

# *South Buxton and Talbot Street Pastoral Charges*

*Palm Sunday – April 5<sup>th</sup>, 2020*

## **Opening Music: VU 395 “Come in, Come in and Sit Down”**

- 1 You know the reason why you came,  
yet no reason can explain;  
so share in the laughter and cry in the pain,  
for we are a part of the family.

*Come in, come in and sit down,  
you are a part of the family.  
We are lost and we are found,  
and we are a part of the family.*

## **Welcome & Announcements:**

Welcome to Palm Sunday. On Thursday, the link I sent out was defective. So when someone brought it to my attention, I thought I fixed it – guess not. Sorry – I apologize. Many of you then clicked on the link under my name and it worked. Sorry for that mistake as I know many of you are being tested already with the technology – and as you can see, so are we - such as Thursday.

All our Church boards have met by Conference Call and I think we are all on the same page. We collected food for the Food Bank on Saturday, and we will deliver it this week. Thank you for all of your donations. Thank you for helping in all of the ways you are keeping the wider community connected and cared for. From our end, we are trying to be prepared for any possibilities. We will keep praying and forging ahead.

Keep our website address handy - [southbuxton.ca](http://southbuxton.ca). It's a great communication page. For the folks at Talbot Street check out your website at [talbotstreet.ca](http://talbotstreet.ca).

Today our service includes words to Palm Sunday Hymns and Music for the audio listeners. Feel free to sing along. God loves joyful song!

## **Lighting of the Christ Candle:**

If you wish – grab a candle to use while we share these services. The flame of the Candle reminds us of the light of Christ that collects us as the faith community, “One in the Spirit”. Thanks be to God.

## **Introit: 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.

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!

### **Call to Worship:**

**Eric:** We welcome the spirit of Christ into our midst.

**People:** We welcome one another as Christ's ambassadors.

**Eric:** We lift these branches and lay these cloaks, in celebration and hope, as a reminder that Christ is always welcome among and within us.

**People:** Hosanna, Immanuel! Welcome, Jesus of Nazareth!

**Eric:** Let us add our voices to the crowd. Let's worship.

### **Prayer of Confession:**

**Loving God, we confess that we yearn for comfort and companionship. We confess we feel weak with fear when we imagine the challenges that lie ahead of us. We do not know what humility looks like, we do not know how to speak truthfully about who we are or who you are, but we also confess that we trust you will strengthen our resolve and lead us in new paths as you prepare us to greet death as part of abundant life. Amen.**

### **Words of Assurance:**

**Eric:** Christ refused to give up on love. And Love never gives up on us. We live in abundant forgiveness, grace, and gratitude as followers of Christ. We enter this time of difficult conversations knowing we are forgiven.

**People:** Thanks be to God.

## **Children's Hymn: VU 357 "Tell Me the Stories of Jesus"**

- 1 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.
- 2 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.
- 4 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!

## **Responsive Reading: Psalm 118: 1 – 2, 19 – 29** – *Brian & Kathy Authier*

Thank God because he's good, because his love never quits.

**Tell the world, Israel, "His love never quits."**

Swing wide the city gates—the righteous gates! I'll walk right through and thank God!

**This Temple Gate belongs to God, so the victors can enter and praise.**

Thank you for responding to me; you've truly become my salvation!

**The stone the masons discarded as flawed is now the capstone!**

This is God's work. We rub our eyes—we can hardly believe it!

**This is the very day God acted— let's celebrate and be festive!**

Salvation now, God. Salvation now! Oh yes, God—a free and full life!

**Blessed are you who enter in God's name— from God's house we bless you!**

God is God, he has bathed us in light.

**Festoon the shrine with garlands, hang colored banners above the altar!**

You're my God, and I thank you. O my God, I lift high your praise.

**Thank God—he's so good. His love never quits!**

## **Gospel: Matthew 21: 1 – 11** – *by Tracey Major*

The disciples were finally near Jerusalem. Jesus had been telling them all along that they'd wind up here, the big city, the home of the temple. But it hadn't really seemed real until now.

