



First Presbyterian Times

April 2023

Letter from the Pastor

Friends,

April's here, and with it our beloved observance of Holy Week and Easter! This is, in the words of novelist John Irving's fictional character, Owen Meany – "The main event!" Without Easter, nothing we say or do as the church of Jesus Christ has any point.

Have you ever thought of it that way before? That we, the church of Jesus Christ, are a people who view everything through the lens of Christ's resurrection, and what his resurrection means for us each and every day as a *Resurrection People*? It's certainly more than food for thought, more than an interesting point to ponder. It is, put plainly, our entire reason for being.

Sure, the church does a lot of good things with its time and resources: feeding people, sending money to philanthropic organization, lending its building to community organizations for meetings and events, hosting speakers who bring lots of interesting information to groups, providing beautiful grounds upon which people walk, play, and enjoy life, and so on. But none of that says anything about the resurrection of Jesus. It's merely decent, hospitable, and nice.

What's so bad about being decent, hospitable, and nice? Nothing. But Jesus didn't come into the world, die a criminal's death, and rise from the dead so that we could be nice, decent people. That's what the preacher and teacher Dietrich Bonhoeffer calls "cheap grace." It demands nothing of us but some general assent that God desires us to be morally-upstanding, ethical, and honorable people.

Friends, Jesus didn't die for us to be nice to one another. He gave his life for us, in a gracious exchange, so we would be reconciled to God and counted as God's children. He rose, and ascended into heaven (as our Apostles' Creed so beautifully states), as a guarantee that all of our humanity is inextricably linked with his, and that we now belong – in life and in death, body and soul – not to ourselves, but to God. He lives and reigns so that we might love one another with the kind of love like his that goes to hell and back.

We are a *Resurrection People* who demonstrate in our lives, individually and communally, the sacrificial love of God in Jesus Christ. It is **this** love that leads us to care for our neighbors by feeding them, provide financial resources in times of need, use our building and grounds as a staging area for ministry, welcome the stranger as friend, educate and inform the people, and model the extravagant generosity of the One who has made us a part of the household of God.

Being nice...or being made wholly new? Which sounds better to you? As for me, I'd rather be a resurrection person than simply a respectable one...God's own child, and not just a good man. Happy Easter to each and every one of you, God's beloved children...a resurrection people!

Peace,

Pastor Jason

A Note from Faith Formation...

Spring Greetings to everyone!

This month, I would like to take a moment to discuss the responsibility of discipleship as Christians. As part of the Lent and Easter season, we of course read the story of Jesus' resurrection, including what is arguably one of the most famous bible verses of all time: "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you;" (Matthew 28:19-20). 'The Great Commission' so it is called, but what does this mean for us right now in 2023? What does it mean for us as members of the First Presbyterian Church of Manhattan, Kansas? When we think of the idea of discipleship and Faith Formation, we of course think about how we are discipling those of all ages and walks of life already in our congregation, but it is likely we also consider how to bring more people into the church. Think about some of the questions we tend to ask as a congregation related to membership and discipleship. 'How do we get more people to come to the church?' 'What events can we do to draw more families with young children to our congregation?' 'In what ways can we advertise so that new people in the community come to our programs?' These are oftenthe big questions we find ourselves posing as Christians in the world. I also have often found myself racking my brain for answers to these very questions, but I find in those moments that turning to scripture reminds me that I am asking the wrong questions. The scripture does not say "advertise and use flashy things to draw people into your church and increase your church membership". The scripture says "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations". The key word here is "Go". Jesus wants us to go out into the world and tell people about Jesus. It is not our responsibility to put up a sign and hope people come...our great commission is to consciously go out into the world and disciple people.

I encourage you to pray on this scripture this month. Consider ways you can disciple others in your community and beyond and the whole world as a broad community of Christians will flourish. Make a connection with someone and tell them about Jesus (and yes, you can also invite them to church!). Get involved in discipleship within the church. Volunteer for leading Sunday School groups, mentoring youth, helping at VBS, serving meals and connecting with those at community meals...these are all ways in which we disciple both our members and the community beyond.

