

Good morning everybody.

First of all, I must apologise to the people who didn't get last weeks service. This morning I found some envelopes had slid off the top of the pile to post and had fallen down the back of my desk. I will put them in a box from now on, so it doesn't happen again. I am so sorry.

I hope you have made it through another week coping well and virus free. One piece of good news – Laura F text me to say that the robin who had been sitting on her eggs in their garden for the last two weeks now is a busy mother as the eggs have just hatched! Good news of new life – how lovely!

Just in case the days are merging into one, today is



This year instead of receiving our Palm Crosses in Church it has been suggested that we attach a green branch to our doors to signify that we are celebrating Palm Sunday. If you haven't go access to a green branch you could make something out of paper or card or use the palm at the end of this service.

With Palm branches on our doors and rainbow pictures in our windows to celebrate of heroic health workers we will have a colourful house!

How strange it seems this year not to be joining together to wave our palm branches and sing our familiar hymns. The good news is that the church is not a building and we are the church wherever we are. Wherever we are we are united by Jesus Christ so let us prepare ourselves to worship together.

It is also communion Sunday today so you might like to get some bread and something to represent the wine ready and we can bless it and eat it together.

Words it share

Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; his steadfast love endures forever.

Hosanna to God, Hosanna in the highest!

Let all who fear God say, "His love endures forever!"

Hosanna to God, Hosanna in the highest!

With the Lord on our side, what can we fear? What can humankind do?

Hosanna to God, Hosanna in the highest!

We shall triumph and stand in confidence in the Lord, our God!

Hosanna to God, Hosanna in the highest!

The Lord is our strength and our might. The Lord has become our salvation!

Hosanna to God, Hosanna in the highest!

Hosanna to God, Hosanna in the highest!

Hymn Make way

Make way, make way, for Christ the King
In splendour arrives.
Fling wide the gates and welcome him
Into your lives.

Make way! (*Make way!*)
Make way! (*Make way!*)
For the King of kings!
(*For the King of kings!*)
Make way! (*Make way!*)
Make way! (*Make way!*)
And let his kingdom in!

He comes the broken hearts to heal,
The prisoners to free.
The deaf shall hear, the lame shall dance,
The blind shall see.

And let his kingdom in!
And those who mourn with heavy hearts,
Who weep and sigh;
With laughter, joy and royal crown
He'll beautify.

And let his kingdom in!
We call you now to worship him
As Lord of all.
To have no other gods but him:
Their thrones must fall!

Prayer

Lord how glad we are to share in your triumphal entry into Jerusalem
And we thank you
That there is a way for us, at this time , to share together at all.
It seems so strange that our church buildings will remain silent today
And every day of this Holy Week
It seems so strange that we will not be there
To share the Last Supper, to sit at the Cross or celebrate the resurrection on Easter morning.
Help us to remember that the reason we won't be there is because the world is suffering, our
neighbours are suffering and this is the only way to bring this virus to an end.
Strange and alone as we feel
We can join our voices to the voice of Christ
Who always spoke up for the sick and the suffering.
May his voice be heard in our hospitals this week, in our supermarkets, on our streets, in our
online work places, down our telephone lines.
May we hear his voice in all those we encounter this week
And may they hear his voice in us.
Lord as we thank you for your presence with us
Let us add our voices to those who waved palm branches as he rode by
Praise to the Son of David. Hosanna, Hosanna in the highest. Amen.

We say the Lords prayer together....

This would be the time in the service where we might have a sketch or a film about Jesus ride into Jerusalem and I couldn't help thinking what it might have been like to be there....

'What do you mean where do I think I am going?

I am off to see what all the fuss is about! I'm off to see Jesus. Haven't you heard? They say he's the Messiah and he's coming into Jerusalem. Who knows what might happen – I don't want to miss it!

They say he's riding on a donkey – I'm off to see for myself.

Listen - they're shouting Hosanna.

**All Hosanna (and wave your palm)
 Hosanna in the highest.**

Wait! Wait! – I'm coming too. Hosanna, Hosanna to the Son of David!!'

Let us listen for Gods word for us this morning....

