

Worship Service Outline
Sunday April 9, 2017
Palm Sunday

Theme of the Service:

“Jesus Brings Change That Makes a Difference”

WE GATHER IN THE PRESENCE OF GOD

Gathering Song: Be Unto Your Name

We are a moment, You are forever, Lord of the ages God before time
We are a vapor, You are eternal, Love everlasting reigning on high

Chorus Holy holy Lord God Almighty
 Worthy is the Lamb Who was slain
 Highest praises honor and glory
 Be unto Your name, Be unto Your name

We are the broken You are the healer, Jesus Redeemer mighty to save
You are the love song we'll sing forever, Bowing before You blessing Your name

Chorus

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Call to Worship

We come to prepare for the holiest of weeks.

**We will journey through praise, with joy on our lips;
we will travel through betrayal and death,
cradling hope deep in our hearts.**

Jesus leads us through this week, and we will follow,
for he is the life we long for,
he is the Word who sustains us.

**We wave palm branches in anticipation,
we lay our love before him, to cushion his walk.**

Setting aside all power, glory, and might, he comes:
modeling humility and obedience for all of us.

Hosanna! Hosanna!
Blessed is the One who brings us the kingdom of God.

Song: **“Hosanna, Loud Hosanna”** BoP#218

(Children come in at this time with palm branches)

God's Greeting (*from 2 Corinthians 13:14*)

(Our Lord has called us to worship and now greets us.)

May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ,
and the love of God,
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

And also with you.

*(As God has greeted us with his peace,
so let us pass the peace of Christ to each other.)*

The Sharing of the Peace (*We greet each other saying, “**The Peace of Christ be with you.**”*)

WE ARE RENEWED IN GOD'S GRACE

Prayer of Praise

Hosanna, King,
Blessed are you, our king, who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in
heaven, and glory in the highest heaven! Even if our voices were silenced,
creation itself would rise up to praise you! Hosanna in the Highest! **s**

**We are happy to join the crowd, waving branches,
but not so sure we want to follow you through this Holy Week:
into the temple courts
into the upper room
into the Garden of Gethsemane
to the high priest's house,
to the assembly of elders,
to Pilate, to Herod,
to the place of The Skull,
to the foot of the cross.**

**We need you to go with us on this journey.
Grant us clear vision,
Courageous hearts,
Persistent steps.**

**Even though we know what this week will bring, we sing:
Hosanna, hosanna.
Save us, we beseech you! Amen.**

Lenten Insert

George McMillan

Song: O Love that will not let me go #209

The Children's Moment: "The King is Coming"

Youth Song: Alleluia, He is coming!

I looked up, And I saw my Lord a-coming
I looked up, And I saw my Lord a-coming down the road

Chorus Alleluia He is coming, Alleluia He is here
Alleluia He is coming, Alleluia He is here

I looked up, And I saw my Lord a-weeping
I looked up, And I saw my Lord a-weeping for my sins

Chorus

I looked up, And I saw my Lord a-dying
I looked up, And I saw my Lord a-dying on the cross

Chorus

I looked up, And I saw my Lord a-rising
I looked up, And I saw my Lord a-rising from the grave

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GOD SPEAKS THROUGH HIS WORD

The Reading of Scripture:

Psalm 118: 19-23

Matthew 21:1-11

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks, be to God!

Prayer of Illumination

Sermon: "Blessing Throughout the Ages"

Text: Matthew 21: 1-11

Theme: ""Blessing Throughout the Ages"

Think about a time when you felt particularly happy. What was it that made you happy? Was it because you had loved ones near? Because you were surrounded by a beautiful landscape? Because you had just accomplished something important? Or were you happy because you had lots of money?

'What makes you happy?' That seems like a simple question, but the truth is that many people don't know. Or, as psychologists have discovered, they think they know the answer, but really don't. Psychological research on happiness has identified several things people have in common: the types of things that make them happy, the things they think will make them happy, and the differences between the two.

romantic relationships,

family dynamics,

close friendships,

social engagements,

money

Things going well in the country

Political affiliation

It was the beginning of the week of Passover, the most sacred week of the Jewish year. In the centuries since, Christians have celebrated this day as Palm

Sunday, the first day of Holy Week. With its climax of Good Friday and Easter, it is the most sacred week of the Christian year.

