

Palm Sunday 2023

Message: Walking the Road into Jerusalem! The Reverend John Livingston, Interim Pastor

When I was a kid, I loved parades. I still do! When I was growing up, I would actually convince my friends to march up and down the block we lived on as I led them wearing a band leader hat! I wish the high school I went to had a marching band. If they did, I would have played the drums or maybe be the Drum Major with that long baton! Oh...I can just see myself leading the band.

Growing up in Queens Village NY- every year, during the month of June, on a certain Thursday afternoon **there was a parade!**

It was called **the Anniversary Day Parade.**

It was held to remember and celebrate the beginning of Sunday School in 1829! Can you believe that? A parade to celebrate Sunday School? I loved it!! All the churches would join the parade with flags and bands and floats.

There was always a theme for the parade, like "Jesus is the Light of the World" or "Let There be Peace" Each church had a float decorated with paper flowers and bright colors expressing the theme. One year my dad directed a marching choir. They sang as they walked along ,and he marched backward - I guess that's where I got my "Marching" genes!

Over the years, as a kid, I was **on the float** but then I graduated to **carrying a flag** and then one year, when I was just 16 years old, I was chosen to be **one of coordinators of the entire parade**, the youngest leader ever chosen, that says something about my enthusiasm and parade spirit!

That year was the best!!

And I was always so sad when the parade was over and after a few days of sadness I started looking forward to next year's parade.

But the thing is . . .I never missed a parade.

TODAY WE REMEMBER AND CELEBRATE THE PARADE OF JESUS into Jerusalem. When this parade is over it leads us into Holy Week when we remember the last week of his life, a week **that was filled with sadness-** but for now, for today, we celebrate the parade of Jesus as he rode into Jerusalem with his enthusiastic **followers marching along!**

Many years ago Jerry Herman wrote the musical, *Hello Dolly* and he wrote a song for that show called *Before the Parade Passes By*

The words are on the first page of today's Order of Worship.

*Before the parade passes by
I've gotta get in step while there's still time left!
I'm ready to move out in front
Life without life has no reason or rhyme left!
With the rest of them!
With the best of them!
I wanna hold my head up high
I need a goal again!
I need a drive again!
I wanna feel my heart coming alive again!
Before the parade passes by!!*

It's basically saying, **"Don't let your life pass you by."**

Live it!

Love it!

March in the parade!!!

Give the best of who you are to everyone and everything especially those closest to you.

I would say that is the best summary of the message Jesus shared.
So, in that spirit, before we have our parade,

I share these words:

"If Tomorrow Never Comes"

If I knew it would be the last time that I'd see you fall asleep,
I would tuck you in more tightly and pray the Lord, your soul to keep.
If I knew it would be the last time that I see you walk out the door,
I would give you a hug and kiss and call you back for just one more.
If I knew it would be the last time, I could spare an extra minute or two to stop and say,
"I love you," instead of assuming that you KNOW I do.
If I knew it would be the last time, I would be there to share your day,
but I'm sure you'll have so many more, so I can let just this one slip away.
For surely there's always tomorrow to make up for an oversight,
and we always get a second chance to make everything right.
There will always be another day to say, **"I love you"**
And certainly there's another chance to say our **"Anything I can do?"**

*But just in case I might be wrong, and today is all I get, I'd like to say how much
I love you and I hope we never forget:*

*Tomorrow is not promised to anyone, young or old alike and today
may be the last chance you get to hold your loved one tight.*

*So, if you're waiting for tomorrow, why not do it today?
For if tomorrow never comes, you'll surely regret the day that you didn't take that extra
time for a smile, a hug, or a kiss and you'd regret that you were too busy to grant
someone, what turned out to be their one last wish.*

**So, hold your loved ones close today, whisper in their ear,
Tell them how much you love them and that you'll always hold them dear,
Take time to say, "I'm sorry," "please forgive me," "thank you" or "it's okay"
And if tomorrow never comes, you'll have no regrets about today!!!!**

Don't let life and love pass you by!

Love one another with your whole heart and soul!

LIVE! LOVE!

MARCH!