

South Buxton and Talbot Street Pastoral Charges

Palm Sunday – March 28th, 2021

Prelude: “What a Friend We Have in Jesus” – Christie Coatsworth

Welcome & Announcements:

Good morning!

Today is Palm Sunday.

Thank you for your support of The Ridgetown Chaplain’s Gala last Friday on Zoom and the Gala can be found at Southbuxton.ca .

The next Alzheimer Learning Series is the week after Easter on Tuesday April 13th and 20th 10:30 to 11:30 am. These learning sessions will be by Zoom.

Our Maundy Thursday (with Communion) will be at 7 pm, and Good Friday Services, at 10 am, will be from Charing Cross United Church. I will post the link on our web pages, at southbuxton.ca, and talbotstreet.ca

Easter SONRise service will be on Zoom at 6:30 am on Sunday April 4th. The Easter Service will be an online Communion Service, by Zoom at 10 am, and posted on the web pages by 9 am. Please remember your bread and juice.

Thank you to Christie Coatsworth for our music this morning. Thank you to Tracey Major for putting together the Power Point slides.

Lighting of the Christ Candle:

Opening Hymn: VU 123 “Hosanna, Loud Hosanna”

- 1 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.

Call To Worship:

Eric: There is no power like the power of the people to bring change, because the power of the people won't stop!

People: There is no power like the power of the people to bring change, because the power of the people won't stop!

Eric: Which side are you on?

People: Justice for our children - is justice for all and we will strive for justice until freedom is one.

Eric: Save us, O God, have mercy and save us.

People: Open to us the gates of righteousness. Hosanna! Hosanna in the highest heaven!

Eric: Hosanna in the highest. Come let us worship.

Opening Prayer:

We want to be respectful tenants of your beautiful garden, God, marveling at the beauty and complexity of your creation and our relationship to it. Forgive us for all the ways that we have hurt your good creation, and guide us as we strive for a healed world. In Jesus' Name, we pray. Amen.

Scripture: Mark 11: 1 - 11 "Another Way" - by Madeline Shanks

It was many, many days later that we disciples had any idea about what the procession with Jesus into Jerusalem for the Passover celebration meant.

We were so caught up with what Jesus had been telling and teaching us. As we walked that last stretch of our journey to Jerusalem and through the east-facing gate, Jesus seemed frustrated and impatient and more on edge with us, but he was also more focused and definite than we had ever seen him.

And then there was the way the details all fell into place – the donkey, the crowds gathering, people spreading their cloaks and leafy palm branches before him on the road, and the cheering: "Hosanna! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest heaven!"

It was as though it had all been pre-arranged and carefully planned. Yet, we had been with Jesus every day, all day, 24/7! And it all happened at the same time as the Romans processed into Jerusalem through the other gate.

We had seen that procession before. That was the usual way for the powerful to enter Jerusalem for the Passover. The Roman rulers wanted to show their power, frighten people, to make sure no one took advantage and used a gathering of so many people try to overthrow the Roman government. Pilate would enter first, on horseback. There would have been many, many soldiers parading in with him, some on horses, some on foot. The sound of their armour and weapons clanging would echo off the walls of the city's buildings, mixing with the sound of hooves and feet marching and throwing clouds of dust into the air.

Our entrance into Jerusalem with Jesus was certainly another way, a different way, a way we had never imagined we'd see or be part of. We entered with enthusiasm and joy, hopeful and fearless. But we didn't understand or even think about how important it was, how we were supporting another way, a different sort of power, and how it would disturb so many people. Despite the cruel Roman ways, most of us were far too afraid to stand up against the Roman rulers; everyone thought that meant fighting and bloodshed and death for us. No one, not any of us disciples, ever imagined another way to face the Romans, a way where one could stand up against them without armour or even a weapon in one's hand, with peace and truth and love in one's heart.

No one, that is, except Jesus.

Scripture Hymn: VU 123 "Hosanna, Loud Hosanna"

2 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.

- 3 '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!