With blessings,

Susana Vick
Director of Faith Formation

DID YOU KNOW? *Deacon Trivia!*



Did you know that FPC fills a community Blessing Box every Saturday?! Our volunteers stock the pantry located at First Congressional United Church of Christ at 700 Poyntz Avenue.

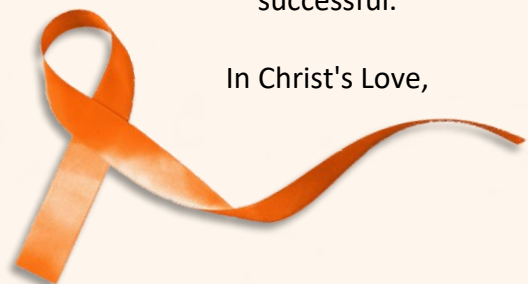
If you want to be a Blessing Box volunteer, ask Peggy Lyons, Pam Beardsley or any other deacon!

THANK YOU FROM *The Mullens*

Friends,

Thank you for your prayers, contacts, and many expressions of love during the past few weeks. We feel your support and are confident Sally's yet-to-be-scheduled bone marrow transplant will be successful.

In Christ's Love,



UPCOMING EVENTS

Troop 74 Annual Pancake Feed | April 1st

Presby Place | 7am—2pm

Boy Scout Troop 74 will host their Annual Pancake Feed on Saturday, April 1st from 7am to 2pm! Tickets are \$5 per person and can be purchased at the door!

Palm Sunday | April 2nd

Fisher Hall | 11:00 a.m.

We invite you to join us on Palm Sunday for a Procession of the Palms, followed by a special Easter cantata worship service! The procession will meet in City Park at 9:30 a.m. (near the shelter on Poyntz Ave.), ending at First Presbyterian Church. Worship will be held at 10:30 a.m. in the Sanctuary. There will be NO early service the morning of Palm Sunday.

Prayer Gathering | April 3rd

Chapel | 9:00am

Maundy Thursday | April 6th

Sanctuary | 7:00 p.m.

Join us at this beautiful service to remember our Savior's sacrificial love with Tenebrae and Communion in the Sanctuary.

Good Friday | April 7th

Sanctuary | 7:00 p.m.

On this night, we will worship and give thanks for the sacrifice of God in Jesus Christ with contemplative service of worship and observance of the crucifixion and glorification of Jesus. **The church office will be closed Good Friday!**

Easter Sunday | April 9th

Church Grounds | Events all morning

It's the Resurrection of the Lord Sunday! We will start the morning with a **Sunrise Service** at 8:00am in Tami's Garden, afterwards a **Continental Breakfast** will be available in Fisher Hall at 8:30am, followed by an **Easter Egg Hunt** in Friendship Park at 9:00am. We will finish the morning with our "main event"; a traditional **Easter Worship Service** and **Communion** in the Sanctuary at 10:30am. The One Great Hour of Sharing offering will also be received this morning. See the Narthex for details and giving envelopes.

Friday Fellowship | April 21st

Fisher Hall | 11:00 a.m.

April's speaker will be our own church member Sue Bath-Dunn, sharing her account of her current trip to the Holy Land. The program is at 11 a.m. followed by a delicious lunch prepared by the church women. All are invited to Friday Fellowship, sponsored by the Deacons! A \$10 donation is requested for lunch. Proceeds go to support the work of the Deacons. Please RSVP through the church office by Monday, April 17th!

Pepper Choplin's

EASTER CANTATA

**Come to the Cross
& Remember**



APRIL 2, 2023

Palm Sunday 10:30AM

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF MANHATTAN

801 LEAVENWORTH STREET MANHATTAN, KS 66502

www.firstpresmanhattan.com



BEING A PEOPLE OF PRAYER...

He handed me a folded piece of paper with writing scrawled over the top in blue ink bearing the words: "Prayer Doesn't Work." And he asked me "What do you think of that?"

After fumbling over myself and the audacity of the phrase, after responding with anything and everything I'd learned in seminary regarding prayer, he continued: "Open it up."

Inside the folded paper were the words: "God works when we pray."

I've never forgotten that humbling moment. And I remember it often in prayer, especially when praying with, or on behalf of, others – that it's not us, but God, who is the agent in prayer.

