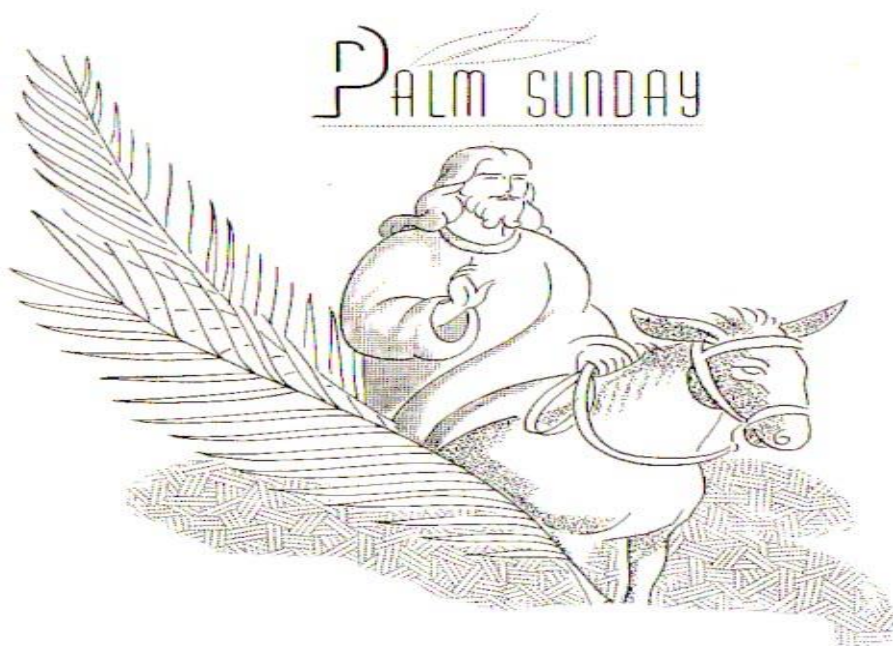


BASINGSTOKE AND READING METHODIST CIRCUIT

An Order of Service for Palm Sunday



Welcome to our Palm Sunday Service

In today's Gospel Reading, Matthew's account of Jesus' entry into Jerusalem offers us a sure sign of God's way of governing the world.

We are invited to share in the joy of Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem, and in the sorrow for the events that follow.

Circuit Minister: Rev'd Audrey D Browne

A Call to worship

Some words from Psalm 118 (slightly adapted)

Come! Let us give thanks to the Lord,
for He is good; His love endures for ever.
Come! Let God's pilgrim people say,
His Love endures for ever. **Amen**

HP 492

Give me joy in my heart, keep me praising,
Give me joy in my heart, I pray,
Give me joy in my heart, keep me praising,
Keep me praising till the break of day.

*Sing hosanna, sing hosanna,
Sing hosanna to the King of kings!
Sing hosanna, sing hosanna,
Sing hosanna to the King.*

Give me peace in my heart, keep me loving,
Give me peace in my heart, I pray,
Give me peace in my heart, keep me loving,
Keep me loving till the break of day.

Give me love in my heart, keep me serving,
Give me love in my heart, I pray,
Give me love in my heart, keep me serving,
Keep me serving till the break of day.

Gathering, Approach and Confession

Lord Jesus, as we gather together,
we too bring you our palms and our shouts of praise.
Hosanna to the Son of David!
Hosanna in the highest!
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
We too journey to Jerusalem,
to worship you as the king who comes to save us...

(Roots Magazine – adapted)

Lord Jesus, we celebrate your triumphal entry into Jerusalem,
riding on a colt, a sign of humility.
as we approach you in worship, we are filled with gratitude
that you came as a humble servant to set us free.

Lord Jesus, you came to change the world.
Forgive us when we become complacent,
when change is difficult – and we give up.

Lord Jesus, you came to serve, not to be served.
Forgive us when we only think of ourselves and
our own needs and not of others.

