



Birchcliff Bluffs United Church

Ministers: All the People – wherever and however they gather

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April 2, 2023

Palm Sunday

WE GATHER AS GOD'S PEOPLE

Prelude

Lighting the Christ Candle

Crowds of people lined the streets to welcome Jesus from Nazareth riding into town on a donkey.

On the other side of Jerusalem, others went to see a proper military parade.

They watched Pontius Pilate riding on a war horse accompanied by battle-hardened foot soldiers.

They were the enemy, impressive and fearful.

At the Jesus parade, people shouted, 'Hosanna, save us we pray.'

Save us from the Romans who rule over us.

Save us that we may live in peace, with dignity.

We shout, we pray, we wait.

When will the day of God's kingdom come?

Call to Worship

In the beginning was the Word and the Word was God.

His light shines in the midst of chaos. Stay with us through these difficult times.

Comfort us as we pray for the world to come. Amen.

Response

Filled With Excitement

Filled with excitement all the happy throng
Spread cloaks and branches on the city streets
There in the distance they begin to see
Riding on a donkey comes the Son of God

From every corner a thousand voices sing
Praises to Him who comes in the Name of God
With one great shout of acclamation
Loud triumphant song breaks forth
Hosanna, hosanna to the King
Hosanna, hosanna to the King
Hosanna, hosanna to the King
Hosanna, hosanna to the King

Opening Prayer

O God, who rules over the universe, do not let the fools of this world destroy your world.

Do not let them gloat over you and us. Do not let them have the last say. May your will be done and may justice and peace prevail. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

Land Acknowledgement

We now take a moment to acknowledge the sacred land beside the water on which Birchcliff Bluffs United Church stands. It has been a site of human activity for many thousands of years. This land is the territory of the Huron-Wendat and Petun First Nations, the Seneca, and most recently the Mississaugas of the Credit and Scugog, all part of the Williams Treaty. We are grateful for the opportunity to live and work on this territory and we seek to be mindful of broken covenants and the need to strive to make right with all our relations.

Opening Hymn

Hosanna, Loud Hosanna

VU 123

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.

From Olivet they followed 'mid an exultant crowd,
the victory palm branch waving, and singing clear and loud;
the Lord of earth and heaven rode on in lowly state,
content that little children should on his bidding wait.

'Hosanna in the highest!' That ancient song we sing,
for Christ is our Redeemer; earth, let your anthems ring.
O may we ever praise him with heart and life and voice,
and in his humble presence eternally rejoice!

Life and Work of the Church

Scripture Psalm 31:9-16

⁹ Be merciful to me, LORD, for I am in distress;
my eyes grow weak with sorrow,
my soul and body with grief.

¹⁰ **My life is consumed by anguish
and my years by groaning;
my strength fails because of my affliction,^[a]
and my bones grow weak.**

¹¹ Because of all my enemies,
I am the utter contempt of my neighbors
and an object of dread to my closest friends—
those who see me on the street flee from me.

**¹² I am forgotten as though I were dead;
I have become like broken pottery.**

¹³ For I hear many whispering,
“Terror on every side!”
They conspire against me
and plot to take my life.

**¹⁴ But I trust in you, LORD;
I say, “You are my God.”**

¹⁵ My times are in your hands;
deliver me from the hands of my enemies,
from those who pursue me.

**¹⁶ Let your face shine on your servant;
save me in your unfailing love.**

Gospel Matthew 21:1-11 Jesus enters Jerusalem

21 As they approached Jerusalem and came to Bethphage on the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two disciples, ² saying 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.

³ If anyone says anything to you, say that the Lord needs them, and he will send them right away.”

⁴ This 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]

⁶ The disciples went and did as Jesus had instructed them.

⁷ They brought the donkey and the colt and placed their cloaks on them for Jesus to sit on.

⁸ A very large crowd spread their cloaks on the road, while others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road.

⁹ The crowds that went ahead of him and those that followed shouted,

“Hosanna^[b] to the Son of David!”

“Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!”^[c]

“Hosanna^[d] in the highest heaven!”

¹⁰ When Jesus entered Jerusalem, the whole city was stirred and asked, “Who is this?”

¹¹ The crowds answered, “This is Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth in Galilee.”

The Word of God for the people of God.

Thanks be to God!

Hymn

He Came Riding On a Donkey

VU 124

1 He came riding on a donkey,
he came riding into town;
slow and easy kind of lowly
he came riding with the dawn.

His disciples walked beside him,
staying close, a little shy;
not too sure where he would guide them,
on to live or on to die.

But all the morning sang his praises;
waking birds and dancing wind;
here he is, the Son of David;
riding on to take his throne.

2 Then the children gathered, singing
shouts of laughter, bursting cheer;
in the streets their song was ringing,
'Hosannas' filled the morning air.

Timid adults strained to see him,
caught the Spirit, joined the song;
spread their cloaks along before him,
branches flashing in the sun.

So all the city sang his praises;
waking streets and dancing crowd;
here he is, the Son of David;
our Messiah, Son of God.

