

# **SA, SL, TS & DSM United Churches**

***Palm Sunday – April 13<sup>th</sup>, 2025***

**Prelude:** - by Christie Coatsworth

## **Welcome & Announcements:**

Thank you for your support of all our past services, which are posted on our websites - [Talbotstreet.ca](http://Talbotstreet.ca) and [Southbuxton.ca](http://Southbuxton.ca)

## **Lighting the Christ Candle:**

### **Call to Worship:**

**Eric:** Today, we join Jesus in the final ascent to Jerusalem, knowing the depths we will descend on our journey through Holy Week. Open the gates of righteousness, that we may come worship God!

**People:** **We join the disciples in declaring that Jesus, riding on a donkey, is our Ruler, the One who will bring peace and salvation for all. Open the gates of peace, that we may come worship God!**

**Eric:** We join with the bystanders who questioned and wondered who this Jesus really is, who feared the consequences of angering the powers that be. Open the gates of truth, that we may come worship God!

**People:** **The journey through Holy Week brings us face-to-face with the stark reality of sin and God's faithfulness to save.**

**Eric:** Open the gates of salvation, that we may come worship God whose steadfast love never fails!

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## **Opening Hymn:** VU 122 "All Glory, Laud and Honour"

*All glory, laud and honour  
to you, Redeemer, King,  
to whom the lips of children  
made sweet hosannas ring.*

You are the King of Israel,  
and David's royal son,  
now in the Lord's name coming,  
our King and blessed one.

*All glory, laud and honour  
to you, Redeemer, King,  
to whom the lips of children  
made sweet hosannas ring.*

The multitude of pilgrims  
with palms before you went;  
our praise and prayer and anthems

before you we present.  
*All glory, laud and honour  
to you, Redeemer, King,  
to whom the lips of children  
made sweet hosannas ring.*

To you, before your passion,  
they sang their hymns of praise;  
to you, now high exalted,  
our melody we raise.  
*All glory, laud and honour  
to you, Redeemer, King,  
to whom the lips of children  
made sweet hosannas ring.*

Their praises you accepted;  
accept the prayers we bring,  
great author of all goodness,  
O good and gracious king.  
*All glory, laud and honour  
to you, Redeemer, King,  
to whom the lips of children  
made sweet hosannas ring. \*\**

### **Opening Prayer:**

**People:** God, we gather on this day to begin this Holy Week. From hope to despair to hope again. As we begin the week, as we join with the crowd, help us cut through the noise to see what is happening, to see what is at stake. As the story unfolds, open us to both the hope and the pain. In this time of worship, prepare us to celebrate, to weep, and to wait. Amen. \*\*

### **Responsive Psalm:** Psalm 118: 1 – 2, 19 - 29

#### ***The Lord Is Always Merciful***

Tell the Lord how thankful you are, because he is kind and always merciful.

**Let Israel shout, “God is always merciful!”**

Open the gates of justice! I will enter and tell the Lord how thankful I am.

**Here is the gate of the Lord! Everyone who does right may enter this gate.**

I praise the Lord for answering my prayers and saving me.

**The stone that the builders tossed aside has now become the most important stone.**

The Lord has done this, and it is amazing to us.

**This day belongs to the Lord! Let's celebrate and be glad today.**

We'll ask the Lord to save us! We'll sincerely ask the Lord to let us win.

**God bless the one who comes in the name of the Lord!**

We praise you from here in the house of the Lord.

**The Lord is our God, and he has given us light! Start the celebration!**

March with palm branches all the way to the altar.

**The Lord is my God! I will praise him and tell him how thankful I am.**

Tell the Lord how thankful you are, because he is kind and always merciful. \*\*

## **Children's Story:**

### **Children's Song: VU 412 "This is the Day"**

This is the day, this is the day  
that our God has made, that our God has made;  
we will rejoice, we will rejoice,  
and be glad in it, and be glad in it.  
This is the day that our God has made,  
we will rejoice and be glad in it.  
This is the day, this is the day  
that our God has made.

Open to us, open to us  
your gates, O God, your gates, O God;  
we will go in, we will go in,  
to your holy place, to your holy place.  
Open to us your gates, O God,  
we will go in to your holy place.  
Open to us, open to us  
your gates, O God.

You are our God, you are our God,  
we will praise your name, we will praise your name;  
we will give thanks, we will give thanks,  
for your faithfulness, for your faithfulness.  
You are our God, we will praise your name,  
we will give thanks for your faithfulness.  
You are our God, you are our God,  
we will praise your name.

