

Palm Sunday

The road narrows, you are going to lose a lane of travel, there may be construction ahead ... or maybe there will be less space for a road to be carved ... a narrow trail up the side of a mountain ... or an alley way between buildings.

There are signs along the road where we journey that give us information, a warning, or simply state the obvious.

A STOP sign is apparent.

A YIELD sign, not so much.

Today we entered the worship area via a detour ... a rerouting to the main entrance with the glass doors and exposure to Hill Ave. Then, when we entered to worship, there was another detour – to the dedication of the Memorial Prayer Garden.

Signs are abundant for you and me, as we travel this wonderful earth of God's creation. The sign of Lent we consider this morning is a sign that indicates that the road narrows ... funnels, if you will ... into a tighter space.

Jesus' life will be tightening down this week, as he approaches his death on the cross. For 32 years, Jesus had walked in the flesh and talked to people like you and me. For 32 years, the world was available for him to travel, talk and tell the truth about why he was here on earth. He talked about sin; he talked about forgiveness; he healed people; he upset his mom and dad at the temple, when he was 12; he prayed; he preached ... he did everything that you expect a Messiah to do.

Then ... his road ... his path ... narrowed. From a six-lane open freeway; Jesus funneled down to a single fast track toward the cross and resurrection. Jesus posted a sign that life in the faith is a narrow path.

Jesus said to his followers, "Enter by the narrow gate. For the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few."

We are tempted by that wide gate and the easy way. When we follow our own desires instead of listening to the will of God.

In the Word of God, the Holy Spirit calls us to repentance and we turn from



that destructive road of sin and ask God's forgiveness.

When we see others lost on that wide way to destruction we pray for them and reach out to them in witness, hoping to bring them by the Spirit's power onto the narrow way that leads to life in Jesus' name.

On Palm Sunday, Jesus, entered a narrow gate into the city of Jerusalem. During the years of his earthly ministry he walked and taught and healed, traveling through Galilee, Samaria and Judea, all the while drawing closer to Jerusalem and closer to his cross. He entered into Jerusalem with humility, riding on a donkey as the Old Testament prophets had said.

The road narrowed from his widespread ministry throughout Israel to the narrow city streets of Jerusalem, crowded with followers who hailed him as David's Son. They waved palm branches, throwing their coats in his path and shouting glad hosannas, calling on the King to save them. Jesus rode through the narrow gate and took up the hard way.

His path of ministry narrowed down into the final road that would lead to suffering and the cross. A narrow road that would mean death for him. His dead end on the cross, would be the message that encourages us to make a U-turn from sin; merge with the flow of faithful believers in the community called the church; and end up offering life and salvation for us. This all because the signs of Lent, the signs on the road of our faith journey, all lead us to the forgiveness that was granted to us through the mystery and majesty of the cross and the empty tomb.

Palm Sunday is a day to honor our King and remember that the road he followed narrowed into a road that led directly to the cross. It is also a day to remember that in holy Baptism, our own road through life narrowed.

In baptism we were taken from the wide road to destruction and placed by the Spirit on the narrow road of Jesus that leads through death and into life. In Romans 6, the apostle Paul asks, "Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life."



Through faith in Jesus Christ, we are created anew. Once we were enemies of God, lost in sin, going our own way on the wide path of destruction. Then by the power of the Holy Spirit we were called to faith, buried with Christ in baptism. We shared his death and we were raised up from the water with our feet set firmly on his narrow road to walk “in newness of life.”

Through Jesus’ death and resurrection, we are reconciled to God. He has given us the message of reconciliation to share with the world, the good news that in Christ, God has reconciled the world to himself. As we witness to the saving work of Jesus, we pray that those who hear the good news will be moved by the Spirit’s power to join us on the joyful, narrow road of life in Christ, our humble King of glory and our Savior.

Amen.