I invite anyone who is interested to join me in the chapel for prayer on Monday morning, April 3 at 9:00am. We will inquire of God and pray for the needs of friends and family, the church, the community, and the world, and hopefully have a core group of people who agree to continue praying when requests, concerns, needs, joys, and celebrations arise, checking in with one another monthly as we lift up together the prayers of God's people.

The coffee will be ready. The Holy Spirit will be present. We just need you! Hope to see you Monday, April 3, at 9:00am!

Peace, Pastor Jason

BSA Troop 74 Annual Food Drive Benefits Church Food Pantry



A big thank you is given to Boy Scout Troop 74 for collecting 370 lbs. of nonperishable food items for the First Presbyterian Church Food Pantry during their annual Scouting for Food drive on Saturday, March 11, 2023. The food drive is a leading BSA service program nationwide.

The Scouts dropped off sacks to residents' homes the week before with a list of needed items, then picked up the donated items and brought them to the church for weighing, checking expiration dates, and sorting. Scoutmaster Michael Kerr and other volunteers helped organize the event. Needed items donated ranged from canned meats, soups, fruits, and vegetables to pasta, baking items, and healthy snacks.

Troop 74's food drive is especially appreciated this year with a significant increase in the number of families seeking food assistance through the Flint Hills Breadbasket and its affiliated church pantries. Our food pantry is open every Friday from 9:00 to 11:30 a.m.

Boy Scout Troop 74 will host their Annual Pancake Feed on Saturday, April 1 at Presby Place from 7 a.m. to 2 p.m. Tickets are \$5 per person and can be purchased at the door.

APRIL CALENDAR

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
2 Procession of Palms 9:30am Easter Cantata 10:30am Palm/Passion Sunday	3 Prayer Group 9am Boy Scouts Troop 74 6:30pm In-reach & Outreach 5:30pm	4 World Friendship 9am Community Showers 5pm Community Meals 6pm	5 Community Breakfast 7am Staff Meeting 9am Women's Bible Study 10am Hospitality & Fellowship 5:30pm Back in the Word Bible Study 6pm Handbell Choir Practice 6pm	6 Life's Journey with Grief 12pm Communion & Tenebrae 7pm Maundy Thursday	7 Food Pantry 9am Good Friday Service 7pm Office Closed Good Friday
9 Sunrise Service 8am Continental Breakfast 8:30 Easter Egg Hunt 9:00am Easter Service 10:30am Resurrection Sunday/ Easter Day	10 Boy Scouts Troop 74 6:30pm	11 World Friendship 9am Community Showers 5pm Community Meals 6pm	12 Community Breakfast 7am Women's Bible Study 10am Back in the Word Bible Study 6pm Handbell Choir Practice 6pm Newsletter Deadline	13 Life's Journey with Grief 12pm Worship & Discipleship 9:30am	14 Food Pantry 9am
16 Early Service 8:30am Nursery 9am-noon Sunday School 9:30am Traditional Service 10:30am 2nd Sunday in Easter	17 Men's Luncheon 12pm Boy Scouts Troop 74 6:30pm	18 Community Showers 5pm Community Meals 6pm	19 Community Breakfast 7am Staff Meeting 9am Women's Bible Study 10am Back in the Word Bible Study 6pm Handbell Choir Practice 6pm Nuts & Bolts 6:30pm	20 Life's Journey with Grief 12pm	21 Food Pantry 9am Grow Green Match Day
23 Early Service 8:30am Nursery 9am-noon Sunday School 9:30am Traditional Service 10:30am 3rd Sunday in Easter	24 Men's Luncheon 12pm Deacons Meeting 5:30pm Boy Scouts Troop 74 6:30pm	25 World Friendship 9am Community Showers 5pm Community Meals 6pm Session 6:30pm	26 Community Breakfast 7am Women's Bible Study 10am Back in the Word Bible Study 6pm Handbell Choir Practice 6pm	27 Life's Journey with Grief 12pm	28 Food Pantry 9am Friday Fellowship 11am
30 Early Service 8:30am Nursery 9am-noon Sunday School 9:30am Traditional Service 10:30am 3rd Sunday in Easter	IMPORTANT DATES: April 1st: Spring Clean-up at FPC April 2nd: Palm Sunday April 6th: Maundy Thursday April 7th: Good Friday April 9th: Resurrection Sunday April 12: Newsletter Deadline				

