

# **Sunday, March 28, 2021**

## **Sunday of the Passion / Palm Sunday, Year B**

### **Introduction**

This week, the center of the church's year, is one of striking contrasts: Jesus rides into Jerusalem surrounded by shouts of glory, only to be left alone to die on the cross, abandoned by even his closest friends. Mark's gospel presents Jesus in his complete human vulnerability: agitated, grieved, scared, forsaken. Though we lament Christ's suffering and all human suffering, we also expect God's salvation: in the wine and bread, Jesus promises that his death will mark a new covenant with all people. We enter this holy week thirsty for the completion of God's astonishing work.

### **Order of Service**

Today is Palm/Passion Sunday, with communion, but with several modifications to a typical Palm/Passion Sunday because of the ongoing pandemic restrictions:

- There will be 2 services, 8 am 10:30, liturgically the same. Kevin will decide if the music will differ at the 2 services.
- There will be no procession with palm, but palm will still be instrumental to the early part of the service. People will pick up their palm from tables in the narthex before the service, as the candles were displayed for Christmas Eve services. The small bread and wine communion elements, as we used at Christmas, will be set up near the usher stations for people to pick up on their way into the sanctuary, to avoid crowds at either station.
- The opening liturgy – all up front, though, not in the Narthex – will be a reading of the “palm processional gospel and a blessing of the palm, but everyone will stay where they are: no walking around.
- Because of the opening liturgy with the palms, no Prelude and no Confession (standard for Palm/Passion Sunday)
- Communion will be as we have been doing it, bringing it out to people in their seats.
- On the passion reading side, without time to develop a full reading of the passion, this year we will have the shorter passion reading and a brief(er) meditation, instead.

### **Entry of Jesus into Jerusalem and the Blessing of the Palms**

#### **[Mark 11:1-11](#)**

*Jesus enters Jerusalem*

### **Readings**

#### **[Philippians 2:5-11](#)**

*Humbled to the point of death on a cross*

#### **[Mark 15:1-39 \[40-47\]](#) (alternate)**

*The passion of the Lord*

### **Jesus Enters Jerusalem: Mark 11:1-11**

<sup>1</sup>When they were approaching Jerusalem, at Bethphage and Bethany, near the Mount of Olives, [Jesus] sent two of his disciples <sup>2</sup>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. <sup>3</sup>If anyone says to you, ‘Why are you doing this?’ just say this, ‘The Lord needs it and will send it back here immediately.’” <sup>4</sup>They went away and found a colt tied near a door, outside in the street. As they were untying it, <sup>5</sup>some of the bystanders said to them, “What are you doing, untying the colt?” <sup>6</sup>They told them what Jesus had said; and they allowed them to take it. <sup>7</sup>Then they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their cloaks on it; and he sat on it. <sup>8</sup>Many people spread their cloaks on the road, and others spread leafy branches that they had cut in the fields. <sup>9</sup>Then those who went ahead and those who followed were shouting,

“Hosanna!

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

<sup>10</sup>Blessed is the coming kingdom of our ancestor David!

Hosanna in the highest heaven!”

<sup>11</sup>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.

### **Blessing of the Palms** [this section goes in the bulletin]

Pastor Blessed is the One who comes in the name of the Lord!

**People Hosanna in the highest!**

Pastor The Lord be with you.

**People And also with you.**

Pastor Let us pray.

*A brief silence is kept*

Pastor 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.

**People Grant us grace to follow our Lord in the way of the cross,  
so that, joined to his death and resurrection, we may enter  
into life with you.**

Pastor through the same Jesus Christ we pray, who lives and reigns with  
you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen

*Something of* “All Glory, Laud and Honor” ELW 344 here...

### **Rice Bowl Offering Dedication prayer here.**

Anything related to the Palm part of Palm/Passion Sunday has to happen before we turn into the readings, as the tone of the service shifts here.

## **Second Reading: Philippians 2:5-11**

*Christ did not act to attain status and glory but was obedient to God even to the point of death. Following Christ's example, we do not seek personal status or glory but care for others as God cared for us in Christ's death.*

<sup>5</sup>Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus,  
<sup>6</sup>who, though he was in the form of God,  
did not regard equality with God  
as something to be exploited,  
<sup>7</sup>but emptied himself,  
taking the form of a slave,  
being born in human likeness.  
And being found in human form,  
<sup>8</sup>he humbled himself  
and became obedient to the point of death—  
even death on a cross.

