

Church at Home

for Palm Sunday April 5, 2020

We gather in the name of our Creator who forms us, our Savior who redeems us, and the Holy Spirit that guides us, empowering us for life every day! Amen.

Today we celebrate Palm Sunday. This is the beginning of Holy Week, and the time when we make this journey with Christ. Of course, this year's journey to the cross and empty tomb will be unusual...but it need not be less holy. I invite you to consider how this year, our engagement in Palm Sunday and Holy Week might even be more intentional than "the usual".

With fewer distractions and time to engage our faith in this new way, even without the pleasure of meeting together at church, may we find ways to be united in our faith, and in our appreciation and recognition of the promises contained in Holy Week. May God in Christ be honored, and all of us, blessed! Now, find a quiet place and space in your life, alone, or with those with whom you are sheltering in place—near a window, or even outside if that works, and take your time making your way through this document.

There will be several different places for you to "click" your cursor on a word or phrase. This will take you to music that Helen (our guest organist) and Vinay (our Interim Music Director) are providing this week, to a Children's message that Vanessa (our Children, Youth, and Family Director), and to the sermon I am offering.

In order to prepare to receive what God has in store for us today, on this Palm Sunday—as we begin our Holy Week journey towards a profound and meaningful Easter Day—I invite you to begin by clicking with your cursor on the colored word: [PRELUDE](#).

After listening to the Prelude, let's pray:

As we gather in your name this day, remind us that we are not alone, that others are with us, praying together, considering your promises together, and looking toward you for hope and healing. Hear, now, our prayers for one another. (please name any of your family, friends, or fellow members of Olivet)
Help all those for whom we pray to experience your loving care and tender, healing touch. With confidence in your care and keeping, we entrust the whole world, and everyone in it. Be with each of us as we take this time out of our

Sunday to meet with you, in the fellowship of the Holy Spirit that resides in us all and binds us together as one. AMEN!

In the spirit of what we often do when gathering at Olivet, click [HERE](#) to watch and enjoy a Children's Message. If you are looking for a coloring page for children to enjoy click [HERE](#).

Now, what follows is the Psalm assigned in the Universal Common Lectionary for Palm Sunday. As you read these verses from scripture, be mindful that Christians all over the world will be reading these same passages and seeking hope with you. Ponder how the words apply to your own life today—maybe even particularly profound ways as we worship at home and in new ways. Reflect on the words of the Psalmist with one another, and use the prayer—better yet, offer up one of your own.

[Psalm 118:1-2, 19-29](#)

O give thanks to the LORD, for God is good; God's steadfast love endures forever!

Let Israel say, "God's steadfast love endures forever."

Open to me the gates of righteousness, that I may enter through them and give thanks to the LORD.

This is the gate of the LORD; the righteous shall enter through it.

I thank you that you have answered me and have become my salvation.

The stone that the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone.

This is the Lord's doing; it is marvelous in our eyes.

This is the day that the LORD has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it.

Save us, we beseech you, O LORD! O LORD, we beseech you, give us success!

Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the LORD. We bless you from the house of the LORD.

The LORD is God, and God has given us light. Bind the festal procession with branches, up to the horns of the altar.

You are my God, and I will give thanks to you; you are my God, I will extol you.

O give thanks to the LORD, for God is good, for God's steadfast love endures forever.

PRAYER: *God as I seek your fullness in the Word, I also seek your saving power. Save us now, God. Amid our struggles and disease and crisis we pray as one, trusting in your mercy and grace. Hosanna—save us now. Save me, God. And then help me to see the ways in which you answer this prayer. In Jesus name, AMEN.*

Click on the word [HYMN](#) for one of our great and traditional Palm Sunday hymns!

A special day calls for something a bit different. I'm guessing that most of you are acquainted at least with the Gospel story of Jesus riding into Jerusalem on a donkey, being cheered on and celebrated by the crowds waving palm branches and laying them as a carpet at his feet. In fact, I will reflect on this story first, BEFORE you read it again for this Holy Week.

So, I invite you to [CLICK HERE FOR THE SERMON](#), after which I will ask you to read the Palm Sunday Gospel as told by Matthew.

[Matthew 21:1-11](#)

When they had come near Jerusalem and had reached Bethphage, at the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two disciples, saying to them, "Go into the village ahead of you, and immediately you will find a donkey tied, and a colt with her; untie them and bring them to me. If anyone says anything to you, just say this, 'The Lord needs them.' And he will send them immediately." This took place to fulfill what had been spoken through the prophet, saying, "Tell the daughter of Zion, Look, your king is coming to you, humble, and mounted on a donkey, and on a colt, the foal of a donkey." The disciples went and did as Jesus had directed them; they brought the donkey and the colt, and put their cloaks on them, and he sat on them. A very large crowd spread their cloaks on the road, and others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. The 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!" When he entered Jerusalem, the whole city was in turmoil, asking, "Who is this?" The crowds were saying, "This is the prophet Jesus from Nazareth in Galilee."

And now, receive the blessing...
May the Lord bless you and keep you.
May God's holy and loving face shine upon you and be gracious to you.
May the God of all—the God of this Holy Week—look upon you with favor,
and fill you with peace!

IF the clicking has gone well for you today, for a closing song, click [HYMN](#) , skip the ads, and enjoy!