

Grace Devotion

Week of March 24, 2024

Pastor Fred Young

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Standing along the road waving their palm branches, taking off their cloaks and laying them down for Jesus to ride over, what was going through the minds of the people? We hear about Palm Sunday every year as the precursor to the events of Holy Week. Even though I know how it ends, I still hope for a change of heart for those who turn so quickly against the same one they cheered as he entered their sacred city. It is hard to believe such praise can precede such hatred. Why, do they herald Jesus' entrance, but then participate in Christ's violent departure? How quickly they seem to abandon what they came to understand as truth.

Hosanna! Save us, Lord! Those who witnessed the original Palm Sunday Parade celebrated a God who had no enemies, made no threats, destroyed no cities, and condemned no one. Such an amazing approach to life, to understanding God, was too much for them to imagine. Sadly, the excited crowd turned from fandom to frenzy, letting fear rule their hearts. But, today, the procession of palms and praise reminds us to sing, dance, and celebrate God's enduring love. The parade also reminds us that God gives light in the midst of darkness. Even with threats blanketing the horizon, we can still dance, make music, and celebrate the Spirit that fills our hearts with light and love!

Jesus goes from this parade, to become a dinner guest at the home of very good friends. Lazarus served as host, Martha served the food and Mary served her Lord. Christ's passion narrative was prepared in Bethany. How Martha prepared to feed her guests. How Mary prepared Jesus' feet. How Jesus sought the company of his good friends, needing their love and devotion to soften his own preparation. How Judas' less than sincere protest linked with the ancient prophet Isaiah's words, "*I am about to do a new thing, do you not perceive it?*"

Looking back on this scene, we think about the waste. We wonder what Mary was thinking. We can only imagine her motivation. Her lavish gesture, wasting this fabulously expensive nard will be ever linked with the excessiveness of Jesus' own willingness to throw his life away on the cross. There is an ancient Nigerian saying that fits well with both of these acts of love: *"It is the heart that does the giving; the fingers only let go."*

Mary, looked at Jesus, felt his soul and in her love said, "I believe you and I will give of myself to help you prepare!" Her act of anointing begins here and will end when she and the other women among Christ's followers arrived at the tomb a week later. The dinner at Bethany is a special occasion. Christ knows that he will not be seeing his friends again. He will carry with him the aroma of their love and devotion. The meal, the company, the gift, all point to the hope of what is to come. As we approach the time of our Lord's suffering, death and glorious new life, how are you going over the top to express your love for Jesus?

Every year Jesus rides into our lives, this time, what will it take for all of us to open our hearts and invite him in? What do we seek in Jesus? What do we believe Christ has come to accomplish? Christ, God's Love come down, will continue to embrace us when we cannot embrace each other. God's love come down is larger, stronger, and more steadfast than we can ever imagine.

PRAYER: HOSANNA! Continue to save us, Lord. Amen.

Blessings!
Pastor Fred

<p>Poem: “Go to Jerusalem (Holy Week)”</p> <p>** Hymn: “Hosannas, Loud Hosanna”</p>	<p>#174</p>
<p>Joys and Concerns</p> <p>Praying for Others</p> <p>Lord’s Prayer</p> <p>Prayer of Confession/Silent Reflection/Assurance of Grace</p>	
<p>Thank you for sharing your tithes and offerings</p> <p>** <u>Doxology</u></p> <p>** Prayer of Dedication</p>	<p>#625</p>
<p>Special Music: “Lenten Meditation” ~ Jay Althouse</p> <p>~Erica Messenger</p>	
<p>**Nicene Creed*</p>	
<p>Time for the Young at Heart</p>	
<p>Hymn: “All Glory, Laud and Honor”</p>	<p>#173</p>
<p>Scripture Readings: Psalm 118: 1-2, 26-29 (NRSV)</p> <p>John 12:12-16 (NRSV)</p>	
<p>Message: “Palm Branches and Puzzle Pieces”</p>	
<p>**Song: “Hosanna” ~ Michael W. Smith *</p>	
<p>** Final Blessing</p> <p>Please remain standing to sing “A Choral Benediction”</p> <p>(Inside front of hymn book or on screen).</p>	
<p>Postlude</p>	
<p>*On the screen</p>	<p>** Please stand, if you are able.</p>

