



Worship for Palm Sunday

Today we enter a week of Passiontide in which we follow Christ from the glory of the palms to the glory of the resurrection, but we do so by the dark road of his suffering and death.

Hosanna to the Son of David, the King of Israel. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.

The Greeting

Grace, mercy and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ be with you
and also with you.

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ, during Lent we have been preparing by works of love and self-sacrifice for the celebration of our Lord's death and resurrection.
Today we come together to begin this solemn celebration in union with the Church throughout the world. Christ enters his own city to complete his work as our Saviour, to suffer, to die, and to rise again.
Let us go with him in faith and love, so that, united with him in his sufferings, we may share his risen life.

The Blessing of the Palms

Hold up the Palm cross you have made or one from previous year

God our Saviour, whose Son Jesus Christ entered Jerusalem as Messiah to suffer and to die; let these palms be for us signs of his victory and grant that we who bear them in his name may ever hail him as our King, and follow him in the way that leads to eternal life; who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

Amen.

The Palm Gospel

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew.
Glory to you, O Lord.

Matthew 21: 1-11

21 As they approached Jerusalem and came to Bethphage on the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two disciples, ²saying to them, "Go to the village ahead of you, and at once you will find a donkey tied there, with her colt by her. Untie them and bring them to me. ³If anyone says anything to you, say that the Lord needs them, and he will send them right away." ⁴This took place to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet:

⁵“Say to Daughter Zion, ‘See, your king comes to you, gentle and riding on a donkey, and on a colt, the foal of a donkey.’”^[a]

⁶The disciples went and did as Jesus had instructed them. ⁷They brought the donkey and the colt and placed their cloaks on them for Jesus to sit on. ⁸A very large crowd spread their cloaks on the road, while others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. ⁹The crowds that went ahead of him and those that followed shouted,

“Hosanna^[a] to the Son of David!” “Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!”^[a] “Hosanna^[a] in the highest heaven!” ¹⁰When Jesus entered Jerusalem, the whole city was stirred and asked, “Who is this?” ¹¹The crowds answered, “This is Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth in Galilee.”

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

At this point in the service we would normally process into church singing and waving our Palm crosses. We can't do that this year so instead take a moment to think of ways in which you can bear witness to your faith in the world around you.

Hymn: All Glory Laud and honour

The Collect

Let us pray for a closer union with Christ in his suffering and in his glory.

Silence is kept.

True and humble king, hailed by the crowd as Messiah: grant us the faith to know you and love you, that we may be found beside you on the way of the cross, which is the path of glory. Amen.

The Liturgy of the Word

Readings

Philippians 2: 5-11

⁵In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus:

⁶Who, being in very nature^[a] God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; ⁷rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature^[a] of a servant, being made in human likeness. ⁸And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death— even death on a cross! ⁹Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, ¹⁰that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

This is the word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God

Hymn: Ride on Ride on in majesty

The Passion Reading

On Palm Sunday it has become our tradition with many other Churches across the world to read together the Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ. We read it in a way that enables us all to take part, for as Christian this is our story also. It is a very moving and powerful story full not only of sadness and grief but also of forgiveness, compassion, love and just the glimmer of hope that all might not be lost after all.

As we leave Jesus dead and buried in the tomb and the disciples scattered, scared and broken hearted it is easy to find ourselves in a place of despair and hopelessness. But... But.... The story does not end here. For we know that we need to tune in on Easter Day for the next instalment of the story that changed the world.

There are two ways this morning for you to engage in the Passion reading. I have made a video for you to listen to and invite you to follow the reading joining in the parts that are in bold type. A link to this video is on our website. Alternatively, you can read the Passion reading out loud. If you are worshipping with other members of your household, one of you could read it while everyone joins in the parts marked all.

Pause

Praise to you, O Christ, King of eternal glory. Christ humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross. Therefore, God has highly exalted him and given him the name that is above every name. **Praise to you, O Christ, King of eternal glory.**

The Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Mark.

Very early in the morning, the chief priests, with the elders, the teachers of the law and the whole Sanhedrin, made their plans. So, they bound Jesus, led him away and handed him over to Pilate. "Are you the king of the Jews?" asked Pilate. "You have said so," Jesus replied. The chief priests accused him of many things. So again, Pilate asked him, "Aren't you going to answer? See how many things they are accusing you of." But Jesus still made no reply, and Pilate was amazed.

Now it was the custom at the festival to release a prisoner whom the people requested. A man called Barabbas was in prison with the insurrectionists who had committed murder in the uprising. The crowd came up and asked Pilate to do for them what he usually did. "Do you want me to release to you the king of the Jews?" asked Pilate, knowing it was out of self-interest that the chief priests had handed Jesus over to him. But the chief priests stirred up the crowd to have Pilate release Barabbas instead. "What shall I do, then, with the one you call the king of the Jews?" Pilate asked them.

All: Crucify him!

They shouted. "Why? What crime has he committed?" asked Pilate. But they shouted all the louder

All: Crucify him!

Wanting to satisfy the crowd, Pilate released Barabbas to them. He had Jesus flogged, and handed him over to be crucified. The soldiers led Jesus away into the palace (that is, the Praetorium) and called together the whole company of soldiers. They put a purple robe on him, then twisted together a crown of thorns and set it on him. And they began to call out to him,

All: Hail, king of the Jews!

