

CHRIST'S UNITED/FRIEDENS/ST. JAMES LUTHERAN CHURCHES

Ashland, Hegins, Pitman

The Revs. Laura A. Csellak and Mark E. Swanson, Pastors

THE SUNDAY OF THE PASSION/PALM SUNDAY ✠ APRIL 5, 2020

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Greetings, we welcome all who are viewing this service, friends both near and far, who desire to hear God's Word, but are unable to attend worship at this time.

We thank our technicians—Gary Klinger, Eljon Alonge, and Steven Wolfgang—for sharing their skills in recording and posting this service.

We pray for our respective faith communities and all those in our nation and around the world affected by the spread of the Coronavirus, especially those most vulnerable.

- If you have any pastoral care needs, do not hesitate to call Pastor Mark or me at the Lutheran parsonage at **570-652-1951**. And please visit our websites for more information in the days ahead.
- *Remember, that the work of the Church continues even now. We urge you to continue your financial giving to the life of your congregation. If possible, please mail in your offering or use electronic means to continue your weekly giving. These are difficult days for all of us, including our congregations.*

Trusting in Christ our Savior, who is Lord of all things, we look ahead in confident hope.

PROCESSION WITH PALMS

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the LORD.

Hosanna to the Son of David.

Let us pray. Mercifully assist us, O LORD God of our salvation, that we may enter with joy upon the contemplation of those mighty acts whereby you have given us life everlasting; through your Son, Jesus Christ our LORD. **Amen.**

PROCESSIONAL GOSPEL: ST. MATTHEW 21:1-11

¹When they had come near Jerusalem and had reached Bethphage, at the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two disciples, ²saying 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. ³If anyone says anything to you, just say this, 'The Lord needs them.' And he will send them immediately." ⁴This took place to fulfill what had been spoken through the prophet, saying,

⁵"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.”

⁶The disciples went and did as Jesus had directed them; ⁷they brought the donkey and the colt, and put their cloaks on them, and he sat on them. ⁸A very large crowd spread their cloaks on the road, and others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. ⁹The 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!”

¹⁰When he entered Jerusalem, the whole city was in turmoil, asking, “Who is this?” ¹¹The crowds were saying, “This is the prophet Jesus from Nazareth in Galilee.”

THANKSGIVING

The LORD be with you.

And also with you.

Let us give thanks to the LORD our God.

It is right to give him thanks and praise.

We praise and thank you, O God, for your redemption of the world through your Son, Jesus Christ our LORD. On this day he entered the holy city of Jerusalem in triumph, and was acclaimed Son of David and King of kings by those who scattered their garments and branches of palm in his path. Bless these branches and those who carry them. Grant that we may ever hail him as our LORD and King and follow him in the way of the cross, so that dying and rising with him, we may enter into your kingdom; through Jesus Christ, our LORD, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

HYMN *“ALL GLORY, LAUD, AND HONOR”*

Refrain

All glory, laud, and honor
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*

2 The company of angels
are praising you on high;
creation and all mortals
in chorus make reply. *Refrain*

- 3 The multitude of pilgrims
with palms before you went;
our praise and prayer and anthems
before you we present. *Refrain*
- 4 To you, before your passion,
they sang their hymns of praise.
To you, now high exalted,
our melody we raise. *Refrain*
- 5 Their praises you accepted;
accept the prayers we bring,
great author of all goodness,
O good and gracious King. *Refrain*

Text: Theodulph of Orleans, 760-821; tr. John Mason Neale, 1818-1866, alt.

The entrance rite concludes:

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the LORD.
Hosanna in the highest.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

As we now enter into contemplation of the Passion of our LORD
Jesus Christ and meditate on the salvation of the world through
his sufferings, death, burial, and resurrection, let us pray.

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.**

FIRST READING: PHILIPPIANS 2:5-11

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

⁹Therefore God also highly exalted him
and gave him the name
that is above every name,

¹⁰so that at the name of Jesus
every knee should bend,
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,
¹¹and every tongue should confess
that Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father.

