

MVLP Gather Round E-News - Issue #6

April 4, 2020

This is the sixth issue of our E-newsletter, “Gather ‘Round,” to call us together through the internet to share news and needs and stories with each other. If you have a tale to tell or a perspective to share, please send it on for the next issue! Three readers have told me “What they are up to!” Please see below....

Mt. Vernon Streams Palm Sunday Service

Pastor Bob will stream his Sunday Worship at 12:30 p.m. Go to the Mount Vernon Larger Parish Facebook Page

(<https://www.facebook.com/MVLPspirit/?ref=bookmrks>) where you will find MOUNT VERNON STREAMS pinned close to the top of the page, and click on that. Elaine and Brooke will sing “This Little Light of Mine.” (Bob says to send him your email if you don’t have Facebook.) The Order of Worship is attached.

More information about Holy Week Services is posted below.

Rev. Betsy Reflects on Palm Sunday

People could see the dust kicked up several miles away, and as the procession grew closer, watchers could hear marching feet, the beat of drums, the creak of leather harnesses, the glint of sun on golden eagles and sabers. Riding in from the west, from his garrison on the coast, was Pontius Pilate, Roman governor of Judea, heading a column of cavalry and soldiers, riding in to keep the peace.

At the same time, another procession was coming into the city from the east; this was a peasant procession which was making its way down from the Mount of Olives. A lone figure sat on a donkey, and as he passed, watchers spread out their cloaks and laid down palm branches in his path, singing the words of Psalm 118, “Hosanna! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord!”

Jesus of Nazareth, from Galilee about 100 miles to the north, had pre-arranged this counter-procession, even down to the colt of a donkey he was to ride. The pilgrims traveling to Jerusalem to observe the Passover yearned for the Jerusalem of memory, for justice and peace, for God’s restoration. This crowd is enthusiastic, wild with joy! Spellbound.... Some Pharisees in the throng call out to Jesus, “Order your disciples to stop!” Are they embarrassed by all this emotion? Do they resent that Jesus identifies himself with the Messiah? Are they afraid Rome will see all this commotion and, fearing an insurrection, retaliate?

By Jesus' day, Jerusalem had become the seat of political oppression. The religious leaders in the temple have colluded with the Roman occupiers to preserve their own position of wealth and power. Peasants have lost their ancestral land and are taxed heavily to support Rome. The elite live in luxury; the poor are hungry.

In one parade, coming in on the west side of the city, the peace is kept by those who sweep in on chariots, with swords ready to maintain power and control. Today we might understand that kind of peace as governments that promise reform, then rule with oppression; institutions that cover up abuse of children; corporations that pay exorbitant income to top executives while workers struggle to make ends meet or people are dropped from health insurance because they get sick.

In the other parade, the one coming in on the east side of the city, the peace is kept by one who comes alone and vulnerable and who brings the peace of healing and hope. Today, we might understand that kind of peace as aid workers building clinics and schools in Haiti, businesses retrofitting machinery and women sewing medical masks, churches raising money for One Great Hour of Sharing, people collecting goods for food pantries.

Into this city, then, the City of David, come two processions, two parades – one from the west representing the power of empire; one from the east representing the power of God. The question then and now, for all of us, is – *in which parade are we marching?*

These days with our global economy, it's difficult to tell. We live in a complicated world. We can be spellbound by pomp and circumstance, lulled by smooth talk, blindsided by prejudice. Just turn on your TV. But for those of us who pray, "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth,.." there is nothing to do but to call out, "Blessed is he who comes..." and to wave our palms and to lay down our priorities and to sing not only for the peace of power and glory, but also for the peace of goodness and justice! May it be so!

WHAT ARE YOU UP TO?

➤ **Bob and Priscilla Rotando**, "*It feels good to move and be outside.*" Thank you so much for the Gather Round newsletter! It is so nice to read, and it feels like we are staying connected with everyone. We have been outside, splitting firewood, and when that project is over, on to gardening. All these projects keeps my worry mind at bay, at least a little anyway.

➤ **Robin Petrarca: Distance Learning with First Graders**

It felt so good to read the Gather Round News. It just popped up as I was working on learning and doing "distance learning" with my first graders and their families. The children are doing very well! At the beginning [of our Zoom sessions] we greet each other, and the children eagerly share stories and projects they have been working on – and then on to math and reading. I look forward to preparing my lessons and sharing

something new I found for them to explore. I encourage them to get outside for a walk each day with their family and [I encourage] you folks, too, to take a daily walk. Out of this time of uncertainty we will all learn new things. We will all grow in new, unexpected ways. Love to you all!

