

Palm Sunday Sermon
April 5, 2020
By The Rev. Nora Becker

Be Well. Be Kind. Be Hopeful.

It's hard to compete with Palm Sunday. This will be a memorable Palm Sunday. One where we cannot join in the celebration of Jesus coming to preach in Jerusalem, one where we are left pondering where all this will lead. The streets are quiet, we have palms but cannot give them out. We to walk with Jesus into Jerusalem in our hearts.

For, we are mired in a tragic time in world history. 102 years ago, the Spanish Flu rampaged across the globe killing millions. And this week I had one of those light bulb moments bringing me to something I had never really connected. My mother was born in 1918. My mother had no sense of smell; she could taste but she would sometimes ask "Does this taste okay?" She had never been able to smell. All because the revelation that smell and taste are now one of the lost things by some who have had the coronavirus.

But we do not have to let go of welcoming and walking with Jesus into Jerusalem where things will get lost. Like Jesus losing his life to give us life, to help his followers become who they will become. This year we are doing a greater thing that we would not have imagined three months ago. We are not meeting together so that we might save each other, ourselves and those whom we do not know. That all are protected and all matter.

Instead of preaching "Go Ye Out into the World and Preach the Gospel!" we are staying home, finding worship online, maybe finding a space for a retreat day or reaching out to friends and family to help them have what they need, including kind words and companionship, and toilet paper. I can see the marquee at the Robinson Grand from my kitchen window. What they had posted last week has meant a lot to me.

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This is a mantra worth holding onto. I had hoped they would keep it longer as a reminder for taking care of ourselves and each other, being kind, helping others, and remaining hopeful amidst fear for what may yet come our way. That is what many of Jesus' followers were doing later that day after they carpeted the road into the city of Jerusalem for Jesus, and him knowing that he would be led to the Cross.

The people were joyful, hopeful and kind. What I see in the gospel reading is deep pain and deep love. Jesus, very human and bereft asking that the cup would pass from him, to be betrayed by a kiss, and to accept the unthinkable physical and emotional pain. To be honest, would I run and hide? I don't know. What do you see, what do you feel? How are you moved? The thing about Palm Sunday is there is too much to take in. Be gentle.

In some ways this pandemic encourages us to be the Body of Christ, caring from a distance, being kind, being willing to give what we have, and most of all being bearers of HOPE in this time of uncertainty. A story: Beth Sickles went to Sam's to purchase items for backpacks. They had not posted the limits on certain products and she went to pay and found she could not get all we needed. She was upset and people took boxes, paid for them out of pocket and gave them back to her. How kind and hopeful and beautiful.

HOPE LIVES WITHIN US - PASS IT ON!