of dry bones and the story of Jesus' resuscitation of Lazarus bring good news of power beyond ours.

Rev. Bob Harris, Preaching

April 17, 2011: Palm Sunday

Scripture Lesson: Matthew 21:1-11

Sermon Title: **"JESUS RIDES IN"**

Candidate for Ministry, Susan Ennis, Preaching

April 21, 2011: Maundy Thursday

Scripture Lesson: John 13:31-35

Sermon Title: **"WHAT DOES LOVE LOOK LIKE?"**

Candidate for Ministry, Susan Ennis, Preaching

Holy Communion will be served with the Revs. Tariq Javed and Bill Jokela officiating

April 22, 2011: Good Friday **Worshiping with Music**

The choir will be presenting portions of a Cantata, **"For Such a One as This"** by Mark Hayes. This is a very beautiful, heartfelt and powerful work containing solos, choruses and narrators who will tell the story of Maundy Thursday and Good Friday.

Under the leadership of Music Director Margaret Whitfield

April 24, 2011: Easter Sunday

Scripture Lessons: Acts 10: 34-43, Matthew 28: 1-10

Sermon Title: **"THE DEATH OF FEAR"**

Sometimes our lives are governed by our fear of death. Celebrate how the good news of resurrection takes away fear and gives life!

Rev. Bob Harris, Preaching



Isabelle Fennig ~ 04/05

Ruth Hartman ~ 04/18

Sarah Metzler ~ 04/06

Margaret Whitfield ~ 04/18

Nancy Manning ~ 04/07

Larry Cook ~ 04/20

Stuart Dahlinger ~ 04/13

Ken Hartman ~ 04/20

Jean Prager ~ 04/14

Daniel DeVera ~ 04/21

Bev Schubert ~ 04/16

Sam Looker ~ 04/21

LET'S CELEBRATE "FLOWER SUNDAY"!

by Marta Strada

“**Flower Sunday**” --- what is that? Perhaps you know it better by the name of **Yew Sunday**, or **Branch Sunday**? Well... I tell you the secret: it is **Palm Sunday**, the great day we are celebrating on April 17th this year. It is the Sunday when in many Christian churches palm leaves are distributed to the worshipers. Unfortunately, in many countries it is difficult to procure palm branches, so palms are being substituted by boughs of box, yew, willow and other native tree branches – even flowers. In Hungary this Sunday is called **Virágvasárnap**, translated as **Flower Sunday**.

In Jewish tradition, Palm branches symbolized triumph and victory; we find such reference also in other parts of the Bible, as in Leviticus 23:40 and Revelation 7:9. Palm branches, as well as their substitutes, are still important today.

When we celebrate Palm Sunday, we think of Jesus Christ's triumphant entrance into Jerusalem in the days before his Passion. All four Gospels tell us the story. Let's look at Matthew 21: 1-11:

¹ As they approached Jerusalem and came to Bethphage on the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two disciples, ² saying to them, “Go to the village ahead of you, and at once you will find a donkey tied there, with her colt by her. Untie them and bring them to me. ³ If anyone says anything to you, say that the Lord needs them, and he will send them right away.”

⁴ This took place to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet:

*⁵ “Say to Daughter Zion,
‘See, your king comes to you,*

*gentle and riding on a donkey,
and on a colt, the foal of a donkey.”*

6 The disciples went and did as Jesus had instructed them. 7 They brought the donkey and the colt and placed their cloaks on them for Jesus to sit on. 8 A very large crowd spread their cloaks on the road, while others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. 9 The crowds that went ahead of him and those that followed shouted,

“Hosanna to the Son of David!”

“Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!”

“Hosanna in the highest heaven!”

10 When Jesus entered Jerusalem, the whole city was stirred and asked, “Who is this?”

11 The crowds answered, “This is Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth in Galilee.”

The four Gospels are similar, only Mark and John mention just one donkey, the one Jesus rides on, and from John 12:13 we learn that *They took palm branches and went out to meet him, shouting, “Hosanna” “Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!” ...*

Jesus, the greatest King this earth has ever seen, rode on a donkey? It was an ancient custom to honor important personalities by covering their path with cloaks and palm branches, waving palm leaves. Of course, the celebrities rode on stallions – not on a donkeys! But Jesus did – Jesus, the Messiah in whom people saw their liberator from Roman oppression.

