

FPC Interactive Worship Bulletin for April 2nd, 2023

GATHERING

Prelude

Call to Worship

One: We come to prepare for the holiest of weeks.

**All: We will journey through praise, with joy on our lips;
we will travel through betrayal and death,
cradling hope deep in our hearts.**

One: Jesus leads us through this week, and we will follow,
for He is the life we long for,
He is the Word who sustains us.

**All: We wave palm branches in anticipation,
we lay our love before Him, to cushion His walk.**

One: Setting aside all power, glory and might, He comes:
modeling humility and obedience for all of us.

All: Hosanna! Hosanna!

Blessed is the One who brings us the kingdom of God.

Hosanna, Loud Hosanna

Hosanna, loud hosanna, the little 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 victor palm branch waving, and chanting clear and loud;
The Lord of earth and heaven rode on in lowly state,
Nor scorned that little children should on His bidding wait.

"Hosanna in the highest!" That ancient song we sing,
For Christ is our Redeemer, the Lord of heav'n, our King.
O may we ever praise Him with heart and life and voice,
And in His blissful presence eternally rejoice.

Jeanette Threlfall***

Welcome

Welcome to worship with FPC! We are glad you are here this morning.

If you are new here, we invite you to fill out a welcome card or email secretary@fpcmissoula.org with your information so we can get connected with you.

This is the day that the Lord has made: let us rejoice and be glad in it!
Let us prepare our hearts and minds to worship and encounter our living God.

PRAISING

Praise to the Lord, the Almighty

Refrain: Hallelujah, hallelujah, hallelujah, hallelujah!

Praise to the Lord, the Almighty, the King of creation!
O my soul, praise Him, for He is thy health and salvation!
All ye who hear, now to His temple draw near;
Sing now in glad adoration. *Refrain*

Praise to the Lord, who o'er all things so wondrously reigneth,
Shelters thee under His wings, yea, so gently sustaineth!
Has thou not seen how thy desires e'er have been
Granted in what He ordaineth? *Refrain*

Praise to the Lord, O let all that is in me adore Him!
All that has life and breath, come now with praises before Him!
Let the amen sound from His people again;
Gladly forever adore Him. *Refrain*
Joachim Neander and Stralsund Gesangbuch**

Reading of Psalm 118, Selected Verses

Sung Refrain:

Hosanna! Hosanna! Blessed is the one who comes to save us.
Hosanna! Hosanna! We bow down to the one who comes to save us.

BELONGING

Kids on the Steps

Prayer of Confession & Assurance of Forgiveness

Like the people who greeted Jesus as he entered Jerusalem and then later pronounced “Crucify him,” we are fickle people who often deny Christ in our thoughts, words, and deeds.

Remembering the events of Jesus’ last week helps us to see ourselves for what we are:

Sinners in need of a Savior, a Savior – praise God – we have in Christ.

In honesty and hope, we confess now our sins to God.

On this Sunday, O God, we remember how quickly we change.

How fickle we are, how we pledge our devotion one moment and turn our backs the next.

We go from shouting “Hosanna! Save Us!” to “Crucify Him.”

We say that we love our neighbors, and then we turn our backs
on those who are unhoused and hungry in our communities.

We speak up for change and justice in one breath,
and then continue unjust practices in our daily lives
by what we consume and the needs we ignore.

Forgive us, O God, for we are half-hearted believers.

Forgive us, O God, for we are partial justice warriors.

Forgive us, O God, for we tire easily and we forget, and we grow weary.

Forgive us, restore us, and renew us for the journey of faith,
so that we might become whole people who live wholly into Your vision of new life.

Take our branches and our lives, so that we may learn to lay them down in your service, following your way even when we cannot understand.

In the name of Christ, who lived into the fullness of humanity, and whom we follow. Amen.

(people are invited to bring their palm branches forward and lay them down)

Laying aside judgment, God offers us redemption;

Setting aside anger, God embraces us with love;

Letting go of grief, God pours living water upon us.

One: Friends, this is the good news: God’s steadfast love endures forever.

All: Hosanna! Blessed is the One who brings us the kingdom of God!

STEWARDING

Invitation to Offering

Musical Offering

Palm Sunday Doxology

All glo - ry to our Lord and God for love so deep, so high, so broad
the Tri - ni - ty whom we a - dore for - e - ver and for - e - ver - more.

From "O Love, How Deep, How Broad, How High" by Benjamin Webb***

FORMING

Sermon: Matthew 21:1-17

Our preacher for this Sunday (4/2/23) is Rev. Steve Lympus. As a manuscript of his sermon will not be available, we are providing a copy of the following Palm Sunday sermon from 2015 by Rev. Dan Cravy on Mark 11:1-11, 15-19.

