

**PALM SUNDAY SERVICE
FROM PALMS TO PASSION**

APRIL 10, 2022



**St. John United Church of Christ
10207 Lincoln Trail, Fairview Heights, IL
397-6323**

Rev. Rosemary Captain

Organist - Sharon Banjacvic

Liturgy - Rev. John A. Nelson.

Ushers - Jan and Tom Miller

*Please stand if comfortably able
and respond with words in bold print

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Reader #1 - Sue Williams

Reader #2 - Ginny Ganschinetz

Reader #3 - Jan Miller

"Hosanna - A Palm Sunday Song" video

***WORDS OF WELCOME:**

***PRELUDE: "Hosanna to the King" John M. Rasley**

***CALL TO WORSHIP:**

Lent began in the wilderness;
it concludes in Jerusalem.

**We now come near to the end of one story.
Another will soon begin.**

We have followed Jesus this far; today we remember
how he faced betrayal, falseness, rejection, and
torment.

**And we witness, once more, that he taught and
walked in love through every step of the journey.**

***INVOCATION:** We stand together, mighty God, for
you have sustained us through weary days and
anguished nights. We join the shouts of welcome,
"Blessed is the one who comes in God's name. Peace
in heaven and glory in the highest." This is a day of
celebration. There is joy in the air. We have
witnessed the transforming power of Jesus'
compassion. But there are ominous overtones.
There are voices that say peace is a mirage and love
will not endure. We cling to our faith that your

steadfast love embraces life and death, that we are surrounded and upheld by your goodness. Meet us here, we pray. Amen

***OPENING HYMN: “Filled With Excitement”**
NCH 214

***CALL TO CONFESSION:** Come, all who are waving branches to welcome the Savior. When the light shines on us, we see the shadows we create. We sense our need for a faith more deeply grounded and a love more fully committed.

***UNISON PRAYER OF CONFESSION:** We confess, O God, that we identify with times of optimism and applause. We like a religion that makes us feel good. We prefer safety and security and certainty. Then Jesus comes, riding a donkey, reaching out to outsiders, proclaiming humble obedience as a virtue, challenging powerful people to change their ways. We sense danger. When Christ upsets our craving for stability, we turn away from the risks. We do not want to be rejected or face a cross. We are not sure we really want to be Christians. O God, help us! Amen. *Silence*

***ASSURANCE OF PARDON:** God contends with us in our fears, identifies our rebellion, and transforms our contrition into courage. Our creator does not give up

on us when we are discouraged or reject us when our pretensions get out of hand. God, who exalted Jesus, is ready to forgive and lift us up. Christ walks with us on the way of faithfulness, empowering us to become the disciples we are called to be.

***GLORIA PATRI:**
Glory to the Creator, the Christ, the Holy Spirit, Three- in-One; as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen. Amen.

THE ENTRY INTO JERUSALEM (LUKE 19:28-40)

Congregation participates when prompted

(Congregation) Crowd: ³⁸ **“Blessed is the One who comes in the name of Our God! Peace in heaven, and glory in the highest!”**

(Congregation) Pharisees: **“Teacher, rebuke your disciples!”**

THE ENTRY INTO JERUSALEM (LUKE 19:28-40)

Narrator (Reader 1): ²⁸ Having said this, Jesus went ahead with the ascent to Jerusalem.

²⁹ Approaching Bethphage and Bethany, near what is called the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two of the disciples with these instructions:

Jesus (Reader 2): Jesus said, ³⁰ “Go into the village ahead of you. Upon entering it, you’ll find a tethered colt that no one has yet ridden. Untie it and lead it back. ³¹ If anyone should ask you, ‘Why are you untying it?’ say, ‘The Rabbi needs it.’”

Narrator (Reader 3): ³² They departed on their errand and found things just as Jesus had said. ³³ As they untied the colt, its owners said to them, “Why are you doing that?”

Narrator (Reader 1): ³⁴ They explained that the Rabbi needed it. ³⁵ Then the disciples led the animal to Jesus and, laying their cloaks on it, helped him mount.

Narrator (Reader 2): ³⁶ People spread their cloaks on the roadway as Jesus rode along. ³⁷ As they reached the descent from the Mount of Olives, the entire crowd of disciples joined them and began to rejoice and praise God loudly for the display of power they had seen, saying,

Crowd: ³⁸ “**Blessed is the One who comes in the name of Our God! Peace in heaven, and glory in the highest!**”

Narrator (Reader 3): ³⁹ Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to Jesus,

Pharisees: “Teacher, rebuke your disciples!”

Narrator (Reader 1): ⁴⁰ Jesus replied,

Jesus (Reader 2): “I tell you, if they were to keep silent, the very stones would cry out!”

***HYMN: “All Glory, Laud, and Honor” NCH 216**

MESSAGE:

“Where are the branches and Hosannas?”

The scriptures for this Palm Sunday may sound as if something is missing. Traditionally, Palm Sunday services draw from all four of the Gospels. John contributes the palm branches (12:13); Matthew contributes the prophecy in Zechariah 9:9 (21:5); and Mark, along with Matthew and John contributes the shouting throng (11:8-10). The author of the Gospel of Luke, which we heard today, tells the story his own way.