April Birthdays

04/04 Forrest Presley
04/04 Shirley Shimp
04/04 Grant Presley
04/07 Libby Edgar
04/08 Bradley Bowen
04/09 Maxine Coffey
04/09 Frieda Palmgren
04/09 Kristan Thompson
04/09 Anne Hoen
04/11 Evan Tuttle
04/14 Ross Snyder
04/14 Reagan Shilling
04/14 Rae Anderson
04/16 Keith Cramer
04/16 Ken Johnson
04/16 Joan Lull
04/17 Gus Van der Hoeven
04/18 Craig Kershner
04/18 Palmer Meek
04/18 Stephanie Upson
04/19 Shelley Norris
04/19 Stephanie Petrie
04/22 Carole Fager
04/23 Davis Wall
04/23 Steve Bietau
04/25 Dane Huff
04/27 Sharron Washington
04/27 Molly Townsend
04/27 Nancy Habluetzel
04/27 Mariann Thompson
04/28 Kirk Provine



GROW GREEN 2023



Earth Day, April 21, also brings us the Greater Manhattan Community Foundation's *Grow Green Match Day* in which the First Presbyterian Church will once again participate.

In 2022, the Session established an Endowment Fund for the First Presbyterian Church of Manhattan and received your gifts, totaling \$24,098.68. With the match provided by the Howe Family Foundation, we raised – on one day of giving – **\$32,097.23!**

As has been communicated before, this Endowment Fund isn't for saving money; it is so that future generations might benefit from our generosity in giving today. The Endowment Fund ensures that we will be a forward-looking congregation dreaming, developing, and implementing new ministries and initiatives that are above and beyond general operating expenses and that embody the love, light and joy of Jesus Christ in this community and beyond. Think of it as "seed money" for ways we can bloom where we are planted, reaching out into our community building relationships, making connections, meeting needs of neighbors in new and creative ways, and providing opportunities to embody the justice, love, welcome and hospitality of Christ to God's people.

What are your dreams for future ministries and outreaches? What needs do you see that go largely unmet in our community? Where do you see the absence of the gospel of Jesus Christ, and how might First Presbyterian Church shine Christ's light in dark places revealing the transforming love of God lived out? This is what the Endowment Fund will make possible, and the possibilities can only be limited by our generosity in giving and our willingness to engage in holy imagining.

We encourage your generous support of the Endowment Fund, and of the dreams of generations to come! Be on the lookout for more information and opportunities to grow this blessing!

If you would like to make a gift at any time, you may do so simply by indicating, with your gift to the church (or directly to the Greater Manhattan Community Foundation), that it is for the **"First Presbyterian Church Endowment Fund."** Also, feel free to speak with any of the members of the Fund Committee: Joan Burton, Maxine Coffey, Bob Haines, Marcia Hauck, Bob Mullen. They would be happy to address your questions or concerns.



WHO'S WHO & WHAT'S WHAT?

At its January meeting, the Session went through a discernment activity to help with its work of leading the congregation in ministry, and at its February meeting a reorganization of its committee structure and responsibilities began. Consolidating some ministries, and focusing – or honing – others, it has organized into four major ministry teams: Worship & Discipleship, In-Reach & Out-Reach, Hospitality & Fellowship, and Nuts & Bolts. The Board of Deacons has done similar work and organized into three major teams: Community Ministry, Member Care, and Fellowship.

There are some areas of organic overlap and, working together, a task for elders and deacons is determining where ministries complement one another, and where the “holes” are that need to be filled. Please keep the Ruling Elders and Deacons in prayer for faithful discernment and fruitful ministry as they lead us all in the way of Christ at First Presbyterian Church of Manhattan. And if you are called upon to lend your gifts, talents, and skills to the leadership and ministry of these teams, say “Yes!”

Ministry Teams, chairpersons, and brief (not exhaustive!) descriptions of ministries are as follows:

SESSION

Hospitality & Fellowship | Chairperson: Teresa Wille

Ministry: Creating a place and people of welcome, generosity, and joy; congregational life activities.