➤ **Wayne Carlow Composed a Hymn**

Gather Round

By Wayne Carlow

Vs. 1. Christ preached to the multitudes. / Healed many who were sick.
Baptized His people by the shores of the sea. / Taught from the mountain top,
from the synagogues. / Or where-ever a gathering may be.

Chorus

*So gather round, gather round. / Gather round the Man from Galilee.
He who died on the Cross at Calvary. / Gave Salvation to you and me.
Gather 'round The Man of Galilee.*

Vs. 2. He is still there for us today. / To help and protect us in every way.
He is the Light of Hope when darkness falls. / There's His Word and Love to share.
As for one another we do care. / Yes we all now "Gather Round."

Chorus (Rights Reserved)

Special Prayers: Please remember...

- ❖ Please lift Herold and Rose's son Chris Desilus to the healing arms of God. He is very sick and needs rest, but he worries about leaving his coworkers short.
- ❖ Positive outcomes for the Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe whose reservation status was rescinded and land taken by the federal government as the Tribe is about to open desperately needed affordable housing on the Cape.

Gather 'Round for Bible Study

Both Rev. Betsy and Pastor Bob are leading Bible Study by Zoom. To participate, **ask to be invited** with your email or phone number to be included in the meeting notice.

Psalms: Tuesday & Friday mornings at 10:00 a.m. with Betsy, reading and discussing selected psalms. Continues Tuesday, April 7. Contact (by Monday) BetsyAldrichGarland@gmail.com.

Gospel of John: Wednesday evenings at 6:30 p.m. with Bob. Continues April 8 for a discussion of chapters 18-19. Contact (by Wednesday morning) Bob at revbobh@gmail.com.

Holy Week Services by Zoom

- ❖ **Maunday Thursday:** Our Holy Communion and Tenebrae Service will happen this year on Thursday, April 9, at 7:00 p.m. I will attach the Order of Worship to

Wednesday's email so you can follow along. Prepare to bring a candle and a glass of grape juice/wine and a bit of bread when you gather 'round. *I need some of you to read scriptures (emailed ahead). Please let me know if you are willing to read.*

❖ **Good Friday:** Pastor Bob is inviting members of the Foster Churches Association to participate in Rev. Scott's HMOG's Reading of the Passion at noontime on April 10.

❖ **Easter Sunrise:** The sunrise service will take place at 7:00 a.m. I will send you the Order of Worship with Saturday's email.

Window on Wildlife

Given the drama of Palm Sunday with its two "parades," it seems appropriate to share Sonja's story about the suet blocks: "Who is boss of the suet blocks? Yes, there is a "pecking order" among the woodpeckers. At the bottom are the downy woodpeckers who will usually stand up to a bossy sparrow or a white-breasted nuthatch, but they quickly leave when any other woodpecker approaches. The hairy woodpeckers are *much* larger, though their markings are amazingly similar. They scare the downy away. However, the "kings" of the blocks are the red-bellied woodpeckers. *Everyone* departs when one arrives for they have been seen pecking intruders and spitting out the plucked feathers. Flickers are ground feeders and do not compete. Of course, many birds like the suet, so the blocks are usually busy, but the smaller birds depart when woodpeckers arrive. Sometimes someone will sneak up on the other side of a block where they are unseen and out of striking distance. Everyone flees when the hawk swoops over the peak of the house or out of the yew which is close by."

Weekly Offerings may be mailed for:

Mt. Vernon to Ron Allen (116 Barbs Hill Road, Greene, RI 02827),

Moosup Valley to Pat Safstrom (76 Moosup Valley Road, Foster, RI 02825),

Rice City to Phyllis Dexter (53 Moosup Valley Road, Foster, RI 02825).

A Prayer for Palm Sunday

Jesus, whom people celebrated with cries of "Hosanna!" – "Save us!" – you have brought us again to this holiest of weeks, when you claim us for your own. Be with us as we walk through it, that we might never again be the same. Amen.

Reverend Betsy can be reached at BetsyAldrichGarland@gmail.com or 401-463-8697.

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