

Welcome / Announcements / Land Acknowledgement

We come to worship in Jesus' name acknowledging with gratitude the land where we are gathered. This is traditional and unceded Coast Salish Territory of Lkwungen people – the Songhees, Esquimalt and WSÁNEĆ. We continue to pray that past and present injustices can be reconciled as we commit ourselves to just and respectful relationships.

□ *Hosanna, loud hosanna*

218

Lent Liturgy¹

On this Palm Sunday, we see Jesus entering Jerusalem riding on a donkey, showing us the way of peace.

With palm branches in hand, we cry out “Hosanna,” save us now, save us from our warring madness.

“We affirm that God is at work when people are ashamed of the inhumanity of war and work for peace with justice.”

“We pray for peace to him who is the Prince of Peace.” (Living Faith 8.5.3)

PWS&D Story **Achieving a Healthier Future for Women**

In rural areas, young girls are often the victims of unwanted early pregnancies, which may force them to stop their schooling and cut off future livelihood opportunities. In the Chinyang'ombe community in Malawi, five remarkable women, known as Community-Based Distribution Agents, have taken on the responsibility of promoting access to family planning methods to address this issue.

Going door-to-door, they provide these vital services directly to the community. Although married women primarily use their services, young girls find solace in accessing family planning methods through youth clubs.

Though they've faced some challenges, the five women acknowledge the positive impact on women in the community, as more individuals have access to family planning methods, resulting in healthier families.

By enabling women to space out when they have children, their work, with PWS&D's support, promotes reproductive health and fosters the well-being of women, children and the community.

This Lenten season, faithfully respond to Christ's call to help improve access to vital healthcare services.

¹ Written by the Rev. John Bannerman (PWS&D Committee Co-Convener)

Gathering Prayer / the Lord's Prayer

Holy One, we praise you with heart and life and voice, not only with outward signs such as palm branches or the occasional "Hosanna", but with lives truly turned towards you. It seems such a distance from this Palm Sunday in Victoria to that day when you entered Jerusalem – the shouts of the crowd ringing in your ears – welcomed as a king yet riding on a lowly donkey; greeted with cheers and acclamations which were so soon to turn to jeers and condemnation. From this side of the resurrection, we confidently believe that we could never have been part of the jeering crowd – but would we, if we had been there?

~ *Silent reflection* ~

Risen Jesus, when our words and actions reflect a reluctance to confess your significance in our lives, forgive us.

When we fear that humbling ourselves would be seen as weakness, some kind of defect in our character – when we have betrayed your love for us through our lack of love for you, for others, and for ourselves, forgive us.

When we find ourselves glossing over the events of your passion and death because we look forward to Easter as simply a time to enjoy holidays and have fun, forgive us.

Fix your mind in us, O God – remake us in your likeness. Empty us of all that hinders us from following you. Make us bold to be your servant people as we pray with one voice... ***Our Father, who art in heaven – hallowed be thy 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, for ever. Amen***

Philippians 2:5-11 [NT 197]

Laura

Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness. And being found in human form, he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death – even death on a cross.

Therefore God also highly exalted him and gave him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

□ *Hosanna*

216

Mark 11:1-11 [NT 47]

Mary

When they were approaching Jerusalem, at Bethphage and Bethany, near the Mount of Olives, he sent two of his disciples and said to them, "Go into the village ahead of you, and immediately as you enter it, you will find tied there a colt that has never been ridden; untie it and bring it. If anyone says to you, 'Why are you doing this?' just say this, 'The Lord needs it and will send it back here immediately.'"

They went away and found a colt tied near a door, outside in the street. As they were untying it, some of the bystanders said to them, "What are you doing, untying the colt?"

They told them what Jesus had said; and they allowed them to take it. Then they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their cloaks on it; and he sat on it.

Many people spread their cloaks on the road, and others spread leafy branches that they had cut in the fields. Then those who went ahead and those who followed were shouting, "Hosanna! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord! Blessed is the coming kingdom of our ancestor David! Hosanna in the highest heaven!"

Then he entered Jerusalem and went into the temple; and when he had looked around at everything, as it was already late, he went out to Bethany with the twelve.

□ *Ride on, ride on in majesty*

217

Mark 14:1-25 [NT 51]

Mary

It was two days before the Passover and the festival of Unleavened Bread. The chief priests and the scribes were looking for a way to arrest Jesus by stealth and kill him; for they said, "Not during the festival, or there may be a riot among the people."

While he was at Bethany in the house of Simon the leper, as he sat at the table, a woman came with an alabaster jar of very costly ointment of nard, and she broke open the jar and poured the ointment on his head.

