

GATHERING

Welcome

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 Love who rescues us.

**ALL: We wave palm branches in anticipation,
we lay our admiration before him, to cushion his way.**

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

**ALL: Hosanna! Hosanna! Blessed is the One who brings us
the kingdom of God.**

Gathering Song: All Glory, Laud, and Honor Hymn #88

*Refrain: All glory, laud, and honor
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. *Refrain.*

To people of the Hebrews
With palms before Thee went;
Our praise and prayers and anthems
Before Thee we present. *Refrain*

To Thee before Thy passion,
They sang their hymns of praise;
To Thee, now high exalted,
Our melody we raise. *Refrain*

Thou didst accept their praises;
Accept the prayers we bring,
Who in all good delightest,
Thou good and gracious King! *Refrain*

Hosanna, Loud Hosanna Hymn #89

Hosanna, loud hosanna,
The little children sang;
Through pillared court and temple,
They 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 heaven our King.

O May we ever praise Him,
With heart and life and voice,
And in His blissful presence
Eternally rejoice.

PRAISING

Prayer of Adoration

Come, Lord Jesus, into our midst this day just as you entered Jerusalem.
Open our hearts to receive your love;
Open our minds to understand your story;
Open the places of our resistance to receive your grace;
Open our eyes to recognize your journey of humility and obedience that led you to the cross.
In praise and adoration, we raise our palms to you, Jesus. Amen.

Song of Adoration: Only A Holy God

Who else commands all the hosts of heaven? Who else could make every king bow down?
Who else can whisper and darkness trembles? Only a Holy God.

What other beauty demands such praises? What other splendor outshines the sun?
What other majesty rules with justice? Only a Holy God.

*Refrain: Come and behold Him, the One and the Only.
Cry out, sing holy, forever a Holy God. Come and worship the Holy God.*

What other glory consumes like fire? What other power can raise the dead?
What other name remains undefeated? Only a Holy God. *Refrain*

Who else could rescue me from my failing? Who else would offer His only Son?
Who else invites me to call Him Father? Only a Holy God. Only my Holy God! *Refrain*

Michael Farren, Jonny Robinson, Dustin Smith and Rich Thompson**

BELONGING

Kids on the Steps

Call to Confession: To Thee I Come

To thee I come a sinner poor
And wait for mercy at thy door
Indeed I've nowhere else to flea
Oh God be merciful to me

To thee I come a sinner weak
And scarce know how to pray or speak
From fear and weakness set me free
Oh God be merciful to me

To thee I come a sinner vile
Upon me Lord vouch-safe to smile
Mercy through blood, I make my plea
Oh God be merciful to me

To thee I come a sinner great
And well thou knowest all my state
Yet full forgiveness is with thee
Oh God be merciful to me

To thee I come, a sinner lost
Nor have I aught where-in to trust
But where thou art, Lord I would be
Oh God be merciful to me

To glory bring me Lord at last
And there when all my sins are passed
With all the saints, I'll then agree
Oh God was merciful to me
Oh God was merciful to me.

Samuel Medley, Clint Wells**

Prayer of Confession & Assurance of Forgiveness

On this precipice of Holy Week, Let us open our hearts and minds to the truth of our lives, and let us offer that truth to God.
Jesus, today we cheer you on as our champion and hail you as our hero.
Forgive us tomorrow when our enthusiasm wanes.
Today we entrust you to rescue us from our broken circumstances.
Forgive us on Tuesday when we decide we can take care of ourselves.
Today we give you all our attention, the focus of our admiration.
Forgive us on Wednesday when we forget to remember who you are.
Today we cheer you loudly by name, wanting only to be near you.
Forgive us on Thursday when we pretend that we've never met you.
Today we can't take our eyes off you, convinced you are the Messiah.

Forgive us on Friday when we avert our eyes because it's too painful to see you on the cross.

Today we express our unswerving hopefulness in the future you promise.

Forgive us on Saturday when we believe all is lost.

Today we are boldly certain of the ways you will redeem us.

Restore us on Sunday when we are startled and awed by your rising.

Prepare us and our hearts for the newness you bring with Easter Hope that is surely coming. Amen.

Friends, Christ has come to save us! We will give our thanks to God, who comes to bring us grace, hope, life. Hosanna in the highest. Amen!

STEWADING

Invitation to Offering

FORMING

Sermon: Phil 2:1-11; Luke 19:28-44

I. INTRODUCTION

When Jesus rode into Jerusalem, it was to shouts of Hosanna. Neither Jesus' disciples nor the people crowding the streets knew that what they were celebrating was his self-less obedient death, a criminal's death, on the cross. He was making a triumphant entrance, but his triumph was going to look like losing. He was going the way that no king was expected to go and showing what God was really all about and what God's people would be called to be all about too.