In-Reach & Out-Reach | Chairperson: Doug Chapman

Ministry: nurturing relationship in, and outside, the church; identifying hands on missions and other endeavors to support that fulfill the church's mission.

Nuts & Bolts | Chairperson: John Lyons

Ministry: building and grounds, budget and finance, personnel, mission interpretation through stewardship

Worship & Discipleship | Chairpersons: Terry Healy and Chris Wilson (co-chairs)

Ministry: worship and education

BOARD OF DEACONS

Community Ministry | Chairperson: Kim Smith

Ministry: Community breakfasts and dinners, Food Pantry, Clothing and school supply drives, etc.

Fellowship | Chairperson: Connie Bietau

Ministry: Friday Fellowship events, Ice Cream Social, teas, etc.

Member Care | Chairperson: Shirley Vogts

Ministry: Bridge Builders, Bereavement, and Remembrance

Budget Update

At its February 28 meeting, the Session took into consideration feedback given at the February 26 Annual Meeting of the Congregation and Corporation regarding the Annual Operating Budget. It voted to amend the budget in such a way that any funds in excess of the budgeted income would be designated in the following way:

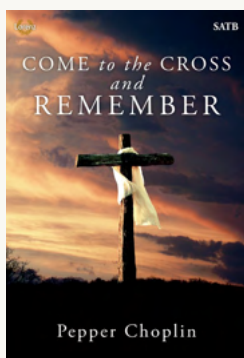
50% would be allocated to the General Fund.

25% would be allocated to Shared Mission of the higher governing councils of the church.

25% would be allocated to local mission causes.

The desire of the Session is for the congregation to know that its voice is heard and valued. Additionally, such action is a challenge for us all to answer – to exceed our anticipated budgeted income and give more to local, domestic, and international causes that fulfill our mission to create disciples for Jesus Christ and practice his teachings by loving and serving God and one another. Let's work together to answer the call!

HOLY WEEK EVENTS & CELEBRATIONS



Sunday, April 2 is Palm/Passion Sunday and the beginning of Holy Week. This year we invite you all to celebrate the day with other Christians as we gather in City Park for prayer, song, some snack, and a palm processional down Poyntz Avenue!

We'll gather in City Park at 9:30am, and make our way east down Poyntz, giving blessing to each congregation as they separate to go toward their church building. It's sure to be a fun time and joint witness with others to the good news that Jesus comes to save! So bring your Hosannas (and some comfortable shoes), and join us as we make our way to First Presbyterian Church for worship.

As we did in Advent, we invite you to join us on Palm / Passion Sunday in worship for a special cantata our choir has been preparing called "Come to the Cross and Remember" by Pepper Choplin. The Publisher writes: "Christ's journey to the cross is filled with images of His sacrificial love for us: the palms, the cup and the bread, the nails, the crown of thorns, and more. These images form the centerpiece of Come to the Cross and Remember. During simple choir/congregation interludes, each of the images is brought forward to create a very moving tableau." And we invite you to make this worship experience a priority as we begin our journey through this Holy Week and proclaim our Savior's great love; a beautiful witness to the good news proclaimed through music.



Thursday, April 6 is Maundy Thursday. "Maundy" comes from the Latin word meaning "commandment," and it is on this evening, at 7:00p.m., that we remember the commandment Jesus gave disciples in the upper room to "love one another." What does this love look like? Join us at this beautiful service to remember our Savior's sacrificial love. We will celebrate communion and end our service with Tenebrae.



Friday, April 7 is Good Friday. But why in the world do we call it "good"? It is on this night, at 7:00p.m. that we will worship and give thanks for the sacrifice of God in Jesus Christ. We hope you will join us for this contemplative service of worship and observance of the crucifixion and glorification of Jesus; join us and permit the power of silence to speak for itself.



Sunday, April 9 is Easter Sunday, the Day of Resurrection! We will worship early at 8:00a.m. in Tami's Garden. From 9:00-ish we have invited our neighborhood to join us for an easter egg hunt in Friendship Park. And everyone is invited to fellowship, break bread with one another, and enjoy some delicious foods in Fisher Hall from 9:00 to 10:30, when our traditional sanctuary service will begin. This is the "main event" for the church of Jesus Christ. And we hope it will be your priority to join the community of faith in worship and witness to the Resurrection of our Lord.



