

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- 1) Considering giving for Presbyterian Disaster Assistance through **One Great Hour of Sharing**.
- 2) **A meditative worship service at 7pm on Good Friday 4/2 is on Zoom**. Be aware that the service contains graphic images depicting Jesus' journey to the cross.
- 3) There will be two **worship services on Easter 4/4**. The 1st service is 10:45am in the sanctuary, by reservation only already filled. The 2nd service is 1pm on zoom.
- 4) **1pm is the new time of Zoom worship**, until live streaming is available from the sanctuary.
- 5) **STARTING ON 4/11:**
 - a) **new Zoom Adult Bible Study will occur at 6pm on Sundays**. Curriculum is "God's Love for Women," a survey course of Genesis through Revelation, with examples of women throughout Scripture. To register please contact Pastor Janet.
 - b) **Adult Sunday school will start in-person in upstairs hall from 9:30-10:45am**. Curriculum is on "The 13 Apostles." Worksheets will be available for children.
 - c) **11am is the new time of worship in the sanctuary**. However, until COVID restrictions are lifted sanctuary, **11am seating is limited. To reserve a place** in Sunday school and/or worship, **please reply to email** from janetann386@gmail.com
Those who will have not had an opportunity to attend on Easter 4/4 are given high priority for reservations. Reservations will be confirmed before the service.
- 6) To watch **sermons recorded** on Zoom on our YouTube Channel, go to the FPCP website: <https://www.fpcpataskala.com/> and click on WORSHIP or follow us on Facebook from the homepage.

WORSHIP for March 28, 2021 – Palm Sunday

Prelude played by Jennifer Ladd, "**Praise to the Lord**"

Streaming CCLI 20373701; Author: Joachim Meander; Arranged by: Philip Keveren; © Copyright by Hall Leonard Corporation
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dclzhsmImG8>

Call to Worship: Psalm 34:1-3 *Responsively*

I will extol the Lord at all times;

his praise will always be on my lips.

I will glory in the Lord;

let the afflicted hear and rejoice.

Glorify the Lord with me;

let us exalt his name together.

Opening Hymn: "**Praise Ye the Lord the Almighty**"

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mxZKjro8hS4>

Prayer of Confession: Psalm 34:13 *Responsively*

The psalmist warns, "Keep your tongue from evil and your lips from telling lies."

For times we gather for the wrong reasons. For times we cry out the wrong words.

For times we think of the wrong things. Forgive us please Jesus.

(Pause in silent confession of sins.)

Assurance of Forgiveness: Psalm 34:17-18 *Responsively*

*“The righteous cry, and the Lord hears them; He delivers them from all their troubles. The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit.”
We believe the good news of the Gospel.*

In Jesus Christ we are forgiven!

“The Gloria Patri”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-uMeiUtOSVM>

Hymn of Preparation: “Ride On, Ride On in Majesty”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MD9rMkIS1yw>

“Scripture cannot be set aside... What does Scripture say?” John 10:35 & Romans 4:3.

Prayer for Illumination: *Unison*

Lord, through your Spirit enable us to consider your Word, and to enact it in our lives to bring you glory and praise. Amen.

Scripture Readings: Matthew 7:15-19

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+7%3A15-19&version=NIV>

Scripture Readings: Luke 13:5-9

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke+13%3A5-9&version=NIV>

Scripture Readings: Mark 11:1-25

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Mark+11%3A1-25&version=NIV>

SERMON: “Fig Tree” by The Reverend Dr. Janet Hufford

Watch sermon on: <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLAdy2hvW6PL93B6hbgswTxf93Evs575yd>

Mark 11:1-11 Jesus enters gently and riding on a donkey. We usually only concentrate on this portion of the account of Jesus riding into Jerusalem. Here the crowds shouted Hosanna expecting a military Messiah to overthrow the Romans, not expecting a Messiah to call the Jewish people and religious leaders to account. To demand repentance of them lest judgment come. Yet the remainder of the entry account and the corresponding parables on the fig or fruit trees reveal Jesus as mighty and powerful judge.

Hear Mark 11:12-14. Finding no fruit Jesus curses the fig tree. In alignment with the parables from Matthew and Luke the consequence is already known.