Lord Jesus, you came to bring peace.
Forgive us when we cause more fights,
more trouble, and more conflicts than peace.

Lord Jesus, you came to set the captives free.
Forgive us when we don't stand up for justice
and freedom for our neighbours.

Lord Jesus, you came to meet us where we are.
Forgive us when we don't stand with each other
through the pain and the struggle.

God, grant us pardon, and the grace to change the world
by serving one another, working for peace, standing up for justice,
and walking with our fellow pilgrims;
through Jesus Christ your Son, our Saviour. **Amen**

(Roots Magazine – slightly adapted)

Interactive: two/three minutes sharing with someone if possible

When might you feel as if you are going in the opposite direction to the 'crowd'?



Readings:

- Psalm 118:1-2, 19-29
- Matthew 21:1-11

HP 160

All glory, laud, and honour
to thee, Redeemer, King,
to whom the lips of children
made sweet hosannas ring!
Thou art the King of Israel
Thou David's royal Son,
who in the Lord's name comest,
the King and Blessed One.

The company of angels
Are praising thee on high;
And mortal men and all things
Created make reply.
The people of the Hebrews
with palms before thee went;
Our praise and prayer and anthems
Before you we present.

To thee before thy passion
They sang their hymns of praise;
To thee now high exalted,
Our melody we raise.
Thou didst accept their praises,
Accept the prayers we bring,
Who in all good delightest,
Thou good and gracious King.

All glory, laud, and honour
to thee, Redeemer, King,
to whom the lips of children
made sweet hosannas ring!

Collect *(Methodist Worship Book)*

God of all-redeeming grace,
In your great love you gave your only Son
to die for the sins of the whole world.

Help us by your Holy Spirit to worship you with reverence,
and to enter with joy into the celebration of those mighty acts
whereby you bring us life and immortality;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

Textual Sermon (see page 8)

Prayer of praise and thanks

Loving God, on this triumphal day,
we thank you for the coming of Jesus.
As he follows the hard road into Jerusalem,
we are grateful for his courage in pursuing the journey.
As we revisit the events of the week ahead,
the loneliness despite the crowds,
we bow in admiration of Jesus' unswerving commitment.
As we journey together as a church family,
towards the heart-rending events of Good Friday,
we praise you for such forgiving love.
As we shout our 'Hosannas' with the crowd,
we trust you for the grace to face the coming week,
and we hope in your promise to carry us into the future. **Amen.**

Prayers of Intercession (*Susan Sayers – adapted*)

Jesus rides into Jerusalem cheered by the crowds.
Days later crowds will be clamouring for his death.
As we recall the extent of God's love for us,
let us offer our prayers to Him.

Father, we pray for your church, the Body of Christ,
help us to stand at the foot of the cross,
and truly learn what it means to love,
and to keep on loving, to serve and to keep on serving.

God our Father:
Let your will be done in us.

Father, we pray that the world will see real hope,
as your people live purified and transformed lives,
and stretch out our arms in lovingkindness to all,
so that we shine as light in the darkness.
We pray for our global community
facing the challenges of the coronavirus pandemic...

God our Father:
Let your will be done in us.

Father, make us more fervent in prayer,
more courageous in self-denial,
and, above all, more loving in outreach.
So our workplace and communities and homes
will see your values display and respond to your grace.

God our Father:
Let your will be done in us.

Father, take away our greed and complacency,
and our assumptions about appropriate living standards,
and teach us sacrificial self-giving,
of time, energy and resources.
So that terrible suffering of extreme poverty;
injustice and oppression
may be removed from human societies.

God our Father:
Let your will be done in us.

Father, through the life-giving death of Jesus,
may the dying turn to you and know your merciful love;
may the grieving be comforted, and may we all one day
share with those who have died the eternal joy of heaven.

God our Father:
Let your will be done in us.

Father, such amazing love is hard to grasp
and impossible to repay.
In thankfulness for lives set free to live
we offer you ourselves.