This is the day, this is the day  
that our God has made, that our God has made;  
we will rejoice, we will rejoice,  
and be glad in it, and be glad in it.  
This is the day that our God has made,  
we will rejoice and be glad in it.  
This is the day, this is the day  
that our God has made. \*\*

### **Gospel Reading: Luke 19: 28 - 40**

#### ***Jesus Enters Jerusalem***

When Jesus had finished saying all this, he went on toward Jerusalem. As he was getting near Bethany on the Mount of Olives, he sent two of his disciples on ahead. He told them, "Go into the

next village, where you will find a young donkey that has never been ridden. Untie the donkey and bring it here. If anyone asks why you are doing this, just say, 'The Lord needs it.' "

They went off and found everything just as Jesus had said. While they were untying the donkey, its owners asked, "Why are you doing that?" They answered, "The Lord needs it." Then they led the donkey to Jesus. They put some of their clothes on its back and helped Jesus get on. And as he rode along, the people spread clothes on the road[g] in front of him. When Jesus started down the Mount of Olives, his large crowd of disciples were happy and praised God because of all the miracles they had seen. They shouted, "Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven and glory to God." Some Pharisees in the crowd said to Jesus, "Teacher, make your disciples stop shouting!" But Jesus answered, "If they keep quiet, these stones will start shouting." \*\*

### **Message: "Steadfast Love"**

On this Palm Sunday we are going to concentrate on the Palms, not on the passion. We will keep the passion until Thursday night and Friday morning. So on this Palm Sunday, we celebrate with the crowd when Jesus rides the donkey into Jerusalem. When we stand with the crowd, we are really taking a back seat. On the day and at that parade, there was a lot of backseat people. In fact, everyone there was a backseat person. The only one in the driver's seat was Jesus. This was his show from the beginning to the end. Everyone else, including us were and are just spectators. They like us, were invited to look and see, to shout for joy, and to welcome the one who comes.

So, we might ask, "Are the crowd that lined the streets of Jerusalem on Palm Sunday as genuinely glad to see Jesus as it seems?" Did you notice that in Luke's account there are no palms in this Palm Sunday parade, and they do not shout "Hosanna!" Luke's crowd quote from Psalm 118, a psalm written for pilgrims coming to Jerusalem. Did the crowds see Jesus as the one they wanted? Or was it just a big party, so everyone gets involved?

Jesus riding into Jerusalem on a donkey makes a statement on its own. As we have talked in past years, as Jesus comes in one gate, the Roman reinforcements are parading into Jerusalem by another gate. Although Jesus talks a lot about the coming of God's Kingdom, Jesus isn't riding in to claim that kingdom? Yet Jesus is declaring who he is? Jesus is declaring himself to be a different kind of conquering hero. Unlike the Roman generals, Jesus wears no crown. Luke's version does not evoke that Jesus is King David, like the Matthew and Mark's versions of this story. Luke's ties this story, to Luke's own version of Jesus' infancy story, and speaks of peace on earth.

In Luke's telling, we are meant to know that Jesus was indeed claiming a kingdom. But it was a kingdom not of this world or of this world's way of doing things. It was something new, something different. It was an answer to prayers that we didn't even know to pray before he came.

What are we praying for today? Could we be praying for something that we do not expect? How do we know what to pray for? Do we just start and then let the Holy Spirit give us the words? How might we as the faithful, pray for our world today? How do we pray for the main actors in today's uncertainty? Do we believe God is really in control? Can we even answer any of these questions? Perhaps we too are searching, like those on the streets entering Jerusalem for someone who could give us a reason to hold up our faith. Maybe we too are holding out our hands for someone to touch and share with us the grace of God – the very peace that Luke proclaims at Jesus' birth. God knows we need it!

We likely don't know how or what to pray. We do realize that our own motivations have a way of being misplaced on the wrong things, and that our motivations sometimes distract us from the grace of life, and at other times help us to focus on what really is important in this life. Maybe today, we have an idea of what we are doing. At the same time maybe we are as lost as the pilgrims marching with Jesus into Jerusalem. It is probably safe to assume that we too are all over the place. No sure what to expect. Not sure what to pray for. Yet hoping that we are praying for what we need. The journey this week just causes us more uncertainty.

Can we trust that God is always with us? Can we trust that we are never alone? Can we give thanks to God!

**Reflection Hymn: VU 357 "Tell Me the Stories of Jesus" (verses 1 to 4)**

Tell me the stories of Jesus I love to hear,  
things I would ask him to tell me if he were here:  
scenes by the wayside, tales of the sea,  
stories of Jesus, tell them to me.

First let me hear how the children stood round his knee,  
and I shall fancy his blessing resting on me;  
words full of kindness, deeds full of grace,  
all in the lovelight of Jesus' face.

Tell me, in accents of wonder, how rolled the sea  
tossing the boat in a tempest on Galilee!

And how the Master, ready and kind,  
chided the billows and hushed the wind.

Into the city I'd follow the children's band,  
waving a branch of the palm tree high in my hand;  
one of his heralds, yes, I would sing  
loudest hosannas! Jesus is king! \*\*

### **Invitation to Communion:**

**Eric:** The Lord be with you.

**People:** And also with you.

**Eric:** Lift up your hearts.

**People:** We lift them up to the Lord.

**Eric:** Let us give thanks to the Lord, our God.

**People:** It is right to give our thanks and praise.

**Eric:** It is right, and a good and joyful thing, always and everywhere to give thanks to you, almighty God, creator of heaven and earth.

