

WHAT'S HAPPENING? – Sunday, March 3, 2024 – Third Sunday in Lent

Hello Westminster people:

This coming Sunday is The Third Sunday in Lent, and Lent is the traditional Christian time of self-examination for both individuals and the church. And by 'church', I mean the local congregation.

As you've no doubt noticed, the Gospel of Mark has been our guide throughout most of this year. But over the next three weeks the assigned readings are explorations of the Gospel of John. We shall return to Mark's gospel on Palm Sunday (March 24).

This coming Sunday, March 3, we'll be reading about Jesus' clearing the Temple in Jerusalem. This story is reported with different details in all four gospels. However, the author of the Gospel of John places this incident at the **beginning** of Jesus' public ministry while the other three gospel writers - Matthew Mark and Luke - tell us that it took place **near the end** of Jesus' last week in Jerusalem, as part and parcel of the climax of Jesus' public ministry.

Could this mean there were two Temple-clearing incidents?

No, it doesn't mean that at all! Instead, we should understand that the writer of John's gospel re-positioned this story to the beginning of Jesus' public ministry, in a way similar to the opening scene of a movie or TV program which functions as a flashback to the rest of the story.

At any rate, the lectionary's assigned gospel reading for this coming Sunday is the version of the Temple clearing story appearing in John 2:13-22. My sermon, based on this biblical text, is titled "Jesus Shuts down the Temple" in which I explore the

various reasons Jesus protested and disrupted the Temple's lucrative banking and business activities.

Equally important, since this is the Season of Lent, in my sermon I go on to point out that this time of the Christian year is ideal for us as persons-of-faith and as a community-of-faith to reflect on Jesus' radical and subversive action that day long ago. And after that I ask the question, "Is it time for us to clear out our own (metaphorical) temples?"

And finally, whether you choose to worship God and celebrate life at Westminster United Church in-person, or via Zoom-church, or YouTube, I look forward to being with you again this coming Sunday.

Peace & Joy,

Rev. Del

P.S. 'Announcements' for Sunday, March 3 are attached

INSIGHTS

For Christians, Lent is the traditional time of the year for self-examination. This picture, I think, captures the Lenten ideal both humorously and effectively. See below or attached.



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