

PALM SUNDAY/SUNDAY OF THE PASSION

April 5, 2020 - 10:00 AM

Living Springs Lutheran Church

4224 Hard Scrabble Road, Columbia, SC 29223
www.livingspringscolumbia.org



Today, we encounter the paradox that defines our faith: Jesus Christ is glorified king and humiliated servant. We too are full of paradox: like Peter, we fervently desire to follow Christ, but find ourselves afraid, denying God. We wave palms in celebration today as Christ comes into our midst, and we follow with trepidation as his path leads to death on the cross. Amid it all we are invited into this paradoxical promise of life through Christ's broken body and outpoured love in a meal of bread and wine. We begin this week that stands at the center of the church year, anticipating the completion of God's astounding work.

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

PALM SUNDAY LITURGY

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

People: Hosanna in the highest.

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Pastor: The Holy Gospel according to Matthew.

People: Glory to you, O Lord.

Pastor: When they 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 fulfill 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." (*Matthew 21:1-11*)

Pastor: The Gospel of the Lord.

People: Praise to you, O Christ.

Pastor: The Lord be with you.

People: And also with you.

Pastor: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

People: It is right to give him thanks and praise.

Pastor: We praise you, O God, for redeeming the world through our Savior 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. Bless these branches and those who carry them. Grant us grace to follow our Lord in the way of the cross, so that, joined to his death and resurrection, we enter into life with you; through the same Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

People: Amen

Assist: Let us go forth in peace,

People: in the name of Christ. Amen

PLACEMENT OF BRANCHES AND CLOAKS

GATHERING SONG

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

People: Hosanna in the highest.



1 Pre - pare the roy - al high - way; the King of kings is near!
2 God's peo - ple, see him com - ing: your own e - ter - nal king!
3 Then fling the gates wide o - pen to greet your prom - ised king!
4 His is no earth - ly king - dom; it comes from heav'n a - bove.



Let ev - 'ry hill and val - ley a lev - el road ap - pear!
Palm branch - es strew be - fore him! Spread gar - ments! Shout and sing!
Your king, yet ev - 'ry na - tion its trib - ute too may bring.
His rule is peace and free - dom and jus - tice, truth, and love.



Then greet the King of glo - ry, fore - told in sa - cred sto - ry:
God's prom - ise will not fail you! No more shall doubt as - sail you!
All lands will bow be - fore him; their voic - es join your sing - ing:
So let your praise be sound - ing for kind - ness so a - bound - ing:



Ho - san - na to the Lord, for he ful - fills God's word!

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

People: Hosanna in the highest.



GREETING AND PRAYERS

Pastor: From God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, grace and peace be with you all.

People: And also with you.

Pastor: Everlasting God, in your endless love for the human race you sent our Lord Jesus Christ to take on our nature and to suffer death on the cross. In your mercy enable us to share in his obedience to your will and in the glorious victory of his resurrection, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

People: Amen.

FIRST READING

Lector: A reading from the book of Isaiah.

The Lord GOD has given me the tongue of a teacher, that I may know how to sustain the weary with a word. Morning by morning he wakens— wakens my ear to listen as those who are taught. The Lord GOD has opened my ear, and I was not rebellious, I did not turn backward. I gave my back to those who struck me, and my cheeks to those who pulled out the beard; I did not hide my face from insult and spitting. The Lord GOD helps me; therefore I have not been disgraced; therefore I have set my face like flint, and I know that I shall not be put to shame; he who vindicates me is near. Who will contend with me? Let us stand up together. Who are my adversaries? Let them confront me. It is the Lord GOD who helps me; who will declare me guilty? (Isaiah 50:4–9a)

Lector: Word of God, Word of life.

People: Thanks be to God.

SECOND READING

Lector: A reading from the book of Philippians.

Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness. And being found in human form, he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death—even death on a cross. Therefore God also highly exalted him and gave him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. (Philippians 2:5–11)

Lector: Word of God, Word of life.

People: Thanks be to God.

