

South Buxton and Talbot Street Pastoral Charges

Palm Sunday – April 2nd, 2023

Prelude: by Christie Coatsworth

Welcome & Announcements:

Thank you for your support of all our past services, which are posted on our websites - Southbuxton.ca and Talbotstreet.ca

Lighting of the Christ Candle:

Call to Worship:

Eric: This week is Holy Week!

People: It is only one week, but this week is a wilderness of emotion and heartbreak.

Everything that could happen happens: celebration, betrayal, feasts, and love made real, hearts are broken, and faith questioned.

Eric: It all happens here in this one week.

People: It is a wildness that we know. We have wandered through it, and we come again today to find God never strays but is hidden behind every rock. God's reflection is in every puddle and every stream.

Eric: God is in all these days, just as God will be a part of every day of our lives.

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. R

The multitude of pilgrims
with palms before you went;
our praise and prayer and anthems
before you we present. R

To you, before your passion,
they sang their hymns of praise;
to you, now high exalted,
our melody we raise. R

Their praises you accepted;
accept the prayers we bring,
great author of all goodness,
O good and gracious king. ** R

Opening Prayer:

People: Great God, sometimes we are frozen in time. We feel like we can't move forward. We feel stuck and wonder if this is all that will ever be. In these wild moments, we most need to find your grace.

Reflection Music: "Hold Us in Your Grace"

Children's Story & Lord's Prayer:

Children's Hymn: VU 123 "Hosanna, Loud Hosanna"

Hosanna, loud hosanna
the happy children sang;
through pillared court and temple
the joyful anthem rang;
to Jesus, who had blessed them
close folded to his breast,
the children sang their praises,
the simplest and the best.

From Olivet they followed
'mid an exultant crowd,
the victory palm branch waving,
and singing clear and loud;
the Lord of earth and heaven
rode on in lowly state,
content that little children
should on his bidding wait.

'Hosanna in the highest!'
That ancient song we sing,
for Christ is our Redeemer;
earth, let your anthems ring.
O may we ever praise him
with heart and life and voice,
and in his humble presence
eternally rejoice! **

Scripture: Matthew 21: 1 - 11 (Video of the Palm Parade)

Reflection: “Among the Palms”

What a celebration! Jesus rides into Jerusalem riding on a donkey. For anyone who is anyone – you would come into town on a horse. But the scripture says that the king will ride in on a donkey. Riding into the big city on a donkey would catch the attention of most folks. As many of the people seeing the display of celebration, they would know the scripture of Zechariah that says, “Announce to the people of Jerusalem: ‘Your king is coming to you! He is humble and rides on a donkey. He comes on the colt of a donkey.’ ” The people in Jesus’ day welcomed the person of great importance with the laying of robes and palm branches. Jesus is getting a welcome fit for a king.

Riding on the donkey shows Jesus’ humbleness. Jesus is God’s son, not God. Jesus knows his place – in the world and in heaven. Jesus has nothing to show for this world. Jesus continues to point towards God. Jesus’ reward comes with his Resurrection – his victory over death. But then we are rushing the story.

The thing is we know the rest of the story. We know what happens in Holy Week. We know what happens in four days, and then on Friday. We already know. We cannot just hear the triumphal entry into Jerusalem, when we know what coming, but let us enjoy the celebrations today.

How might we tell the Palm Sunday story, if we did not know how it ended? Or would it be just another important person riding into Jerusalem – as we could guess many did on a regular basis.

Matthew’s story starts in the relative quiet of a hillside and ends in the middle of the city of Jerusalem, with shouting of celebrations, and then encounters with the religious authorities whose job it was to keep the peace, especially during the Passover. Being the Season of Passover many folks who have come to Jerusalem are anticipating a party of sorts, as well as meeting friends and family. Together they will celebrate God’s blessing and protection over the Jewish people during the first Passover, as the Jewish People started their Exodus from Egypt, 1,300 years before.

Matthew’s story is so full of anticipation and drama. The disciples and the crowd lay down their cloaks for Jesus in a powerful gesture of adoration for their king. They are singing, “Hosanna, Hosanna, here comes the Son of David”. King David was the poster child for the Hebrew people. He was the best king they ever had. In scripture, God promises the Hebrew people a new King from the throne of

David. According to scripture, on this day - that king has arrived. Do you stand back and see what happens, or do you join in the party?

In Matthew's view, those who follow Jesus are often on the margins of society, while those who reject him are at the centre. In this story, people on the outskirts of Jerusalem wave palm branches and praise Jesus, but once they enter the heart of the city people express skepticism, instead of praise.

