

Smithfield & Carman Email Service

April 5, 2020

Palm Sunday



*"Welcome to our email service this week"*

*May the light of Christ be in our midst  
as we welcome the sounds of "Hosanna"  
May the Spirit of God dwell in our hearts  
during these times.*

**Opening Prayer:**

**God of all creation, you are love.  
In joyful times, in excited times...  
in times of sadness, in times of fear ..  
you are the love that holds us.  
Wherever we are in the crowd  
walking beside Jesus,  
waving and shouting from the sidelines,  
or watching from today's isolation,  
help us to remember we are not alone.**

**Hymn: Hosanna, Loud Hosanna**

***Hosanna, loud hosanna  
the happy 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.***

**Scripture: Luke 19: 29-44**

When he had come near Bethphage and Bethany, at the place called the Mount of Olives, he sent two of the disciples, saying, "Go into the village ahead of you, and as you enter it you will find tied there a colt that has never been ridden. Untie it and bring it here. If anyone asks you, 'Why are you untying it?'

just say this, 'The Lord needs it.'" So those who were sent departed and found it as he had told them. As they were untying the colt, its owners asked them, "Why are you untying the colt?" They said, "The Lord needs it." Then they brought it to Jesus; and after throwing their cloaks on the colt, they set Jesus on it. As he rode along, people kept spreading their cloaks on the road. As he was now approaching the path down from the Mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to praise God joyfully with a loud voice for all the deeds of power that they had seen, saying,

"Blessed is the king  
who comes in the name of the Lord!  
Peace in heaven,  
and glory in the highest heaven!"

Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to him, "Teacher, order your disciples to stop." He answered, "I tell you, if these were silent, the stones would shout out."

As he came near and saw the city, he wept over it, saying, "If you, even you, had only recognized on this day the things that make for peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes. Indeed, the days will come upon you, when your enemies will set up ramparts around you and surround you, and hem you in on every side. They will crush you to the ground, you and your children within you, and they will not leave within you one stone upon another; because you did not recognize the time of your visitation from God."

### **Reflection:**

This morning our story takes us just outside Jerusalem, with Jesus and his disciples, early on a Sunday morning. Jesus sent two of us into town saying we would find a donkey's colt tied to a tree, which we should untie and bring back to him. And, well, if anyone asked to simply say, "The Master needs it."

The colt of course didn't have a saddle, so we took our coats and put them on the donkey, and lifted Jesus up onto it. So now we walk with him. At first it's quiet with the only sound of the hooves clomping on the road, and the wind through the olive trees.

Up ahead a crowd is gathering, children are shouting, palm branches are waving, people are laying their coats on the dusty road, making a multicolor carpet, as if Jesus is a king.

As the crowd increases we too start to shout and sing,

*“Hosanna to the Son of David!  
Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord!*

But not everyone is joining us, for the Pharisees in the crowd were uncomfortable, as they rush toward Jesus warning him this is dangerous. They are worried that Jesus being seen as a king will start a revolutionary act that might bring the Roman soldiers, killing everyone in the name of law and order. Yet, Jesus refuses to be silenced saying: *“If these were silent, the stones would shout out.*

So our parade continues, and we shout louder than before, and as we round a bend, we see Jerusalem spread before us, with the Temple glistening in the sun. It is a sight that has choked up many a traveller.

But Jesus doesn't get choked up, he begins to weep. The crowd gathers around him as he begins to speak to Jerusalem, saying through tears, *“If you, even you, had only recognized on this day the things that make for peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes. Indeed, the days will come upon you, when your enemies will set up ramparts around you and surround you, and hem you in on every side. They will crush you to the ground, you and your children within you, and they will not leave within you one stone upon another; because you did not recognize the time of your visitation from God.”*

What a shock! Going from a shouting, celebrating crowd to the sound of Jesus weeping! From joyful laughter to tears.

As we descend toward Jerusalem, each of us also descends into our own thoughts, whispering among ourselves about what is happening. One of us reminds us of the words from the prophet Zechariah....

*“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.”*

A shiver of recognition runs through us. “What comes next what did Zachariah say after that?” one of us asks.....

*“He will cut off the chariot from Ephraim and the warhorse from Jerusalem.  
The bow used in battle will be cut off; he will speak peace to the nations.  
His rule will stretch from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the Earth.”*

Suddenly we feel the full drama of this moment, as we recall another parade on the other side of Jerusalem when Herod rides into the city in full procession. Yet Herod does not ride on a donkey but a mighty warhorse, in the name of Caesar, not in the name of the Lord. He is not surrounded by a ragtag crowd holding palm branches and waving their coats, but surrounded by chariots, accompanied by uniformed soldiers with swords and spears. A military procession full of force intended to stir fear and obedience not hope and joy.

And so the meaning of this day begins to become clear to us.

Caesar’s kingdom rules by fear, with threats of violence, demanding submission.  
God’s kingdom rules by faith with a promise of peace, and joy.

Jesus’ tears are telling us that he knows our leaders aren’t going to listen to him.

Well.... it has been quite a day, certainly a Sunday we will never forget .... and certainly the beginning of a week we’ll never forget.

*What a mix of emotions!*

*What a collection of dramatic events!*

As we fall asleep we ponder: to be alive is to learn what makes for peace

It’s not weapons, more threats, more fear.

It’s more faith, more freedom, more hope, more love, more joy.

*Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord!      Amen*

**Hymn: Glory, Laud and Honour**

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

**Prayers for ourselves and others:**

God of all hopefulness,  
on this holy day of Palms and Passions,  
and through this the holiest of weeks,  
when our Lenten journey finds its completion  
through pain, sorrow  
despair, illness  
losses of all kinds,  
through fear,  
anger and hatred,  
we bring You the needs of our world.  
We bring You all those involved in any way  
with this virus as we keep them in our prayers.  
May they find courage and strength.  
May they find grace and wisdom.  
We pray for the church and for all faith communities,  
We pray for ourselves, as we too deal with the uncertainties  
during these times.  
We bring you the needs of ourselves and our loved ones,  
seeking Your peace and healing, Your wisdom and protection.

Hear us, O God, and come to us  
in compassion and love. Rescue and restore us,  
to bring healing of the human spirit to our broken world.  
as we pray in your name ....  
Our Father ....  
Amen.

### **Commissioning and Benediction**

**The God who rejoiced with Jesus during  
the Palm Sunday parade, remains with us.**

**The God who stayed with Jesus while  
on the cross stays with us in these uncertain times.**

**As Holy Week begins,  
may we ever look for the resurrection.  
for we are not alone.**

**Go in quiet hope.**

**Go in the love of God    Amen**

***May God bless you all and keep you safe.***