The Gospel is announced:

The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew, the 27th Chapter.

Glorify to you, O Lord.

HOLY GOSPEL:

MATTHEW 27:11-54

¹¹ Now Jesus stood before the governor; and the governor asked him, 'Are you the King of the Jews?' Jesus said, 'You say so.' ¹² But when he was accused by the chief priests and elders, he did not answer. ¹³ Then Pilate said to him, 'Do you not hear how many accusations they make against you?' ¹⁴ But he gave him no answer, not even to a single charge, so that the governor was greatly amazed.

¹⁵ Now at the festival the governor was accustomed to release a prisoner for the crowd, anyone whom they wanted. ¹⁶ At that time they had a notorious prisoner, called Jesus Barabbas. ¹⁷ So after they had gathered, Pilate said to them, 'Whom do you want me to release for you, Jesus Barabbas or Jesus who is called the Messiah?' ¹⁸ For he realized that it was out of jealousy that they had handed him over. ¹⁹ While he was sitting on the judgement seat, his wife sent word to him, 'Have nothing to do with that innocent man, for today I have suffered a great deal because of a dream about him.' ²⁰ Now the chief priests and the elders persuaded the crowds to ask for Barabbas and to have Jesus killed. ²¹ The governor again said to them, 'Which of the two do you want me to release for you?' And they said, 'Barabbas.' ²² Pilate said to them, 'Then what should I do with Jesus who is called the Messiah?' All of them said, 'Let him be crucified!' ²³ Then he asked, 'Why, what evil has he done?' But they shouted all the more, 'Let him be crucified!'

²⁴ So when Pilate saw that he could do nothing, but rather that a riot was beginning, he took some water and washed his hands before the crowd, saying, 'I am innocent of this man's blood; see to it yourselves.' ²⁵ Then the people as a whole answered, 'His blood be on us and on our children!' ²⁶ So he released Barabbas for them; and after flogging Jesus, he handed him over to be crucified.

²⁷ Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the governor's headquarters, and they gathered the whole cohort around him. ²⁸ They stripped him and put a scarlet robe on him, ²⁹ and after twisting some thorns into a crown, they put it on his head. They put a reed in his right hand and knelt before him and mocked him, saying, 'Hail, King of the Jews!' ³⁰ They spat on him, and took the reed and struck him on the head. ³¹ After mocking him, they

stripped him of the robe and put his own clothes on him. Then they led him away to crucify him.

32 As they went out, they came upon a man from Cyrene named Simon; they compelled this man to carry his cross. ³³And when they came to a place called Golgotha (which means Place of a Skull), ³⁴they offered him wine to drink, mixed with gall; but when he tasted it, he would not drink it. ³⁵And when they had crucified him, they divided his clothes among themselves by casting lots; ³⁶then they sat down there and kept watch over him. ³⁷Over his head they put the charge against him, which read, 'This is Jesus, the King of the Jews.'

38 Then two bandits were crucified with him, one on his right and one on his left. ³⁹Those who passed by derided him, shaking their heads ⁴⁰and saying, 'You who would destroy the temple and build it in three days, save yourself! If you are the Son of God, come down from the cross.' ⁴¹In the same way the chief priests also, along with the scribes and elders, were mocking him, saying, ⁴²'He saved others; he cannot save himself. He is the King of Israel; let him come down from the cross now, and we will believe in him. ⁴³He trusts in God; let God deliver him now, if he wants to; for he said, "I am God's Son." ' ⁴⁴The bandits who were crucified with him also taunted him in the same way.

45 From noon on, darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon. ⁴⁶And about three o'clock Jesus cried with a loud voice, 'Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?' that is, 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?' ⁴⁷When some of the bystanders heard it, they said, 'This man is calling for Elijah.' ⁴⁸At once one of them ran and got a sponge, filled it with sour wine, put it on a stick, and gave it to him to drink. ⁴⁹But the others said, 'Wait, let us see whether Elijah will come to save him.' ⁵⁰Then Jesus cried again with a loud voice and breathed his last. ⁵¹At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. The earth shook, and the rocks were split. ⁵²The tombs also were opened, and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised. ⁵³After his resurrection they came out of the tombs and entered the holy city and appeared to many. ⁵⁴Now when the centurion and those with him, who were keeping watch over Jesus, saw the earthquake and what took place, they were terrified and said, 'Truly this man was God's Son!'