Some scholars argue about the details of this Bible story. Was there only one donkey, or were there two, the mother ass and her foal? Was Jesus sitting on the foal, or on the mother with the foal following them? Is that important? The important fact is that the greatest King of all did not enter Jerusalem on a stallion, but on a donkey -- what a demonstration of our Lord Jesus' humility.

This picture fits the prophecy we read in [Zechariah 9:2-10](#):

*Rejoice greatly, O Daughter of Zion! - Shout, Daughter of Jerusalem!
See, your king comes to you, righteous and having salvation,
gentle and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.
I will take away the chariots from Ephraim and the war-horses from Jerusalem,
and the battle bow will be broken.
He will proclaim peace to the nations. - His rule will extend from sea to sea
and from the River to the ends of the earth.*

Jesus Christ entered Jerusalem not to free the people from the Romans, but to give his life to save all mankind.

But Palm Sunday is not only a day of joy, it is the day that starts Holy Week when we remember Jesus' suffering and death. In the 1960s Pope John XXIII suggested naming it

Passion Sunday, finalized by Pope Paul VI by calling it *Dominica in Palmis de Passione Domini*, (Palm Sunday of the Passion of the Lord). In Germany this Sunday is also called **Black Sunday**, due to the practice of veiling the crucifixes and statues in the Roman Catholic churches in black. This day the name Passion Sunday is also used by other denominations, as you can see on the Presbyterian Planning Calendar.

Yes, Jesus' joyful entrance to Jerusalem, riding on a donkey on a path spread with palm branches to start his week of passion, all go together. We think of all when we celebrate Palm Sunday, waving our palm branches, and sing together joyfully

Ride on! Ride on in Majesty! Hark! All the tribes hosanna cry;

O Savior meek, pursue Thy road with palms and scattered garments strowed.

Ride on! Ride on in Majesty! In lowly pomp ride on to die.

O Christ, Thy triumphs now begin o'er captive death and conquered sin.

Ride on! Ride on in Majesty! The winged squadrons of the sky

Look down with sad and wondering eyes to see the approaching sacrifice.

Ride on! Ride on in Majesty! In lowly pomp ride on to die.

Bow thy meek head to mortal pain, then take, O God, Thy power and reign.

(Henry Hart Milman, 1827 - John Bacchus Dyke, 1862)

BOOK CLUB NEWS

The Book Club will meet on Tuesday, April 19 at 1:00 PM in the church library. The group will discuss the non-fiction book, Heaven is for Real by Todd Burpo. Newcomers are welcome.



Deadline for the May issue of FIRST and ForMOST is April 21, 2011. Please e-mail your announcements and reports to the Editor, Marta Strada, LUXI7777@aol.com, or put them in the FIRST and ForMOST drawer in the church office. Thank you.

ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING

Each year the Presbyterian Church (USA) takes up several special offerings. One of these is the "One Great Hour of Sharing" offering which is taken up on Easter Sunday of each year. We will join with other churches across the country in support of this offering this year. This is an ecumenical offering which is received in churches of all denominations and used by each denomination to support ministries of their church.

One Great Hour of Sharing began more than 60 years ago. In response to the devastation of World War II, one Saturday evening a radio broadcast asked Americans to go to their churches the next morning and give generously. Thus began a ministry that collects approximately \$20 million among all the denominations which receive this offering.

For the past 20 years the PC (USA) has received \$8 - \$11 million. For 2011 the funds received by the One Great Hour of Sharing offering will be divided between 3 programs of the PC (USA). The Presbyterian Hunger Program will receive 36%, the Presbyterian Disaster Assistance Program will receive 32% and The Self-Development of People Program will receive 32%.

You will find envelopes in the bulletin on Easter Sunday Morning to use in order to give to this offering. Should you wish to find out more about the One Great Hour of Sharing Offering in the PC (USA) please visit www.pcusa.org/oghs.
Susi Ennis

SPRING'S AWAKENING

**Today I heard a robin sing
And my joyous heart took wing.
Spring has lavishly arrived
As Mother Earth comes alive.**

**Dogwood trees reach for the skies,
Tulips bloom before my eyes.
Birds wing swiftly to and fro,
Sing the sweetest songs they know.**

**Hills and valleys are revived,
Buttercups and bluebells thrive,**

**Fish enliven steams and brooks,
Woodland babes fill cozy nooks.**

**Little children romp and tease,
Butterflies glide on the breeze
I smell the fragrance of the rose,
Feel velvet grass between my toes.**

**I thank our gracious Lord above
For His precious gifts of love,
Expressed in effervescent Spring
And every vibrant living thing.**

Catherine Janssen Irwin

HAPPY EASTER TO ALL OF YOU!