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Announcements

Church Financials

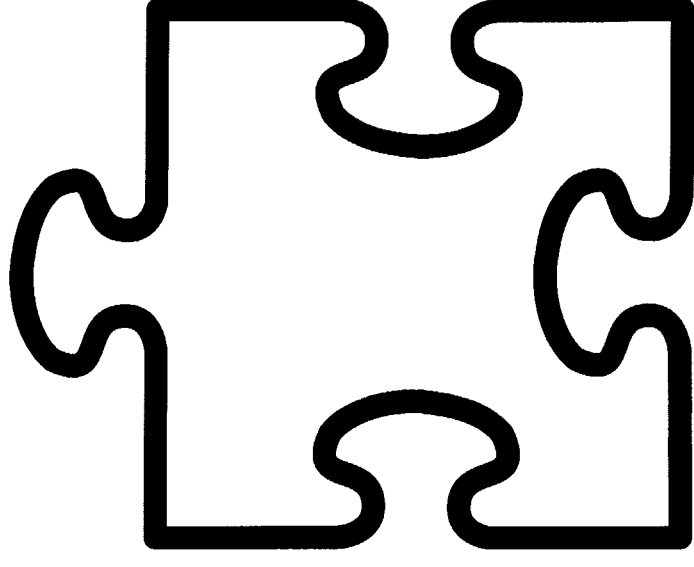
General pledge Feb.2024: \$7,058
General pledge Feb.2023: \$6,496
YTD income: \$22,676
YTD expenses: \$34,389
YTD deficit: \$11,713

~Covered Dish TODAY immediately following worship.

Easter Services Update

- Maundy Thursday Service at Trinity UCC Gettysburg led by Pastor Fred at 7 pm
- Good Friday Service at Grace UCC led by Pastor Fred at 7 pm
- JOINT Sunrise Service on Easter at 6:30 am (Straban Rec Park Gettysburg)
- Worship at Trinity UCC Gettysburg led by Pastor Fred at approx. 8 am
- Worship with communion at Grace UCC led by Pastor Fred at 10 am.

Palm Branches and Puzzle Pieces



Grace United Church of Christ
100 Fourth Street
Hanover, Pennsylvania 17331
717-632-1146

*In case of inclement weather, please check Facebook or call
the Prayer Line 717-634-8865*

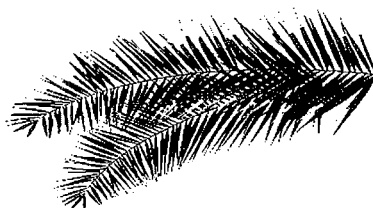
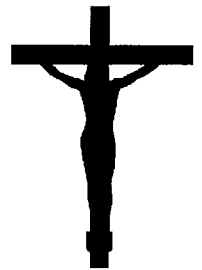
Go to Jerusalem (Holy Week)

When the days drew near for [Jesus] to be taken up, he set his face to go to Jerusalem. Luke 9:5; For the Lord God will help me; therefore shall I not be confounded: therefore have I set my face like a flint, and I know that I shall not be ashamed. Isaiah 50:7

“To set one’s face” seems strange to say,
And do we understand?
To be determined, come what may
Or what others demand.
Christ knew what lay ahead of him –
Hosannas and the cross.
From cheering crowds to torture grim –
Christ knew and paid the cost.

Through pain and grief and sorrow
In faith to “set his face,”
To weep at night and brave the morrow –
That was Christ’s steadfast grace.
So as we wave our palms and sing
And our great Savior praise,
Let us also our homage bring
And prayerful pledges raise.

Such love and mercy and such blessing
That we do not deserve
Inspires all to sin confessing –
From faith never to swerve;
Pick up the cross that we should bear,
No empty prayer or hymn.
Let’s set each face and bravely dare –
Go to Jerusalem. Patti Miller



The power of your words

Don't use foul or abusive language. Let everything you say be good and helpful, so that your words will be an encouragement to those who hear them.—Ephesians 4:29

A church decided to do some major renovations on their decades-old building, so they called together a group of members to do the internal demolition. Around 40 people of all ages showed up that day eager to take on the task.

They went right to work ripping up carpet, knocking out walls, tearing down ceilings, and dismantling just about everything in the building. There was no skill or training required. People young and old pitched in and had the demolition done in no time.