The day that Jesus chose to go into Jerusalem was a very symbolic one. Not only was it a time when people were gathering from all over for the Passover feast but there were some very key figures who were entering Jerusalem the Holy City that day. One of those very key figures was Pontius Pilate who every year would make a grand entry into Jerusalem with Royal Regalia surrounding hymn.

In the book. "The Last Week," Marcus Borg and John Dominic Crossan outlines the scene as Jesus made his journey on the beginning of his final week. It was a very crucial time for the people of that region as they once again turned out for the yearly rituals.

Pilates Procession

- From the western side of the city, Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor of Judea, and Samaria, entered Jerusalem at the head of a large contingent of imperial cavalry and soldiers.
- Pilate was flanked by military might, in royal regalia, men on horseback with a symbolism that would remind everyone of the power of the empire.
- Pilate's entire procession proclaimed the power of empire. Pilate's military procession was a demonstration of both Roman imperial power and Roman imperial theology.
- Though unfamiliar to most people today, the imperial procession was well known in the Jewish homeland in the first century as at every commemoration of these religious festivals this was a feature.
- Luke and the community for which he wrote would have known about it, for it was the standard practice of the Roman governors of Judea to be in Jerusalem for the major Jewish festivals.
- Pilate's rather militarial entry had no empathy or reverence for the plight of the poor and the sick that gathered each year, as that military presence was more to prevent riots.
- Imagine the imperial procession's arrival in the city. A visual display of imperial power: cavalry on horses, foot soldiers, leather armor, helmets, weapons, banners, golden eagles mounted on poles, sun glinting on metal and gold. Sounds: the marching of feet, the creaking of leather, the clinking of bridles, the beating of drums. The swirling of dust. The eyes of the silent onlookers, some curious, some awed, some resentful.

Jesus' Procession

- From the east, Jesus rode a donkey down the Mount of Olives, cheered by his followers.
- Jesus was from the peasant village of Nazareth, his message was about the kingdom of God, and his followers came from the peasant class.
- They had journeyed to Jerusalem from Galilee, about a hundred miles to the north, a journey that is the central section and the central dynamic of the gospels. The message of the gospel's story of Jesus and the kingdom of God has been aiming for Jerusalem, pointing toward Jerusalem and that moment has now arrived.
- Jesus' entry is through a prearranged "counter procession." As Jesus approaches the city from the east at the end of the journey from Galilee, he tells two of his disciples to go to the next village and get him a colt they will find there, one that has never been ridden, that is, a young one. They do so, and Jesus rides the colt down the Mount of Olives to the city surrounded by a crowd of enthusiastic followers and sympathizers, who spread their cloaks, strew leafy branches on the road, and shout, "Hosanna! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven, and glory in the highest heaven!"
- Jesus's procession deliberately countered what was happening on the other side of the city. Pilate's procession embodied the power, glory, and violence of the empire that ruled the world. Jesus's procession embodied an alternative vision, the kingdom of God. This contrast— between the kingdom of God and the kingdom of Caesar— is central not only to the gospel of Mark, but to the story of Jesus and early Christianity.

Both Jesus and Pilate were heading to the same place, they were coming from different directions, from different cultural and socio economic backgrounds but they were both heading to Jerusalem, the Holy City of our God.

Jerusalem was not just any city. By the first century, it had been the center of the sacred geography of the Jewish people for a millennium. And ever since, it has been central to the sacred imagination of both Jews and Christians. Its associations are both positive and negative. It is the city of God and the faithless city, the city of hope and the city of oppression, the city of joy and the city of pain.

On this occasion though there was an excitement that was very palpable. As both processions made their way towards the city, they ran to meet Jesus and the welcome he received is very telling.

According to our text in Matthew:
The people spread their cloaks on the road,

others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. ⁹The crowds that went ahead of him and that followed were shouting, "Hosanna to the Son of David!

Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord!
Hosanna in the highest heaven!"

There was something about Jesus that caused them to be joyous, excited and bubbly to the point where they couldn't control themselves.

