

twelvebaskets



PALM SUNDAY C

A complete Sunday service ready to use
for worship and inspire ideas in your church

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Palm Sunday - Year C
10th April 2022



Order of Service

Call to worship

Hymn:

1 STF – All people that on earth do dwell OR

277 STF – My song is love unknown

Opening Prayers

The Lord's Prayer

All Age Talk

Hymn:

64 STF – Praise is rising, eyes are turning to you OR

318 STF – Christ, our king before creation

Readings: Isaiah 50:4-9a Philippians 2:5-11; Luke 19:28-40

Reflections on the readings

Hymn:

264 STF – Make way, make way, for Christ the king in splendour comes OR

265 STF – Ride on, ride on in majesty!

What are you being called to?

Hymn:

483 STF – We are marching in the light of God OR

276 STF – Lift high the cross, the love of Christ proclaim

Intercessions

Offering / collection

Blessing the offering

Hymn:

789 STF – Holy, holy, holy Lord OR

351 STF – In Christ alone my hope is found

Blessing

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Call to worship

When we gather,
We connect.
With each other and with the divine.
Today we come, to gather, to connect.
Gather us, connect us, and send us out with your Spirit in our hearts.

Amen.¹

Hymn:

1 STF – All people that on earth do dwell OR
277 STF – My song is love unknown

Opening Prayers

O Lord,
There is a time for everything.

A time for listening,
And a time for speaking.

Help my ears to collect your wisdom.

Help my mouth to form words that bring hope.

Help my voice to not falter,
And my heart to beat bravely.

There is a time for everything,
And now is the time to raise my anthem.

Let your song be sung from my lips,
And your love flow through me.

Give me the voice to speak up,
To be a beacon of light and hope when it gets
dark and frightening.

There is a time for everything.

Help me, O Lord,
To find my voice.

God of Wisdom,
Hear my prayer.

Amen.²

¹ Call to Worship written by Tim Baker

² Opening prayers written by All We Can, as part of the *Let Wisdom Speak* Lent resource

We say together the Lord's Prayer

All Age Talk

Today is Palm Sunday, the Sunday before Easter, when we celebrate Jesus' arrival into Jerusalem on the back of a donkey – a moment of great celebration, as well as the beginning of the difficult time of Holy Week, where Jesus eventually faces his death.

Let's listen to the imagined thoughts of one of his followers on that day.

[Pause. Read on slowly, setting the scene].

It was wonderful. After the long walk to Jerusalem, to stand on the Mount of Olives gazing over the whole city; the walls on the opposite side of the valley, the temple, the home and centre of our faith in the one God.

Jesus had arranged for two of the disciples to go into a nearby village and borrow a donkey for him to ride into Jerusalem on. As he started out down into the valley, crowds were coming out of Jerusalem straight for us, lining the road, throwing palms and their shawls and cloaks onto the road for him to walk on. The din was enormous, shouts of joy, of praises to God echoed all around. It was as if everyone had come out to welcome Jesus.

It was exciting; would he be crowned as king in Jerusalem? It almost seemed like it. Though he'd said he was never to be called a king, he was a servant of God. Many prophets and a few kings had ridden on a donkey into Jerusalem as a sign of peace.

To anyone who had listened to and thought about Jesus words and teachings, it was obvious what he was saying by these symbols. No-one cared about that just then, it was a time of unleashed joy and hope brightening the lives of those who suffered under Roman rule. The event had seemed to take over and mean more than it should have.

Then we were frightened. Here was Jesus riding into Jerusalem very publicly, so all would know, and at the beginning of the Passover week. The Temple leaders had made their feelings known many times over recent months; of their dislike of Jesus and how he taught, of the stories aimed at the leaders. Their anger was seething, but they had never stopped him.

We had tried to persuade Jesus not to come into Jerusalem publicly this time; however he just ignored our protestations, saying we do not know God's mind. He also said that no prophet ever died but in Jerusalem...

It was a heady mixture; exciting, noisy, wonderful and a terrible foreboding deep in our hearts. Would the worst happen...? How long could we last before falling down exhausted...? But we did not say anything to each other, but we all knew and felt it!³

³ Taken from Palm Sunday Dialogues by David J Woodman

Hymn:

64 STF – Praise is rising, eyes are turning to you OR

318 STF – Christ, our king before creation

Readings: Isaiah 50:4-9a Philippians 2:5-11; Luke 19:28-40

Reflections on the reading

Revd James Morley offers a poetic take on Palm Sunday.

Is it a bird?

Is it a plane? –

No, they haven't been invented yet.

Is it a king? –

It can't be, he's riding a donkey.

But everyone's cheering and celebrating –

it's turning into a proper street-party!

But why do they keep asking 'Whose Anna'?

It's him, that bloke people are saying is a king.

Our king –

allegedly.

Everyone's king –

apparently.

The one God's sent to save us –

although, sometimes I think the only person I need saving from is myself...

Some people say he's the Messiah.

Although some people have said that he's not the Messiah –

That's certainly what the powers that be will think if he keeps stirring things up –
they'll crucify him!