Turning Tables

-When I was 25 years old, I was living in Seattle. I was serving as a high school ministry mentor. My Christian community was rich with friends passionate about following Christ together and investing our lives in high school students. When Holy Week came around, many of us decided it would be meaningful to attend a Maundy Thursday worship service in a more formal, liturgical setting than we were used to. Maundy Thursday was the night that Jesus celebrated the Passover with his disciples. It's the night he offered them bread and cup as his own body and blood. It's the night he washed their feet and taught them what it really means to love one another. (This is what Christians across the world will do on Thursday night.) My friends and I were looking to take part in the drama of Christ's self-offering.

The church we chose that night was grand and beautiful. Mahogany pews. Candlelight. Soaring arches. Pipe organ. Mosaic scenes of the Lord's life, death and resurrection. I had grown up experiencing the Lord's Supper in a variety of ways – served in my seat, going forward, kneeling at a railing, drinking from the cup, dipping in the cup. On this evening, as we walked forward down a long aisle, I tried to watch how the others were receiving Jesus' gifts. There was a man offering bread. People were eating the bread, then walking over to a woman with the cup. But I couldn't see how they were drinking from it. When I was a kid, one minister had held the chalice near the top while we put our lips on it and pushed the bottom away to tip it into our mouths. So when I approached this minister, I reached out to touch the cup – at which point, she gave me a look of great disgust, pulled the cup away to her side, and hissed: *Are you a member of this church?* I stumbled. Does this woman mean: Am I a *Christian*? No. She means: Do I *belong* here? I shook my head. She held the chalice like I was trying to steal it. And jerked her jaw to the side aisle and spit out the word *Pass!* I slunk down the aisle, red-faced, heart pounding in my ears. **Access denied.** To the blood of *Christ*. To God's saving *presence*. I hid in a back pew till I could disappear into the night.

Today, as we enter into the passion of Jesus, I want to suggest to you that the opposite of my experience that night in Seattle is the good news we celebrate. That the mystery of this Holy Week, from the Mount of Olives, to the Upper Room, to Calvary, to the Empty Tomb—that the explosive revelation, the inestimable gift is **access to God**.

-Let's pray: Lord, as we enter into the shouts of joy at your downward ride into Jerusalem, as we enter into your tears and holy anger, reveal to our hearts the truth of who you are, and so who we were made to be. Amen.

-I'd like to share with you some slides from my recent pilgrimage to Israel. My hope is that they might help bring the scenes of this powerful passage of Jesus' passion to life.

- Crest of the Mount of Olives, looking west at Jerusalem, the place pilgrims would first have seen city after hard, hot desert climb up from 800 feet below sea level at Jericho, the lowest city on earth.
- Temple Mount – Temple was being rebuilt by Herod (then Rome/Pilate) in time of Jesus. Today, after destruction in 70 A.D., it's dominated by the Dome of the Rock. Muslims believe this is 'the distant place' (al Aksa) where Mohammad was transported in a dream and had a vision of paradise.
- Diagram of Temple Mount. 300 x 500 yards covered colonnade of massive columns. 150 x 100 yard Sanctuary within other courts. Sanctuary is facing East toward Mount of Olives. Court of the Gentiles/non-Jews is large space separated from Sanctuary courts.
- Dominus Flevit Church. The modern church built to commemorate Jesus' descent down the Mount of Olives to Jerusalem. It remembers Jesus' lament over the city when he weeps for her (Luke). Hen = image of the Lord on the altar: 'Jerusalem,

Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets, how often have I desired to gather your children as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing.'

• Wailing Wall. Western retaining wall of Temple Mount, used by Jews now for 700 years as a place of prayer.

• Model of the Temple from Israel Museum. Wall separates Sanctuary from Court of Gentiles. Warning was posted in Greek, Latin, and Aramaic: 'No foreigner may enter within the railing and enclosure that surround the Temple. Anyone apprehended shall have himself to blame for his consequent death.' Within the wall, were: Court of the Women. Court of Israel (circumcised Jewish men). Altar outside Sanctuary. Inside is Holy of Holies, separated by curtain from all but the high priest, once a year.

[Please stand: Gospel of Mark 11.1-20]

-What we have before us is on first glance a jubilant passage. It's a triumphant day. A celebration. This is the culmination of Jesus' journey. As Jesus and his disciples reach the Mount of Olives at Passover time, there's grand anticipation and gladness. There's expectation in the air that Jewish dreams are about to come true. That God's sovereign and saving presence' is about to be revealed in a new way.

