

Palm Sunday

April 5, 2020

Adaptive Worship Service



1812 North Highland Avenue
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Ministers: The People of Grace Lutheran Church

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Pastor: Rev. Jefferson Cox

Welcome! Today, we encounter the paradox that defines our faith: Jesus Christ is glorified king and humiliated servant. We too are full of paradox: like Peter, we fervently desire to follow Christ, but find ourselves afraid, denying God. We wave palms in celebration today as Christ comes into our midst, and we follow with trepidation as his path leads to death on the cross. Amid it all we are invited into this paradoxical promise of life through Christ's broken body and outpoured love in a meal of bread and wine. We begin this week that stands at the center of the church year, anticipating the completion of God's astounding work.

This is a special bulletin for Grace Lutheran Church. We have closed the Sanctuary to the general public amidst the COVID-19 pandemic and this Sunday the service will be live-streamed from Pastor Jeff's house. This bulletin is designed to be used at home by anyone who is baptized serving as the Worship Leader. Holy Communion is not included. When we can gather again at Grace, we will have a glorious celebration of Holy Communion together again.

GREETING

Worship Leader: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

Congregation: And also with you.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Worship Leader: Reader: 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. 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.

Congregation: Amen.

FIRST READING

Philippians 2:5-11

Introduction to the Lesson: *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 fellowship within the community of Christ.*

Reader: The attitude you should have is the one that Christ Jesus had: He always had the nature of God, but he did not think that by force he should try to remain equal with God. Instead of this, of his own free will he gave up all he had, and took the nature of a servant. He became like a human being and appeared in human likeness. He was humble and walked the path of obedience all the way to death—his death on the cross. For this

reason God raised him to the highest place above and gave him the name that is greater than any other name. And so, in honor of the name of Jesus all beings in heaven, on earth, and in the world below will fall on their knees, and all will openly proclaim that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

After the reading...

Reader: The word of the Lord.

Congregation: Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL LESSON

Matthew 21:1-11

Worship Leader: The Holy Gospel according to Matthew in the 21st chapter.

Congregation: Glory to you, O Lord.

As Jesus and his disciples approached Jerusalem, they came to Bethphage at the Mount of Olives. There Jesus sent two of the disciples on ahead with these instructions: “Go to the village there ahead of you, and at once you will find a donkey tied up with her colt beside her. Untie them and bring them to me. And if anyone says anything, tell him, ‘The Master needs them’; and then he will let them go at once.”

This happened in order to make come true what the prophet had said: “Tell the city of Zion, Look, your king is coming to you! He is humble and rides on a donkey and on a colt, the foal of a donkey.” So the disciples went and did what Jesus had told them to do: they brought the donkey and the colt, threw their cloaks over them, and Jesus got on. A large crowd of people spread their cloaks on the road while others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. The crowds walking in front of Jesus and those walking behind began to shout, “Praise to David's Son! God bless him who comes in the name of the Lord! Praise be to God!” When Jesus entered Jerusalem, the whole city was thrown into an uproar. “Who is he?” the people asked. “This is the prophet Jesus, from Nazareth in Galilee,” the crowds answered.

After the reading...

Worship Leader: The gospel of the Lord.

Congregation: Praise to you, O Christ.

GOSPEL MESSAGE—From Sundays and Seasons

Enter the Story

Annually the church the world over traces Jesus’ “triumphal entry” into the city of Jerusalem. A donkey and colt symbolize Jesus’ rule, humble and lowly. Nothing is shaped as expected, yet everything is as needed. To enter the scene, we’ll use many senses.

Listen! The braying of humble animals mixes sweetly with boisterous shouts of praise: “Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest heaven!” (Matt. 21:9).

Smell! People young and old, doves and goats, spices and spring blooms. The crowd is filled with the scents of fishing nets and barns, of vineyards and hostels.

Open-eyed, look around! See colorful cloaks and branches spread on the ground, creating a pathway for the donkey and its rider. See children hoisted above their elders, each straining to catch sight of Jesus, on whom all their hopes are pinned for a better life and a lovelier world.

This Holy Week, we are invited to enter into the story with senses newly awakened. As you listen to the gospel today, what do you hear that you’ve never heard before? What parts of the narrative come to life that in earlier years you may have missed? Today as you wave a palm and perhaps join in a procession, can you imagine yourself in the crowd that surrounded Jesus?

Are you asking anything of the people beside you? Do you know the dreams of freedom dear to them? Have you shared your hopes for a better world rooted in Jesus’ way of humility? Are you willing to risk making something of a scene today, in ways that might attract some attention, prompting neighbors to echo the question in Jerusalem so long ago when “the whole city was in turmoil, asking, ‘Who is this?’” (Matt. 21:10). Then, in words and actions may we all respond that the one at our center is “the prophet Jesus from Nazareth in Galilee” (Matt. 11:11).

SERMON

HYMN OF THE DAY

All Glory, Laud, and Honor

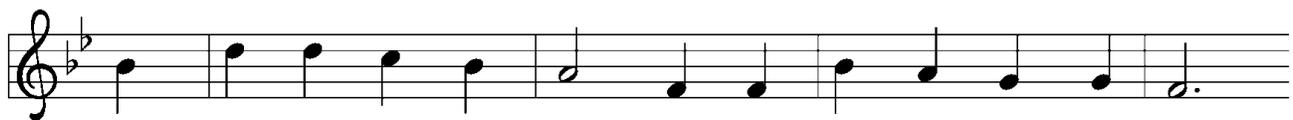
Refrain



All glo - ry, laud, and hon - or to you, re - deem - er, king,



to whom the lips of chil - dren made sweet ho - san - nas ring.



