

Faith Lutheran Church
Sunday, March 28, 2021
Palm Sunday



Welcome

Processional Gospel: Mark 11:1-11

L- The holy gospel according to Mark.

Congregation -Glory to you, O Lord.

L- *Jesus enters Jerusalem*

¹When they were approaching Jerusalem, at Bethphage and Bethany, near the Mount of Olives, [Jesus] sent two of his disciples ²and 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. ³If anyone says to you, ‘Why are you doing this?’ just say this, ‘The Lord needs it and will send it back here immediately.’”

⁴They went away and found a colt tied near a door, outside in the street. As they were untying it, ⁵some of the bystanders said to them, “What are you doing, untying the colt?” ⁶They told them what Jesus had said; and they allowed them to take it. ⁷Then they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their cloaks on it; and he sat on it. ⁸Many people spread their cloaks on the road, and others spread leafy branches that they had cut in the fields. ⁹Then those who went ahead and those who followed were shouting,

“Hosanna!

Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord!

¹⁰Blessed is the coming kingdom of our ancestor David!

Hosanna in the highest heaven!”

¹¹Then 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.

L - The gospel of the Lord.

Congregation- Praise to you, O Christ.

Blessing of the Palms (You may raise and wave your palms in the air)

P- The Lord be with you.

Congregation- And also with you.

P- Let us pray. (A brief silence is kept.)

We praise you, O God,
for redeeming the world through our Savior Jesus Christ.
Today he entered the holy city in triumph
and was proclaimed messiah and king
by those who spread garments and branches along his way.
Bless these branches and those who carry them.

**All- Grant us grace to follow our Lord in the way of the cross,
so that, joined to his death and resurrection,
we enter into life with you;
through the same Jesus Christ,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and forever.
Amen.**



Gathering Hymn: ELW #344 (verses 1 & 2)

“All Glory, Laud, and Honor”

Opening Prayer

Please join me in the Prayer of the Day:

Everlasting God, in your endless love for the human race you sent our Lord Jesus Christ to take on our nature and to suffer death on the cross. In your mercy enable us to share in his obedience to your will and in the glorious victory of his resurrection, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Readings and Psalm

- Isaiah 50:4-9a *The servant of the LORD submits to suffering*
- Psalm 31:9-16 *Into your hands, O LORD, I commend my spirit. (Ps. 31:5)*
- Philippians 2:5-11 *Humbled to the point of death on a cross*

The Holy Gospel according to Mark 15:1-39

Pastor – The Holy Gospel according to Mark, the 15th chapter...

Congregation– Glory to you, O Lord

Pastor – Holy Gospel: Mark 15:1-39

The passion story in Mark’s gospel presents Jesus as one who dies abandoned by all. He shows himself to be the true Son of God by giving his life for those who have forsaken him.

Narrator- ^{15:1}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. ²Pilate asked him,

Pilate- “Are you the King of the Jews?”

Narrator- He answered him,

Pastor – “You say so.”

Narrator- ³Then the chief priests accused him of many things. ⁴Pilate asked him again,

Pilate- “Have you no answer? See how many charges they bring against you.”

Narrator- ⁵But Jesus made no further reply, so that Pilate was amazed.

⁶Now at the festival he used to release a prisoner for them, anyone for whom they asked. ⁷Now a man called Barabbas was in prison with the rebels who had committed murder during the insurrection. ⁸So the crowd came and began to ask Pilate to do for them according to his custom. ⁹Then he answered them,

Pilate- “Do you want me to release for you the King of the Jews?”

Narrator- ¹⁰For he realized that it was out of jealousy that the chief priests had handed him over. ¹¹But the chief priests stirred up the crowd to have him release Barabbas for them instead. ¹²Pilate spoke to them again,

Pilate- “Then what do you wish me to do with the man you call the King of the Jews?”

Narrator- ¹³They shouted back,

Congregation- “Crucify him!”

Narrator- ¹⁴Pilate asked them,

Pilate- “Why, what evil has he done?”

Narrator- But they shouted all the more,

Congregation- “Crucify him!”

Narrator- ¹⁵So Pilate, wishing to satisfy the crowd, released Barabbas for them; and after flogging Jesus, he handed him over to be crucified.

¹⁶Then the soldiers led him into the courtyard of the palace (that is, the governor’s headquarters); and they called together the whole cohort. ¹⁷And they clothed him in a purple cloak; and after twisting some thorns into a crown, they put it on him. ¹⁸And they began saluting him,

Soldiers- “Hail, King of the Jews!”

Narrator- ¹⁹They struck his head with a reed, spat upon him, and knelt down in homage to him. ²⁰After mocking him, they stripped him of the purple cloak and put his own clothes on him. Then they led him out to crucify him.

²¹They 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. ²²Then they brought Jesus to the place called Golgotha (which means the place of a skull). ²³And they offered him wine mixed with myrrh; but he did not take it. ²⁴And they crucified him, and divided his clothes among them, casting lots to decide what each should take.