As Jesus comes close to the city of Jerusalem on his journey up from Jericho, he sends disciples to find a donkey colt that's never been ridden. The colt is a sign of royal authority prophesied by Zechariah. And Jesus chooses it purposefully.

As he descends the Mount of Olives, the people wave leafy branches. They spread cloaks on the road. According to another prophecy, *God himself* was expected to appear on this mountain on the day of judgment to become "king over all the earth."

The people shout 'Hosanna! It's a Hebrew word. 'Hosanna' mixes exuberant praise to God with the prayer that God will save his people. Those following Jesus have seen sacrificial compassion: the sick healed, storms calmed, disciples walking on water, loaves and fishes multiplied, evil spirits cast out, religious rules stood on their head, sinners welcomed, even a young man raised from the dead.

Here rides their longed-for Rescuer. Miracle worker. Rabbi. King. What will he do next? How will he destroy the Gentile oppressors? They raise up their voices as he comes to take the city: 'Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David! Blessed be the revolution finally come!'

It's a dangerous greeting and an ironic celebration. Here rides the King of Israel through waving palms and joyful shouts of praise. But Jesus see a crowd that will dwindle when what's called for is more than emotion. Palm Sunday is a parade of fair-weather friends. A crowd of would-be revolutionaries that will betray, deny and abandon their king when the path of allegiance becomes too risky. Friends that will fade away when there are calls for crucifixion.

According to Luke's gospel, when the company nears Jerusalem, Jesus can do nothing but down in tears. Still he rides purposefully onward. Downward towards the cross.

Why is Jesus doing this? Why enter intentionally into such danger and suffering?//

-It turns out that Jesus is on his way to the Temple.

Now that you've seen a model of the Temple, you have a sense of how vast it was.

- The Temple courts were administered by Sadducees. They were religious aristocratic elites. They dominated the higher echelon of the priesthood. They did not believe in a God who was at work in the world, but one who gave the law. They collaborated with the Roman occupiers, who kept them in power if they kept the peace. This made them even more rigidly conservative because it was in their best interest to preserve the status quo. They were all about law and order. Popular movements were threatening.
- What was going on there? Sacrifice of sheep and doves on an altar outside the Sanctuary. Multitude of animals to be slaughtered and burned required 1000s of priests. At festival time it was overwhelming. Ex: AD 66-255,600 lambs for Passover! It was in the porticoes surrounding the massive Court of Gentiles, the area outside the Sanctuary courts, where money was exchanged and animals purchased. According to Exodus, foreign money had to be converted to shekel of pure metal that bore no face imprint. It was an immense volume of trade. And it was crucial not only for proper worship but for financial gain of the Sadducees.
- Rome's Antonia Fortress lay on the northwest corner of the Temple courts to make sure that this religious thing didn't get out of hand. Rome, remember built the Temple up to placate the people they were occupying. And the fortress was there to ensure that radical nationalist religious sentiments were quickly crushed.
- An uprising would hurt the interests of everyone in power.
- (Like the poor monks of the church of the Holy Sepulcher, or the Church of the Nativity, reduced to angry monitoring of crowds, snapping at people, fighting themselves, spending years of their lives in darkly lit rooms.)

Enter Jesus to interrupt this whole cozy sacrificial system.

- He drives out the merchants and customers.
- He overturns the money changers' tables.
- He disrupts the flow of animals towards the Sanctuary altar.
- And in this symbolic act of righteous indignation, Jesus takes on nothing less than the status quo. He threatens the way things are. He exposes the lies that make society work (this nice system that pacifies people, keeps religious aristocrats in power/money, keeps Rome happy, but manipulates people to understand their religious sacrificial system as the way to God).
- Jesus takes on religion, politics, commercial interest, and power.
- And he substitutes his authority for the whole society's practice
- Can you see why the chief priests will collude with Rome to have him crucified?

Why is Jesus doing this? Why enter intentionally into such danger and suffering?//

(-Scene in the film 'Luther,' where pilgrims to Rome are paying to climb stone stairs on their bloody knees for indulgence to cover their sins. They're going to see relics, said-to-be pieces of the cross or bones of saints. Luther is incensed at this religious manipulation and profiteering.)

-The key to this event—the key to his journey to Jerusalem—lies in what Jesus says here.

Scripture says: He was teaching and saying:

Is it not written, 'My house shall be called a house of prayer for all the nations.'?
But you have made it a den of robbers.

