

Sunday Worship Service— March 29, 2026

Palm Sunday

Welcome by the Pastor

Land Acknowledgement & Welcome Statement

Introduction*

Today is Palm Sunday and we join in Christ's triumphal entry. We have walked the Lenten pathway these forty days, each of us invited to "let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus." We enter this holy week accompanying Jesus to the cross with both grief and thanksgiving in our hearts, trusting in God's redeeming love.

Lenten Candle Liturgy¹

We have gathered for worship, week after week, sharing a common quest for a deeper faith and a deeper experience of the divine. I invite you now to close your eyes and let go of the things that distract and concern you. Listen! The time is drawing near. Jesus is preparing to enter Jerusalem. How will we greet Jesus? Will we follow him all the way to the Cross? The power of Jesus is that he lived what he taught, even when it led to his death. Jesus lived with an abiding awareness of God, radiating the light of God in all he said and did. But that light was too much for the world. There are forces today, as there were in ancient Judea, that conspire to put it out. Where are we in this drama? What are we willing to risk to follow Jesus? (*silent reflection*)

As we extinguish these lights, we acknowledge the darkness and pain of illness and disease in the world.

Let us pray:

Loving God, there are so many choices before us every day. Choices offered by our friends, our families, our culture, our own past. Some of them encourage the well-being of the earth, ourselves and our neighbors; others are destructive. Help us to distinguish between them. May we learn from the choices of Jesus and embody compassion, justice, and inclusion in all we say and do. Amen.

¹ Written by Andrew Schwartz

Prayer of Confession*

God does not always or even often do what we expect or want God to do. We pray, but don't hear the answer we want. We hope, but nothing changes. We anticipate a miracle and get the status quo. We want splendor and majesty, and we get humility and weakness. We want glory, and we get agony. So easily faith falters and we fail to trust.

God of humility, you do not always meet our expectations. Forgive us for failing to see and admit that the problem is not with you but with our expectations. Forgive us for refusing to receive you as you come to us. Forgive us for doubting the wisdom of your plan. Forgive us for not noticing and being grateful for your work and your gifts. Forgive us and teach us to trust you and your ways. (silence for reflection)

Words of Forgiveness

God comes to us today not as we expect, but as we need God. God comes with the glory and splendor of grace and forgiveness. God comes in lowliness and humility; that we may be raised up from our woundedness and our failure. God comes to us and God forgives us, in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Amen.

Call to Worship

We remember Jesus entering Jerusalem in triumph, welcomed with palms and shouts of praise.

Today we greet Jesus with joy, knowing that Jesus' power is compassion, and its cost is the cross.

Guide us through this holy week, that we may empty our hearts to live for the coming of your new community, committed to new life for all.

Hosanna! Hosanna in the highest! Amen.

Blessing of the Palms *(raise palms)*

We praise and thank you, O God, for the great acts of love by which you have modeled for us through Jesus. We ask that you bless these branches, signs of your victory, and bless those who carry them in our hands or in our hearts, that we may follow Jesus in the way of the cross that, dying and rising with him, we may experience your abundance in its fullness. Amen.

#344 Gathering Hymn "All Glory Laud and Honour" (v.1,3,5)

Refrain: All glory, laud and honour to you, redeemer, king,

to whom the lips of children made sweet hosannas ring.

- 1. You are the king of Israel and David's royal Son,
now in the Lord's name coming, our King and Blessed One.**

Refrain

- 3. The multitude of pilgrims with palms before you went;
our praise and prayer and anthems before you we present.**

Refrain

- 5. Their praises you accepted; accept the prayers we bring,
great author of all goodness, O good and gracious King.**

Refrain

Prayer of the Day*

Holy One, awaken our ears and open our minds, that we might recognize your voice and discover your wisdom. Guide our thoughts, that we might adopt Christ's attitude of humility and love. Strengthen our resolve, that we might walk with you, wherever that leads. Amen.

Scripture Reading: Philippians 2:5-11

In the reading from Paul's letter to the church in Philippi, Paul uses an early Christian hymn to help us comprehend Jesus' obedient selflessness on the cross and how God has made Christ lord over all reality. The perspective of the cross becomes the way we rightly understand God, Christ, our own lives, and the community of Christ.