But some were there who said to one another in anger, "Why was the ointment wasted in this way? For this ointment could have been sold for more than three hundred denarii, and the money given to the poor." And they scolded her.

But Jesus said, "Let her alone; why do you trouble her? She has performed a good service for me. For you always have the poor with you, and you can show kindness to them whenever you wish; but you will not always have me. She has done what she could; she has anointed my body beforehand for its burial. Truly I tell you, wherever the good news is proclaimed in the whole world, what she has done will be told in remembrance of her."

Then Judas Iscariot, who was one of the twelve, went to the chief priests in order to betray him to them.

When they heard it, they were greatly pleased, and promised to give him money. So he began to look for an opportunity to betray him.

On the first day of Unleavened Bread, when the Passover lamb is sacrificed, his disciples said to him, "Where do you want us to go and make the preparations for you to eat the Passover?"

So he sent two of his disciples, saying to them, "Go into the city, and a man carrying a jar of water will meet you; follow him, and wherever he enters, say to the owner of the house, 'The Teacher asks, Where is my guest room where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?' He will show you a large room upstairs, furnished and ready. Make preparations for us there."

So the disciples set out and went to the city, and found everything as he had told them; and they prepared the Passover meal.

When it was evening, he came with the twelve. And when they had taken their places and were eating, Jesus said, "Truly I tell you, one of you will betray me, one who is eating with me."

They began to be distressed and to say to him one after another, "Surely, not I?"

He said to them, "It is one of the twelve, one who is dipping bread into the bowl with me. For the Son of Man goes as it is written of him, but woe to that one by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been better for that one not to have been born."

While they were eating, he took a loaf of bread, and after blessing it he broke it, gave it to them, and said, "Take; this is my body."

Then he took a cup, and after giving thanks he gave it to them, and all of them drank from it.

He said to them, "This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many. Truly I tell you, I will never again drink of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God."

Hosanna – from Jesus Christ Superstar (Tim Rice and Andrew Lloyd Webber)

Reflection

In our hall there used to be bulletin boards with the message: **do justice – love kindness – walk humbly with God** printed in large font on huge sheets of paper. That – according to the prophet Micah – is what God requires of us – what God desires of creation – what God wants. Remarkably simple really but I wonder if we forget now that it is no longer there. Or perhaps we stopped seeing it long before it was taken down – before the pandemic forced us from our building for a time and became the before and after that helps us measure time. Maybe we stopped paying attention to that message because we were looking for something more complicated. Sometimes I wonder if we are looking for the jazzy version of what God wants – the fancied-up doctrine or credo

that makes our faith and God's desire of us somehow more "special" and therefore more worthy.

You will see a stunning photo of me on the screen now. This is me on the mule I was given to ride in Mexico some years ago. There is something humbling about signing up for a horseback ride and being seated upon a mule instead. A reminder perhaps that one is not quite so important after all – or maybe an affirmation of one's character – or just simply the luck of the draw. My mule was every bit as capable as the horse Steve was assigned to ride. She was calm and steady – sturdy and safe – strong, but humble. There is nothing regal about riding a mule of that I can assure you!

Our reading from Mark's Gospel talks of Jesus riding on a colt – Matthew mentions a donkey and a colt – but I think the idea is to contrast the expectation of triumph with that of humility. Instead of the anticipated triumphal entry of the Messiah into Jerusalem for the liberation of the people, Jesus comes in a humble way offering salvation. Not quite what the brochure promised – not exactly as advertised. It is that humility that captures me throughout the journey into Jerusalem and to the cross – and it is that humility to which we are all called – all invited to accept and embrace.

The Philippians text read today as our "words of hope" says that Jesus *humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death – even death on a cross. Therefore, God also highly exalted him....* That text also tells us that we should match this way of being – we should be just like Jesus – of *the same mind*. In the same way we ought not regard our relationship with pride or exploit it and we are encouraged to empty ourselves – to give ourselves away – to become those who serve others. Maybe we were expecting to ride to glory on a white horse – maybe we were hoping for a fine chariot. Funny how things turn out – not exactly as predicted but here we sit in our unassuming pew. Perhaps, like those early followers of Jesus we need to adjust our expectations and gracefully accept a more modest, meeker mode of moving forward by God's side. I pray that each day we might walk humbly with our God as those who seek justice in loving ways. **Amen**

☐ **To mock your reign**

223 (Kingsfold #671)

Offering and Prayer

As Holy Week opens, we remember what Jesus faced – how the crowd cheered him one day and called for his death by week's end. Close friends betrayed him and ran away. In our offering, we declare our love and loyalty to Jesus, and that we are here for him.