Everything seemed like a big deal. Things that were pretty ordinary seemed heavier somehow like something else was lending them more weight. The donkey Jesus wanted, for example. It was such an ordinary thing, except some said it was a fulfillment of prophecy, so it felt important like it was the most special donkey in the world. The donkey didn't have a saddle, so they made one out of their cloaks. They knew some people said Jesus was a king. But they thought he looked more like a child playing dress-up, with a donkey instead of a warhorse, a bunch of cloaks instead of a fancy saddle.

They worried that the crowd might laugh. But people quickly joined the spirit of this day, taking off their own cloaks and jackets and spreading them out on the road that Jesus was travelling. The

poor people, the ones who didn't have cloaks to lend, cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. How strange it was to see a muddy donkey trampling such beauty beneath its feet.

They called him fancy names, too: Son of David, the one who comes in the name of God, the prophet Jesus from Nazareth in Galilee. They felt so proud that others could finally see what they had known all along: this was someone who came from God, someone worth following, no matter where he led them.

Later, they would reflect on when it was that everything had changed. Was it when he threw people out of the temple for abusing the poor? Was it when he told the scribes and Pharisees that they had forgotten God's justice? Maybe if that woman hadn't anointed his feet, he would never have been arrested and tried and killed.

It was impossible to tell when things had changed. But they knew one thing: when Jesus rode into Jerusalem on the donkey that day, they had never seen him look so brave.

### **Reflection: "Conversation with Jesus"**

Matthew's gospel is all about demonstrating to its readers of how Jesus' life fulfills the Hebrew Scriptures. In Matthew, we hear echoes of Isaiah and many of the other Hebrew prophets.

Today's story starts in the quiet of a hillside and ends in the middle of the main city of Jerusalem in shouting and the laying of cloaks and palms. Today's reading is full of anticipation, drama, and contrasts. The disciples and the crowd lay down their cloaks for Jesus in a powerful gesture of adoration and self-sacrifice. The crowd is charged with the arrival of their King. This is the week leading up to the Passover – the most important Jewish festival of the day. The Passover celebrates God's saving of God's chosen people during the plagues of Egypt where they were slaves. This whole week of Passover is a great celebration of the Jewish faith. People from all over, come to Jerusalem to celebrate in the City of God. Jumping to being part of the celebrations of Jesus riding into town would not be a big stretch of the imagination. The Jewish people would know the scripture of the King coming riding a donkey. Look, there he is!

Palm Sunday starts Holy Week. Today we mark Jesus' entry into Jerusalem with shouts of Hosanna, which means "save now, we pray." Each and every year as we journey through Holy Week, we may take the time to reflect on the events of our lives, our communities, and in our world today. This year the event that is front and centre is the COVID-19 virus, and how it has changed our lives. This event has called us, the Christian community to support one another in finding new meanings in our journey with Jesus towards the cross.

Palm Sunday can often be a bittersweet celebration. We may be preoccupied with questions about why Jesus would make such a spectacle of his arrival given

the danger he was in. Yet, in these last few weeks, our leaders have made a major spectacle with demands for us to stay home and stay isolated – no church on Sunday morning, no going out to dine at the local restaurant. These demands are telling us of the danger we are in. Many of us are not so much at risk, but it takes the involvement of all of us to protect the 20% who are at the greatest risk. If we do not do our part – we are putting the other 6.5 million Canadians at great risk.

Our job is to stay isolated! Our job as Christians is to pray – pray for those who risk their own lives to protect those 20%, pray for those who are sick, pray for those whose loved ones have died (for any reason) and we as the community cannot support them. We have some many things to pray for, including ourselves as we journey through the danger that is before us right now. We are several weeks into our isolation. My grandsons first thought this was great, but they are tired of it – mainly because they cannot see their friends to hang out together. They are using the technology that they grew up on; to talk, video chat and whatever they do to communicate. How many hours of video games can you play? I guess they are finding that out.

Many for many of us we are going through our Palm Sunday, the excitement of being in the house and away from others, but in the next few days, we will be well into our third week, and even for us it may be wearing thin. Yet as we journey each day, we are unsure if we may be heading into further danger. We will only know when we get there!

In our relationship with the Christ, recognize we are not alone. We recognize we are part of a living, loving and caring community. We are not alone. God is with us – all the way to that cross, and even after! Thanks be to God.