SESSION HIGHLIGHTS

February 16, 2011

Rev. Bob Harris, current Moderator of the Session, called the meeting to order. He led the devotion, based on Chapter 2, Your Authority to Lead, of the book Spiritual Leadership for Church Officers, by Joan S. Gray. Session members discussed questions relating to this chapter in small groups, then shared with the others what they thought the characteristics of a respected leader were. They agreed that they were evoking trust, creating hope, showing compassion. The Session concluded that at FPCA the trust in leaders was high and communication was good. The devotion was closed with prayer.

Due to recovery from surgery, Assistant to the Pastor Susan Ennis was not able to attend the Session Meeting, but had e-mailed the Session her plans for the Lenten Series Sabbath Rest: two sessions each week (Sunday after Service and Thursday afternoon) focusing on "Sabbath Resistance" and "Sabbath Practices."

Rev. Bob Harris shared with the Session that Student Intern Dr. Stephen Hiemstra was now working at Providence Hospital every week, Tuesday through Thursday in the Psyche unit and at ER on Saturdays.

He also reported that during Lent Dr. Hiemstra will teach adult Sunday School on the Philippians.

Deacon Molly Bonar reported that this year the deacons will meet every other month, and the new members of the congregation will be assigned to deacons during the next meeting in April 2011.

Elder Susan Hanson informed the Session that people doing Life Line Screening would like to use our Sanctuary in May, and Session approved the plan. Elder Ruth Sutton volunteered to oversee the project. It was noted that this program may attract nonmembers of the surrounding community to our church.

Reporting for the **Stewardship and Marketing Commission**, Elder Paul Malone informed the Session that some people were wondering whether there will be a picnic type garage sale this year, which could include entertainment by the Praise Band to attract outsiders to FPCA. It could take place in June 2011. He encouraged the Session to think about whether FPCA wants to do it, and, if so, FKPCV should be invited to participate.

Elder Ruth Sutton reported that the cards with information about FPCA had been sent out to neighboring residents; members of the congregation should go from house to house and talk to the people to whom the cards had been sent.

Reporting for the **Worship Commission**, Elder Sandy Mori told the Session Betty Beal was working on getting new banners for the Sanctuary, and was contacting other churches in order to get ideas how they should be designed.

Reporting for **Christian Education Commission**, Elder Marta Strada had e-mailed to the Session the items discussed during the latest meeting; one of them was the plan to give 2nd graders a book, Egermeier's Bible Story Book, to give children a chance to learn and talk about the basic Bible stories until they have this important context and are mature enough to read the Bible on their own. Bibles will be given to 8th graders instead of 3rd graders.

Reporting for the **Buildings and Grounds Commission**, Elder Jack Belz informed the Session that the workmanship done on the pews was of poor quality. Adjustments have to be

made before final payment. Elder Susan Hanson added that the electrical inspection was done; but another inspection would take place when the stage area was finished.

Reporting for the **Administration and Finance Commission**, Elder Tom Martin informed Session that, as the donation checks are being received, it was difficult to determine what amount goes to which fund. A request to write separate checks for each fund, and indicate it on the envelope, will be put in the Sunday bulletins as well as in FIRST and ForMOST.

As **Presbytery Representative**, Elder Sandy Mori encouraged the Session Members to attend at least one Presbytery meeting this year.

Rev. Bob Harris added that there will be an important meeting about reducing the size of the *Book of Order*, and on June 28, 2011, Presbytery will vote on adding the Belhar Confession to the *Book of Confession*.

Elder Cara Lauler shared with the Session that now, as the **Congregational Life and New Member Commission** had turned inactive, it should be decided who would handle the responsibilities of the Commission. During the next meeting the Session has to discuss what functions of the Commission were important enough to continue and which ones could be stopped. It will have to be figured out how the functions which will have to be continued will be carried out.