Consider though – if we did not know the rest of the story, would we tell this story at all? The importance of this story relies on the story of the Resurrection. If Jesus was not resurrected, he would just be another failed leader, who was wasted to keep the peace. Oh yes – that happened to Jesus. He was crucified and they thought it was done – but was it? It's hard not to look ahead, to make sense out of today's story.

Each year, the journey through Holy Week is coloured by events in our lives, in our communities, and in the world. We talked last week about our cries to God, "If only you had been here". Who do you know, who has cried those words? How do we, or might we, support them in their pain and and/or doubt? How many events have you heard of where the crowds gets involved in whatever is happening.

This week in the news was stories about charges against some of those who stormed the Whitehouse on January 6, 2021. Once the few got started, others join in, thinking they are doing the popular thing. Or do they like today's story get caught up in the hype. Or could it be that they don't want to miss out – just in case this is the real thing.

Who knows what gets people to do irrational things? We are people with human emotions, and we do human actions that we doubt very soon after. One hour we are worship and celebrating the King, the next hour, we stand with the crowd trying to kill him? Why the change – because it is human nature.

We can tell the story of Holy Week simply, letting it live and breathe through its many details, and let folks grab what they need, and ponder what they don't understand. In doing so, we share the promise of new life. We walk the journey of Holy Week in hope – hope that we are not alone. God is always with us. Thanks be to God.

Reflection Hymn: VU 357 "Tell Me the Stories of Jesus"

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!

Show me that scene in the garden of bitter pain;
and of the cross where my Saviour for me was slain.
Sad ones or bright ones, so that they be
stories of Jesus, tell them to me. **

Invitation to Share Our Gifts:

Eric: As we offer our gifts to God, we also bring with us our faltering steps, our brokenness, our hopes, our risking and our hearts, that as God transforms our gifts, God will also transform us to be God's blessed people. We give as an act of gratitude and worship.

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: Gracious God, bless and transform all that we offer: our faltering steps, our brokenness, our hope, our risking, our hearts, that your covenant may be written on our hearts and we may be a blessed and transformed covenant people. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Prayer Hymn: MV 66 "Senzeni Na?" (*What Have We Done?*)

Senzeni Na? Senzeni Na?
Senzeni Na? Senzeni Na?
Senzeni Na? Senzeni Na?

Senzeni Na? Senzeni Na?

Pastoral Prayer:

Closing Hymn: VU 124 “He Comes Riding on a Donkey”

He came riding on a donkey,
 he came riding into town;
slow and easy kind of lowly
 he came riding with the dawn.
His disciples walked beside him,
 staying close, a little shy;
not too sure where he would guide them,
 on to live or on to die.
But all the morning sang his praises;
 waking birds and dancing wind;
here he is, the Son of David;
 riding on to take his throne.

Then the children gathered, singing
 shouts of laughter, bursting cheer;
in the streets their song was ringing,
 'Hosannas' filled the morning air.
Timid adults strained to see him,
 caught the Spirit, joined the song;
spread their cloaks along before him,
 branches flashing in the sun.
So all the city sang his praises;
 waking streets and dancing crowd;
here he is, the Son of David;
 our Messiah, Son of God.

In our fasting, and our feasting,
 called to follow in his way;
called to walk his road to Easter,
 called to live his cross today.
Hosanna to the Son of David,
 hosanna in the heavens above;
blessed is he who comes to save us,
 blessed is he who brings his love.
Let us join to sing his praises;
 open hearts and souls to God;
he is with us, Son of David;
 God's Messiah, Christ the Lord. **

Benediction:

Eric: Go into this Holy Week, knowing you do not go alone. God is always with you, now and forever more!

Sending Out Hymn: MV 71 “When the Wind of Winter...”

When the wind of winter blows
bringing times of solitude,
fill the silent icy night,
be our hearts’ compassion.

*Holy Light, warm our night;
warm the time of winter,
Holy Light, warm our night;
warm the time of winter.*

Amen, Amen, Amen.

Postlude: – Christie Coatsworth

Prayers: - Please include these people in your prayers this week.

We have offered prayer for these people each Sunday morning just before the Zoom Service. It was suggested to share these names with the total group – as “In the Spirit We Are One”.

Cancer:

**Chris
Paul
Carol
Maureen
Susan
Cara
Margie
Marcus
Susan
Ingrid
Jerry**

**Reg and Mary Jane
Dave
Bill
Jane
Donna
Martin and Family
Larry
Kerigan
Fran
Ken**

**Natalie
Ruth
Dave
Marj
Sue
Evelyn**

**Richard and Evelyn
Elaine
Wayne**

**Ed Sykes
Arley Smith
Eric
Ron
Wes
Barb
Pat**