A reading from Philippians , beginning with the 2nd chapter:

Adopt the attitude that was in Christ Jesus: Though Jesus was in the form of God, he did not consider being equal with God something to exploit. But Jesus emptied himself by taking the form of a slave and by becoming like human beings. When Jesus found himself in the form of a human, Jesus humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Therefore, God highly honored Jesus and gave him a name above all names, so that at the name of Jesus everyone in heaven, on earth, and under the earth might bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God.

Word of God, word of life. **Thanks be to God.**

Bread of Life Choir “Hosanna to the Son of David”

Gospel Reading: Matthew 21:1-11

In the gospel reading from Matthew, we hear about Jesus’ entrance into Jerusalem.

The holy gospel according to Matthew, the 11th chapter. **Glory to you, O Lord.**

When they approached Jerusalem and came to Bethphage on the Mount of Olives, Jesus gave two disciples a task. Jesus said to them, “Go into the village over there. As soon as you enter, you will find a donkey tied up and a colt with it. Untie them and bring them to me. If anyone says anything to you, say that their master needs them.” Jesus sent them off right away. Now this happened to fulfill what the prophet said, *Say to Daughter Zion, “Look, your king is coming to you, humble and riding on a donkey, and on a colt the donkey’s offspring.”* The disciples went and did just as Jesus had ordered them. They brought the donkey and the colt and laid their clothes on them. Then Jesus sat on them.

Now a large crowd spread their clothes on the road. Others cut palm branches off the trees and spread them on the road. The crowds in front of Jesus and behind him shouted, *“Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessings on the one who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!”* And when Jesus entered Jerusalem, the whole city was stirred up. “Who is this?” they asked. The crowds answered, “It’s the prophet Jesus from Nazareth in Galilee.”

The gospel of our Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ.**

Sermon

#502 Hymn of the Day “The King of Love My Shepherd Is” (v.1-2,4,6)

- 1. The King of love my shepherd is, whose goodness faileth never;
I nothing lack if I am his and he is mine forever.**
- 2. Where streams of living water flow, my ransomed soul he leadeth
and, where the verdant pastures grow, with food celestial feedeth.**

4. In death's dark vale I fear no ill, with thee, dear Lord, beside me,
thy rod and staff my comfort still; thy cross before to guide me.
6. And so, through all the length of days, thy goodness faileth never.
Good Shepherd, may I sing thy praise within thy house forever.

Affirmation of Faith for Palm Sunday²

We believe that the person who rode into Jerusalem on a donkey is Jesus, the Son of God.

We believe that Jesus came to model for us a life of love and compassion.

We believe that Jesus was cruelly treated, put to death on a cross, and buried in a borrowed tomb.

We believe that God raised Jesus from the dead.

We believe that Jesus is present in our midst today, comforting our sorrow, and reminding us to shine our lights of love and service to all.

And we believe that the day will come when Jesus will reign in glory as the restorer of all that was separated from God, receiving our love and praise forever and ever. Amen.

Commissioning of Church Council

Sharing of the Peace

Prayers of Intercession³

Reconciled by God's mercy and sustained by God's presence, let us pray for the world and its needs. Prayer petitions will end with "God in your mercy" and the congregation responds by praying "**receive our prayer.**"

(brief silence)

Jesus Christ, you humbled yourself and became as nothing for our redemption. Give to your Church the servant mind to display your grace and mercy. We bow the knee and confess your name.

God, in your mercy, **receive our prayer.**

Jesus Christ, on this day the crowd shouted praises, but in just a few days they tuned on you. We pray for all at the mercy of fickle popularity. Give

² Adapted from *Lost in Wonder, Love, & Praise* by John R. Killinger, 2001 Abingdon Press.

³ from *Intercessions for Years A, B, and C* by Ian Black ©2009 Ian Black, published by SPCK, London, UK

governments strength and courage to hold to what is true and right.
 God, in your mercy, **receive our prayer.**

Jesus Christ, as the crowd spread their cloaks and waved tree branches in your honour, we give thanks for the occasions that fill us with joy at being alive. Draw us closer to one another and to you.
 God, in your mercy, **receive our prayer.**

Jesus Christ, in your passion we see our human frailty. Be with all whose endurance is strained and spirit is weakened by their ailments. We pray for those living with dementia, those living with cancer and those living with chronic health conditions. We pray for those in hospital, and those who are grieving the loss of their loved ones. Sustain the weary with your eternal word. God, in your mercy, **receive our prayer.**

Jesus Christ, as we journey with you through this week of your passion, may our faith be strengthened, our hope confirmed, and our love for you and one another deepened. God, in your mercy, **receive our prayer.**

Into your hands, gracious God, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your mercy, through Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

Offertory Prayer*

O God, with these gifts, we give you thanks. We bless your generous, humble spirit, and ask that you bless these gifts with this same generous, humble spirit, so that all who receive these gifts may also receive your love, through Jesus Christ. Amen.

