

APRIL 13, 2025
PALM SUNDAY
LUKE 19:28-40

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND PRAYER CONCERNS

PRAYER FOR OUR TIME

THE BELL IS RUNG

PRELUDE: "The Palms" Lani Smith

PENNIES FOR MISSION:

***CALL TO WORSHIP (Inspired by Psalm 118)**

L: Give thanks to God, for God is good.

P: God's steadfast love endures forever!

L: This is the day that God has made.

P: Let us rejoice and be glad in it!

L: Blessed is the one who comes in the name of God.

P: God has given us light.

L: Give thanks to God, for God is good.

P: God's steadfast love endures forever!

***INVOCATION:**

Gracious God, let us trust in your presence with us in all times, the sad and scary times as well as the joyous celebrations. Open us to receive you anew today. Amen.

***OPENING HYMN: 213 "Hosanna, Loud Hosanna"**

***PRAYER FOR TRANSFORMATION AND NEW LIFE**

Gracious God, as we enter this Holy Week, we may be tempted to skip parts of the story that begins with Jesus' entry into Jerusalem. There are challenging chapters ahead of us in this week. We may want to turn away from the betrayals and hardships and suffering in the Passion Story, just as we too often turn away from the hardships and suffering of people in our own time. Forgive us when our focus slips. Bring us back to the path you set before us. Renew our strength and increase our faithfulness. Amen.

***WORDS OF GRACE**

Receive this good news: God reaches out to us to draw us close. In the name of Jesus, your sins are forgiven.

***GLORIA:**

Glory to the Creator, and the Christ and the Spirit so near. As it was from the start so it shall be forever, One God always here. (repeat twice)
(end) One God always here. One God always here.

SCRIPTURE LESSONS: Psalm 118:1-2, 19-29

Give thanks to the Lord because he is good,
because his faithful love lasts forever.

² Let Israel say it:

"God's faithful love lasts forever!"

¹⁹ Open the gates of righteousness for me
so I can come in and give thanks to the Lord!

²⁰ This is the Lord's gate;
those who are righteous enter through it.
²¹ I thank you because you answered me,
because you were my saving help.
²² The stone rejected by the builders
is now the main foundation stone!
²³ This has happened because of the Lord;
it is astounding in our sight!
²⁴ This is the day the Lord acted;
we will rejoice and celebrate in it!
²⁵ Lord, please save us!
Lord, please let us succeed!
²⁶ The one who enters in the Lord's name is blessed;
we bless all of you from the Lord's house.
²⁷ The Lord is God!
He has shined a light on us!
So lead the festival offering with ropes
all the way to the horns of the altar.^[a]
²⁸ You are my God—I will give thanks to you!
You are my God—I will lift you up high!
²⁹ Give thanks to the Lord because he is good,
because his faithful love lasts forever.

***GOSPEL LESSON: Luke 19:28-40**

Procession into Jerusalem

²⁸ After Jesus said this, he continued on ahead, going up to Jerusalem. ²⁹ As Jesus came to Bethphage and

Bethany on the Mount of Olives, he gave two disciples a task. ³⁰ He said, "Go into the village over there. When you enter it, you will find tied up there a colt that no one has ever ridden. Untie it and bring it here. ³¹ If anyone asks, 'Why are you untying it?' just say, 'Its master needs it.'" ³² Those who had been sent found it exactly as he had said.

³³ As they were untying the colt, its owners said to them, "Why are you untying the colt?"

³⁴ They replied, "Its master needs it." ³⁵ They brought it to Jesus, threw their clothes on the colt, and lifted Jesus onto it. ³⁶ As Jesus rode along, they spread their clothes on the road.

³⁷ As Jesus approached the road leading down from the Mount of Olives, the whole throng of his disciples began rejoicing. They praised God with a loud voice because of all the mighty things they had seen. ³⁸ They said, "Blessings on the king who comes in the name of the Lord.

Peace in heaven and glory in the highest heavens."

³⁹ Some of the Pharisees from the crowd said to Jesus, "Teacher, scold your disciples! Tell them to stop!"

⁴⁰ He answered, "I tell you, if they were silent, the stones would shout."

*These are the ancient words revealed to us anew.
Thanks be to God. Amen.*

MESSAGE: “The Palms”

You may recall that a few weeks ago we had a bad storm come through here. If I asked any one of you about your experience, the stories would be different depending on where you lived. Some people went to their basement. Some people went to their bathroom or closet. Some heard loud noises. Some heard nothing. Some had damage outside. Others did not.

Have you ever wondered why church denominations have different ways of praising God and teaching about Jesus? After all, we have one Bible, and there’s only one Jesus? It depends on which translation of the Bible you read, and which gospels written by, at least 4 different men, you study.

None of the authors personally met Jesus. Some knew someone who did. Others were born way after the resurrection. They listened to the experiences of some of the people who knew stories second-hand. Plus, the authors each put their own “spin” on the stories, and each had their own reason for writing. That’s why many preachers follow the common lectionary where different gospels are read at different times in the three-year cycles.

In various communions, the Sixth Sunday in Lent may be celebrated either as Palm Sunday or Passion Sunday, or both. I chose the Palms this year because we are

going to talk about the Passion Thursday evening at our Maundy Thursday gathering.