<sup>9</sup>Therefore God also highly exalted him  
and gave him the name  
that is above every name,  
<sup>10</sup>so that at the name of Jesus  
every knee should bend,  
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,  
<sup>11</sup>and every tongue should confess  
that Jesus Christ is Lord,  
to the glory of God the Father.

A The Word of the Lord.

**C THANKS BE TO GOD.**

## **Gospel (alternate): 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.*

<sup>1</sup>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. <sup>2</sup>Pilate asked him, "Are you the King of the Jews?" He answered him, "You say so." <sup>3</sup>Then the chief priests accused him of many things. <sup>4</sup>Pilate asked him again, "Have you no answer? See how many charges they bring against you." <sup>5</sup>But Jesus made no further reply, so that Pilate was amazed.

<sup>6</sup>Now at the festival he used to release a prisoner for them, anyone for whom they asked. <sup>7</sup>Now a man called Barabbas was in prison with the rebels who had committed murder during the insurrection. <sup>8</sup>So the crowd came and began to ask Pilate to do for them according to his custom. <sup>9</sup>Then he answered them, "Do you want me to release for you the King of the Jews?" <sup>10</sup>For he realized that it was out of jealousy that the chief priests had handed him over. <sup>11</sup>But the chief priests stirred up the crowd to have him release Barabbas for them instead. <sup>12</sup>Pilate spoke to them again, "Then what do you wish

me to do with the man you call the King of the Jews?" <sup>13</sup>They shouted back, "Crucify him!" <sup>14</sup>Pilate asked them, "Why, what evil has he done?" But they shouted all the more, "Crucify him!" <sup>15</sup>So Pilate, wishing to satisfy the crowd, released Barabbas for them; and after flogging Jesus, he handed him over to be crucified.

<sup>16</sup>Then the soldiers led him into the courtyard of the palace (that is, the governor's headquarters); and they called together the whole cohort. <sup>17</sup>And they clothed him in a purple cloak; and after twisting some thorns into a crown, they put it on him. <sup>18</sup>And they began saluting him, "Hail, King of the Jews!" <sup>19</sup>They struck his head with a reed, spat upon him, and knelt down in homage to him. <sup>20</sup>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.

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

<sup>25</sup>It was nine o'clock in the morning when they crucified him. <sup>26</sup>The inscription of the charge against him read, "The King of the Jews." <sup>27</sup>And with him they crucified two bandits, one on his right and one on his left. <sup>29</sup>Those who passed by derided him, shaking their heads and saying, "Aha! You who would destroy the temple and build it in three days, <sup>30</sup>save yourself, and come down from the cross!" <sup>31</sup>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. <sup>32</sup>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.

<sup>33</sup>When it was noon, darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon.

<sup>34</sup>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?" <sup>35</sup>When some of the bystanders heard it, they said, "Listen, he is calling for Elijah." <sup>36</sup>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." <sup>37</sup>Then Jesus gave a loud cry and breathed his last. <sup>38</sup>And the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom.

<sup>39</sup>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!"

### **Prayers of Intercession**

When I say, "Hear us, O God," you respond, "**Your mercy is great.**"

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

*A brief silence is kept as we gather our prayers.*

In Jesus you came among us as a suffering servant. Let your church be humble: 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 the crowds at Jerusalem, joy turned so easily into hostility and betrayal. Keep us steadfast in your Word, O LORD, that we may not mistake the stoking of fear for material or political gain for truth. Lead us and guide us that we may hear your voice above the others:

Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

Jesus was handed over to the powers of this world. Let us see clearly what is right! We pray for the leaders of the nations, for all who exercise power in work and business. Sustain soldiers, and guide those who command them.

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; 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 Grace's ministries with the suffering and at the time 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 your promises and, with them, to look for the resurrection of the dead.

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.**

**Peace**

As usual

**Offering 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.**

**Prayer after Communion**

God of steadfast love,  
at this table you gather your people  
into one body for the sake of the world.  
Send us in the power of your Spirit,  
that our lives bear witness to the love that has made us new  
in Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

**Amen.**

**Blessing**

God bless you ✝ that you may be a blessing,  
in the name of the holy and life-giving Trinity.

**Amen.**

**Dismissal**

Go in peace. Share the good news.

**Thanks be to God.**

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Prayers adapted by Interim Pastor Janet S. Peterman

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