Read Philippians 2:1-11

The church was a unique grouping for the first century culture. Dan mentioned last week how separate the Jewish people were from their Gentile neighbors and how even Peter had to learn to eat with Gentiles although taught all his life not to. But Gentiles were not a homogenous group. They organized themselves on the basis of family, or gender or class, or money. (William Willimon, Day 1) That made the Christian church unlike anything anyone had ever known. There were landowners and slaves, men and women, businessmen and widows. People that expected respect and people were used to being over-looked. They all shared life in the Christian community! Unprecedented! Maybe impossible? It definitely was not natural, not expected.

When I lived in Hamilton, which you know is a small town, there was a judge who was stopped while he was driving under the influence. Now, evidently this wasn't the first time, and he said to a new police officer, "Do you know who I am?" He expected a preferential treatment from the officer. Obviously, he didn't get it or the whole town wouldn't have heard about it.

But I thought of that judge when I read Philippians 2 – "in humility regard others better than yourself." Paul seems to think that something like that is happening in Philippi because he writes, "Let each of you look not to your own interests but to the interests of others. Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus..."

I read a Eugene Peterson devotional every day, and last week there was quote from his book, *Traveling Light* "It is a great freedom to love." And I thought, "Wow! Isn't that what Paul is telling this very different collection of people who were in this crazy community called the church? "Look after the best interest of each other, not just your own." Isn't that what love looks like? "Regard everyone as your superior," is all about putting others first. Love! To have the same mind that was in the Messiah Jesus, he says, and then explains that meant sacrificing himself for love.

The church, this strange mix of people, this motley crew, are free to love and that makes them, makes us, able to do what Jesus does, including turning away from seeking gain or glory to loving sacrificially,

Self-sacrifice is not universally rewarded in the world today. Sacrifice may be seen as necessary, but not self-sacrifice, not sacrificial love. I watch Korean dramas and have noticed that in historical dramas as well as modern dramas sacrifice may happen. But I wouldn't call it self-sacrifice. A village of very poor people have their homes destroyed and their food and meager belongings destroyed so the king can have more hunting grounds. Or a CEO cuts corners on safety in order to produce more product faster and as a result employees are injured and killed.

When the king or CEO is confronted, they justify what happened by saying success or progress requires some sacrifice. But I notice they haven't sacrificed anything.

I wish that was just in Korean dramas where I always know justice will finally prevail, but it isn't. We live in a country and a world where policies are enacted by the powerful and decisions made that call for sacrifice, often by the most vulnerable, the least powerful. The Church, big and little c, is called to sacrificial-love, to do nothing out of selfish-ambition, to consider others better than ourselves, to have the same mind among us to give ourselves away, we can do as Jesus did and serve the world even if it doesn't grow the church's membership or bank account.

The 3rd chapter of the Form of Government of the Book of Order says, or used to say, after spelling out the mission of the church, "The church is called to undertake this mission even at the risk of losing its life, trusting in God alone as the author and giver of life." It seems logical and certainly biblical that the community that came into existence because Jesus was obedient unto death on the cross, should then not have as its first mission its budget or growth but giving itself away.

This is the first church I've ever been in where pretty much everyone knows and can recite our mission. It is front and center all the time, and I love that because it keeps us from looking inward and becoming self-centered. It keeps us looking for ways, even self-sacrificial ways and joining with others in the community, that would enable us to surprise Missoula with Christ's astonishing love. It keeps us focused together, of the same mind serving, together, free to love one another and the people calls us to.

In our world today, as in the first century world, self-sacrifice and humility are not normal or rewarded. We have a lot that tells us to be winners and encourages individual superiority or even national superiority. It means that even the "culture wars" have come into the church and works to keep us divided.

But I remembered the "blue school house" project that Allen Hilton tells about in his book, *A House United, How the Church Can Change the World*. Some of you may remember too. A prosperous UCC congregation in Dallas were looking for a mission and after much study and prayer decided to build schoolhouses for the many children on the border who wanted to learn but had no schools. They went as a congregation and built these blue schoolhouses. A congregation in Houston heard about the mission and after study and prayer believed God was calling them to be part of that work.

But what makes this so unique was how different the congregations were. The Houston congregation was a Southern Baptist church who held fundamentalists beliefs, including the need for gay and lesbians to become heterosexual. On the other hand the UCC congregation was a progressive Christian church that welcomed gay and lesbian brothers and sisters.

The Southern Baptist members went down and started working next to the members of the UCC church. And after they had worked side by side with one another on this common mission, giving of themselves for these children, they discovered they held completely different views. But by then they were friends. They had the same mind that Christ had, serving side by side out of obedience not for gain or self-congratulation or to push their own agendas.

Christ made the impossible happen, 2 groups that would never even be in the same congregation were the church together in that border mission. Joining together to give of themselves they found the freedom to love one another, not considering their own understanding of some scripture something to grasp so they could serve together

Monday I had my Wellness Check-up and my primary is all about checking the whole person, not just physical. I told her I was struggling with this sermon and before I could even tell her what scripture I was using, she said, "Oh Janet, tell them to love everyone, that that's that we need so badly right now. That would be enough!"

