

April 5, 2020, Palm Sunday

Parts of this service marked with an asterisk () may be led by one person.*

Invocation

Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord.

Hosanna in the highest!

Gospel Reading

* The Holy Gospel according to Matthew.

When [Jesus and his disciples] had come near Jerusalem and had reached Bethphage, at the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two disciples, saying to them, ‘Go into the village ahead of you, and immediately you will find a donkey tied, and a colt with her; untie them and bring them to me. If anyone says anything to you, just say this, “The Lord needs them.” And he will send them immediately.’ This took place to fulfil what had been spoken through the prophet, saying,

‘Tell the daughter of Zion,
Look, your king is coming to you,
humble, and mounted on a donkey,
and on a colt, the foal of a donkey.’

The disciples went and did as Jesus had directed them; they brought the donkey and the colt, and put their cloaks on them, and he sat on them. A very large crowd spread their cloaks on the road, and others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. The crowds that went ahead of him and that followed were shouting,

‘Hosanna to the Son of David!
Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord!
Hosanna in the highest heaven!’

When he entered Jerusalem, the whole city was in turmoil, asking, ‘Who is this?’ The crowds were saying, ‘This is the prophet Jesus from Nazareth in Galilee.’

The Gospel of the Lord.

Prayer *(Prayer used by permission of Augsburg Fortress)*

* God is with us. Let us pray.

We praise you, O God, for redeeming the world through our Lord, Jesus Christ. Today he entered the holy city in triumph and was proclaimed messiah and king by those who spread garments and branches along his way. Grant us grace to follow our Lord in the way of the cross, so that, joined to his death and resurrection, we enter life with you; through the same Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

Hymn *(Read or sung together)*

(Hymn lyrics printed under OneLicence # 731166-A)

Chorus

All glory, laud and honour to you, redeemer king,
to whom the lips of children made sweet hosannas ring.

You are the king of Israel and David's royal Son,
now in the Lord's name coming, our King and Blessed One. *Chorus.*

The company of angels are praising you on high;
creation and all mortals in chorus make reply. *Chorus.*

The multitude of pilgrims with palms before you went;
our praise and prayers and anthems before you we present. *Chorus.*

To you, before your passion, they sang their hymn of praise.
To you, now high exalted, our melodies we raise. *Chorus.*

Their praises you accepted; accept the prayers we bring,
great author of all goodness, O good and gracious King.

For those of you reading this "on line," a slightly different version of this hymn may be heard by clicking here - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vybSEKZQU6c>

Prayer of the Day (*Prayer used by permission of Augsburg Fortress*)

God is with us. Let us pray.

Sovereign God, you have established your rule in the human heart through the servanthood of Jesus Christ. By your Spirit, keep us in the joyful procession of those who with their tongues confess Jesus as Lord, and with their lives praise him as Saviour, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

Reflection

* So who doesn't love a parade?

The people, the music, the bands, the floats, the candy being handed out (or thrown!). And in small towns, like the one in which I happen to live, another part of the fun of parades is recognizing some of the people who are actually in it, and getting the waves from the marchers.

And how exciting is it if the *mayor*, or the local federal *representative*, actually waves at you!

I wonder if Jesus waved?

I wonder if he recognized any of the cheering people? I wonder if he acknowledged them as he went riding by, down the slope from the Mount of Olives, and up the other side to the gate of Jerusalem? Or was he too overwhelmed by the prospect of what was coming? Was he, rather, simply looking down at the donkey's head? Or up at the approaching city wall? Or did he even have his eyes open at all?

I wonder.

But there is something else about parades. There is one more reason to love them.

And that is, quite simply, the *reason* they are being held.

Canada Day. Thanksgiving. The beginning of the Christmas season. Remembrance Day.

Parades are not just about the crowds or the candy or the waves from friendly politicians. They signify something. They remind us of an event, or a season, or a community experience.

But there is a significant difference for Jesus' parade. His parade points toward something which has *not yet happened*; something which is *coming*. This parade directs us to the reign of God, when "God's will" will indeed be done on earth, when the truth of God's love will be seen.

This parade is dedicated to something which is not yet visible; which has been occasionally hinted at, but which is, so far, still approaching.

Kind of like the end of this Covid-19 pandemic. It WILL end. But we do not know when.

But there is one more difference with Jesus' parade. And that is this: We are not watching it happen. *We are the marchers.*

We are the one who are following Jesus up to that gate. We are the ones who are shouting "Hosanna!" We are the one who are celebrating what is coming, anticipating what is promised.

Which means, it is our job to do the waving. It's our job to recognize the faces in the crowd. It's our job to share our excitement for the reason for this parade. It's our job to point to what Jesus is doing here, and to live the promised end result of that action.

We can't gather for a parade this year. But we *can* do all the rest! By our grocery shopping for our isolated neighbour, by our cards to our shut in friends, by our adhering to the guidelines put in place by Public Health officials, by remembering the poor and powerless who suffer even when there is *no* pandemic, we are indeed celebrating the love of God. We are indeed waving at the folks watching our parade. We are indeed following Jesus.

And who doesn't love that?

Prayers of the People

* Let us offer our prayers for this hurting world to the God who comes in humble peace.

[*Short pause*]

God who comes in peace, we celebrate your coming. We join in singing Hosanna. We love parades. Remind us of what is coming. In your mercy,

Hear our prayer.

God who comes in peace, crowds are fickle. We are inconsistent. One moment we cheer, the next moment we turn our backs. Forgive our contradictions. In your mercy,

Hear our prayer.

God who comes in peace, you call us to join your parade, yet to do so with humility. Increase in us the gift of your love, that we may point to you with grace, and humbly follow wherever you go. In your mercy,

Hear our prayer.

God who comes in peace, give your church a vision of where and how we might serve most faithfully today. In the middle of hardships, pandemic and poverty, focus our sight on your presence with the poor, the lonely, the suffering; and give us the grace to respond. In your mercy,

Hear our prayer.

God who comes in peace, we remember before you the sick, the cut off, those who are trapped by circumstances, as well as those who work to bring healing, help and hope. Today we especially remember those we name before you.

[Names of those who are of special concern may be offered.]

Send us in peace to those who have none. In your mercy,

Hear our prayer.

Trusting the promise of mercy, we pray in the name of Jesus Christ, our Saviour and Lord, who taught us to pray,

Our Father....

Lord's Prayer *(Prayer used by permission of Augsburg Fortress)*

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, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

OR

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread, and forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial, and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are your, now and forever. Amen.

OR

To pray with the leaders of our local congregations, you may click here -

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5D7r99aSnzg>

Benediction *(Read together)*

May almighty God,
the Father who created us to live in love,
the Son (†) who died and rose to bring us new life,
and the Spirit who has made us part of the parade,
bless us all, now and forever. Amen.

We go in peace, following Jesus.

Thanks be to God.

Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord.

Hosanna in the highest!