



First Mennonite Church

Midweek E-Newsletter

March 24, 2021

From Pastor Tom

Down from the Mount of Olives

This Sunday is Palm Sunday, the day we will commemorate Jesus' "triumphal entry" into Jerusalem, riding on the back of a donkey while the crowds waved palm branches, shouting "Hosanna! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord—the King of Israel!" Ten years ago, while on the "Jerusalem Seminar" co-led by Patty Shelly and Doug Miller, Lois and I joined the group in retracing Jesus' journey from Bethphage at the top of the Mount of Olives, downward and westward to Jerusalem. It was yet another of those "pinch yourself—I can't believe I'm here" moments that were a constant during the three-week interterm trip. Several details of that day remain in my memory. First, when we got off our bus, there was a man waiting for us, in 1st century Palestinian garb, complete with a donkey! (I don't remember that any of us asked for a ride, which I'm sure he would have obliged—for a small fee!). But then, as we walked down the zig-zagging, narrow street, we stopped at several churches built along the way to commemorate different parts of Jesus' story. First was a church called "Pater Noster," Latin for "Our Father." This church commemorates the story told in Matthew 6:7-14 and Luke 11:1-13, where Jesus teaches his disciples the Lord's Prayer. Outside the church are many monuments, each with the Lord's Prayer in a different language. (I took pictures of the ones in Greek, the text of which I wrote a paper on in seminary, and in Guarani, the indigenous language of Paraguay, where we would be traveling that summer.)

The second stop was at a church called "Dominus Fleuit," Latin for "The Lord Wept." This church was built to commemorate Luke 19:31 where on his way down from the Mount Olives Jesus wept for Jerusalem, saying "If you, even you, had only recognized on this day the things that make for peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes." How apropos those words remain today, given the conflict that continues to trouble that most holy of cities! I remember in particular the spectacular view from that church of the the old city of Jerusalem, and the famous Dome of the Rock mosque.

Finally, we stopped at the church known as "Gethsemane," built adjacent to the Garden of Gethsemane where Jesus prayed just prior to his arrest (and where centuries-old olive trees remain to this day). Of the three churches, this one was the most poignant, not so much for its connection with Palm Sunday and the Triumphal Entry, but for the events that would occur three chapters later (in Luke), the events we refer to as "the Passion of Christ." A pivotal part of that story was when Jesus yielded himself to the will of his Father, while praying at Gethsemane.

Commemorating these stories is a vitally important part of our faith, whether by visiting the actual locations where they occurred or re-reading the accounts in the four gospels. I look forward to doing this with our FMC family during the ten days to come!

Upcoming Events

Holy Week Events March 28- April 4	
Palm Sunday <i>March 28</i>	10 a.m. <i>Come and See</i> (Hosted by Kids in Fellowship Hall) 10:30 a.m. Palm Sunday Processional and Worship (Sanctuary)
Maundy Thursday <i>April 1</i>	7 p.m. In-person and Virtual Service
Easter Sunday <i>April 4</i>	6:45 a.m. Sunrise Service at Mark and Sandy Hiebert's farm 10 a.m. <i>Taste and See!</i> (Fellowship Hall) Brunch in a Box and Easter Egg Hunt 10:30 a.m. <i>"Christ is Risen!"</i> (Sanctuary)
*Families with children will have reserved seats in the sanctuary. All others may sit every other pew. Please continue to wear masks!	
**Easter Brunch Boxes – all are invited to feast in the fellowship hall, courtyard, or even – this one Sunday – in the sanctuary!	
***Please be seated and ready to celebrate together in the sanctuary by 10:30 a.m. each Sunday.	

- ☞ **Easter lilies and flowering plants** are beautiful expressions of new life! Please consider sharing flowers or lilies with our church as we look forward to Holy Week and Easter morning. Contact Cheryl Bartel for more information.

- ☞ **Tabor College's Concert Series** will feature vibrant, diverse song Friday, March 26 at 7 p.m. in the Shari Flaming Center for the Arts. **Roosevelt Andre Credit**, bass/baritone, will share opera, spirituals, hymns, and musical theatre pieces with his Kansas crowd. Credit hails from New York City and has made a career nationally and internationally, finding roles on and off Broadway, including the Tony Award-Winning and Grammy Nominated production of *The Gershwin's Porgy and Bess*. Don't miss this opportunity– seating is limited, and tickets may be ordered online at tabor.edu/tickets. The performance will also be available via livestream on Youtube: search Tabor Webcast.

- ☞ **Hymn Sing:** Join in with fellow believers to sing praises to Christ in this Easter season March 26 from 6-7 p.m. at Peabody Christian Church on the corner of Division and Sycamore in Peabody, KS. *Now, as ever, we Christians will sing!*

- ☞ **The Maundy Thursday service** will be held at 7 p.m. Thursday, April 1 both in person and virtually. Communion will be part of the service. If you plan to attend virtually, communion elements will be available in the foyer through Thursday for you to pick up. You may use your own crackers and juice if desired, but these elements are available to you. Please take as many as needed for your family. Contact Aleen Ratzlaff at 620-947-2099 by Thursday at noon if you would like them delivered.

Other Announcements

- ☞ **The Executive Board of Mennonite Church USA** voted during its Jan. 22-23, 2021 meeting to hold its biennial Delegate Assembly online due to uncertainty around COVID-19 gathering restrictions. Originally scheduled to meet in person on July 6-10, 2021, in Cincinnati, Ohio, the Delegate Assembly will meet virtually on Saturday, July 10 from 1 p.m.-3:30 p.m. ET. For more information, visit <https://convention.mennoniteusa.org/> and click the Delegates tab.
- ☞ **Men and Boys Retreat, April 16-18, at Camp Mennoscah!** Come to Camp Mennoscah for this long-standing, guys-only retreat! Spend time fishing, canoeing, worshipping, sitting by the fire, or visiting with friends in fellowship. The official beginning to the weekend is Saturday morning, but many arrive on Friday. Meals can be purchased for Saturday night, Sunday morning and lunch. People are welcome Friday, but no meals or entertainment will be provided. Meals available for an additional cost. No pre-registration. Registration and payment will take place upon arrival. For more information, contact Kevin Neufeld at 316-322-5515.
- ☞ **Save the date for the Sent Conference 2021!** Join us on Thursday, April 22 at 7-8:30 p.m. and Friday, April 23 at 2:30-4 p.m. ET for two webinars from peace church planters. They will share stories of hope and resilience in birthing new communities of faith. Keep your eyes on MennoniteMission.net/Sent for how to register!

Verse of the Week

“Blessed is anyone who endures temptation. Such a one has stood the test and will receive the crown of life that the Lord has promised to those who love him.” James 1:12 (NRSV)