At the conclusion of the Gospel:

The Gospel of the LORD.

Praise to you, O Christ.

MEDITATION *Pastors Mark and Laura*

PRAYERS

Turning our hearts to God who is gracious and merciful, we pray for the church, the world, and all who are in need. Our prayer response is: **"Your mercy is great."**

A brief silence.

God of mercy, awaken your church and make it bold in proclaiming your faithfulness. By your Spirit, give us strength to speak a joyful word to the weary, that they may be sustained by your promise of redemption during these difficult days. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

God of mercy, bring quiet to the earth as it trembles and shakes in this troublesome hour. Hold out your protective and healing hand to touch all that is fragile or broken. Prosper the work of doctors, scientists, engineers, and researchers who are laboring to find ways to restore creation to health and wholeness. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

God of mercy, drive away fear and anger that cause us to turn against one another. Give wisdom, compassion, courage, humility, patience to leaders who seek liberation for all who oppressed. Bring peace and hope to those who look to you, O Lord, for freedom in body or in spirit. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

God of mercy, send your saving help to all who suffer in any way. Heal the wounded. Comfort the dying. Bring peace to those who are sick. Tend to all who cry out for relief (*especially*). Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

God of mercy, we pray for all who desire to gather for worship in this Holy Week, but are unable to assemble as your people. 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, even if for a while, we must be apart. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

God of mercy, when we breathe our last, you raise us to eternal life. With all your witnesses in heaven and on earth (*especially*), let us boldly confess the name of Jesus Christ, our resurrection and our hope. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

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

LORD'S PRAYER

**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**

BENEDICTION

The blessing of Almighty God, Father, ☩ Son and Holy Spirit, keep you in grace, lead you in light, and give you peace. **Amen.**

DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Share the good news.

Thanks be to God.

HYMN *“O SACRED HEAD, NOW WOUNDED”*

- 1 O sacred head, now wounded,
with grief and shame weighed down,
now scornfully surrounded
with thorns, thine only crown;
O sacred head, what glory,
what bliss till now was thine!
Yet, though despised and gory,
I joy to call thee mine.

- 2 How pale thou art with anguish,
with sore abuse and scorn;
how does thy face now languish,
which once was bright as morn!
Thy grief and bitter passion
were all for sinners' gain;
mine, mine was the transgression,
but thine the deadly pain.

- 3 What language shall I borrow
to thank thee, dearest friend,
for this thy dying sorrow,
thy pity without end?
Oh, make me thine forever,
and should I fainting be,
Lord, let me never, never
outlive my love to thee.

- 3 Lord, be my consolation;
shield me when I must die;
remind me of thy passion
when my last hour draws nigh.
These eyes, new faith receiving,
from thee shall never move;
for all who die believing
die safely in thy love.

Text: Paul Gerhardt, 1607–1676, based on Arnulf of Louvain, d. 1250; tr. composite



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SUNDAY OF THE PASSION/PALM SUNDAY...

Today's liturgy begins with a palm procession, commemorating Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem. Quickly the tone of the service changes as we meditate upon Jesus' passion and death. Because this story is so central to our faith, we hear Matthew's account of the passion. Though Jesus is obedient even unto death on the cross, he is exalted by God. We gather to remember his offering for the life of the world, and to be fed by his life-giving mercy. This Holy Week culminates in the celebration of the Three Days of Jesus' suffering, death, and resurrection.

ABOUT THE SCRIPTURE READINGS.....

PHILIPPIANS 2:5-11: *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.*

MATTHEW 26:14—27:66: *In fulfillment of scripture and obedience to God's will, Jesus goes to the cross so that a new covenant in his blood may bring forgiveness of sins. Even the soldiers who crucify him recognize him to be the Son of God.*