Next hear 11:15-19. Now Jesus takes action. He overturns the tables of the money changer and the benches of those selling doves. With zeal he cleanses the temple which is to be a house of prayer not a den of robbers.

Then comes the account of the following morning in 11:20-21. First the disciples note that the fig tree has withered. Second Jesus calls the disciples to prayer as he did in the temple!

The withering fig tree is an example for the church. Jesus had been coming to Jerusalem for Passover every year of his 3 year ministry, just as he has as a faithful Jew all of his life. During his years of ministry after the ordination of his baptism, he has been warning Jewish religious leaders to repent. But they have not heeded his words. And now they began looking for a way to kill Jesus! Their time and the time for Jerusalem is running out. Thus the fig tree withers. And during his time in Jerusalem Jesus speaks of the destruction of the temple and signs of the end times. Jesus' gentleness is not wimpy. Jesus' gentle ride into Jerusalem is full of power and might.

The withering fig tree is also an example for the contemporary church. For this I recall accounts from my first pastorate.

Transformation takes 5 to 7 years, the time for most fruit trees to mature and bear fruit. A church merger occurred a year into my first pastorate in a church working toward renewal and transformation. I informed the congregation that the merger restarted the process of transformation with 5 to 7 years before fruit is visible. At 5 years we did begin to see fruit with 18 people joining and 5 adult baptisms. Growth continued for a time, but in time growth was resisted and stifled.

Then a fig tree like event took place with a decorative Bradford pear tree to the side of the entrance of church. About 7 years past the merger, I thought I heard more than once, possibly from God, "That tree is in my way." As a result, I preached a sermon from Psalm 1, the same psalm that I preached at the merger to convey the timing of transformation. I also took a photo to document the beauty of the pear tree and to call attention to it on the projection screen at the front of the sanctuary. In addition I opened the side door for people to be able to view the tree, without telling the congregation what I thought I heard. Not long after the sermon I heard something new. I heard a single word, "Watch." Within the week the tree split in half with main top branches of the tree of the tree split from the trunk. Then I heard again, "Watch." Next the following week lightning struck. Leaders reacted to the events. They wanted to replace the tree. But a few people came to me, expressing that God did not want a tree there but something else. I then revealed what I heard and journaled weeks earlier, "That tree is in my way. Watch." I called leaders to pray for what God intended the space instead. But leaders could not agree in unity what God wanted in the space. In preparing for today's sermon, I went to look at recent pictures on the website. I see nothing there to replace the tree with God's intended plan.

On the day of his entry into Jerusalem, the fig tree in Jerusalem was caused to wither by Jesus. The decorative pear tree at a contemporary church was in God's way and was destroyed by two natural causes. Now the question for us? Is anything in God's way for his work to be done at FPCP? Does anything need to be moved for God's eternal planting to take root and grow fruit? Does our heart also need moved? If there is something that prevents FPCP from bearing fruit, what needs done? What do we hear from God? What is God asking us to do? It may be in part the widening of the sanctuary doorway for wheelchair access, new parking spaces for those with limited mobility, an improved sound system to better hear, onsite live streaming for those who cannot attend. But there may be something even more.

Let us not gather at the gates for the wrong reasons like the crowds at Jerusalem. Let us

heed the Lord and do as he asks. Let us look for and see the signs. Let us listen to hear from the Lord. Let us not stand in the way of God's plans for FPC. Amen.

Affirmation of Faith:

Revelation 22:1-5

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Revelation+22%3A1-5&version=NIV>

Hymn of Response: "Hosanna, Loud Hosanna"

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-ud3MzWjuAQ>

PRAYERS of Joy and Concern, followed by:

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.

Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

Please Continue to Give in Dedication to Our Lord and Savior, Jesus

Prayer Of Dedication: *Unison*

Jesus, Our Savior. In view of your mercy, we offer up our thanks thru giving. Amen.

Doxology

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HqpXWF15avU>

Closing Hymn: "All Glory, Laud and Honor"

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EXpMWtbHQvw>

Benediction: Mark 11:9b-10 *Responsively*

Hosanna! Go in the name of the Lord to show forth the coming Kingdom of God,... in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**