

April 15, 2019 Huntley UMC weekly email

Dear friends,

I was out of the country the last couple of weeks on a trip to the Galapagos Islands, so that's why I haven't been in touch. The Galapagos Islands are a unique and special place, unlike any other place on the planet. The animal and marine life are unique and mostly not found anywhere else in the world. I will share more about my trip in later communications, and I am planning on putting together a slide show and talk about my trip in the coming weeks. I invite all who are interested in learning more to attend my Galapagos presentation. I will let you know when this will happen. Many thanks to Ruth McKenzie for filling for me in my absence.

Yesterday in worship at Huntley United Methodist Church we celebrated Palm Sunday and the beginning of Holy Week. As Jesus came into the city, the crowds began singing and shouting and joyfully praising God in loud voices for all the miracles they had witnessed, according to Luke's Gospel. "Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord!" they cried. "Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!"

But not everyone is happy with this turn of events. Some Pharisees in the crowd said to Jesus, "Teacher, rebuke your disciples!" Obviously the Pharisees are offended by this little celebration, and see it as blasphemous, as an affront to God. But Jesus replies, "If they keep quiet, the very stones will cry out." That's quite a vivid image, isn't it? The very stones crying out, ordinary rocks along the ground, crying out his praise. If the stones on the ground had cried out, what do you think would have been their message on that first Palm Sunday?

Surely the first thing the stones would have cried out is this: "Take notice, Jerusalem, your King is here." Maybe Jesus wasn't the king the people expected, but he was on a mission from God to redeem a fallen world. His face was set toward Jerusalem and his goal. Jesus would not be deterred. Maybe the world didn't get the king they expected, but we certainly got the king we needed.

The second thing that the stones might have said is this: "Your Savior has arrived." The really good news about this day is that Jesus didn't come into our world to rule over us, but to redeem us. He is our King, but more importantly, he is our Savior. Jesus did for us what we could not do for ourselves. We can accomplish much in this world, but the one thing we can never do is save ourselves. Jesus came to save us!

The last thing the stones would have said about Jesus is, "Give him your heart." It is not enough for us to acknowledge that Christ is our King or that because of his sacrificial love, our sins have been forgiven. There must come a time when we allow him to be the Lord of our lives, when we begin to live as the kind of men and women God created us to be. When we give Jesus our hearts, we open ourselves to be that new and beautiful creation that God desires for each one of us. May you have a blessed Holy Week as we prepare for Easter.

We will celebrate Holy Week with the following special community services. Maundy Thursday Community Service and Potluck Dinner at Bethlehem UCC in Worden at 6:30 p.m. Good Friday Community Service at Ballantine UCC beginning at 7:00 p.m. Easter worship at Huntley United Methodist Church next Sunday at 10:30 a.m. All are invited and encouraged to attend.

Huntley United Methodist Women will host their annual Garage Sale and Bake Sale on Saturday, April 27th from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Donations will be accepted after worship on April 21st.

Huntley United Methodist Church will host a Community Blood Drive on May 1st from 3:00 – 6:30 p.m. Please call Kathe at 839-5844 if you would like to donate. Giving blood truly makes a difference in our communities and helps save lives. Giving blood is easy, safe, and almost everyone is able to donate. Give the gift of life by becoming a blood donor.

See you in worship,
Pastor Gary Geiman