First, verse 28 not only ties this event to what precedes but reminds the reader that this episode is a part of the larger narratives begun at 9:51. “When the days drew near for him to be taken up, he set his face to go to Jerusalem.” Jesus said that right after his Transfiguration. He has been on this journey since then. The account of Jesus’ arrival in Jerusalem is followed by Jesus’ weeping over the city and his prophecy of its destruction in chapter 19

verses 41-44. Such a context prevents this story before us from becoming autonomous, having a life of its own. Jesus' entry into Jerusalem is part of the whole story of Jesus.

In Luke's Gospel, there is no mention of hosannas or branches cut from trees. Because those belonged commonly to nationalistic demonstrations and parades, perhaps Luke wants this event to carry no such implication. Jesus is called "King", to be sure (v. 38), but Luke makes it clear very soon that the term is in no sense political or military (23:2-5).

Thirdly, and very important, the entry into Jerusalem is very much a disciple event rather than a burst of enthusiasm on the part of a large crowd surrounding Jesus, as in Matthew and Mark. Notice: the disciples set Jesus on the colt; the disciples spread their garments on the road; the disciples rejoice and praise God. That the ovation is not by a general multitude in the city for the festival as written in Matthew or gathered as a result of reports about the raising of Lazarus as in the gospel of John.

According to Luke, Jesus is praised and hailed as king by his followers and not by the general public. And this is not the group that later calls for Jesus' crucifixion. To be sure, Jesus' followers did not understand him or the nature of his messiahship,

but neither are they persons who sing praise and scream death within the same week.

We know that each of the authors of the four Gospels had different agendas, different audiences, and were written at different times. This can be difficult for us to comprehend when we read such a different view of this event than we are used to. But the story continues in all the gospels.

Jesus comes to the city – the city where God dwells (Psalm 84:1); the city where all go to worship (Psalm 122); the city where all nations shall gather (Isaiah 2:1-5). Here Jesus will die, but in this city his disciples will tarry, because from Jerusalem the good news of the gospel will be carried to the nations (Luke 24:47 ; Acts 1:4-8).

PASTORAL PRAYER: Beginning with a time for silent personal prayer.

Modest King, receive our praise for all that you do for us from day to day. We would speak and sing in harmony with all of nature that glorifies you, God of grace.

We rejoice, O God, in your steadfastness. When life is uncertain, you are a rock of refuge. When friends are ashamed of us, you are still merciful and forgiving. How abundant is your goodness beyond all deserving! Your love and encouragement we see in

the face of Jesus Christ. You see us through places of affliction and set our feet again in a safe place. And we are very grateful.

Universal God, you have commanded us to pray for all humanity, so we pray for all nations and peoples, that all who are still searching for you will find you through Jesus Christ our Lord.

And at this time of unrest in the middle of our earth, we pray for peace, the peace that is beyond our understanding.

Remember in your mercy the poor and needy, the unemployed and the disabled, widows and widowers, orphans and abandoned children. Comfort those who mourn. Bless the sick and all those on our prayer list. Relieve their needs, console the sorrowful, heal the sick, and bring them wholeness.

We pray all these things in the name of the One who we celebrate as your Son, as we pray together . .

THE PRAYER OF OUR SAVIOR:

Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be your name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen.

PRAYER RESPONSE: NCH 769

**Hear our prayer, O God, hear our prayer, O God;
Incline your ear to us, and grant us your peace.**

CALL FOR THE OFFERING:

If Jesus Christ is to reign among us, much more will be needed than our praise and rejoicing when we are together. How do we witness and serve when we are apart? How much of ourselves and our substance will we invest?

OFFERTORY: “We Will Glorify” Twila Paris

***DOXOLOGY:**

**Praise God from whom all blessings flow;
Praise God, all creatures here below;
Praise God for all that love has done.
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.**

***UNISON OFFERTORY PRAYER:**

We cast these gifts before you, O God, as palms were cast before Jesus long ago. We lay them on your altar in praise, thanksgiving, and joy.

Receive them back from our hands, that they may become a greater blessing in your hands. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

***CLOSING HYMN: NCH 215**

“Ride on! Ride On in Majesty”

***COMMISSION AND BLESSING:**

We have testified to God's mighty works in Christ;
We go into the world to carry on what Jesus began.

We have learned what Christ has taught;

God's Word is in our hearts and on our tongues.

Have the mind of Christ who did not grasp for power;
Reach for full humanity, in humility and praise.

The one who was rejected is head of the church;

We will follow in faith and trust where Christ leads.

Be assured of God's continuing help and blessing;
The steadfast love of God endures forever.

**We celebrate the name of Jesus above all other
names. Blessed is the one who comes in God's
name. Amen.**

BENEDICTION RESPONSE:

"Let There Be Peace on Earth" Words on screen

POSTLUDE: "Majestic March" Rob Roy Perry