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Assist: Turning our hearts to God who is gracious and merciful, we pray for the church, the world, and all who are in need.

+ A brief silence +

Assist: God of mercy, awaken your church to new proclamations of your faithfulness. By your Spirit, give us bold and joyful words to speak, that we sustain the weary with the message of your redemption. Hear us, O God.

People: Your mercy is great.

Assist: God of mercy, quiet the earth where it trembles and shakes. Protect vulnerable ecosystems, threatened habitats, and endangered species. Prosper the work of scientists, engineers, and researchers who find ways to restore creation to health and wholeness. Hear us, O God.

People: Your mercy is great.

Assist: God of mercy, drive away fear and anger that cause us to turn against one another. Give courage to leaders who seek liberation for the oppressed. Bring peace and hope to those who are in prison and those who face execution. Hear us, O God.

People: Your mercy is great.

Assist: God of mercy, send your saving help to all who suffer abuse, insult, discrimination, or contempt. Heal the wounded. Comfort the dying. Bring peace to those suffering chronic or terminal illness. Tend to all who cry out for relief. We pray especially for: *Rhea Pye; Claudette Tuttle; Elizabeth Maddox; Helen Bradham; Charles Kauffman; JoAnn Pulse; Tanyua Anderson; the Kugler/Turnmire families; the Oquendo family; and those we name before you now, either silently or aloud...* Hear us, O God.

People: Your mercy is great.

Assist: God of mercy, we pray for all who will prepare and lead worship in this Holy Week. In all things, show us the ways that you call us to die to self, to live for you, and to give of ourselves for the sake of others. Hear us, O God.

People: Your mercy is great.

Assist: God of mercy, when we breathe our last, you raise us to eternal life. With all your witnesses in heaven and on earth, let us boldly confess the name of Jesus Christ, our resurrection and our hope. Hear us, O God.

People: Your mercy is great.

Pastor: God, our peace and our strength, we pray for our nation and the world as we face continued uncertainties around coronavirus. Protect the most vulnerable among us, especially all who are currently sick or in isolation. Grant wisdom, patience, and clarity to health care workers, especially as their work caring for others puts them at great risk. Guide us as we consider how best to prepare and respond in our families, congregations, workplaces, and communities. Give us courage to face these days not with fear but with compassion, concern, and acts of service, trusting that you abide with us always. Hear us, O God.

People: Your mercy is great.

Pastor: According to your steadfast love, O God, hear these and all our prayers as we commend them to you; through Christ our Lord.

People: Amen.

SHARING OF PEACE

Pastor: The peace of Christ be with you always.

People: And also with you.

We greet one another, with the words that the risen Jesus spoke to his disciples: "Peace be with you."

OFFERINGS ARE GIVEN

Offering may be dropped off at the office during the week or sent through the mail. For those who wish to give electronically, you may use the secure Givelify app.



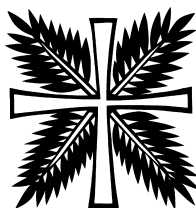
OFFERING PRAYER

Assist: Let us pray. O Lord our God, maker of all things:

People: Through your goodness you have blessed us with these gifts. With them we offer ourselves to your service and dedicate our lives to the care and redemption of all that you have made, for the sake of him who gave himself for us, Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

Pastor: Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us:

People: 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, forever and ever. Amen.





**THE PASSION OF OUR LORD
ACCORDING TO THE GOSPEL OF ST. MATTHEW**



1 Be - neath the cross of Je - sus I long to take my stand;
2 Up - on the cross of Je - sus, my eye at times can see



the shad - ow of a might - y rock with - in a wea - ry land,
the ver - y dy - ing form of one who suf - fered there for me.



a home with - in a wil - der - ness, a rest up - on the way,
And from my con - trite heart, with tears, two won - ders I con - fess:



from the burn - ing of the noon - tide heat and bur - dens of the day.
the . . . won - der of his glo - rious love and my un - wor - thi - ness.

Narrator: Then one of the twelve, who was called Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests and said,

Judas: What will you give me if I betray him to you?