But apparently, he doesn't go around saying he's the Messiah –
no, he just asks other people who they think he is.

Well, I think he must be a few loaves and fish short of a picnic –
what sort of king is supposed to ride a donkey?

Just look at everyone though –

I can't remember the last time I saw people round here so happy.

There must be something in the water –
or the wine.

It would be great though – if he was the one.

I mean, we've waited long enough.

We've prayed hard enough.

But things don't seem to get any better though.

Maybe God's not listening.

Or too busy.

Or just doesn't care –
at least not about people like you and me.
I really wish God would send someone though –
it'd be nice to have a bit of hope.
Anyway –
seeing everyone having such a good time –
at least it lifts the spirits.
All this excitement's quite contagious actually –
I might get myself a palm branch –
when in Rome and all that –
although this is Jerusalem.
Yeah –
I could waft a palm branch at Jesus and tell him I'm his biggest fan...
'Course, it's all rubbish really isn't it –
all this Messiah mumbo-jumbo –
it'll never amount to anything –
probably end in tears.
No –
you mark my words –
It'll certainly never change anything.
It'd take an act of God to change things in this world...⁴

Hymn:

264 STF – Make way, make way, for Christ the king in splendour comes OR

265 STF – Ride on, ride on in majesty!

What are you being called to?

On this Palm Sunday, the challenge for you to think about is: 'what or who are you singing your praises to at this moment'?

Yes, we are here to praise God, and to sing our Palm Sunday songs, but so were the crowd on that first Palm Sunday – perhaps some of them through the cynicism and doubt expressed in the reflection we heard earlier from Revd James Morley. So, God's on the list. But is God at the top of the list?

Who else is on the list?

What else is on the list?

Do we praise money, either as an end in itself or what it can achieve?

Do we sing the praises of celebrities, or films, or fictional stories?

Do we sing the praises of products, or holidays, or gadgets?

Do we sing the praise of companies, and friends, and heroes?

None of these are necessarily bad things in and of themselves (except perhaps the praise of money as an end in itself), but our praise is best reflected in how we live. Do we live as if following Jesus, and learning from his teachings, matters more to us than being able to afford the new iPhone?

⁴ Reflection written by James Morley

Do we listen more carefully to the words of scripture, or do we know more lyrics by Abba than we do verses from the Psalms?
What would make us turn up on the road side to sing praise? For whom, or for what, would we wave our banners and sing our praises?

This is not a judgemental space, and I'm not telling you what you should and shouldn't praise – the church has spent too long coming up with rules about what people should and shouldn't do...

But this is a reflective space, and so as you go from here, go with the challenge of 'praise' in your heart. Go away and reflect on where your priorities lie, on where you are drawing strength from, on what brings you hope and wholeness and a sense of peace.

Go and pursue all that is good.

Hymn:

483 STF – We are marching in the light of God OR

276 STF – Lift high the cross, the love of Christ proclaim

Prayers of intercession

God of this, and every season,

Even as we wave our banners and sing our hallelujahs,

We know that all is not well with your world.

We know that we live in a 'Holy Week' kind of world, where there is war and oppression, violence and betrayal, denial and human failure.

In the midst of conflict and war, we pray for peace.

In the midst of hunger and starvation, we pray for resources to reach those most in need.

In the midst of several refugee crises continuing around the world, we pray for shelter, for comfort, for home.

In the midst of uncertainty and doubt facing our leaders, our society, our world, we pray for courage, courage to do the right thing, the loving thing, the thing that will bring more peace and grace and light into the world.

In the midst of our own towns, communities and villages, we pray for all who feel lonely. Bring them your companionship.

In the hospitals and care homes and health facilities, we pray for all who suffer with illness and disease. Bring them your healing and hope.

In the houses and homes up and down this community, we pray for all who grieve: perhaps recent, or much more historic bereavements. Bring them your comfort.

And we pray for all battling with ongoing mental health challenges, and those who look to care for them and stand by them. Bring a light, that shines in dark places.

Loving God, even as we pray,

Help us to see, that we can be an answer to prayer.

Show me, show each one of us, the role we can play this day, that would bring peace, resources, shelter, courage, companionship, healing, hope, comfort and light to those in need today.

Those near me, and those around the world.

Show me what is mine to do this day,
In Jesus' name we pray,

Amen.⁵

We will now take up the offering.

Blessing the offering

Palm Sunday God, as we await your coming this Easter season, we wave our palm branches with enthusiasm, we celebrate your arrival in our lives again this day. Living God, while we wait, while we celebrate, use us and our gifts – including these gifts of money – to help bring transformation in your world.

In Jesus' name we pray

Amen.⁶

Hymn:

789 STF – Holy, holy, holy Lord OR

351 STF – In Christ alone my hope is found

Blessing

Go from this place, into this difficult week,
With 'hosanna' in your heart,
With praise in your soul,
And with a hope for a better kind of world.

Amen.⁷

⁵ Prayers of intercession by Tim Baker

⁶ Additional prayers by Tim Baker

⁷ Additional prayers by Tim Baker