²⁵It was nine o'clock in the morning when they crucified him. ²⁶The inscription of the charge against him read, "The King of the Jews." ²⁷And with him they crucified two bandits, one on his right and one on his left. ²⁹Those who passed by derided him, shaking their heads and saying,

Passerby- "Aha! You who would destroy the temple and build it in three days, ³⁰save yourself, and come down from the cross!"

Narrator- ³¹In the same way the chief priests, along with the scribes, were also mocking him among themselves and saying,

Chief Priest- "He saved others; he cannot save himself. ³²Let the Messiah, the King of Israel, come down from the cross now, so that we may see and believe."

Narrator- Those who were crucified with him also taunted him.

³³When it was noon, darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon. ³⁴At three o'clock Jesus cried out with a loud voice,

Pastor – "Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?"

Narrator- which means, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" ³⁵When some of the bystanders heard it, they said,

Bystander- "Listen, he is calling for Elijah."

Narrator- ³⁶And someone ran, filled a sponge with sour wine, put it on a stick, and gave it to him to drink, saying,

Bystander- "Wait, let us see whether Elijah will come to take him down."

Narrator- ³⁷Then Jesus gave a loud cry and breathed his last.

(Silence to be kept for three seconds)

Narrator- ³⁸And the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. ³⁹Now when the centurion, who stood facing him, saw that in this way he breathed his last, he said,

Centurion- "Truly this man was God's Son!"

Narrator- The Gospel of the Lord.

Congregation– Praise to You, O Christ.

Commentary and Reflection

Grace, Mercy, and Peace from God our Father and our Lord and savior Jesus Christ!

Today we are celebrating Palm Sunday. But this year we are celebrating it a little different than in previous years. This year we are seated six feet apart from each other. The palms are handed over to us by greeters at the entrance using tongs...and no physical touch. But it is amazing to be with you all. Today is a big day for Jesus, as well as for us.

Today is a Sunday that goes by two names in many churches, "Palm Sunday" and the "Passion Sunday." We generally have a Palm Sunday processional at the start of the service. This represents the story of Jesus riding into Jerusalem with Palm branches spread before Him. Unfortunately, this year we can't have a Palm Sunday procession for safety reasons. But we acted out the Gospel of Mark this morning, which was very nice and interesting.

Jesus and His disciples entered Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover in the Holy City. Our Gospel text for today indicates that, when they drew near to Jerusalem and Bethany, at the Mount of Olives. Jesus sent two of His disciples and said to them, "Go into the village in front of us, and immediately as you enter it you will find a colt tied, on which no one has ever sat. Untie it and bring it to me. If anyone says to you, "Why are you doing this? Say to them, "The Lord has need of it and will send it back here immediately."

Jesus sent two of His disciples ahead to make preparation. Jesus tells them in advance what they will see and what they are to say when they get there. Interestingly, the disciples find everything exactly the way Jesus described the situation.

Passover was an important religious festival for Jews. It is a festival they observe every year to remember that God liberated them from slavery in Egypt. Historically, Pilate and his troops also marched into Jerusalem every Passover to display their military power. What a coincidence that Jesus also chose the same day to enter Jerusalem to **mark God's divine power. To display God's liberating salvation and power to all of humanity.**

I believe the disciples struggled to understand Jesus' divine being. They could not understand how Jesus restored the sight of the blind, healed the sick, fed five thousand people with one loaf of bread and two fish. And when he calmed the storm on the sea of Galilee, they did not fully understand Jesus' power. They could not believe that He is the Son of God, the Messiah. The one whom they had waited for so long. They just marveled at His power saying, "Who then is this that even demons, the wind and the sea obey Him?"

The most amazing thing about the instructions Jesus gave is that everything He described came to pass exactly as Jesus said. The disciples were asked what they were doing. They responded as instructed and were sent on their way. It is as if Jesus knew exactly what would happen. The same was true when Jesus told them about His betrayal, arrest, His death and His resurrection. What did all of this mean to the disciples? Did it convince them to believe that Jesus is the Messiah?

The problem is that no one believed in Him until His death and resurrection. Jesus had unparalleled wisdom and foresight but still He was obedient to God's will. He was willing to die on the cross and rise again on the third day to save you and me. To save whomever believed in Him. Jesus would have saved Himself from the Cross, but He was obedient to God's command. The chief priest at Jesus' crucifixion mockingly said..."**He saved others; he cannot save Himself, let the Christ, the king of Israel come down now from the cross that we may see and believe.**" (Mark 15: 31)

Jesus is not the super hero whom we see on television or would invent for ourselves. Jesus is the Son of God, fully human, fully divine. He came down to save the world. God revealed Himself in Jesus Christ. He became the medium between God and human. What a marvelous truth it is that all humanity is drawn to Him in order to be saved.

Mark presents Jesus as a great miracle worker. Yet He is also the suffering servant foretold by Isaiah. The scripture foretells His life, death and resurrection.

In the Gospels, Jesus was hailed by the blind as the son of David for restoring His sight. Yet this great Son of David, the creator of the world...cried out to God on the cross..... Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani (Hebrew) Means... "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me."