Marta Strada, Clerk of Session

FPCA LIBRARY CORNER

A new book has joined our book collection for the young people:

Egermeier's Bible Story Book, stories by Elsie E. Egermeier ; story revision by Arlene S. Hall. Anderson, Ind. : Warren Press, 2007. **(J 220.9 Eg)** *It calls itself "complete narration from Genesis to Revelation for young and old. It brings Scriptures to the children in an attractive and easy way to read and understand. The Christian Education Commission decided to present this book to third graders to familiarize them with Bible stories before they are old enough to read and understand the Bible itself. The library copy is for all of you.*

Your Librarian, Marta Strada

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DO YOU LIKE TO LAUGH?

Sunday after church, a Mom asked her very young daughter what the lesson was about. The daughter answered, "Don't be scared, you'll get your quilt." Needless to say, the Mom was perplexed. Later in the day, the Pastor stopped by for tea and the Mom asked him what that morning's Sunday school lesson was about. He said 'Be not afraid, the Comforter is coming.'

Contributed by Punch Jackson.

YOUTH NEWS

GOOD COFFEE FOR A GOOD CAUSE

SUPPORT THE YOUTH MISSION TRIP July 3-8, 2011

During Lent there will be Equal Exchange coffee (decaf only) available, in both whole bean and ground form, after the Sunday morning worship service. The cost is \$5 per package. The proceeds from this sale will go towards the cost of sending our young people to the Charleston, W. Virginia area to work on various projects as part of a Youthworks program.

Equal Exchange is an employee owned Fair Trade Organization which pays farmers a fair return for their labors. It is part of the Presbyterian Coffee Project which promotes justice through fair trade. Support this worthy cause!

The Youth Mission Trip, slated for July 3-8, 2011. All students, parents and prospective leaders are welcome to attend and learn more about this trip to Charleston, WV.

Stephanie Berg

EASTER EGG HUNT

EASTER SUNDAY, APRIL 24, 2011

11:30 A. M.

for Elementary School aged children

ACOLYTE SCHEDULE

4/10/2011 Garrett Youmans

4/17/2011 Elisha Musih

4/24/ 2011 Sarah Metzel

5/8/2011

5/15/2011

5/22/2011

5/29/2011

Nathan Youmans

Andrew Lauler

Scott Springston

Sam Looker

SUPPORT BETHANY HOUSE

Can you help? Bethany House needs household cleaning products to carry on its on-going mission of providing temporary shelter for homeless women and their children who have been victims of domestic abuse. Their programs help women regain their health and dignity and become reestablished in their community by providing temporary housing and support.

The following items are needed:

Toilet paper, paper towels, bleach, laundry soap (High Efficiency), dishwashing detergent, dishwasher detergent, 30 gal. trash bags, cleaning products (Mr. Clean, Pinesol, Spic & Span) spray cleaners (i.e. 409), mops, carpet freshener, air freshener

Donations may be placed in the Bethany House barrel in the back of the sanctuary. Please be generous and help this worthwhile program.

If you have any questions, please contact Stephanie Berg, bergspj@aol.com or 703-849-8937

LIFE LINE SCREENING

Have You Taken Control of Your Health Today?

Life Line Screening will be at First Presbyterian Church of Annandale on Monday, May16, 2011 performing preventive health screenings for early detection of vascular diseases that increase risk for heart disease, stroke and osteoporosis. Why consider a preventive screening? Vascular disorders are silent and progressive diseases, and preventive screenings provide an affordable, painless and accurate way to detect abnormalities that need further evaluation by your doctor.

These screenings will be offered to scan for potential health problems related to vascular disease and bone health:

The following 4 tests will cost you only **\$139**:

1. **Blocked carotid arteries** in the neck which can lead to a stroke;
2. **Abdominal aneurysms** which can lead to a ruptured aorta (AAA)
3. **Plaque buildup in the leg** arteries (PAD) which is a strong predictor of heart disease.
4. **Heart Rhythm screening** to detect irregular heart beat and increased risk of blood clots.
Add the fifth test for a total of **\$149**:
5. **Bone Density screening** to detect risk of osteoporosis (thinning of the bone) for **\$ 90** more.
You can also have
6. *Disease Risk Assessment* (**Blood Testing** for cholesterol, glucose, biometrics and Disease Risk Scorecard) for **\$ 79** more.

Register for the Complete Wellness Package with Heart Rhythm (tests 1-5) for \$ 149. Add Disease Risk Assessment with blood testing & biometrics for \$ 90 more. Screenings take 60-90 minutes to complete. Appointments are limited and pre-registration is required. Sign up now by calling **1-800-324-1851** or at www.lifelinescreening.com/community-partners (use code HSC3549)