Merciful Father,
**accept these prayers
for the sake of your Son,
our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen**

This prayer may be said over palms *(you may wish to use a recycle palm cross)*

God our Saviour,
Whose Son entered Jerusalem as Messiah to suffer and die:
may these palms be for us a sign of his victory;
may we who carry them ever hail him as king
and follow him in the way that leads to eternal life.
With all the faithful,
may we enter the new Jerusalem in triumph;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and forever. **Amen**

(Methodist Worship Book)

HP 159

Ride on, ride on in majesty!
Hark, all the tribes 'Hosanna!' cry;
Thine humble beast pursue his road
with palms and scattered garments strowed.

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.

Ride on, ride on in majesty!
The winged squadrons of the sky
look down with sad and wondering eyes
to see the approaching sacrifice.

Ride on, ride on in majesty!
Thy last and fiercest strife is nigh;
The Father, on his sapphire throne
Expects his own anointed Son.

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.

Sending Out (*Roots Magazine – adapted*)

...as we go,
let us celebrate Jesus the King,
the one who conquers by love and peace,
and asks us do the same.

Blessing

...and the blessing of God
the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit,
remain with us/you now and always. **Amen.**

This week's readings highlight for us, Jesus' courage, his claims, and his call.

Palm Sunday marks the beginning of a pivotal week. Up to this point Jesus had more or less conformed to the rules of society.

But the events of Palm Sunday begin to answer the question:

Who is this man?

'Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord' (Psalm 118.26a / Matthew 21.9).

It is vital that we hold in mind the layered themes of Passover and Sukkot:

- **Passover** is about the people being redeemed by God and set free to leave Egypt.
- **Sukkot** is about the pilgrims being sustained by God while journeying to the Promised Land.

In the context of these two *Jewish Feasts*, **'his steadfast love endures forever'** takes on a touchable experience, and **'this is the day that the Lord has made'** is far more than a celebration of a new day - it speaks of God actively shaping the unfolding events.

Jesus accurately plays out Old Testament prophecies by entering Jerusalem on a donkey.

Matthew (21:4) flags up Jesus' fulfilment of the prophecy of Zechariah (9:9), but this fulfilment would have been clear in any case to all who saw Jesus astride a donkey on the final leg of this pilgrimage into Jerusalem.

Jesus, who normally walks everywhere, decides to ride. He gets onto a donkey at the very point where every other pilgrim - rich and poor, travels on foot.

The message could not be clearer even if he had worn a crown and shouted through a loudspeaker - 'I am your Messiah, your King!'

Both Psalm 118 and Matthew 21:1-11, are full of excitement and celebration, with a sense of an unfolding *divine* drama.

Both passages describe a communal experience of salvation - in that, the purposes of God are becoming clear before the very eyes of the people. There, the eternal touches time and space, and the people respond with joy and worship.

There is also the recognition here that God is at work in the rich heritage of Israel's stories and prophetic scriptures that inform the people's hope.

In Matthew (21:1-11), when the people realized that they are seeing the Messiah enter Jerusalem, they respond with words borrowed from Psalm 118:

'Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord!'

Yet, despite the celebrations, Jesus knew where it was all going.

Nevertheless, he made a public declaration by his entry into Jerusalem; and, in many ways this was an act of defiance.

However, Jesus was not irrational because he acted with a sense of purpose and destiny.

The triumphal entry into Jerusalem shows Jesus' courage and is an emphatic confirmation of his claims about himself.

This is the entry of a king and Messiah - the one who comes in the name of the Lord.

The cry of the people 'Hosanna' originally means 'save us now' and is a cry for help. It is a call for deliverance to be their Saviour and their King.

Nonetheless, Jesus will soon prove that his call and destiny is not one of earthly kingship; it is for the hearts of the people - it is one of peace and love and justice.

In order for this to happen, the events of Holy Week have to be unfolded.

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