Message: “March into The City of God”

Last week, we shared the story of Taylor Branch, who as a civil rights historian who once expressed his surprise that Montgomery, Alabama, became the nucleus of the civil rights movement: “There weren’t many real activists in Montgomery at the time.” Branch did not think that the people in Montgomery had “a heart” for activism. Yet everything changed the Monday morning that the bus boycott started (initiated by Rosa Park’s arrest); suddenly, for the Black Folk of Montgomery Alabama, their time had come to act – and despite the personal risk, they acted together as a united community. Montgomery might not have been filled with the type of people we often label as activists; still, it was filled with people who were ready to do what was right. We also shared that we as the Church want to create this type of community; a community with a heart for Christ’s mission, ready to act together for Christ’s sake in the world.

This is exactly is what is happening today on Palm Sunday as Jesus and his followers, along with their many supporters and the crowd in the street at the Gate entering into Jerusalem. They are not the ones we would label as activists – because to be an activist against the Roman Government meant death. Yet for this crowd the time had come to do the right thing – to take a stand – and they did.

The book “The Last Week”, written by Modern Day New Testament scholars Marcus J. Borg and John Dominic Crossan, offers an account of what the gospels say about Jesus’ last days in Jerusalem. We actually did a Faith Talk on this book

about 7 years ago. Borg and Crossan note that at the same time Jesus was entering the city of Jerusalem by one gate, Pilate was entering from another gate in another part of the city. There is a definite display of two kinds of power in each of these processions into the City of God.

Pilate's procession was a striking display of state and military power. He entered with warhorses and Roman soldiers. It is Passover, a festival when the people remember their time of enslavement in Egypt and celebrate their freedom from tyranny. Part of their history of remembrance includes their ancestors challenging and fleeing from Egypt's Pharaoh. For Pilate, his way of reminding the people of Israel not to resist the Roman ruling authority, is to stately display his power over them. Pilate does this in the midst of the Israelites' major festival, The Passover.

The Passover is a time when the Israelites remember they protested in the past and God helped them. Pilate reminds them they should not do so today. Pilate's processional was all about the power of the Roman Empire.

Jesus' processional, on the other hand (and on the other side of the city), was a simple one where he rode a donkey. "According to the prophet Zechariah, the king entering Jerusalem on a donkey was to banish weapons of war from the land and speak peace to the nations". This is a quote from Marcus Borg.

The Israelite people who shouted "Hosanna" (which means "save us") are those people who did not hold power in their society of that day. They are a part of Jesus' community who were part of a peripheral religious group that was led by an unusual leader. One way of describing this processional is as a counter-protest that resisted the status quo. The time had come for them to act on what they believed was right. The time was right to protest for what is right!

What might we protest today to make changes in our country or world? How might we as church goers and believers protest? One way is offering financial resources to be the church in our very community. It may be a silent protest, but we are a reminder to our community that we care and we will be there to help if and when help is needed. Churches have protested silently like this for the 2,000 years since Jesus. When the going gets tough, such as the start of the Pandemic – government leaders have been reaching out to Church Leaders to "help" with the Pandemic. Church Leaders lead their flocks every week, and their help in keeping folks "cautious" versus "reckless" is a public and community advantage. We as the church have a part to play in today's tribulations. The Church's response can help keep society as a whole, calm and peaceful.

Our financial resources sent around the world, allow groups in other countries to peacefully challenge the powers of their day to make changes in their society. This past week the Canadian Foodgrains Bank offer a Zoom presentation on events happening in Bangladesh and India. Offerings of new farming practices, families can change communities. In India, one woman asked her husband for a plot of land to try her training on. He ended up giving her about ¼ of what she asked for. She was not deterred. That year he did not get a crop off the rest of the farm. The wife with just a small piece of land, got enough food to feed her family that year. Her husband said, “Now, you will make all the farming decisions with me next year”. They had a wonderful crop, and were able to grow 2 crops that year – just using the Canadian Foodgrains Bank’s farming practices for drought areas. Our money helps these silent protests to take roots and change the lives of women, of families and of communities. Not all protests need to be violent or power against authority. “Seeing” is believing. That is Jesus’ way.