**People:** In the beginning, you hovered over the waters and poured out your love over the formless void, turning chaos into life. You formed us in your image and provided for us from the fruit of creation.

**Eric:** When we turned away, and our love failed, Your steadfast love never failed. You set the Israelites free and brought them through the waters.

**People:** When they doubted and complained, You provided manna from heaven and water from a rock. Even when we betrayed and broke covenant with you, You never abandoned us.

**Eric:** And so, with your people on earth and all the company of heaven we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

**All:** Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,

heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest.

Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.

Holy are you, and blessed is your Son, Jesus Christ.

**People:** When we turned away from you and abused your gifts, you gave us in him your crowning gift.

**Eric:** Divine Love poured out in human form, Christ fed the hungry, healed the sick, ate with the scorned and forgotten, and taught us how to love by incarnating Love among us.

**People:** By the baptism of his suffering, death, and resurrection, you gave birth to your church, delivered us from enslavement to sin and death, and made with us a new covenant by water and the Spirit.

*(Kevin takes the towel and raises the pitcher of water):*

**Eric:** On the evening in which he gave himself up for us, Jesus rose from the supper table and took a pitcher of water. He poured it into a basin, knelt down, and began to wash the disciples' feet.

**People:** When he was finished, he sat down and spoke with the disciples, saying, "I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another."

*(Kevin pours the water into the baptismal font.)*

### **Invitation to Share Our Gifts:**

**Eric:** We offer our gifts so others can also feel your grace. Let us give to share our love with others.

### **Offertory: VU 541 "Praise God From Whom..."**

Praise God from whom all blessings flow;  
Praise Him, all creatures here below;  
Praise Him above ye heavenly host;  
Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost.

### **Offertory Prayer:**

**People:** God of Peace, who reigns in unexpected ways, we gather before you in this season of Lent, bringing our gifts as an offering of our hearts. Just as the crowd welcomed Jesus with shouts of praise, we offer our lives in service to your kingdom. Use these gifts to bring hope, healing, and love to a world longing for your peace. Guide us to give generously with joyful hearts, knowing that in our giving, we proclaim your reign of grace. Bless these offerings and all who give in the name of Christ, our Savior. Amen \*\*

### **Hymn: VU 400 "Listen To Your Children Praying"**

Lord, listen to your children praying,  
Lord, send your Spirit in this place;  
Lord, listen to your children praying,  
send us love, send us power, send us grace!

### **Pastoral Prayer & Lord's Prayer:**

**Eric:** That same night, Jesus took bread, gave thanks to you, broke the bread, gave it to his disciples, and said: "Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

**People:** When the supper was over, he took the cup, gave thanks to you, gave it to his disciples, and said: "Drink from this, all of you; this is my blood of the new covenant, poured out for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me."

**Eric:** And so, in remembrance of these your mighty acts in Jesus Christ, we offer ourselves in praise and thanksgiving as a holy and living sacrifice, in union with Christ's offering for us, as we proclaim the mystery of faith:

**All:** Christ has died; Christ is risen; Christ will come again.

**Eric:** As Christ, Divine Love poured out for us, came to show us how to love one another, pour out your Holy Spirit on us gathered here and on these gifts of bread and wine. Make them be for us the body and blood of Christ, that we may be for the world the body of Christ, redeemed by his blood and called to love one another as Christ loves us.

**People:** For it is by this love that everyone will know We are his disciples.

**Eric:** By your Spirit, make us one with Christ, one with each other, and one in ministry to all the world, until Christ comes in final victory, and we feast at his heavenly banquet.

**People:** Through your Son, Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit in your holy church, all honor and glory is yours, almighty God, now and forever. Amen.

\*\*\* You are welcome to come forward and dip your hands in the water of the Baptismal Font, and dry your hands. Proceed to the bread and the cup and take communion as a Child of God.

**Closing: VU 480 “Let Us Break Bread Together”**

Let us break bread together on our knees,  
let us break bread together on our knees.

*When I fall down on my knees  
with my face to the rising sun,  
Oh, Lord, have mercy on me.*

Let us drink wine together on our knees,  
let us drink wine together on our knees.

*When I fall down on my knees  
with my face to the rising sun,  
Oh, Lord, have mercy on me.*

Let us praise God together on our knees,  
let us praise God together on our knees.

*When I fall down on my knees  
with my face to the rising sun,  
Oh, Lord, have mercy on me. \*\**

**Blessing:**

**Eric:** Friends, Go forth humbly to serve the God whose love endures forever. God's love endures – now and forever. \*\*

**Chorus: VU 480    Chorus**

*When I fall down on my knees  
with my face to the rising sun,  
Oh, Lord, have mercy on me.*

**Amen, Amen, Amen.**

**Postlude:** – Christie Coatsworth