In the liturgy of the Palms for Year C, the Lucan account of Jesus’ triumphal entry into Jerusalem serves as the Gospel text. So what we have this morning is how Luke describes this event. In sharp contrast to the observance of the Sunday before Easter as Passion Sunday, as described Matthew, Mark, and John, which celebrates this day as Palm Sunday and focuses on Jesus’ entry into Jerusalem as an occasion of triumph and praise. In fact, some feel the mood of victory and joy is premature, stealing its message from East yet to come, and hence not an appropriate way to worship prior to Good Friday and Easter. In favor of such an observance, however, is Lucan Gospel’s own record of the event. In general, it would be fair to say that Luke’s account of Jesus’ entry into Jerusalem is more subdued, less crowded and less noisy, than those of the other authors. Notice several features of Luke’s story.

First, from the beginning (verse 28) Luke reminds us that this is part of the larger story begun back in chapter 9, Jesus’ journey to Jerusalem. And the account of followed by Jesus’ weeping over the city and his prophecy of its destruction (19:41-44). Such a context prevents the story from having a “life” of its own.

Secondly, Luke’s record makes no mention of hosannas or branches cut from trees. Because those

belonged commonly to nationalistic demonstrations and parades, perhaps Luke wants this even to carry no such implication. Jesus is called “King”, to be sure, but Luke makes it clear very soon that the term is in no sense political or military (23:2-5).

Third, and very important, according to Luke, the entry into Jerusalem is a 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 in Matthew) or gathered as a result of reports about the raising of Lazarus (which is what I told you last Sunday because we were reading John) is an important detail.

Christ is praised and hailed as king by his followers, says Luke, and not by the general public. And this is not the group, says Luke, that later called 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. Such a portrait of a fickle crowd must be drawn from accounts other than Luke’s.

Fourth, the expressions of praise in Luke make no reference to David or Davidic images of the messiah. “King” is used, but as stated above, Luke does not permit

that word to carry political force. Actually, the praise on this occasion echoes the praise in the announcement to the shepherds of the birth of Jesus.

But even the rather modest parade offered by Luke evokes an objection by some Pharisees. We are not told whether their objection was due to disagreement, envy, fear of political repercussions, or some other motive, and therefore honesty demands that we not read into the story information unavailable to us. Nor does Jesus identify the problems the scene generates for the Pharisees; he simply states in a vivid image the clear and certain appropriateness of his disciples’ praise.

“If these were silent, the stones would shout out” is a statement conveying one or more of several messages: THIS IS WHERE YOU AND I COME IN. It took me awhile, but I finally got to our lesson today. Some things simply must be said. Disciples are expressing ultimate truth; truth cannot be silenced; God will provide a witness though every mouth be stopped, opposition to Christian witness cannot succeed. With all these interpretations of the expressions Luke would agree.

And so, Jesus comes to the city – the city where God dwells, the city where all go to worship, the city where all nations shall gather. Here Jesus will die, but in this city his disciples will tarry, because from Jerusalem the gospel will be carried to the nations. Amen.

SPECIAL MUSIC: “Blessed Is He” Video

PASTORAL PRAYER:

Most High and holy One who inhabits eternity, in Christ you have come down to those who are contrite and humble in spirit. By the grace of the Holy Spirit help us feel your living presence. Refresh your people who are overworked and weary.

Bless all who have blessed each of us in some way whether we know who they are or not. If we are estranged from anyone, reconcile us by the forgiving Spirit, that all bitterness and hostility may be removed and the unity of the Spirit be manifest in the bond of peace. Deliver the innocent from temptations too hard for them to bear, and support those on the verge of losing faith and giving up the good fight.

Send true comforters to those who are suffering from the malice of others or by the mistreatment of the careless; any who have been misjudged and misunderstood; and those who are victims of injustice and oppression because of their race, their religion, or their sex. Hasten the day of liberty and justice for all. Be near, O Lord, to the sick and the suffering. Uphold all who are bearing pain and loss bravely, both the afflicted and those who care for them. Help them as they have need, and give them reason to rejoice in Christ our Savior.

We pray, Compassionate Christ, for your healing Spirit to assist psychiatrists, psychologists, counselors, and mental health workers who work with those who suffer from mental illness.

We pray for all those workers who give aid to those affected by the recent storms and floods; all the workers who restart our electricity, cut down trees that fell on power lines and houses, and those who give shelter to the families whose houses were too damaged to return to.

Thank you, most holy One, for keeping us in the palm of your hand and loving us unconditionally. We are most thankful for your Son who taught us to pray . . .

THE LORD’S PRAYER:

PRAYER RESPONSE:

“Change My Heart, O God”

(sung twice)

Change my heart, O God, make it ever true.

Change my heart, O God, may I be like you.

You are the Potter, I am the clay;

Mold me and make me, this is what I pray.

Change my heart, O God, make it ever true.

Change my heart, O God, may I be like you.

INVITATION TO GENEROSITY:

Let us return to God a portion of what we have been given.

OFFERTORY: "If That Isn't Love" Dottie Rambo

***DOXOLOGY: 785 "We Give You but your Own"**

We give you but your own,

whate'er the gift may be;

All that we have is yours alone,

we give it gratefully.

***PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING AND DEDICATION:**

Gracious God, use our offerings and our lives to bring wholeness to this world.

***CLOSING HYMN: 215 "Ride On! Ride On in Majesty"**

BENEDICTION:

As we continue through Holy Week, listen for the voice and guidance of Jesus, rather than responding to the shouts of the crowd. Whatever this week brings into your life. God is with you. May you trust in the blessings of God today and always.

BENEDICTION RESPONSE: "Let There Be Peace on Earth"

POSTLUDE: "March Triumphant into Jerusalem"

Robert W. Thygerson