

## Worship Service: PALM SUNDAY

### Helpful Elements:

Palm fronds

**Welcome:** Welcome! Thank you for coming to our service today. My name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I'll be leading our worship time. Today is Palm Sunday, the day we celebrate Jesus' triumphant entry into Jerusalem for the Passover festival. This is the start of what's called Passion Week, remembering Jesus' Last Supper, betrayal, crucifixion, and then resurrection on Easter Sunday, which is next week. Our color is still purple, the Lenten color of humility and repentance. Please pray with me as we open our time together.

**Opening Prayer:** As the people spread their coats and palm branches on the ground to welcome Jesus into Jerusalem, so we welcome You into our lives this morning. King of Glory, King of Peace, Servant King, reign in our hearts and lives this day and all days, that we might praise your holy name. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Amen.<sup>1</sup>

### Opening Hymn: Doxology, p. 1

We start today by blessing the palm branches; let us pray.

As it is written in Zechariah 9:9: "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout, daughter of Jerusalem! See, your king comes to you; righteous and having salvation, gentle and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey." On that day long ago, Lord Jesus, you rode into Jerusalem with people proclaiming "Hosanna!" and spreading their garments and palms before you in tribute. We pray, O Lord, for you to bless these palm branches today and make them holy, a reminder of your victory and your passion. Amen.

**[Pass out palm branches during hymn singing]**

### Hymns:

**For the Beauty of the Earth, p. 2**

**Amazing Grace, p. 4**

---

<sup>1</sup> [http://www.faithandworship.com/liturgy\\_Palm\\_Sunday.htm](http://www.faithandworship.com/liturgy_Palm_Sunday.htm)

## **First Reading: Psalm 118: 1-4, 22-24, 26**

Oh give thanks to the Lord, for he is good;  
for his steadfast love endures forever!

<sup>2</sup> Let Israel say,

“His steadfast love endures forever.”

<sup>3</sup> Let the house of Aaron say,

“His steadfast love endures forever.”

<sup>4</sup> Let those who fear the Lord say,

“His steadfast love endures forever.”

<sup>22</sup> The stone that the builders rejected  
has become the cornerstone.

<sup>23</sup> This is the Lord’s doing;  
it is marvelous in our eyes.

<sup>24</sup> This is the day that the Lord has made;  
let us rejoice and be glad in it.

<sup>26</sup> Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!  
This is the word of the Lord; thanks be to God.

## **Hymns:**

**Holy, Holy, Holy, p. 5**

**Jesus Loves Me, p. 6**

**Softly and Tenderly, p. 7**

## **Second reading: Matthew 21:1-8, The Triumphal Entry**

Now when they drew near to Jerusalem and came to Bethphage, to the Mount of Olives, then Jesus sent two disciples, <sup>2</sup> saying to them, “Go into the village in front of you, and immediately you will find a donkey tied, and a colt with her. Untie them and bring them to me.” <sup>3</sup> If anyone says anything to you, you shall say, ‘The Lord needs them,’ and he will send them at once.” <sup>4</sup> This took place to fulfill what was spoken by the prophet, saying,

<sup>5</sup> “Say to the daughter of Zion,  
‘Behold, your king is coming to you,  
humble, and mounted on a donkey,  
on a colt, the foal of a beast of burden.’”

<sup>6</sup> The disciples went and did as Jesus had directed them. <sup>7</sup> They brought the donkey and the colt and put on them their cloaks, and he sat on them. <sup>8</sup> Most of the crowd spread their cloaks on the road, and others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road.

And from the account in Luke 19: 37-40:

<sup>37</sup> As he was drawing near—already on the way down the Mount of Olives—the whole multitude of his disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works that they had seen, <sup>38</sup> saying, “Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord!

Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!”<sup>39</sup> And some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to him, “Teacher, rebuke your disciples.”<sup>40</sup> He answered, “I tell you, if these were silent, the very stones would cry out.”

This is the word of the Lord; thanks be to God.

### **Hymns:**

**It is Well with My Soul, p. 10**

**Shall We Gather at the River, p. 13**

**I Need Thee Every Hour, p. 15**

**Interactive Homily:** Let’s think about celebration, especially as it relates to the week leading up to Easter.

Why do we have celebrations? What kinds of things do we celebrate?

