

“GOD ON THE MOVE”
“God Moves... to the Cross”

God has been on the move with us during Lent: God has moved through the desert, around obstacles, over the fence, down the road and has invited us to empty ourselves. This week, we begin the most sacred time week of the Christian year, Holy Week. May this week be a time of deepening faith and understanding as we find Jesus beckoning us to go all the way to the cross and then into the light of God’s love and grace. -- Pastor Cindy

This week we completed 1,786.50 miles! After a lovely stay in Venice, we walked to Florence, Rome, Naples, and Bari, giving us a lot of time to explore much of Italy. From Bari, we took a boat across the sea and arrived in Greece. While in Greece, we walked to Thessalonika, Athens and Corinth. After completing our tour of Corinth, we crossed the Aegean Sea to arrive in Ephesus, just in time for Palm Sunday.

Things I’d like to remember from today’s sermon: **“God Moves... to the Cross”**

Daily prayer: *Most Holy God, if our hearts are troubled during this Holy Week, let your everlasting mercy bring us quietness and rest. If our minds are torn by doubt stay beside us until we see. If our souls are timid and confused, give us some small portion of that awe-full courage of Love. Blessed, then with the redeeming gifts of Christ’s life in us, we shall grow and change into Christ’s likeness, even as we shrink from the Cross and the tomb. Amen. (adapted from a prayer by Daniel H. Evans)*

This week’s sermon may be viewed at <http://sundaystreams.com/go/firstwichita>

Study Guide

Monday, April 15, 2019 Luke 19: 29-29

This week always begins with such excitement. In our churches, children parade with palm branches and we sing and shout, “Hosanna!” Who doesn’t love a parade? How we love a new celebrity and how far that one can fall when our affections change. The energy and excitement are contagious! Sometimes we will travel a far distance to see someone like Jesus. We are often on the move when things are exciting and wonderful. This Palm Sunday story begins well; yet we know how it will end, “Hosanna’s!” will be “Crucify Him!” in a matter of days. *Today, let’s focus on*

the gift of grace and excitement; the shouts of joy, the walking together with Jesus and his disciples and enjoying the taste of God's reign on earth. Pray today, that you might be open to what God has in store for you this holy week.

Tuesday, April 16, 2019 Philippians 2: 5-11

“Though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, he humbled himself and became obedient to death, even death on a cross.” These words fit so well on the path of Holy week. Christ started out with shouts of “Hosanna,” but in a few short days the cries turn to “Crucify Him!” Even if we do not feel comfortable with “blood” language, we all know we fall short of what we were meant to be. We are moving with Jesus toward the cross and Jesus moved from being fully divine, to being fully human like each one of us. *In what ways does Christ moving toward you make you whole? How is God on the move during this Holy Week, in your life, and in your faith community and the world?*

Wednesday, April 17, 2019 Psalm 118: 1-2, 19-29

This is part of the difficulty of Holy Week. This is the turning point. “The stone that the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone.” It begins with betrayal. The story is known, Judas leaves and betrays Jesus to the religious authorities. Peter promises to stand by Jesus, but in the end, just like Jesus predicted, Peter turns his back on him. Perhaps this is Holy Week in a nutshell, all people, ALL people sooner or later betray their highest ideals, lose sight of what is important and in fear turn away. In a world filled with evil great and small, some betrayals are much larger than others. It is out of this darkness that the light of love, grace, mercy and forgiveness shines. It is acknowledging that each of us is broken and in need of healing and hope, that God's does God's greatest work in Christ. Even though we turn away from God and move away from Him, God moves toward us. *Today, spend some time offering up your brokenness to God. Experience how God is offering you light, love and grace. Then, give thanks to God.*

Maundy Thursday, April 18, 2019 Luke 22: 14-23

Today is the beginning of the last days of Holy Week, called the Holy Triduum (three days). Maundy means commandment. It was on this night that Jesus washed the disciple's feet (John 13: 1-11) and instituted the sacrament of Holy Communion. Christ commands us to love God and love one another and to be a servant to one another. In a world that is all about “me,” serving and loving other has become inconvenient. Yet, this is the command. We, who claim we follow Jesus, are called to live as Jesus lived, in love and service. *Tonight I encourage you to find a place of worship. Our service will be at 6:00 p.m. in Meredith Hall. There will be prayer stations, hand and foot washing stations and then we will gather for a light meal and to share Holy Communion. God is on the move even as we walk this difficult path with Jesus.*

Good Friday, April 19, 2019 Isaiah 53: 7-12, Luke 23: 13-49

“He was oppressed...by a perversion of justice.” There was nothing just or fair about Jesus' trial and crucifixion. It was an unjust movement toward execution. This day is one of sorrow and darkness and an invitation toward reflection. Though his life and death Jesus offers grace, mercy and hope. On this one day, we are invited to truly focus on the grief, shame and the sadness, and to see how God moves toward us, even in the midst of evil and death. Tonight at 7:00 there will be the Tenebrae (service of darkness) service in the Sanctuary. Through scripture, music and candles we will remember a life poured out for many. *Read the entire chapter of Isaiah 53 and meditate upon the poetry and truth of these words. By walking through these final days of darkness we are invited to ponder God on the move, through death and on to new life. Pray for your heart to be opened as God continues to be on the move and Jesus moves out of the tomb to new life.*