Matthew 21:1-11 (NLT)

21 As Jesus and the disciples approached Jerusalem, they came to the town of Bethphage on the Mount of Olives. Jesus sent two of them on ahead. ²“Go into the village over there,” he said. “As soon as you enter it, you will see a donkey tied there, with its colt beside it. Untie them and bring them to me. ³If anyone asks what you are doing, just say, ‘The Lord needs them,’ and he will immediately let you take them.”

⁴This took place to fulfil the prophecy that said,

⁵“Tell the people of Jerusalem ‘Look, your King is coming to you. He is humble, riding on a donkey— riding on a donkey’s colt.’”^[b]

⁶The two disciples did as Jesus commanded. ⁷They brought the donkey and the colt to him and threw their garments over the colt, and he sat on it.^[c]

⁸Most of the crowd spread their garments on the road ahead of him, and others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. ⁹Jesus was in the centre of the procession, and the people all around him were shouting,

“Praise God^[d] for the Son of David!

Blessings on the one who comes in the name of the LORD!

Praise God in highest heaven!”^[e]

¹⁰The entire city of Jerusalem was in an uproar as he entered. “Who is this?” they asked.

¹¹And the crowds replied, “It’s Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth in Galilee.”

Reflecting on the story ...may your voice, Lord be heard in mine. Amen.

Elsewhere in Jerusalem on this very day Pontius Pilate was holding a parade. His parade was a show of force – he was returning from Capernaum for Passover accompanied by war horses dressed for battle, parading banners, marching soldiers in leather armour carrying their weapons all to dissuade the many visitors to Jerusalem coming to celebrate again the escape from Egypt from causing any trouble.

People lined the streets to greet him- who would want occupying forces to think you were anything but compliant?

And then there was Jesus. In complete contrast – no weapons, no foot soldiers – unless you count his disciples, no banners – just palm branches, no war horse – just a humble donkey. The image is reframed.

The greatest power is not in pomp and show but in simple vulnerability, not in power and might but in humility, not in force but in love that led all the way to the cross.

I wonder if Gods way of turning things upside down could encourage us to reframe our current circumstances?

I have seen simple ways to rethink what is happening around us. We are encouraged to think we are 'Not stuck in doors but Safe in doors', and that our 'Freedom is not being denied but we are being given the freedom to keep ourselves safe'.

A few days ago the BBC's Newsnight programme asked Graham Medley, Professor of Infectious Disease Modelling at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, what advice he had for people during the COVID-19 pandemic. His advice was essentially a reframe, flipping how we would normally see the situation.

"Most people have a fear of acquiring the virus. I think a good way of doing it is to imagine that you do have the virus and change your behaviour so that you're not transmitting it," he said.

He suggests that this counterintuitive idea stops us from being afraid of others who might be infected; it halts the need to panic buy because it puts us back in the driving seat; it puts our focus outside ourselves. We are the ones who can choose and that choice will ultimately be for the greater good and the benefit of other people too.

This might seem the strangest of ideas yet we know it is true – when we are feeling down in the mouth nothing helps us more than being able to do something for others. Someone once wrote that sharing our light with others increases the light for us all so this Palm Sunday as we reflect on the strangeness of it all let us think who we could phone; who we could encourage; who we could thank; who we could bless; who we could share the light with.

It might seem the strangest of ideas and we have to be careful we don't get the wrong idea. The people in the crowd that day shouting their hosannas had looked at their circumstances - they were oppressed under Roman rule and wanted a Messiah to liberate them from the governing forces so they could be free. They had reframed the Messiah from the suffering servant by whose stripes we would be healed to a saviour – not from our own sin and wrong thinking and acting but to something much smaller - a saviour from their enemy Rome. I guess we can sympathise.

But how counterintuitive God is. As Jesus drew close to the cross even the disciples had not understood that his death was not a failure or an end but would lead to life and bring new life for all.

We all need the eyes of faith to see it, Jesus bears witness to the futility of the world's kind of power in establishing God's peace and points us as followers of Christ to a different way.

Gods kingdom is nothing like an earthly kingdom. Power does not come from domination or oppression, but rather flows from love and service.

Leadership requires servanthood and grace. Peace is won without sword, and no person claims greater value than another.