1 You are the king of Is - rael and Da - vid's roy - al Son,
2 The com - pa - ny of an - gels are prais - ing you on high;

Refrain



now in the Lord's name com - ing, our King and Bless-ed One.
cre - a - tion and all mor - tals in cho - rus make re - ply.

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Worship Leader: Turning our hearts to God who is gracious and merciful, we pray for the church, the world, and all who are in need.

A brief silence.

Prayer Leader: God of mercy, awaken your church to new proclamations of your faithfulness. By your Spirit, give us bold and joyful words to speak, that we sustain the weary with the message of your redemption. Lord, in your mercy,

Congregation: Hear our prayer.

Prayer Leader: God of mercy, quiet the earth where it trembles and shakes. Protect vulnerable ecosystems, threatened habitats, and endangered species. Prosper the work of scientists, engineers, and researchers who find ways to restore creation to health and wholeness. Lord, in your mercy,

Congregation: Hear our prayer.

Prayer Leader: God of mercy, send your saving help to all who suffer abuse, insult, discrimination, or contempt. Heal the wounded. Comfort the dying. Bring peace to those suffering chronic or terminal illness. Tend to all who cry out for relief (especially those impacted by the COVID-19 outbreak, those in harm's way while serving in the military, and those unjustly or unnecessarily separated from their parents or children), and those we name now with our lips or in our hearts. Fill us with compassion and empathy for those who struggle, and keep us faithful in prayer. Lord, in your mercy,

Congregation: Hear our prayer.

Prayer Leader: God of mercy, we pray for all who will prepare and lead worship in this Holy Week, especially in light of the historic challenges before us. In all things, show us the ways that you call us to die to self, to live for you, and to give of ourselves for the sake of others. Lord, in your mercy,

Congregation: Hear our prayer.

Prayer Leader: According to your steadfast love, O God, hear these and all our prayers as we commend them to you; through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

OFFERING

Offerings to the mission and ministry of Grace can be made online at GraceCLW.com (look for the "Donate" button), or (for now) by mailing a check to Grace Lutheran Church, 1812 N. Highland Ave. Clearwater FL 33755. Thank you for your continued financial support during these uncertain times.

OFFERING PRAYER

Prayer Leader: Blessed are you, O God, maker of all things. Through your goodness you have blessed us with these gifts: our selves, our time, and our possessions. Use us, and what we have gathered, in feeding the world with your love, through the one who gave himself for us, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Congregation: Amen.

LORD'S PRAYER

Worship Leader: Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray in the language closest to our hearts.

Congregation: 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 trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

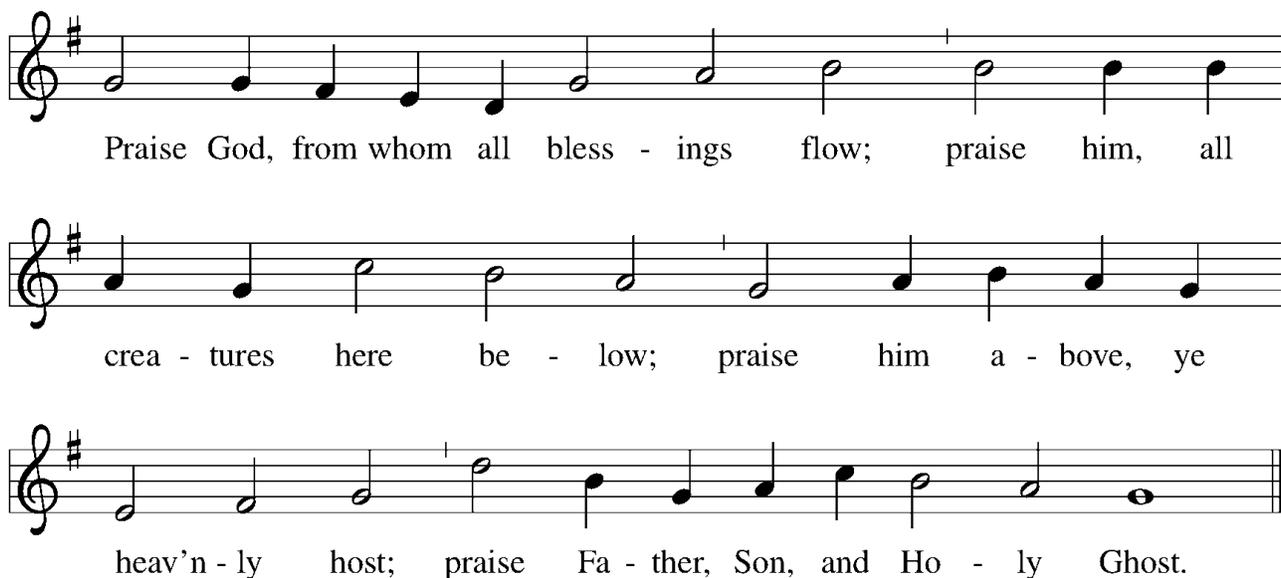
BLESSING

Worship Leader: The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord's face shine on you with grace and mercy. The Lord look upon you with favor and ✠ give you peace.

Congregation: Amen.

SENDING SONG

The Doxology



Praise God, from whom all bless - ings flow; praise him, all
crea - tures here be - low; praise him a - bove, ye
heav'n - ly host; praise Fa - ther, Son, and Ho - ly Ghost.

Text: Thomas Ken, 1637–1711

Music: OLD HUNDREDTH, Louis Bourgeois, 1510–1561

DISMISSAL

Worship Leader: Together we have heard God's Word and joined in prayer, we have given and have been forgiven. Now our service of worship has ended, and our service to the world begins! Go in Peace. Christ is with you.

Congregation: Thanks be to God!

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