Narrator: They paid him thirty pieces of silver. And from that moment he began to look for an opportunity to betray him. On the first day of Unleavened Bread the disciples came to Jesus, saying,

People: Where do you want us to make the preparations for you to eat the Passover?

Narrator: He said,

Jesus: Go into the city to a certain man, and say to him, "The Teacher says, My time is near; I will keep the Passover at your house with my disciples."

Narrator: So the disciples did as Jesus had directed them, and they prepared the Passover meal. When it was evening, he took his place with the twelve; and while they were eating, he said,

Jesus: Truly I tell you, one of you will betray me.

Narrator: And they became greatly distressed and began to say to him one after another,

People: Surely not I, Lord?

Narrator: He answered,

Jesus: The one who has dipped his hand into the bowl with me will betray me. The Son of Man goes as it is written of him, but woe to that one by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been better for that one not to have been born.

Narrator: Judas, who betrayed him, said,

Judas: Surely not I, Rabbi?

Narrator: Jesus replied,

Jesus: You have said so.

Narrator: While they were eating, Jesus took a loaf of bread, and after blessing it he broke it, gave it to the disciples, and said,

Jesus: Take, eat; this is my body.

Narrator: Then he took a cup, and after giving thanks he gave it to them, saying,

Jesus: Drink from it, all of you; for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. I tell you, I will never again drink of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom.

Narrator: When they had sung the hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives. Then Jesus said to them,
Jesus: You will all become deserters because of me this night; for it is written, "I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock will be scattered." But after I am raised up, I will go ahead of you to Galilee.

Narrator: Peter said to him,
Peter: Though all become deserters because of you, I will never desert you.

Narrator: Jesus said to him,
Jesus: Truly I tell you, this very night, before the cock crows, you will deny me three times.

Narrator: Peter said to him,
Peter: Even though I must die with you, I will not deny you.

Narrator: And so said all the disciples. Then Jesus went with them to a place called Gethsemane; and he said to his disciples,
Jesus: Sit here while I go over there and pray.

Narrator: He took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be grieved and agitated. Then he said to them,
Jesus: I am deeply grieved, even to death; remain here, and stay awake with me.

Narrator: And going a little farther, he threw himself on the ground and prayed,
Jesus: My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me; yet not what I want but what you want.

Narrator: Then he came to the disciples and found them sleeping; and he said to Peter,
Jesus: So, could you not stay awake with me one hour? Stay awake and pray that you may not come into the time of trial; the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.

Narrator: Again he went away for the second time and prayed,
Jesus: My Father, if this cannot pass unless I drink it, your will be done.

Narrator: Again he came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were heavy. So leaving them again, he went away and prayed for the third time, saying the same words. Then he came to the disciples and said to them,
Jesus: Are you still sleeping and taking your rest? See, the hour is at hand, and the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Get up, let us be going. See, my betrayer is at hand.

Narrator: While he was still speaking, Judas, one of the twelve, arrived; with him was a large crowd with swords and clubs, from the chief priests and the elders of the people. Now the betrayer had given them a sign, saying,
Judas: The one I will kiss is the man; arrest him.

Narrator: At once he came up to Jesus and said,
Judas: Greetings, Rabbi!

Narrator: Then Judas kissed him. Jesus said to him,
Jesus: Friend, do what you are here to do.

Narrator: Then they came and laid hands on Jesus and arrested him. Suddenly, one of those with Jesus put his hand on his sword, drew it, and struck the slave of the high priest, cutting off his ear. Then Jesus said to him,
Jesus: Put your sword back into its place; for all who take the sword will perish by the sword. Do you think that I cannot appeal to my Father, and he will at once send me more than twelve legions of angels? But how then would the scriptures be fulfilled, which say it must happen in this way?

Narrator: At that hour Jesus said to the crowds,
Jesus: Have you come out with swords and clubs to arrest me as though I were a bandit? Day after day I sat in the temple teaching, and you did not arrest me. But all this has taken place, so that the scriptures of the prophets may be fulfilled.