What is it about Jesus that makes us happy and what is it that gets us excited to the point where we sing hosannas to his presence in our lives?

We should live each day rejoicing and excited about serving God because we are a sinful people, unworthy of God's love; we are a people who are prone to fail and we live our lives falling again and again and again.

Had it not been for salvation by the power of Jesus' resurrection we would be so lost and in done and hopeless in our sinful state.

We have so much to be joyful, exuberant and excited about as we have the pleasure of engaging the salvation journey and living by the Grace of God.

1 Peter 4:13 invites us to live rejoicing because of what we have to gain.

13 But rejoice in as much as you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed.

Psalm 118

24 This is the day that the Lord has made;

let us rejoice and be glad in it. [\[a\]](#)

I think this is what Cilla D Martin called us to do when she wrote this very powerful song:

Why should I feel discouraged
Why should the shadows come
Why should my heart feel lonely
And long for heaven and home
When Jesus is my portion
A constant friend is He
His eye is on the sparrow
And I know He watches over me

His eye is on the sparrow
And I know He watches me

I sing because I'm happy
I sing because I'm free
His eye is on the sparrow
And I know He watches me (He watches me)
His eye is on the sparrow
And I know He watches
I know He watches
I know He watches me

People ran to meet Jesus as they yearned for a change of their circumstances and they also longed for righteousness and justice in their lives. Today we are beneficiaries of salvation and we live by God's grace in this broken and troubled world. May we live joyfully and let it be seen in and through our lives.
Amen.

Hymn of Response: I come with Joy #530

COMMUNION

Invitation to the Table

We Confess Our Faith: Apostles' Creed BoP#539

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended into hell.
On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic Church,**

**the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.**

The Great Prayer of Thanksgiving (BoP#564)

The Lord be with you.
And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.
We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
It is right to give our thanks and praise.

In the beginning you spoke and at your word your Spirit moved over the waters, bringing order, light, and life out of chaos. By your hands you formed our bodies and knit together our inward in your image and breathed breath and life into us. When we turn away from you and our love fails, your love remains constant. You lead us through the deep and chaotic waters and you call us from our scattered lives to unity and peace.

Therefore, with choirs of angels and archangels and with those of every time and place, we give you praise and glory:

**Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.**

**Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.**

Holy, mighty and tender God, in time you sent Jesus of Nazareth and in him we saw your promises made flesh. Dwelling among us good news was seen and heard and our world transformed. He healed the sick, fed the hungry, and ate with sinners. In his suffering, death and resurrection, he delivered us from sin and darkness and revealed a living and redeeming hope for all people. And when he ascended into heaven, your Holy Spirit came to be our Counselor and Comforter.

Institution of the Bread and Wine

And so, remembering Christ's life, love, death, and resurrection, we proclaim the mystery of faith:

Christ has died.

Christ is risen.

Christ will come again.

Gracious God, pour out your Holy Spirit upon us and upon these your gifts of bread and wine, that the bread we break and the cup we share may be the communion of the body and blood of Christ.

Prayers of thanksgiving and of concern for the world, concluded with:

Through Christ, with Christ, in Christ, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all glory and honor are yours, almighty God, world without end.

As Christ taught his disciples we now pray together:

Our Father...

Amen.

Sharing the Bread as a symbol of the Body of Christ

Sharing the Wine as a symbol of Christ Blood

Prayer:

**Eternal God,
we thank you for this holy mystery
in which you have given yourself to us.
Send us into the world in peace
for we have seen,
have heard,
and been fed by your grace.
Keep us faithful and alert
for signs of Christ's coming
and lead us to live lives marked by truth and light,
so that we may eat and drink together
in your eternal dominion of hope, peace, joy and love.**

Amen.

WE BRING OUR PRAYERS AND GIFTS

Prayer for God's People

Work and Witness of our Church

A Time of Giving with Sung Response: **"Praise God, from Whom all Blessings Flow"** BoP#79

WE ARE DISMISSED TO CONTINUE OUR FAITH JOURNEY

The Benediction

Recessional Hymn: **"Ride On, Ride On in Majesty"** BoP#217