3 In our fasting, and our feasting,
called to follow in his way;
called to walk his road to Easter,
called to live his cross today.

Hosanna to the Son of David,
hosanna in the heavens above;
blessed is he who comes to save us,
blessed is he who brings his love.
Let us join to sing his praises;
open hearts and souls to God;
he is with us, Son of David;
God's Messiah, Christ the Lord.

Sermon Flash Mob

Hymn

When His Salvation Bringing

1 When his salvation bringing,
to Zion Jesus came,
the children all stood singing
hosannas to his name:
nor did their zeal offend him,
but as he rode along,
he let them still attend him,
and smiled to hear their song.

2 And since our God retaineth
his love for children still,
though now above he reigneth
on Zion's heav'nly hill,
we'll flock around his banner
who sits upon his throne,
and cry aloud, "Hosanna
to David's royal Son!"

3 For should we fail proclaiming
our great Redeemer's praise,
the stones, our silence shaming,
would their hosannas raise.
But shall we only render
the tribute of our words?
No, while our hearts are tender,
they too shall be our God's.

Offering

Memories of the past can sometimes confuse us clouding our experience of love.

With the desire that others may know the blessing of a loving connection, we bring our offerings, celebrating the support God gives us when we ask. Amen.

Prayers of the People

Loving creator of all that is, we know our need to be in this place and we are thankful that you meet us here.

We want to know more of your love for us. We need to feel the strength of those who have gone before and whose presence surrounds us now. We want to find the courage to live our lives fully, we want to see your presence in our quiet places, we want. As we go into this holy week, help us to recognize your place is the story. Help us to be one with Jesus, sharing his pain and sorrow ...

We now take a moment to remember those we keep in our prayers.

**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.**

BLESSING AND SENDING FORTH

Closing Hymn

And On This Path

MV 8

And on this path, the gates of holiness are open wide (x3)
Open wide! Open wide! Open wide!
The gates are open wide!

So enter in, the gates of holiness are open wide (x3)
Open wide! Open wide! Open wide!
The gates are open wide!

And on this path, the gates of holiness are open wide (x3)
Open wide! Open wide! Open wide!
The gates are open wide!

Benediction & Commissioning

As we go forth on this Palm Sunday, help us to hear the voices that call us to be unconditionally loving. Go with God, Jesus, the Holy Spirit and know you are never alone.

Amen.

Postlude

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Birchcliff Bluffs United Church
Additional Lectionary

Psalm 118:1-2 **New Revised Standard Version Updated Edition**

A Song of Victory

¹ O give thanks to the LORD, for he is good;
his steadfast love endures forever!

² Let Israel say,
“His steadfast love endures forever.”

Psalm 118:19-29

New Revised Standard Version Updated Edition

¹⁹ Open to me the gates of righteousness,
that I may enter through them
and give thanks to the LORD.

²⁰ This is the gate of the LORD;
the righteous shall enter through it.

²¹ I thank you that you have answered me
and have become my salvation.

²² The stone that the builders rejected
has become the chief cornerstone.

²³ This is the LORD’s doing;
it is marvelous in our eyes.

²⁴ This is the day that the LORD has made;
let us rejoice and be glad in it.^[a]

²⁵ Save us, we beseech you, O LORD!
O LORD, we beseech you, give us success!

²⁶ Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the LORD.^[b]
We bless you from the house of the LORD.

²⁷ The LORD is God,
and he has given us light.

Bind the festal procession with branches,
up to the horns of the altar.^[c]

²⁸ You are my God, and I will give thanks to you;
you are my God; I will extol you.

²⁹ O give thanks to the LORD, for he is good,
for his steadfast love endures forever.

Isaiah 50:4-9

New Revised Standard Version Updated Edition

The Servant's Humiliation and Vindication

⁴ The Lord GOD has given me
a trained tongue,^[a]
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.
⁵ The Lord GOD has opened my ear,
and I was not rebellious;
I did not turn backward.
⁶ 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.
⁷ 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;
⁸ he who vindicates me is near.
Who will contend with me?
Let us stand in court together.
Who are my adversaries?
Let them confront me.
⁹ It is the Lord GOD who helps me;
who will declare me guilty?
All of them will wear out like a garment;
the moth will eat them up.

Philippians 2:5-11

New Revised Standard Version Updated Edition

⁵ Let the same mind be in you that was^[a] in Christ Jesus,
⁶ who, though he existed in the form of God,
did not regard equality with God
as something to be grasped,
⁷ but emptied himself,
taking the form of a slave,
assuming human likeness.

And being found in appearance as a human,
8 he humbled himself
and became obedient to the point of death—
even death on a cross.

9 Therefore God exalted him even more highly
and gave him the name
that is above every other name,
10 so that at the name given to Jesus
every knee should bend,
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,
11 and every tongue should confess
that Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father.

Matthew 26:14-27 **New Revised Standard Version Updated Edition**

Judas Agrees to Betray Jesus

14 Then one of the twelve, who was called Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests ¹⁵ and said, “What will you give me if I betray him to you?” They paid him thirty pieces of silver. ¹⁶ And from that moment he began to look for an opportunity to betray him.