Easter Sunday is also the day we will also receive the One Great Hour of Sharing special offering of the PC(USA). For over 70 years, One Great Hour of Sharing has provided Presbyterians a way to share God's love with our neighbors in need around the world. In a world of disaster, hunger, and oppression millions of people lack access to sustainable food sources, clean water, sanitation, education, and opportunity. The three programs supported by the One Great Hour of Sharing (Presbyterian Disaster Assistance, the

Presbyterian Hunger Program, and Self-Development of People) all work in different ways to serve individuals and communities in need. From initial disaster response to ongoing community development, their work fits together to provide people with safety, sustenance, and hope. We hope you will generously support this special offering on the day we celebrate our liberation in Christ.

Holy Week Devotional

Begin devotional with prayer:

Everlasting God, in your tender love you sent your Son to take our nature, and to suffer death upon the cross. In your tender mercy enable us to share in his obedience to your will and in the glorious victory of his resurrection; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. Amen.

As you read each Scripture, is there a word or idea that stirred within you? Focus on it, ask what God's invitation, or announcement, to you might be. Pray your life to God, take a moment to rest in God's presence.

Palm Sunday: Read Mark 11:1-11

It is time for Jesus to make his entry into Jerusalem for the last time. He knows what awaits him, but he does not turn back.

Monday: Read Mark 11:12-19

Less than two miles from Jerusalem is the city of Bethany. Jesus has spent the night there with his disciples but now returns with them to the busy city of Jerusalem. Passover has brought a huge crowd to the Holy City.

Tuesday: Read John 12:20-36

Each day Jesus and the disciples would go to the temple where Jesus would teach the crowds. His last public discourse was perhaps his hardest—that his hour was at hand for the ultimate sacrifice.

Wednesday: Read Luke 22:1-6

Passover, the great Jewish festival remembering God's deliverance of a people from bondage to freedom, is drawing near. And Jesus has many seeking his undoing. A plot develops to stop him.

Maundy Thursday: John 13:1-32

Having loved his own...he loved them to the end." Even in the midst of betrayal by a beloved disciple, Jesus reiterates his love for us and then gives us all a new commandment "love one another." Jesus further demonstrates his love for his disciples by taking on the role of a servant setting an example for all who would claim the title Christian.

Good Friday: John 18 & 19

During the long night after his arrest, Jesus was led from trial to trial. Peter denies him three times while the other disciples abandon him completely and go into hiding. Then in the afternoon Jesus is taken to a hill outside the city and is crucified.

Easter Sunday: Matthew 28:1-10 & Luke 24:13-49

The Sabbath is over and the women gather at the garden tomb to prepare Jesus' body for burial. They do not know how they will move the heavy stone sealing the tomb but they are determined to do this last thing for their beloved teacher. When they get to the tomb they discover that it is empty. Furthermore, they are told that their Lord is risen! With their hearts filled with joy, they rush to tell the disciples the wonderful news. Our Lord is not dead! He lives!

The Lord is risen! He is risen, indeed! And he appears to many of his disciples on multiple occasions, opening minds, eyes, and hearts to the good news that he has conquered death and that disciples are heralds of a new age begun with resurrection!



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Manhattan, KS 66502

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April Lectionary

Sunday, April 2 | Palm Sunday

Psalm 118:1-2, 19-29 & Matthew 21:1-11; Isaiah 50:4-9a & Psalm 31:9-16; Philippians 2:5-11 & Matthew 26:14-27:66

Sunday, April 9 | Easter Sunday

Acts 10:34-43 & Psalm 118:1-2, 14-24; Colossians 3:1-4 & John 20:1-18

Sunday, April 16 | Second Sunday of Easter

First Reading Acts 2:14a, 22-32 & Psalm 16:1-11; 1 Peter 1:3-9 & John 20:19-31

Sunday, April 23 | Third Sunday of Easter

Acts 2:14a, 36-41 & Psalm 116:1-4, 12-19; 1 Peter 1:17-23 & Luke 24:13-35

Sunday, April 30 | Fourth Sunday of Easter

Acts 2:42-47 & Psalm 23:1-6; 1 Peter 2:19-25 & John 10:1-10