March 6
Grace and peace to you this day.

One of the things that I know almost nothing about is astronomy. However, the topic fascinates me. The other night for example, there were two very bright lights in the Western sky. Turns out they weren’t stars, but planets: Jupiter and Venus. It looked like this:

![Planets in the Western sky](image)

Venus, which is roughly the size of the Earth, actually appears here as the brighter object and is 38 million miles away from us. Jupiter, on the other hand, is 11 times the size of Earth and is the largest planet in the solar system. It is 441 million miles from us.

This occurrence is called a “cosmic kiss” or a “candy crush” and in the case of Jupiter and Venus, will occur again in 2039. It turns out that the solar system is so finely tuned that astronomers can predict with precision when this phenomenon will occur again. Fascinating.

As I think about this, I come to this thought: If the Lord of all Creation cares so much about spinning balls of rock and gas that He sets them in their course with such precision, how much more does He care about the course of our lives, the course He hand picks for each and every one of us. Of course, the planets lack free will and are bound to their course by the laws of nature as God has determined them. Not so with we humans who veer off course frequently, often with disastrous results.

I can’t really pretend to understand much of this, but nonetheless, I am led to the words of our Creator as spoken through the prophet Isaiah:
“For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways,” declares the LORD. “As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts” (55:8-9).

So let me encourage you. Take a look at the celestial realms on a clear night and know that the God who set each planet and each star carefully on their course did so, with the greatest of care, for you as well.

IHS,
Pastor Lou

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March 7
Greetings, DGCC Family.

This past Sunday was the second Sunday of Lent. Perhaps because Lent is customarily seen as a Catholic practice and tradition, we Protestants tend not to focus on it too much, which certainly was not the case when I was growing up in a Catholic household.

Like all Catholic kids, we were encouraged to give up something for Lent. Common choices were things like candy, chocolate, donuts, etc. No one found it too amusing when I offered to give up broccoli. Or creamed tuna (don’t ask).

Additionally, we were encouraged to “fast” on Fridays and holy days. Generally, this meant that we could not eat meat. That was OK with me because we got to eat peanut butter and jelly sandwiches for lunch on those days (which I still like), though I could have done without the Mrs. Paul’s fish sticks for Friday night dinner.

To be sure, the practice of fasting is deeply rooted in Scripture. For example, the Gospel writer Luke records the following scene when Mary and Joseph go to present the child Jesus at the temple:

“There was also a prophet, Anna, the daughter of Penuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was very old; she had lived with her husband seven years after her marriage, and then was a widow until she was eighty-four. She never left the temple but worshiped night and day, fasting and praying” (2:36-37) /

In any case, I wonder if there’s not something to be said for the Lenten practice of fasting and spiritual discipline. That being said, perhaps we should look at the practice of fasting in a different light. What if we “fasted” from one hour of TV a day? What if we
“fasted” from social media during Lent. I’m sure Mr. Zuckerberg won’t mind…or even notice.

What if instead we replaced those things with spending time in the Word. Or in prayer. Or visiting an old friend, or someone in a hospital or nursing home.

So allow me to encourage you: think about observing a Lenten fast from “screen time.” Put down the remote and pick up God’s Word. And then see how nourishing this fast can be.

IHS,
Pastor Lou

March 8

Grace and peace to you this day.

Next week starts the uniquely American season called “March Madness.” For the uninitiated, it is a national college basketball tournament that lasts for two or three weeks and culminates in the winner being crowned the NCAA champions.

I must confess, I never watch a single minute of it. I don’t follow the “brackets.” I couldn’t tell you who is in it, who is favored, or who I want to win. It’s not that I see anything wrong with it, it’s just that it doesn’t hold my interest. Probably because I was terrible at basketball as a kid. Let’s just say that my vertical leap was, well, modest.

That being said, I’m going to suggest that during this season of Lent, we conduct our own kind of tournament. Let’s call it “Messiah Madness.” During this tournament, you are asked to read verses of Scripture about the Messiah. Here’s a few to get you started, in no particular order:

- Jeremiah 31:31-34
- Matthew 1:1-17
- John 7:42
- Daniel 9:25-26
- John 1:41
- John 4:25
- Matthew 3:3

You get the idea. Reading these won’t get you a trophy or an NBA contract, but maybe, just maybe, it will get you something better: a closer walk with your Savior.
March 9

Grace and peace to you this day.

As we are now finishing up the first week of March, I am reminded of an old saying for the weather this month. Perhaps you have heard it as well: “In like a lion, out like a lamb.”

As I think about this, I am reminded that these two animals are used to refer to Jesus the Messiah as well. This picture is painted vividly in the book of Revelation:

“Then one of the elders said to me, “Do not weep! See, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has triumphed. He is able to open the scroll and its seven seals” (5:5).

By referring to Jesus as the Lion of Judah, John the Elder (who is the author of Revelation), is referring to the lineage of Jesus (you can read about this in Matthew 1). There were twelve tribes of Israel (named after the twelve sons of the patriarch Jacob), one of whom was Judah. Judah was an ancestor of Jesse, who was the father of King David. God had promised through the prophet Isaiah that a green shoot would grow from the stump of Jesse (11:1), referring to Jesus, and had also promised King David that someone would be on his throne forever, also referring to Jesus. In referring to Jesus as “the Lion of Judah,” John is not only referring to how Jesus will deal with evil in the end times, but is also referring to the steadfast promises of God made through Scripture.

Similarly, we read this on Revelation:

“All after this I looked, and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and before the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands. And they cried out in a loud voice: ‘Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb” (7:9-10).

This is one of my favorite verses in all of Scripture. All the people coming together to worship the Lamb of God, the Lion of Judah.
So next time we get a March thunderstorm that comes in like a lion, and next time we get a gentle breeze that goes out like a lamb, I hope that for you it calls to mind our true Lion, and our true Lamb.

IHS,
Pastor Lou

March 10
Happy Friday everyone!
As always, here’s your music devotional for the week. Turn up the volume and enjoy.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cKLQ1td3MbE

IHS,
Pastor Lou