The counterintuitive Jesus gave all he had for our sakes. For our Hosannas to be authentic may we find new ways of loving, new ways to care at this time when so many things in our lives have been turned upside down.

Let us take a moment to reflect – and perhaps ponder this week.

Is there anything in our lives that we need to reframe just now? Anything in our attitudes to others; in our thinking about God; in our discipleship? Bring it to God and God will show us the way.

This is the time in the service when we make our offering. May God accept what we bring and help us to use it wisely for justice and for peace in our community. Amen

The gracious invitation to Communion

Let us open our hearts that the Sovereign God of Glory may come in

Let us lift our voices in praise and thanksgiving

God deserves all honour and blessing. It is our privilege and joy to exalt the Lord in every place and every moment.

And so, we are invited to this table by Jesus Christ, Gods Son, who comes to us humbly and riding on a donkey's foal.

Prayer of Thanksgiving, confession and concern.

We celebrate Your coming to us, and thank you that you came

Not with political power or military might, not with glamour or fame or wealth, but in humility and love, gently and with great compassion.

You deserve our worship, our love and our devotion, because You have entered our broken world, you have joined us on our journey of pain and pleasure, of sorrow and joy, and have given us access to life eternal and abundant.

In your generosity You invite us to this table to share this meal with you, to receive you love, as you offered yourself for the saving of the world.

Lord Jesus Christ, we recognise that Your life among us was one of sacrifice, confronting hatred, fear, violence and evil. Forgive us when we resist Your coming. When we reject You and seek to silence Your transforming and challenging influence.

Silent confessions are offered.

Have mercy on us, loving God do not cease to come to us and to call us to life. Help us to embrace the way of the cross and to live in the power of Your death-defying love. For Jesus' sake.

Come again among those who need our prayers this week.

Those who are suffering from COVID 19 at this time

And all people working to help them and to keep us, fed, safe and well.

Be with those who are bereaved and bring peace into the hearts of those who are anxious and struggling with their mental health.

Be with our Prime Minister and our government as they seek to make the best decisions and with our media that they may find a wholesome way to bring us news.

Come again to those we know who are working on the front line, To Pam, Nick, Mark and Neelam who have lost loved ones this week. To Joys daughter and her unborn child, to everyone who is feeling sad and alone.

We bring you the needs of ourselves and our loved ones, seeking Your peace and healing, Your wisdom and protection.

Hear us, O God, and come to us, in compassion and love rescue and restore us, and make us a people in whom Your gentle reign is seen.

Come by your Holy Spirit into this bread and wine that we may find true communion in our blessing, breaking and sharing. Amen

The Lord Jesus, on the eve of His death, shared a meal with His followers.
Taking the bread, He gave thanks, broke it, and offered it to them with these words:
This is My body broken for you. Remember Me whenever you eat.

After the meal, taking the cup of wine, He gave thanks, and offered it to them with these words:
This is My blood poured out for you, Remember Me whenever you drink.

And so, now O Lord, we eat and drink in memory of Jesus and His great love, And in this simple meal we proclaim His death and resurrection, giving life to all people.

Communion is received

Final Prayer

**Thank You, Lord Jesus, for coming to us once again
through this simple meal of bread and wine;
For nourishing our bodies and our souls;
and for filling us with hope as we look forward to the eternal banquet.
Amen.**

Ride on! ride on in majesty!
Hark! all the tribes hosanna cry;
O Saviour meek, pursue thy road
with palms and scattered garments strowed.

Ride on! ride on in majesty!
In lowly pomp ride on to die;
O Christ, thy triumphs now begin
o'er captive death and conquered sin.

Ride on! ride on in majesty!
The angel-squadrons of the sky
look down with sad and wondering eyes
to see the approaching sacrifice.

Ride on! ride on in majesty!
Thy last and fiercest strife is nigh;
the Father on his sapphire throne
expects his own anointed Son.

Ride on! ride on in majesty!
In lowly pomp ride on to die;
bow thy meek head to mortal pain,
then take, O God, thy power, and reign.

Blessing

Let's stay with the Hosannas
even as we journey with the
Christ who carried those
Hosannas all the way to the
cross and ensured their
fulfilment as the justice and love
of God.

As we stay with the Hosannas
We know the blessing of God,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit is
with us all. Amen