### **Offering:**

We might not be able to place our money unto the offering plate, but we give of ourselves each Sunday as we also give our gifts of cash. People have been asking me how they might continue to support our ministries. You are welcome to send some monthly postdated cheques to your church treasurer. We have added a ‘Donate’ page to our website at [southbuxton.ca](http://southbuxton.ca) - we can accept ETransfers, credit cards, and all the information to mail cheques is all there.

In this time of uncertainty, let us continue to share our wonderful gifts of compassion, empathy and love with each other. Continue to share our Spiritual gifts of prayer, of thought, of calling and checking in with others. The longer we are separated; the more we can assume that folks in our community will be affected by job loss, by being sick, or by needing to be quarantined. We as followers of Jesus, in faith, will offer our help. If you are doing okay, consider increasing your offering and gifts to support these realities.

Let us take a moment to consider the gifts we may offer today.

**Offering Music: VU 537 “Your Work, O God, Needs Many Hands”**

- 1 Your work, O God, needs many hands  
to help you everywhere,  
and some there are who cannot serve  
unless our gifts we share.
- 2 Because we love you and your work,  
our offering now we make:  
be pleased to use it as your own,  
we ask for Jesus' sake.

**Offering Prayer:**

**We connect to one another because of grace. Even strangers or enemies are like family to us because we are all part of God's plan and promises. We share with one another because we have everything we need. God, use these gifts and this sacrifice of our time and talent to lavish your love on the whole family of God. We belong to one another, as we belong to Christ. Amen.**

**Pastoral Prayer:**

*Let us pray:*

O God, in Jesus Christ, you triumphantly entered Jerusalem, thus beginning a week of pain and sorrow. In these days of defeat and victory, you have brought together humiliation and exaltation, death and resurrection. In these days we are feeling our own defeats, and we pray for a few victories. Be with us now, as we follow Jesus in joy and in sorrow, in the way of the cross.

O Jesus who wept, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” be with all who are tortured, all who are victims. Be with those in our hospitals and nursing homes - that they may find comfort and joy in one another, when they cannot have family or visitors to brighten their days.

O Jesus who wept in sympathy and frustration, be with us as we are grieving those whom we've lost, and yet we do not have the opportunity to support the family or to say goodbye.

Be with the doctors and nurses, the hospital and nursing home support staff, and our emergency personnel; – Keep them safe, healthy and strong. May they know their community is praying for them. For those healthcare folks who have found they may have been exposed, and are going through testing, keep them calm and

confident that they have taken all the proper steps as they have been trained. We pray for their clean slate.

Be with each one of us as we struggle to stay at home. As time goes on, we may get a bit complacent. Help us to be diligent, and to know we have to do our part.

Be with those who have been laid off as work had ceased, Be with those feeling the financial pinch. Be with us as we reach out to help those in our community who need our help. Keep us calm and help us to listen, as you show us the wisdom to do the right things on the right times.

O Living God, who knows all our pain and joy, be with us in our lives. May your healing power flow into a world consumed by fear, of sickness, of powerlessness, and of pandemics. All of this we ask in Jesus' Name as we pray his prayer:

*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."*

**Closing Hymn: VU 337 "Blessed Assurance"**

- 1 Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine!  
O what a foretaste of glory divine!  
Heir of salvation, purchase of God,  
born of the Spirit, washed in Christ's blood.  
*This is my story, this is my song,  
praising my Saviour all the day long;  
this is my story, this is my song,  
praising my Saviour all the day long.*
- 2 Perfect submission, perfect delight!  
Visions of rapture now burst on my sight;  
angels descending, bring from above  
echoes of mercy, whispers of love.  
*This is my story, this is my song,  
praising my Saviour all the day long;  
this is my story, this is my song,  
praising my Saviour all the day long.*

3 Perfect submission, all is at rest,  
I in my Saviour am happy and blessed;  
watching and waiting, looking above,  
filled with God's goodness, lost in Christ's love.

*This is my story, this is my song,  
praising my Saviour all the day long;  
this is my story, this is my song,  
praising my Saviour all the day long.*

**Benediction:**

**Eric:** Called to carry the blessing into the world, we depart from this space. We move together in spirit, so we will remember none of us goes alone. We belong to one another now and forever more.

**Closing Chorus:**

*This is my story, this is my song,  
praising my Saviour all the day long;  
this is my story, this is my song,  
praising my Saviour all the day long.*