

**What circumstances are calling us to bravery?
How will we practice the truth that we need each other?**

A brief Palm Sunday reflection

Siblings in Christ, friends in faith,

I invite you to wonder with me and with Bryan about two questions this morning: **What circumstances are calling us to act with bravery? How will we practice the truth that we need each other?**

Palm Sunday has never been a stand-out cherished day in the liturgical calendar for me. But then I arrived to a new call in the St. Croix Valley in 2021. Becoming involved with our St. Croix Valley Ministerial Association (an extraordinarily thoughtful, heartfelt group of colleagues) has transformed my experience of Palm Sunday with all of you into a day that renews my faith in some new way each year. We are here today to tap into the common love song of our Christian faith, harvesting a flow of the loving Spirit we know in Jesus the Christ.

What circumstances in your private life or in our public sphere are calling you to speak and act with bravery? Reverend George Anne shared with us the story of Bryan, who was so disturbed by the cruel, scornful ways Jesus was treated by his oppressors that he bravely shouted and wailed against the injustice he was witnessing. I wonder if Bryan recognized how closely he was patterning his behavior after Jesus' behavior that Passover over 2,000 years ago?

What circumstances were calling Jesus to speak and act with bravery? Jesus could see God's vision for a beloved community. I believe that Jesus' faith in an ever-present, all-powerful God of Love gave him the courage he needed in order to act bravely. I believe that Jesus persisted because he knew and could feel in his bones that he wasn't alone. Do we know and feel in our bones that we aren't alone?

Can you imagine the conversations Jesus had with his best friends leading up to that day? “Look,” Jesus might have said, “Those who are benefiting from their roles in perpetuating injustice are doing their utmost to try to silence our message of God’s love for all. But we will persist. We are never alone in this struggle. Nothing can separate us from the Love of God!”

Jesus knew he needed the support of each one who came alongside him to shout their encouragements that day, just as we need the support of each one present with us online and onsite here today.

How will you practice the truth that we need each other?

“Blessed is the one who comes in the name of our Lord.” That is, blessed is the one who comes in the name of our God – the universal Love that is sovereign in our lives. They shouted it about Jesus as he rode into Jerusalem, bravely staying in the struggle for justice. May we say it of one another as well. Blessed is each of us who comes in the name of ever-present, all-powerful Love.

What circumstances are calling you to act with bravery?

How will you practice the truth that we need each other?

With Bryan and with Jesus, may we act in love and in truth, bravely demonstrating our need for one another - because Love is counting on us. Amen. Let us say it together: Amen!

Rev. Clare Gromoll
Ecumenical service at Trinity Lutheran Church (Stillwater)
March 24, 2024 (Palm Sunday, Mark 11:1-11)