There is some mystery about the way that God works in our lives. Today as we celebrate Palm Sunday and look forward to Holy Week, let us once again remember God's mercy and forgiveness bestowed upon us. Let us marvel at His mighty works, **His saving grace.** When God pulls us into the depths of our own limitations, God's mighty power is revealed in His acts. God reorients us to His Word and Sacraments. **A Word that always rescues and saves us and Sacraments that preserve us and give us new life each day.**

The word is fulfilled in Jesus Christ and when He comes to us we recognize ourselves in Him. We might have been in the crowd shouting "Hosanna in the highest" to receive Jesus into Jerusalem. We might have been standing under the cross when He was crucified. What does that mean to us?

I believe we are more privileged today because Jesus doesn't come to us on donkey but in the Bread and Wine. Jesus is nearer to us than we think so let us rejoice and be glad in Him.

The whole church on earth joins the crowds in Jerusalem shouting with palms in their hands "Hosanna." We also join the angelic choir in heaven singing "Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of power and might, heaven and earth are full of your glory, Hosanna in the highest.

The peace of God which passes all understanding keeps your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.

Hymn of the Day: ELW #352 (verses 1 & 2)

"O sacred head, now wounded"

Blessing

The peace of the lord be with you always. **and also with you. Amen.**

Prayers of Intercession

Relying on the promises of God, we pray boldly for the church, the world, and all in need.

A brief silence.

In Jesus you came among us as a suffering servant. Give your church humility. Redeem your people from pride and the certainty that we always know your will. Heal us and empower us to confess Christ crucified. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

In creation, life springs from death. Redeem your creation awaiting resurrection: restore lost habitats and endangered species. Create new possibilities for areas affected by climate change especially for the people of the South-Eastern United States, who have experienced a tornado and severe weather. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Jesus was handed over to the powers of this world. In all nations, instruct the powerful, that they would not exploit their power but maintain justice. Sustain soldiers, and guide those who command them, that they serve those in greatest need. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

On the cross Jesus joined all who feel forsaken. Abide with those who are condemned to death. Defend those who are falsely accused. Console and strengthen those who are mocked or bullied. Accompany all who suffer especially for Beverly Tankersly, Pastor Matthew Lamb, Connie Mattson, Lori Strickland, Eric Marken, Eva Mohr, Al Picotte, Bill Duff, Bill Vaneffen, Lois Stoppel, Teri DePlonty, Janet Rolston, Dawn Aldrich, Jane Hansen, Ken Randall and for all those who are grieving for loved ones, especially the family and friends of Cindy Panik and Sandra Kaye. For whom and what else do we pray silently or out loud? (Pause...); grant respite and renewal. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

You called followers to tend Jesus' body in death. Sustain hospice workers and funeral directors. Bless this congregation's ministries at times of death: those who plan and lead funerals, those who prepare meals, all who offer support in grief. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

You inspired the centurion to confess Jesus as your Son. We praise you for the faith you have given to people of all places and times. Give us also such faith to trust the promises of baptism and, with them, to look for the resurrection of the dead. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Lord of comforter, we pray especially for the families who are mourning the loss of lives due to gun violence in Atlanta and Colorado. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

We entrust ourselves and all our prayers to you, O faithful God, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Offertory Prayer (please join in prayer)

Faithful God, you walk beside us in desert places, and you meet us in our hunger with bread from heaven. Accompany us in this meal, that we may pass over from death to life with Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

Our Lord's Prayer (I invite you to join in praying the prayer our Lord Jesus taught us...)

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 forever. Amen

Benediction

You are what God made you to be: created in Christ Jesus for good works, chosen as holy and beloved, freed to serve your neighbor. God bless you ☩ that you may be a blessing, in the name of the holy and life-giving Trinity. **Amen.**

Dismissal

Go in peace. Live in faith, Share Christ's love
Thanks be to God.

Sending Hymn: ELW #347 (verses 1 & 2)

"Go to Dark Gethsemane"

Sources:

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

Worship opportunities for Holy Week and Easter Sunday

Palm Sunday, March 28th at 10:30am

In-person and live on Facebook

Maundy Thursday, April 1st

Watch on Facebook or on our website at 7:00PM (no in-person service)

Good Friday, April 2nd

Watch on Facebook or on our website at 7:00PM (no in-person service)

Easter Sunday, April 4th at 10:30am

In-person and live on Facebook



Ways to Commune during Holy Week.

Palm Sunday (March 28th) and Easter Sunday (April 4th)

Communion will be offered at in-person worship and after the service by way of drive-thru from 11:30am to 12:15pm for those who watched the service online, but did not attend in-person.

Maundy Thursday (April 1st)

Pre-consecrated Communion elements will be available for pick-up from 12 noon until 1:30PM. You can then partake in Holy Communion while watching our online worship service at 7PM.

❖ **Pastor Rita is available for any pastoral needs by phone, email, and Zoom!** ❖

If you would like to speak with Pastor Rita, please call or email her at (312) 478-6212 or critawilliam@gmail.com From there if you'd like to set up a Zoom meeting, just ask!

❖ **Quarters for Hunger boxes are available in the lobby. Pick one up if you'd like to donate to the ELCA's World Hunger campaign. We'll let you know when to return them.** ❖

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