☐ **Praise God from whom all blessings flow**

306

Lord Jesus, compared with the gift you gave for our sake, what we offer today seems so small. Bless our gifts with your love so that they accomplish more than we can even imagine. Bless our lives, too, so that what we do and say will show we have the commitment to follow you, whatever the cost. Amen

† Pastoral Prayers

Loving God, in Jesus you came to us in humility, reaching out to all with mercy and compassion. You ask us to do the same. In gratitude for all the mercy and compassion we have known, we pray for those who find themselves in humble circumstances.

Hear us as we pray for the unhoused in our communities, and for refugees wherever they take shelter...

for all who find themselves without enough resources to cope when necessities are so costly...

for those who live in isolated communities lacking the access, care and technology most of us take for granted...

Embrace them, O God, in your mercy, and humble us, lest we put too much trust in our lifestyles as the source of life's goodness.

Hear us as we pray for all those who have been humbled by unexpected circumstances...

for those who face illness or injury...

for those who know death or disaster – fear or failure...

for victims of crime and those who suffer through the misjudgment or mistake of others...

And we pray for those who suffer because of the consequences of their own actions and choices...

Embrace them, O God, in your mercy, and humble us, lest we imagine we can live our lives untouched by trouble.

Hear us as we pray for all those who have not yet learned the lessons of humility...

for those who live carelessly or drive recklessly, endangering themselves and others...

for those who abuse the trust and power in their positions, betraying those whose interests are in their hands...

And we pray for those who mislead others to protect their own interests or indulge their fame with no thought for the consequences...

Humble them, O God, in your mercy, and humble us if we are tempted to ignore the responsibility you give us all to care for our neighbours' needs.

Create in us the compassion and courage as we come to the Cross with Christ. Amen

Pilate's Dream – from Jesus Christ Superstar (Tim Rice and Andrew Lloyd Webber)

When they had sung the hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives. And Jesus said to them, "You will all become deserters; for it is written, 'I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered.' But after I am raised up, I will go before you to Galilee."

Peter said to him, "Even though all become deserters, I will not."

Jesus said to him, "Truly I tell you, this day, this very night, before the cock crows twice, you will deny me three times."

But he said vehemently, "Even though I must die with you, I will not deny you." And all of them said the same.

They went to a place called Gethsemane; and he said to his disciples, "Sit here while I pray."

He took with him Peter and James and John, and began to be distressed and agitated. And said to them, "I am deeply grieved, even to death; remain here, and keep awake."

And going a little farther, he threw himself on the ground and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from him. He said, "Abba, Father, for you all things are possible; remove this cup from me; yet, not what I want, but what you want."

He came and found them sleeping; and he said to Peter, "Simon, are you asleep? Could you not keep awake one hour? Keep awake and pray that you may not come into the time of trial; the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."

And again he went away and prayed, saying the same words.

And once more he came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were very heavy; and they did not know what to say to him.

He came a third time and said to them, "Are you still sleeping and taking your rest? Enough! The hour has come; the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Get up, let us be going. See, my betrayer is at hand."

Immediately, while he was still speaking, Judas, one of the twelve, arrived; and with him there was a crowd with swords and clubs, from the chief priests, the scribes, and the elders.

Now the betrayer had given them a sign, saying, "The one I will kiss is the man; arrest him and lead him away under guard." So when he came, he went up to him at once and said, "Rabbi!" and kissed him.

Then they laid hands on him and arrested him.

But one of those who stood near drew his sword and struck the slave of the high priest, cutting off his ear.

Then Jesus said to them, "Have you come out with swords and clubs to arrest me as though I were a bandit? Day after day I was with you in the temple teaching, and you did not arrest me. But let the scriptures be fulfilled."

Mark 14:50-72 [NT 52]

Laura

All of them deserted him and fled.

A certain young man was following him, wearing nothing but a linen cloth. They caught hold of him, but he left the linen cloth and ran off naked. They took Jesus to the high priest; and all the chief priests, the elders, and the scribes were assembled.

Peter had followed him at a distance, right into the courtyard of the high priest; and he was sitting with the guards, warming himself at the fire.

Now the chief priests and the whole council were looking for testimony against Jesus to put him to death; but they found none. For many gave false testimony against him, and their testimony did not agree. Some stood up and gave false testimony against him, saying, "We heard him say, 'I will destroy this temple that is made with hands, and in three days I will build another, not made with hands.'" But even on this point their testimony did not agree.