Again and again they struck him on the head with a staff and spit on him. Falling on their knees, they paid homage to him. And when they had mocked him, they took off the purple robe and put his own clothes on him. Then they led him out to crucify him. A certain man from Cyrene, Simon, the father of Alexander and Rufus, was passing by on his way in from the country, and they forced him to carry the cross. They brought Jesus to the place called Golgotha (which means “the place of the skull”). Then they offered him wine mixed with myrrh, but he did not take it. And they crucified him.

Dividing up his clothes, they cast lots to see what each would get. It was nine in the morning when they crucified him. The written notice of the charge against him read: the king of the Jews. They crucified two rebels with him, one on his right and one on his left. Those who passed by hurled insults at him, shaking their heads and saying,

All: So! You who are going to destroy the temple and build it in three days, come down from the cross and save yourself!”

In the same way the chief priests and the teachers of the law mocked him among themselves.

All: He saved others, but he can’t save himself! Let this Messiah, this king of Israel, come down now from the cross, that we may see and believe.

Those crucified with him also heaped insults on him. At noon, darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon. And at three in the afternoon Jesus cried out in a loud voice, “Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?” Which means “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” When some of those standing near heard this, they said,

All: Listen, he’s calling Elijah. Someone ran, filled a sponge with wine vinegar, put it on a staff, and offered it to Jesus to drink. Now leave him alone. Let’s see if Elijah comes to take him down,”

he said. With a loud cry, Jesus breathed his last. The curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. And when the centurion, who stood there in front of Jesus, saw how he died, he said,

All: Surely this man was the Son of God!

Some women were watching from a distance. Among them were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James the younger and of Joseph, and Salome. In Galilee these women had followed him and cared for his needs. Many other women who had come up with him to Jerusalem were also there.

It was Preparation Day (that is, the day before the Sabbath). So as evening approached, Joseph of Arimathea, a prominent member of the Council, who was himself waiting for the kingdom of God, went boldly to Pilate and asked for Jesus’ body. Pilate was surprised to hear that he was already dead. Summoning the centurion, he asked him if Jesus had already died. When he learned from the centurion that it was so, he gave the body to Joseph.

So Joseph bought some linen cloth, took down the body, wrapped it in the linen, and placed it in a tomb cut out of rock. Then he rolled a stone against the entrance of the tomb. Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Joseph saw where he was laid.

This is the Passion of the Lord.

Silence

Hymn: When I survey the wondrous cross

Prayers of Intercession

Let us pray

We stand in the presence of Jesus our King and ask his blessing on the world, saying,
King Jesus, we welcome you,
Come and reign among us.

We ask you to bless this world, which you created, and invade with your peace the places where hatred and violence rule, where lives are scarred with fear and misery. We pray for the leaders of the nations and those shaping national policies that they will make wise decisions.

King Jesus, we welcome you,
Come and reign among us.

We ask you to bless this community and bring the joy of your salvation to those whose lives are filled with darkness and despair, anxiety and fear. We thank you for all the wonderful acts of kindness, compassion and generosity that are being shown to others at this difficult time. We give thanks for the hard work and dedication of NHS staff, medical researchers, care workers, teachers, food industry workers and all other who are supporting the nation at this difficult time. Bless them with the resources they need to stay safe and to help and care for others.

King Jesus, we welcome you,
Come and reign among us.

We ask you to bless your worldwide Church, and fill with your power all who worship and serve you, who show compassion and bring peace and relief in your name. As we learn to be church in a new way, give us the strength and courage to follow where you lead. Help us to shine out your love and light in all that we do and in all that we are.

King Jesus, we welcome you,
Come and reign among us.

We ask you to bless our homes and loved ones and reassure us of your presence in these difficult and challenging times. Inspire us as we reach out to connect in new and different ways with each other. Be with those who feel lonely and isolated, that they may know comfort and peace.

King Jesus, we welcome you,
Come and reign among us.

We ask you to bless anyone who is suffering or in distress, thinking particularly of all those suffering and grieving as a result of the Coronavirus.

In a moment of stillness and quiet we name before you any known to us who are suffering at this time whether in body, mind or spirit.

We ask you to heal them in body, mind and spirit and strengthen their confidence in you.

King Jesus, we welcome you,
Come and reign among us.

Take a few moments in stillness and quiet to offer your own prayers to God

King Jesus we welcome you,
come and reign among us, fill our lives with your joy and our hearts with your love as we cry 'Hosanna in the highest!' to our saviour Jesus Christ. Amen

Gathering our prayers and praises into one, let us pray as our saviour taught us.

**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,
for ever and ever.
Amen.**

The Peace

Once we were far off, but now in union with Christ Jesus we have been brought near through the shedding of Christ's blood, for he is our peace.

The peace of the Lord be always with you
and also with you.

Let us offer one another a sign of Gods' peace.

I know that we are not together physically today and not able to share the peace in our normal way. However, this does not mean that we are not able to share the peace. Bring to mind members of our church family and as you do wish them God's peace. "..... (the name of a member of our church family) God's peace be with you.

Hymn: Make way Make way for Christ the king

The Dismissal

May the Father, who so loved the world that he gave his only Son, bring you by faith to his eternal life.
Amen.

May Christ, who accepted the cup of sacrifice in obedience to the Father's will, keep you steadfast as you walk with him the way of his cross. **Amen.**

May the Spirit, who strengthens us to suffer with Christ that we may share his glory, set your minds on life and peace. **Amen.**

And the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be among us and remain with us always. **Amen.**

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

In the name of Christ. Amen.

As our services finishes today place your Palm Cross in your window as a witness to the world.

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