Narrator: Then all the disciples deserted him and fled.



Narrator: Those who had arrested Jesus took him to Caiaphas the high priest, in whose house the scribes and the elders had gathered. But Peter was following him at a distance, as far as the courtyard of the high priest; and going inside, he sat with the guards in order to see how this would end. Now the chief priests and the whole council were looking for false testimony against Jesus so that they might put him to death, but they found none, though many false witnesses came forward. At last two came forward and said,

Witness: This fellow said, "I am able to destroy the temple of God and to build it in three days."

Narrator: The high priest stood up and said,

High Priest: Have you no answer! What is it that they testify against you!

Narrator: But Jesus was silent. Then the high priest said to him,

High Priest: I put you under oath before the living God, tell us if you are the Messiah, the Son of God.

Narrator: Jesus said to him,

Jesus: You have said so. But I tell you, from now on you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of Power and coming on the clouds of heaven.

Narrator: Then the high priest tore his clothes and said,

High Priest: He has blasphemed! Why do we still need witnesses? You have now heard his blasphemy. What is your verdict?

Narrator: They answered,

People: He deserves death.

Narrator: Then they spat in his face and struck him; and some slapped him, saying,

People: Prophecy to us, you Messiah! Who is it that struck you?

Narrator: Now Peter was sitting outside in the courtyard. A servant-girl came to him and said,

Servant: You also were with Jesus the Galilean.

Narrator: But he denied it before all of them, saying,

Peter: I do not know what you are talking about.

Narrator: When he went out to the porch, another servant-girl saw him and said to the bystanders,

Servant: This man was with Jesus of Nazareth.

Narrator: Again he denied it with an oath,

Peter: I do not know the man.

Narrator: After a little while the bystanders came up and said to Peter,

People: Certainly you are also one of them, for your accent betrays you.

Narrator: Then he began to curse, and he swore an oath,

Peter: I do not know the man!

Narrator: At that moment the cock crowed. Then Peter remembered what Jesus had said: "Before the cock crows, you will deny me three times." And he went out and wept bitterly. When morning came, all the chief priests and the elders of the people conferred together against Jesus in order to bring about his death. They bound him, led him away, and handed him over to Pilate the governor. When Judas, his betrayer, saw that Jesus was condemned, he repented and brought back the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and the elders. He said,

Judas: I have sinned by betraying innocent blood.

Narrator: But they said,

People: What is that to us! See to it yourself.

Narrator: Throwing down the pieces of silver in the temple, he departed; and he went and hanged himself. But the chief priests, taking the pieces of silver, said,

People: It is not lawful to put them into the treasury, since they are blood money.

Narrator: After conferring together, they used them to buy the potter's field as a place to bury foreigners. For this reason that field has been called the Field of Blood to this day. Then was fulfilled what had been spoken through the prophet Jeremiah, "And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of the one on whom a price had been set, on whom some of the people of Israel had set a price, and they gave them for the potter's field, as the Lord commanded me."

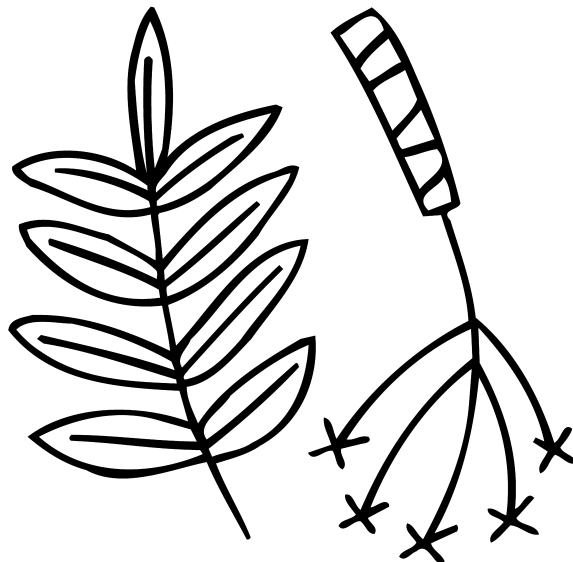
Now Jesus stood before the governor; and the governor asked him,

Pilate: Are you the King of the Jews?