- Get this: The word 'nations' is the word 'Gentiles'! Non-Jews. My house shall be called a house of prayer for all the *Gentiles!*
- Recall the *Soreq* wall surrounding the Sanctuary courts that prescribed death to non-Jews. Add to that that the Messiah was expected to come *purge* Jerusalem of Gentiles, aliens, and foreigners.
- But this quotation (house of prayer) is from Isaiah 56— It's an extension of God's *salvation* to those formerly understood to be excluded—foreigners, Gentiles, and eunuchs: the outcasts of Israel.
- Jesus has come to include the very people the Messiah was expected to exclude! Jesus has come to *include* the outcasts of Israel. He overturns the corrupt system by which Israel was thought to monopolize *access* to God.
- *He comes on behalf of both the excluded and the misguided.* Championing the outcasts and exposing the cozy insiders with angry love.

Why is Jesus doing this? Why enter intentionally into such danger and suffering?

- In overturning the tables, Jesus clears the Temple to make *a house of prayer for everyone*. **He himself will replace the sacrificial system. In the outstretched arms of Jesus Christ will be *Access to God for all!***

(Eph 2.11-22)

Isn't this who we hoped God would be?

The One who sacrifices himself that All might have access to his love:

The fair-weather friend, the betrayer, the denier, the deserter, the outcast, the oppressor, the religious leader, the foreigner, the Eunuch, the alien?

This week we pay attention as Christ gives himself up for all. That all peoples, that everyone, might be welcomed into the embrace of the true King.

When you come to the Table, know that you are welcome here, that the Body and the Blood are for you, that it is in the Lord's heart to turn over tables that ALL might have access to so large a love...

Amen.

Call to the Passion (from Matthew 27, Mark 15, and Luke 23)

Leader: Pilate spoke to them...

Who do you want me to release for you,
the criminal Barabbas or Jesus, called Christ?

People: Barabbas!

Leader: Then what should I do with Jesus?

People: Crucify him!

Leader: Why? What evil has he done?

People: Let him be crucified!

Leader: And their voices prevailed...

Celebration of the Lord's Supper

Communion Song: O Sacred Head, Now Wounded

O sacred head, now wounded with grief and shame weighed down;
Now scornfully surrounded with thorns, Thine only crown.
How pale Thou art with anguish, with sore abuse and scorn!
How does that visage languish, which once was bright as morn!

What Thou, my Lord, hast suffered, 'twas all for sinner's gain;
Mine, mine was the transgression, but Thine the deadly pain.
Lo, here I fall, my Savior! 'Tis I deserve Thy place;
Look on me with Thy favor, vouch safe to me Thy grace.

What language shall I borrow to thank Thee, dearest friend?
For this Thy dying sorrow, Thy pity without end?
O make me Thine forever, and should I fainting be,
Lord, let me never, never outlive my love for Thee.
Paul Gerhardt and James W. Alexander***

SENDING

Sending Song: Jerusalem

See Him in Jerusalem, walking where the crowds are.
Once these streets had sung to Him. Now they cry for murder.
Such a frail and lonely man, holding up the heavy cross.
See Him walking in Jerusalem on the road to save us.

See Him there upon the hill, hear the scorn and laughter;
Silent as a lamb He waits, praying to the Father.
See the King who made the sun and the moon and shining stars.
Let the soldiers hold and nail Him down, so that He could save them.

See Him there upon the cross, now no longer breathing;
Dust that formed the watching crowds, takes the blood of Jesus.
Feel the earth is shaking now, see the veil is split in two,
And He stood before the wrath of God, shielding sinners with His blood.

See the empty tomb today, death could not contain Him.
Once the Servant of the world, now in victory reigning.
Lift your voices to the One, who is seated on the throne;
See Him in the new Jerusalem, praise the One who saved us!
Jonny Robinson, Rich Thompson and Tiarne Tranter**

Benediction

Leading in Worship This Morning:

Liturgist: Ron Righter
Kids on the Steps: Melinda Hickey
Sermon: Steve Lympos
Musicians: Beaux Dunning, Emma Thackston,
Kalani Padilla, Simon Hill, Wally Congdon
Sound, Slide and Video Techs: Zane Reneau,
Dan McCaffery and Sean Barry

EPC Ministry Staff:

Pastor: Dan Cravy
Worship Director: Emma Thackston
Children, Youth and Family Director: Austin Graef
Church Operations Manager: Becky Kress
Program Support Administrator: Jo Ruby
Church Secretary: Haleigh Adair
Facilities Steward: Carl Miller
Parish Associates: Rev. Janet Malone and Rev. Bob Schurr
Preaching Pastor, Blackfoot Church of the Potomac: Natalie Mauer

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