- Important events, such as births, birthdays, and anniversaries
- Accomplishments, like finishing college or winning a race
- Milestones of history as a nation, like July 4<sup>th</sup> or D-Day or V-Day (WW2)
- When something has gone well! Any excuse to celebrate 😊

How do we celebrate?

- Gathering with other people, cake and ice cream, balloons, piñatas, gift-giving, decorations, confetti, champagne, dancing in the streets, tickertape parade; also ritual meals, such as Passover

How does it feel to celebrate something? What emotions do you have? Why?

- Typically feels good! Fun, exciting, remembering, powerful: tied to the importance of the event or memory

When Jesus came into Jerusalem on a donkey for the Passover festival, everyone threw down their cloaks in front of him and laid down palm branches as a carpet. Why do you think they did this? What did people know about Jesus at this point?

- healing the sick
- teaching with authority
- gathering huge crowds
- standing up to the religious leaders
- standing up for the poor, the “unclean,” women, “sinners”
- even raising the dead: Lazarus, just a few days earlier

The crowds believed Jesus to be the promised Messiah! However, when we celebrate Palm Sunday, we know what's coming next: The Last Supper, Jesus being betrayed by Judas, being killed by the Romans at the Jewish leaders' request, the disciples' sadness and fear and scattering, and finally the resurrection. So how is this celebration different than a typical celebration?

- Tinged with sorrow
- More thoughtful in hindsight
- Theme of repentance and death, realities of the world
- JOY as we look forward

Let us pray together in thanksgiving and wonder for this story and the Passion Week to come.

**(Silent Prayer)** ... Lord, in your love and mercy, hear our prayers. Now let us say the Lord's prayer together:

**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, the power, and the glory forever, Amen.

**Hymns:**

**Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing, p. 12**

**Shall We Gather at the River, p. 14**

**Third Reading: Poetry: "All Glory, Laud and Honor"** by Theodulphus of Orleans<sup>2</sup>  
(Italian abbot and bishop around 780 A.D.)

All glory, laud, and honor  
to thee, Redeemer, King!  
to whom the lips of children  
made sweet hosannas ring.

---

<sup>2</sup> [https://songsandhymns.org/people/detail/theodulph\\_of\\_orleans](https://songsandhymns.org/people/detail/theodulph_of_orleans)

Thou art the King of Israel,  
thou David's royal Son,  
who in the Lord's Name comest,  
the King and Blessed One.

The company of angels  
are praising Thee on high;  
and mortal men and all things  
created make reply.

The people of the Hebrews  
with palms before Thee went;  
our praise and prayer and anthems  
before Thee we present.

To Thee, before Thy Passion,  
they sang their hymns of praise;  
to Thee, now high exalted, our melody we raise.

Thou didst accept their praises;  
accept the prayers we bring,  
who in all good delightest,  
Thou good and gracious King.

**Hymns:**

**My Jesus, I Love Thee, p. 17**

**The Old Rugged Cross, p. 18**

**Fourth Reading:** A Prayer for Palm Sunday

What a strange paradox; the King is coming, the people rejoice, singing 'Hosanna in the highest!' yet fail to understand that the King they welcome is the Servant King, the King who washes his disciples' feet, the King who came not with an army but a weapon so powerful that not even death could resist, the sacrificial love of God laid out upon a Cross.

Lord God, as we sing our 'Hosannas' today may we remember also that which you

were riding toward; the suffering and rejection, pain and humiliation, the cruel Cross. And let us look forward to the joy of Easter Day when you rose from death to reign forever.

Help us, as we daily lay our lives before you, to live the resurrection life that acknowledges Jesus as Lord and King over our lives.<sup>3</sup>

**Hymns:**

**When I Survey the Wondrous Cross, p. 19**

**Beneath the Cross of Jesus, p. 20**

**Closing Blessing:** (Strike bell as you say the word “Lord”)

The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face shine upon you, and be gracious unto you; the Lord lift up his countenance upon you, and grant you peace. Amen.

**Closing Hymn: Doxology, reprise, p. 23**

---

<sup>3</sup> [http://www.faithandworship.com/liturgy\\_Palm\\_Sunday.htm](http://www.faithandworship.com/liturgy_Palm_Sunday.htm)