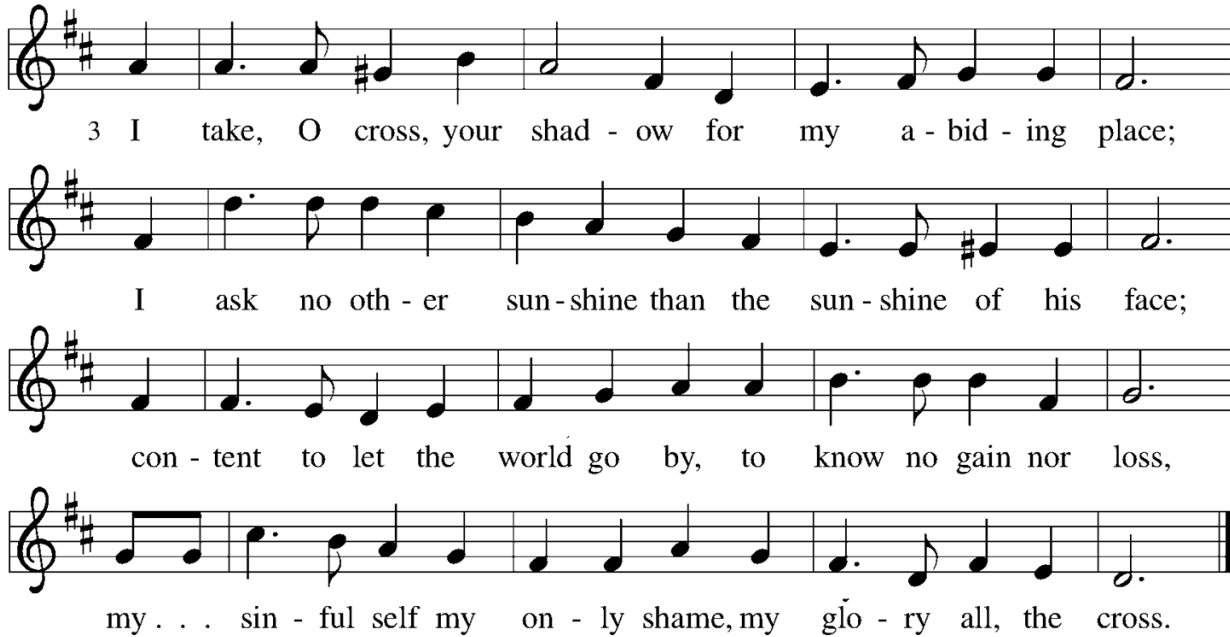
Narrator: Jesus said,

Jesus: You say so.

Narrator: But when he was accused by the chief priests and elders, he did not answer. Then Pilate said to him,
Pilate: Do you not hear how many accusations they make against you?
Narrator: But he gave him no answer, not even to a single charge, so that the governor was greatly amazed. Now at the festival the governor was accustomed to release a prisoner for the crowd, anyone whom they wanted. At that time they had a notorious prisoner, called Jesus Barabbas. So after they had gathered, Pilate said to them,
Pilate: Whom do you want me to release for you, Jesus Barabbas or Jesus who is called the Messiah?
Narrator: For he realized that it was out of jealousy that they had handed him over. While he was sitting on the judgment seat, his wife sent word to him, "Have nothing to do with that innocent man, for today I have suffered a great deal because of a dream about him." Now the chief priests and the elders persuaded the crowds to ask for Barabbas and to have Jesus killed. The governor again said to them,
Pilate: Which of the two do you want me to release for you?
Narrator: And they said,
People: Barabbas.
Narrator: Pilate said to them,
Pilate: Then what should I do with Jesus who is called the Messiah?
Narrator: All of them said,
People: Let him be crucified!
Narrator: Then he asked,
Pilate: Why, what evil has he done?
Narrator: But they shouted all the more,
People: Let him be crucified!
Narrator: So when Pilate saw that he could do nothing, but rather that a riot was beginning, he took some water and washed his hands before the crowd, saying,
Pilate: I am innocent of this man's blood; see to it yourselves.
Narrator: Then the people as a whole answered,
People: His blood be on us and on our children!
Narrator: So he released Barabbas for them; and after flogging Jesus, he handed him over to be crucified. Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the governor's headquarters, and they gathered the whole cohort around him. They stripped him and put a scarlet robe on him, and after twisting some thorns into a crown, they put it on his head. They put a reed in his right hand and knelt before him and mocked him, saying,
People: Hail, King of the Jews!
Narrator: They spat on him, and took the reed and struck him on the head. After mocking him, they stripped him of the robe and put his own clothes on him. Then they led him away to crucify him.



