

*Also righteousness will be the belt about His loins.
And faithfulness the belt about His waist.
And the wolf will dwell with the lamb,
And the leopard will lie down with the young goat,
And the calf and the young lion and the fatling together;
And a little boy will lead them. Isaiah 11:5-6 (NASB)*



The Prophet Isaiah was given a very long view of history when the Lord inspired him to write down his visions. The mysterious passage above describes the world after the coming of God's Kingdom in its fullness. Messiah, the Christ wears a belt of righteousness and faithfulness. His return sets all things right. Peace and justice are established forever, evidenced by the end of the predator-prey pattern of the fallen nature. God's peace – right relationship – Eden – is restored through God's one and only Son.

When Jacob (called Israel) blessed his twelve sons, he called his son Judah "a lion's whelp." (Genesis 49) In times to come kings would be born out of the tribe of Judah – the first, most favored and beloved being King David. Isaiah described Messiah as a Lamb (Isaiah 53), like the sacrifice made by the Israelites in Egypt – on the night the Angel of Death passed over the countryside. The blood of the slaughtered lamb was spread on the doorways of the peoples' houses. God saw that blood and spared the firstborn inside the house. All other firstborn children in Egypt died before dawn.

The Savior of Israel, that is the Savior of the world, Jesus Christ, is both a Lion and a Lamb.

The rhythm of the church year brings us to the Season of Lent (which began on February 26th this year). The somber forty days of waiting for the Savior ends in His miraculous victory over death – on Easter morning! The emblem of that glorious gift is a lion lying down with a lamb. Another emblem is the empty cross – often with a grave cloth wrapped around it. The One who was sacrificed – enlivened by God's Holy Spirit – escapes the grave. He lives forever – and offers you and me that same eternal life in God's presence.

The cultures of many nations have replaced these strong images – the Lion, the Lamb, the empty Cross – with cute baby creatures (chicks, bunnies, ducklings). The newness of life we see all around us in Spring is a reflection of the New Creation God gives us in Jesus Christ. Let us not confuse worldly celebration with the holy Season of Easter. We worship the Lion who is the Lamb. Jesus is God in the flesh.

The Worship Team at Banks Community UMC have chosen the emerging butterfly as the picture of New Life in Christ for Easter 2020. This amazing metamorphosis from caterpillar to beautiful, colorful insect tells the story of our change – our liberation – our rebirth into membership in the body of Christ. "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever." (Hebrews 13:8) You and I are changed creatures when we acknowledge and trust and follow the God-man Jesus Christ. He is Risen! He is Risen indeed!

Blessings,
Pastor Margot