

Our Changing Reality

When I was growing up in the Midwest, people always used to say that the month of March would come in like a lion and go out like a lamb, or come in like a lamb and go out like a lion. It was a way of saying that March was a month of change. How ever this month begins will not be the way it ends. At some point during the month, the winds will shift. They will begin to blow stronger or the air will get calmer. As people we live within this changing reality. We are caught up in the changes in the jet stream above us, in the hurricanes of life around us, and the swirling vortexes of people's lives that disrupt our own. Whether we are the active change agent or not, this is a month that will change us. Perhaps that's why the old saying brings together two images of Jesus Christ to describe the month of March. Both the lion and the lamb are symbols of Christ. They represent a paradox – two seemingly opposite characteristics of our Lord that are brought together in one person. It is a miracle, and one that we can't fully understand.

So, chances are, God will do something in your life and in your community this month that will change you. Chances are that you will not be the same person at the end of this month that you are at the beginning. Here are a few things to reflect on that will happen in our community this month, that could have some significant changes on us:

1. **Palm Sunday/Holy Week/Easter.** The highlight of our faith is the death and resurrection of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. The New Testament tells us that if Christ did not really rise from the dead then we are of all people, the most to be pitied. If Christ did not really rise from the dead then our faith is worthless. Everything rises and falls on the resurrection. This month Easter falls on March 23. Many of you will have an opportunity to minister to people who rarely attend church this month. Let us pray that the Spirit of God will move in our worship services to touch people who need to experience Jesus Christ as the changing reality in their lives.
2. [➡Presbytery meeting, March 11, at Mount Soledad Presbyterian Church.](#) While presbytery meetings are always important to our life together, this month's meeting will be particularly so. This will be the first meeting since our council retreat with Alan Roxburgh as we discussed steps that we could take to become a missional presbytery of missional churches and missional people. This has helped crystallize and build upon previous conversations, and helped bring in to focus how we can begin to learn to engage our communities in new ways. Our recommendations and subsequent action steps will be important for you to hear.

Also, this meeting will bring the [➡final report and recommendations of the Way](#)

[Forward Work Group](#). This group, which was formed some 15 months ago, after concerns from the last General Assembly, will present their suggestions about how to respond to the issues that were raised. As we are all aware, our denominational reality and our presbytery reality have changed over the last 15 months. While these recommendations are not necessarily the final word on these issues, they will give you, the presbytery, an opportunity to make some significant decisions.

3. **Seminars in your congregation.** Some of the recent presentations that I have given at the presbytery meeting and at the Leadership Development Day are now available for me to give to leaders and members in your congregation. Over the last two months, I have shared some thoughts about our changing reality in presentations about:

 The History of Presbyteries and the Future of Ours

 [We're Not in Kansas Anymore – A New Era of Mission](#)

 [We're Not in Kansas Anymore – Surfing the Edge of Chaos.](#)

I am available to present these to your congregation, so that more of your church members can be a part of this conversation. By having this presentation and discussion in your church building, you can talk more specifically about how these changes are affecting your particular church, and you can explore ideas and ways of dealing with the new reality.

4. And of course, [March Madness](#). No discussion of this month would be complete without filling out our brackets about who will end the season as the best men's college basketball team in the country. What makes this tournament so exciting is the unexpected upsets, the Cinderella stories, and the people who rise to the occasion when the pressure is on.

I am encouraged by what I see as I go around the Presbytery of San Diego, because I see people rising to the occasion when the pressure is on. I see more and more people becoming aware of our changing reality and beginning to think outside the box as we look for ways to move back in to the neighborhood and have a genuine missionary encounter with our own culture. I pray that this will be a significant month for you. I pray that we will get a clearer sense of what God is doing in our world and how we can join in what He is already doing. I pray that we will end the month as different people than the way we begin it. I pray that we will become more like Christ, coming in like a lamb, and going out like a lion. After all, that's what March is all about.

Clark Cowden