HYMN

"Beneath the Cross of Jesus"


3 I take, O cross, your shad - ow for my a - bid - ing place;
 I ask no oth - er sun - shine than the sun - shine of his face;
 con - tent to let the world go by, to know no gain nor loss,
 my . . . sin - ful self my on - ly shame, my glo - ry all, the cross.

Narrator: As they went out, they came upon a man from Cyrene named Simon; they compelled this man to carry his cross. And when they came to a place called Golgotha (which means Place of a Skull), they offered him wine to drink, mixed with gall; but when he tasted it, he would not drink it. And when they had crucified him, they divided his clothes among themselves by casting lots; then they sat down there and kept watch over him. Over his head they put the charge against him, which read, "This is Jesus, the King of the Jews." Then two bandits were crucified with him, one on his right and one on his left. Those who passed by derided him, shaking their heads and saying,

People: **You who would destroy the temple and build it in three days, save yourself! If you are the Son of God, come down from the cross.**

Narrator: In the same way the chief priests also, along with the scribes and elders, were mocking him, saying,

People: **He saved others; he cannot save himself. He is the King of Israel; let him come down from the cross now, and we will believe in him. He trusts in God; let God deliver him now, if he wants to; for he said, "I am God's Son."**

Narrator: The bandits who were crucified with him also taunted him in the same way. From noon on, darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon. And about three o'clock Jesus cried with a loud voice,

Jesus: Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?

Narrator: That is, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" When some of the bystanders heard it, they said,

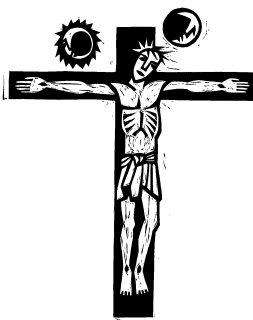
People: **This man is calling for Elijah.**

Narrator: At once one of them ran and got a sponge, filled it with sour wine, put it on a stick, and gave it to him to drink. But the others said,

People: **Wait, let us see whether Elijah will come to save him.**

Narrator: Then Jesus cried again with a loud voice and breathed his last.

(We STAND in silence. After the sounding of 7 chimes, the passion concludes:)



Narrator: At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. The earth shook, and the rocks were split. The tombs also were opened, and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised. After his resurrection they came out of the tombs and entered the holy city and appeared to many. Now when the centurion and those with him, who were keeping watch over Jesus, saw the earthquake and what took place, they were terrified and said,

People: Truly this man was God's Son!

Narrator: Many women were also there, looking on from a distance; they had followed Jesus from Galilee and had provided for him. Among them were Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James and Joseph, and the mother of the sons of Zebedee.

When it was evening, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who was also a disciple of Jesus. He went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus; then Pilate ordered it to be given to him. So Joseph took the body and wrapped it in a clean linen cloth and laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn in the rock. He then rolled a great stone to the door of the tomb and went away. Mary Magdalene and the other Mary were there, sitting opposite the tomb. The next day, that is, after the day of Preparation, the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered before Pilate and said,

People: Sir, we remember what that impostor said while he was still alive, "After three days I will rise again." Therefore command the tomb to be made secure until the third day; otherwise his disciples may go and steal him away, and tell the people, "He has been raised from the dead," and the last deception would be worse than the first.