When this phase was completed, the remodeling began – which required skilled and trained people who knew how to construct, build, and refurbish. Their task was much more difficult, and it took much longer than the demolition.

Tearing down is easy, especially when it comes to people. A simple burst of anger or a careless word can destroy a relationship. But it takes skill and intention to build someone up – holding your tongue and speaking the right words at the right times.

When it comes to people, be a skilled builder instead of a demolisher. It takes more time and effort, but the rich, God-honoring relationships you'll build are well worth it!

Prayer Challenge

Pray and ask God to make your words a constructive, not destructive, force in other people's lives.

Questions for thought

Think of a time when someone said something that tore you down. Why did those words hurt you?

How can you speak words into other people's lives that build them up?



Name: _____

Psalm 118:24

W A E X W D L F B Q A X N A A M K X M C J L N B
O Q G E F M U U A P I X A W O F L T F J D Z L N
K L I L X T J N H X A T R T W M Y D T T B E W U
M Y O F A K T T H A N K F U L N E S S W S B E Y
U I F A L D S U C D D K I G V H T F W S D T C A
L T J T H E Y Y I V L D O N O H J B I K W I V Q
D S S D S C G S D A D R O L V Q U N C H Z N M E
K Z M T Z M J R A E D W B H U W G A Z R K S B V
E H O L H J E M A U J O M Y M S G B V F T W E R
Q P A X L V I C B Y Q X S Z R F Z E Y Q L K B C
P H F S U C H V W S J Y Q V G O Z Z J E G Q D K
U H U T M E R V W T S Q Q S W P W X V M S J G G
R Z L V R B N E B E H A H B K B Y K L B U O S Z
G Q M A B E R Y E O E A S Y T P N E Q F C S B Q
Y S Z L X J J L C K U D T F I R T W V O I R S Y
G H X D G D U O I Y N Z F M R W A K K I Q D A Y
V E O C P V W S I U Z N I P S A L M H Q A A D A
H F O O I Y T T I C P P A E D A M Q D I C Q L U
I I A C G G G N D H E P F F R N B J F P V L E P
Q J L Z T F Y U N W T X B D T Z O G C I I T D C
Y C O A E H S Z C X H U J H K O X O I T D K S Z
B X L M X H N D B S N B P S P U W B E Q T A N D
Q S E I D G P Z S Y I Q L X X X I O X T F I G Z
Z C M H B G L L N N A S E S Q K J X G K V F W X

thankfulness	blessings	gift	each	psalm
it	in	glad	be	and
rejoice	us	let	made	has
Lord	that	day	the	is
this				



EASTER WORD SEARCH

EASTER
BUNNY
CHICK
EGGS
CARROT
SPRING
DAFFODIL
LAMB
BASKET
HUNT
TULIP
CANDY
DUCKLING
RABBIT
BLOSSOM

C	B	A	S	K	E	T	G	R	E	K	L	A	W	X
H	U	A	B	M	I	L	E	A	S	T	E	R	D	J
T	N	S	M	K	A	O	R	C	P	L	A	C	P	B
S	N	C	Y	Y	D	R	C	C	Q	R	K	U	M	L
C	Y	L	C	I	A	R	G	Q	L	A	M	B	K	O
A	A	H	E	W	F	O	D	S	T	O	A	A	C	S
R	G	N	O	F	F	I	A	S	S	G	Y	C	E	S
R	W	T	D	P	O	Q	J	N	W	A	E	K	X	O
O	A	C	S	Y	D	L	O	B	T	E	R	S	P	M
T	L	N	E	A	I	U	Y	K	I	N	O	O	T	R
R	I	V	N	K	L	I	C	N	N	M	I	S	C	E
A	C	I	C	K	M	A	I	K	T	E	E	P	R	K
X	J	I	J	F	Y	T	S	O	L	R	A	R	N	E
U	H	G	W	J	N	D	R	E	W	I	P	I	E	N
C	W	X	T	U	L	I	P	N	O	R	N	N	E	N
X	J	O	H	V	Z	I	C	O	J	E	G	G	S	A
U	Y	R	A	B	B	I	T	F	I	J	P	V	E	B
X	J	D	O	F	Z	I	C	B	J	W	E	S	T	S