Great Thanksgiving

God be with you. **And also with you.**
 Lift up your hearts. **We lift them to God.**
 Let us give thanks to God.
It is right to give our thanks and praise.

Eucharistic Prayer

From the very beginning, you have loved us.
 But...Time and time again, in history and in our story,
 we have turned away from you.

But you never left us to walk by ourselves, loving God.
You walk the road with us.

Through prophets, priests and storytellers,
through family, friends, and neighbours,
you called us back to your love.

There came a time when you sent Jesus to speak to the world.
To speak to us.
To teach us your love.
To give abundant life.
To make us new.

Jesus lived a life as one of us – a child, a youth, an adult.
He laughed with those who laughed,
he cried with those who cried.
In all of this, he walked the hard road –
the way of the Cross, and the way of the Resurrection.

In the night in which he was betrayed,
Jesus took bread, and gave thanks;
broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying:
Take and eat, this is my body, given for you.
Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, Jesus took the cup,
Gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying:
This cup is the covenant in my blood,
Shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin.
Do this for the remembrance of me.

And so we do as Jesus asked us, loving God.
We pray that your Spirit might fill these gifts,
and fill us – that we all might be vessels of your love,
your hope and your life in the world.
Come, Holy Spirit, come!

p.191 **The Lord's Prayer**

**Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,
 your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven.
 Give us today our daily bread.
 Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.
 Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil.
 For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever.
 Amen.**

Communion Distribution

Clarinet Solo – *Ari Wang*

#492 Communion Hymn “Eat This Bread, Drink This Cup”

Refrain **Eat this bread, drink this cup. Taste and see the goodness of God.
 Bread of life, cup of love, we rejoice in your presence.**

- 1. I will bless the Lord at all times, praise with heart and voice;
 in my God I glory forever: listen and rejoice! *Refrain***
- 2. Look upon the Lord, be radiant, never turn away.
 God will save in ev'ry affliction, hear us when we pray. *Refrain***
- 3. Angels fold their wings around us, guard through good and ill.
 Those who seek the Lord will lack nothing; taste, and have your fill.
*Refrain***
- 4. Saints of God, bow down and worship, bless the holy name.
 Rise to tell God's greatness forever, wondrous deeds proclaim! *Refrain***

Communion Blessing

Prayer after Communion

Blessed Jesus, in this rich meal of grace, you have fed us with your love and forgiveness, the bread of life. Now send us forth to bear your life-giving hope to a world in need. Amen.

#264 Sending Hymn “Prepare the Royal Highway” (v.1,2,4)

1. **Prepare the royal highway; the King of kings is near!
Let ev'ry hill and valley a level road appear!
Then greet the King of glory, foretold in sacred story:
Hosanna to the Lord, for he fulfills God's word!**

2. **God's people, see him coming: your own eternal king!
Palm branches strew before him! Spread garments! Shout and sing!
God's promise will not fail you! No more shall doubt assail you!
Hosanna to the Lord, for he fulfills God's word!**

4. **His is no earthly kingdom; it comes from heav'n above.
His rule is peace and freedom and justice, truth, and love.
So let your praise be sounding for kindness so abounding:
Hosanna to the Lord, for he fulfills God's word!**

Announcements

Blessing

And so it begins, we walk through this week
From palms now to passion, it's Jesus we seek
Each moment we walk through these days now with Jesus,
It's time to see others, the way Jesus sees us.

To watch for the ones, who need hope, who need kindness.
Seeking the light, not the darkness that blinds us.
As you walk through these days, may the love you now know
Be spread to each person you meet on the go.

And may God who now blesses and keeps you in love
Whose face shines upon you with grace from above
Who looks on you with such joy and such favour,
This God, three in One (+) gives you peace - life to savour. Amen!

Sending

Go in peace, to love and serve God through word and deed.
Thanks be to God!

Sources:

Bible passages (except where otherwise indicated) from Common English Bible (CEB) and adapted for inclusive language.

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