Narrator: Pilate said to them,

Pilate: You have a guard of soldiers; go, make it as secure as you can.

Narrator: So they went with the guard and made the tomb secure by sealing the stone.

APOSTLES' CREED

People: I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

BLESSING

Pastor: God, who fills the creation with abundance, Christ, who spreads his arms in forgiveness, Holy Spirit, who draws ever near to us, ✝ bless you and bring you to life everlasting.

People: Amen.



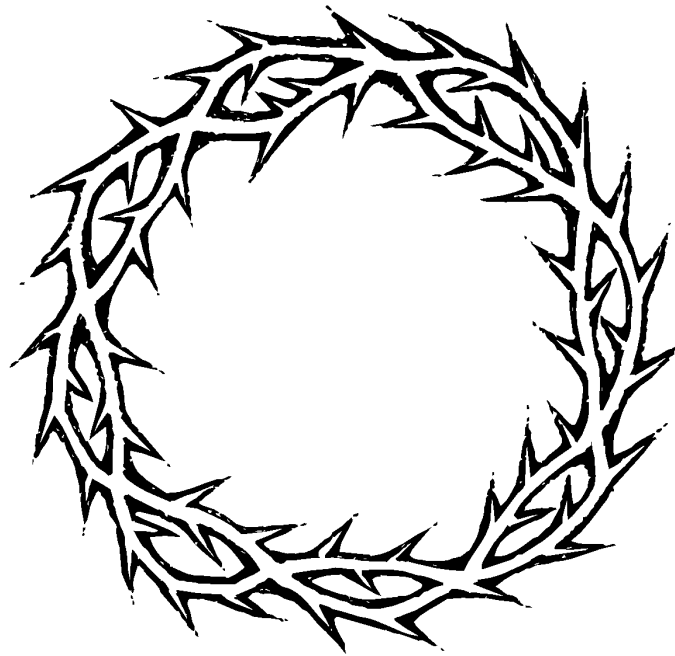
May we ev - er fol - low Je - sus With a stum - bling or a
Echo

4
song Let us ev - er fol - low Je - sus May we fol - low
Echo

8
Let us fol - low — May we fol - low
Echo
fol - low Let us fol low — May we

12
All: Bear the cross and jour - ney on.
Echo
fol - low

WE DEPART IN SILENCE





Seasonal Emphasis

"If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross & follow me." Mark 8:34

PALM SUNDAY/SUNDAY OF THE PASSION:

Enter the Story

Annually the church the world over traces Jesus' "triumphal entry" into the city of Jerusalem. A donkey and colt symbolize Jesus' rule, humble and lowly. Nothing is shaped as expected, yet everything is as needed. To enter the scene, we'll use many senses.

Listen! The braying of humble animals mixes sweetly with boisterous shouts of praise: "Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest heaven!" (Matt. 21:9).

Smell! People young and old, doves and goats, spices and spring blooms. The crowd is filled with the scents of fishing nets and barns, of vineyards and hostels.

Open-eyed, look around! See colorful cloaks and branches spread on the ground, creating a pathway for the donkey and its rider. See children hoisted above their elders, each straining to catch sight of Jesus, on whom all their hopes are pinned for a better life and a lovelier world.

This Holy Week, we are invited to enter into the story with senses newly awakened. As you listen to the gospel today, what do you hear that you've never heard before? What parts of the narrative come to life that in earlier years you may have missed? Today as you wave a palm and perhaps join in a procession, can you imagine yourself in the crowd that surrounded Jesus?

Are you asking anything of the people beside you? Do you know the dreams of freedom dear to them? Have you shared your hopes for a better world rooted in Jesus' way of humility? Are you willing to risk making something of a scene today, in ways that might attract some attention, prompting neighbors to echo the question in Jerusalem so long ago when "the whole city was in turmoil, asking, 'Who is this?'" (Matt. 21:10). Then, in words and actions may we all respond that the one at our center is "the prophet Jesus from Nazareth in Galilee" (Matt. 11:11).