She always has answers for my problems and I think she even had the answer for this sermon. That's really what Paul is telling the Philippians. Get it together, and exercise their freedom to love each other so that together you can love with the kind of love that gives itself away, as Jesus did. As my primary said, "Think how different things would be right now if we loved like that." Self-sacrificial love can change the world. Look at the cross! There is the Messiah, Jesus, giving himself up! There is God reconciling the world to God's self through Jesus.

I don't know what you or I might need to sacrifice in order to join with the people of God in serving the world. Or what sacrifices may be called upon from our congregation. I do know that I have personally experienced sacrificial love from more than one member of this community so I'm thinking I need to figure out better how to give myself away than many of you do.

I do know that we want to remember that the celebration on Palm Sunday was not the end of the story. The end of the story was death on a cross, the triumph of Easter Sunday doesn't happen if Jesus did not sacrifice himself to ransom us. As we go through this week, we can watch Jesus being obedient, even to death on the cross. And we can look to God to give us that same mind, that same obedience, loving the world with sacrificial love.

It seems appropriate that today we celebrate the Lord's Supper where we come again to proclaim the Lord Jesus' death and give thanks for Christ's sacrificial love that frees us to love. All are invited to come to this table whether you've been coming for 40 year or this is the first time you heard Jesus' invitation. The church is a motley crew and that's what makes coming to the table together a little bit magical.

For we are told in Scripture that on the night Jesus was betrayed, he was at table with his disciples, and he took the bread, broke it and gave thanks to God for it, and passed it among his disciples saying, "This is my body, broken for you. As often as you eat this remember me."

In the same way after supper, he took the cup and after giving thanks for it, he passed it among his disciples saying, "This cup is the new covenant, sealed in my blood which is given for you for the forgiveness of sins. So as often as you drink this, remember me.

So whenever we eat the bread and drink the cup, we proclaim the death of our Lord Jesus Christ until he comes again. This is the gift of God for all of us the people of God.

Celebration of the Lord's Supper

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Communion Song: Come to the Table

Come all proud, come all greedy, come all liars, come all shamed,
come all wealthy, come receive it, to the table, come today.

Come all broken, come all needy, come all poor, come all slaves,
come all rulers, come be seated, come all sinners, come all saints.

Come to the table, from near and far. Come from the shadows, come out of the dark.
There's room at the table, we saved you a seat. Come to the banquet, come join in the feast.

Every race, every nation, come all outcasts, come all gay, from the fringes, come to Jesus,
to a table, full of grace, to the table, come and stay.

Come to the table, come eat and drink. There's no inner circle, come dine with the King.
Recline at the table, come let down your guard. You're never a stranger, just come as you are.

Come, behold, come be loved, come accepted, come now, come.
Come, behold, come be loved, come accepted, come now, come.

Prepared is the table, we're ready to feast. The party is waiting, there's more still to feed.
The harvest is ready, go fill every seat. Go live out the mission as a kingdom of priests.

Mark Alan Schoolmeesters**

SENDING

Sending Song: My Soul Will Wait

When the enemy surrounds, and my heart grows faint within,
When the darkness overwhelms, and my fears are pressing in,
I will trust in You, O Lord; in the silence I will wait. I will stand upon Your Word.

You're my solid rock and my salvation, my steadfast hope that won't be shaken,
My soul will wait, my soul will wait for You.

You're my stronghold and my shield in the midst of every threat.
Though the wicked never yield, they will vanish like a breath.
Yes, I know the outcome's sure; Satan's evil plans will fail. In Your power I'm secure.

You're my solid rock and my salvation, my steadfast hope that won't be shaken,
My soul will wait, my soul will wait for You.
You're my comfort when I feel forsaken, my refuge and my sure foundation,
My soul will wait, my soul will wait for You.

This is love I can't explain, this is mercy unreserved.
Through Your sacrifice so great, I have peace that's undeserved.
For the battle has been won, and I fear no shame or loss; now the sting of death is gone.

You're my solid rock and my salvation, my steadfast hope that won't be shaken,
My soul will wait, my soul will wait for You.
You're my comfort when I feel forsaken, my refuge and my sure foundation,
My soul will wait, my soul will wait for You.

Keaton Bunting and Bob Kauflin**

Benediction

As you go out into the week between Palm Sunday and Easter keep your eyes on the one who is steadily and deliberately making his way to the cross and may you welcome opportunities to give yourself away to the glory of God and to Jesus Christ to whom God gave the name that is above every other name. Amen

Leading in Worship This Morning:

Liturgist: Tracey Craven

Kids on the Steps: Erik Farnham

Sermon: Janet Malone

Musicians: Joselyn Thomsen, Noah Hill, Chris Caldwell, Allie McAdow
Sound and Video Techs: Zane Reneau, Char Davis, Bill Maitland

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Program Support Administrator: Jo Ruby

Facilities Manager: Wes Keller

Church Secretary: Lori Wheeler

Bell Choir Director: Tomi Kent

Parish Associates: Rev. Janet Malone and Rev. Bob Schurr
Preaching Pastor, Blackfoot Church of the Potomac: Natalie Mauer