Then the high priest stood up before them and asked Jesus, "Have you no answer? What is it that they testify against you?"

But he was silent and did not answer.

Again the high priest asked him, "Are you the Messiah, the Son of the Blessed One?"

Jesus said, "I am; and 'you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of the Power,' and 'coming with the clouds of heaven.'"

Then the high priest tore his clothes and said, "Why do we still need witnesses? You have heard his blasphemy! What is your decision?"

All of them condemned him as deserving death. Some began to spit on him, to blindfold him, and to strike him, saying to him, "Prophecy!" The guards also took him over and beat him.

While Peter was below in the courtyard, one of the servant-girls of the high priest came by. When she saw Peter warming himself, she stared at him and said, "You also were with Jesus, the man from Nazareth."

But he denied it, saying, "I do not know or understand what you are talking about." And he went out into the forecourt. Then the cock crowed.

And the servant-girl, on seeing him, began again to say to the bystanders, "This man is one of them."

But again, he denied it. Then after a little while the bystanders again said to Peter, "Certainly you are one of them; for you are a Galilean."

But he began to curse, and he swore an oath, "I do not know this man you are talking about."

At that moment the cock crowed for the second time. Then Peter remembered that Jesus had said to him, "Before the cock crows twice, you will deny me three times." And he broke down and wept.

□ *My song is love unknown*

220

Mark 15:1-39 [NT 53]

Laura

As soon as it was morning, the chief priests held a consultation with the elders and scribes and the whole council. They bound Jesus, led him away, and handed him over to Pilate.

Pilate asked him, "Are you the King of the Jews?"

He answered him, "You say so."

Then the chief priests accused him of many things.

Pilate asked him again, "Have you no answer? See how many charges they bring against you."

But Jesus made no further reply, so that Pilate was amazed.

Now at the festival he used to release a prisoner for them, anyone for whom they asked.

Now a man called Barabbas was in prison with the rebels who had committed murder during the insurrection. So the crowd came and began to ask Pilate to do for them according to his custom. Then he answered them, "Do you want me to release for you the King of the Jews?" For he realized that it was out of jealousy that the chief priests had handed him over. But the chief priests stirred up the crowd to have him release Barabbas for them instead.

Pilate spoke to them again, "Then what do you wish me to do with the man you call the King of the Jews?"

They shouted back, "Crucify him!"

Pilate asked them, "Why, what evil has he done?"

But they shouted all the more, "Crucify him!"

So Pilate, wishing to satisfy the crowd, released Barabbas for them; and after flogging Jesus, he handed him over to be crucified. Then the soldiers led him into the courtyard of the palace (that is, the governor's headquarters); and they called together the whole cohort. And they clothed him in a purple cloak; and after twisting some thorns into a crown, they put it on him. And they began saluting him, "Hail, King of the Jews!"

They struck his head with a reed, spat upon him, and knelt down in homage to him.

After mocking him, they stripped him of the purple cloak and put his own clothes on him. Then they led him out to crucify him.

They compelled a passer-by, who was coming in from the country, to carry his cross; it was Simon of Cyrene, the father of Alexander and Rufus.

Then they brought Jesus to the place called Golgotha (which means the place of a skull). And they offered him wine mixed with myrrh; but he did not take it.

And they crucified him, and divided his clothes among them, casting lots to decide what each should take.

It was nine o'clock in the morning when they crucified him.

The inscription of the charge against him read, "The King of the Jews."

And with him they crucified two bandits, one on his right and one on his left. Those who passed by derided him, shaking their heads and saying, "Aha! You who would destroy the temple and build it in three days, save yourself, and come down from the cross!"

In the same way the chief priests, along with the scribes, were also mocking him among themselves and saying, "He saved others; he cannot save himself. Let the Messiah, the King of Israel, come down from the cross now, so that we may see and believe."

Those who were crucified with him also taunted him.

When it was noon, darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon.

At three o'clock Jesus cried out with a loud voice, "Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?" which means, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"

When some of the bystanders heard it, they said, "Listen, he is calling for Elijah."

And someone ran, filled a sponge with sour wine, put it on a stick, and gave it to him to drink, saying, "Wait, let us see whether Elijah will come to take him down."

Then Jesus gave a loud cry and breathed his last. And the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom.

Now when the centurion, who stood facing him, saw that in this way he breathed his last, he said, "Truly this man was God's Son!"

Silent Reflection

Could we start again please?

– from Jesus Christ Superstar (Tim Rice and Andrew Lloyd Webber)