Jesus’ entry into Jerusalem is in contrast to Pilate’s procession of power. Did it make a difference? It sure did – so much that we celebrate the Palm Sunday March every year for the past 2,000 years. The Sunday march before Holy Week reminds us that changes are coming! Big Changes! Changes that we are a part of.

Jesus’ processional took place during Passover, which is a time when the people remembered protesting and challenging authority under the Pharaoh of Egypt, and when God saved the people from tyranny. Moses did not violently protest outside the Pharaoh’s palace. No, Moses went right up to the Pharaoh and said, “Let my people go”. The Pharaoh may have laughed at him, but Moses came back and said, “Let my people go”. The Pharaoh did not arrest Moses, or have him killed. Eventually the Pharaoh did “let the people go”. Each year the Israelites celebrate “Passover” a week after the Spring Equinox. Today’s protest of Jesus’ processional into Jerusalem coincided with the Passover festival. Jesus like Moses, did not use physical force. Jesus used people power!

The crowds that create a parade of honour for Jesus as he enters Jerusalem call out for salvation. In their understanding of how the world worked, this had to come from a king. But Jesus was not a royal king. Jesus’ salvation comes without glitz and glamour. Although they are looking to the right person, the crowd is looking for the wrong thing.

“In the Last Week”, the book of Borg and Crossan, they speak of today’s palm parade as a social commentary on the big pompous fanfares that powers and principalities would use to enter a city. The parade could be seen as a protest.

Today's worship liturgy is based on their ideas. May we look to the right person for the right things - because we are not alone. God is always with us. Thanks be to God.

Reflection Hymn: VU 127 "Ride On! Ride On In Majesty!"

- 1 Ride on! Ride on in majesty!
Hark! All the tribes hosanna cry:
O Saviour meek, pursue thy road
with palms and scattered garments strowed.
- 2 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.
- 3 Ride on! Ride on in majesty!
The winged squadrons of the sky
look down with sad and wondering eyes
to see the approaching sacrifice.
- 4 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.

Invitation to Share Our Gifts:

Eric: We wish to march with Jesus' and have a hand in his ministry. We want to experience God's reign on Earth. The sharing of gifts is one way we can catch a glimpse of the reign of God. Let us give in love!

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:

Holy God, you come to us in Jesus, a poor man, riding a donkey; we thank you for this witness of the power of love, despite the powers of this world. We thank you for all who have withstood evil, who have suffered the jeers and worse of the crowds, who have been tormented, even put to death, and still refused to use the weapons of hatred. We trust that our offerings have made a difference in this world. We thank you with "hosannas!", with joy in our hearts, in the name of Jesus, our leader. Amen.

Pastoral Prayer & Lord's Prayer:

Eric: We will go into this Holy Week with loud protests.

People: **We will cry to God with our whole hearts. Save us, please save us.** *(Moment of silence)*

Eric: From the brokenness and corruption of our world, from greed, hunger and oppression, from exploitation, degradation, pollution and corruption. *(Moment of silence)*

People: **Save us from our broken covenants. Save us from lawlessness.** *(Moment of silence)*

Eric: We will go into this Holy Week lifting high the good man Jesus, the Christ. *(Moment of silence)*

People: **Jesus who taught us about radical love,** *(Moment of silence)*

Eric: Jesus who gives us hope for a new world, *(Moment of silence)*

People: **and a new way where all people are of equal worth and value is possible if we choose to join him.** *(Moment of silence)*

Eric: May we always hunger for justice until all are fed. *(Moment of silence)*

People: **May we always strive until there is justice and food for all.** *(Moment of silence)*

Eric: We will go into this Holy Week lifting high the good man Jesus, the Christ who showed us how to pray...

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 and ever. Amen.

Blessing:

Eric: As we go, may we never rest until all are at peace. May it be so, now and forever more.

Postlude: "Alleluia" – 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:	Karen	Ona	Earl
	Jasmine	June	COVID deaths
	Tom	Melonie	Barry/ Marsha
	Randy	Susan	Glen
	George	Zoe	Baby Haya
	Cindy & Connie	Becky	Baby Carly
Special:	Richard	Gary	
	Cleata 97 on	Jerri	
March 26		Ingrid	
Hillie		Willie & Gisele	