The Passover with the Disciples

17 On the first day of Unleavened Bread the disciples came to Jesus, saying, “Where do you want us to make the preparations for you to eat the Passover?” ¹⁸ He said, “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.’ ” ¹⁹ So the disciples did as Jesus had directed them, and they prepared the Passover meal.

20 When it was evening, he took his place with the twelve disciples, ^[a] ²¹ and while they were eating he said, “Truly I tell you, one of you will betray me.” ²² And they became greatly distressed and began to say to him one after another, “Surely not I, Lord?” ²³ He answered, “The one who has dipped his hand into the bowl with me will betray me. ²⁴ 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.” ²⁵ Judas, who betrayed him, said, “Surely not I, Rabbi?” He replied, “You have said so.”

The Institution of the Lord’s Supper

26 While they were eating, Jesus took a loaf of bread, and after blessing it ^[b] he broke it, gave it to the disciples, and said, “Take, eat; this is my body.” ²⁷ Then he took a cup, and after giving thanks he gave it to them, saying, “Drink from it, all of you,

Matthew 26:66 **New Revised Standard Version Updated Edition**

⁶⁶ What do you think?” They answered, “He deserves death.”

Pilate Questions Jesus

¹¹ Now Jesus stood before the governor, and the governor asked him, “Are you the king of the Jews?” Jesus said, “You say so.” ¹² But when he was accused by the chief priests and elders, he did not answer. ¹³ Then Pilate said to him, “Do you not hear how many accusations they make against you?” ¹⁴ But he gave him no answer, not even to a single charge, so that the governor was greatly amazed.

Barabbas or Jesus?

¹⁵ Now at the festival the governor was accustomed to release a prisoner for the crowd, anyone whom they wanted. ¹⁶ At that time they had a notorious prisoner called Jesus^[a] Barabbas. ¹⁷ So after they had gathered, Pilate said to them, “Whom do you want me to release for you, Jesus^[b] Barabbas or Jesus who is called the Messiah?”^[c] ¹⁸ For he realized that it was out of jealousy that they had handed him over. ¹⁹ 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.” ²⁰ Now the chief priests and the elders persuaded the crowds to ask for Barabbas and to have Jesus killed. ²¹ The governor again said to them, “Which of the two do you want me to release for you?” And they said, “Barabbas.” ²² Pilate said to them, “Then what should I do with Jesus who is called the Messiah?”^[d] All of them said, “Let him be crucified!” ²³ Then he asked, “Why, what evil has he done?” But they shouted all the more, “Let him be crucified!”

Pilate Hands Jesus Over to Be Crucified

²⁴ 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, “I am innocent of this man’s blood;^[e] see to it yourselves.” ²⁵ Then the people as a whole answered, “His blood be on us and on our children!” ²⁶ So he released Barabbas for them, and after flogging Jesus he handed him over to be crucified.

The Soldiers Mock Jesus

²⁷ Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the governor’s headquarters,^[f] and they gathered the whole cohort around him. ²⁸ They stripped him and put a scarlet robe on him, ²⁹ 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, “Hail, King of the Jews!” ³⁰ They spat on him and took the reed and struck him on the head. ³¹ After mocking him, they stripped him of the robe and put his own clothes on him. Then they led him away to crucify him.

The Crucifixion of Jesus

³² As they went out, they came upon a man from Cyrene named Simon; they compelled this man to carry his cross. ³³ And when they came to a place called Golgotha (which means Place of a Skull), ³⁴ they offered him wine to drink, mixed with gall, but when he tasted it, he would not drink it. ³⁵ And when they had crucified him, they divided his clothes among themselves by casting lots;^[g] ³⁶ then they sat down there and kept watch over him. ³⁷ Over his head they put the charge against him, which read, “This is Jesus, the King of the Jews.”

³⁸ Then two rebels were crucified with him, one on his right and one on his left. ³⁹ Those who passed by derided^[h] him, shaking their heads ⁴⁰ and saying, “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.” ⁴¹ In the same way the chief priests also, along with the scribes and elders, were mocking him, saying, ⁴² “He saved others; he cannot save himself.^[i] He is the King of Israel; let him come down from the cross now, and we will believe in him. ⁴³ He trusts in God; let God deliver him now, if he wants to, for he said, ‘I am God’s Son.’ ” ⁴⁴ The rebels who were crucified with him also taunted him in the same way.

The Death of Jesus

⁴⁵ From noon on, darkness came over the whole land^[j] until three in the afternoon. ⁴⁶ And about three o’clock Jesus cried with a loud voice, “Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?” that is, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” ⁴⁷ When some of the bystanders heard it, they said, “This man is calling for Elijah.” ⁴⁸ 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. ⁴⁹ But the others said, “Wait, let us see whether Elijah will come to save him.”^[k] ⁵⁰ Then Jesus cried again with a loud voice and breathed his last.^[l] ⁵¹ At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. The earth shook, and the rocks were split. ⁵² The tombs also were opened, and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised. ⁵³ After his resurrection they came out of the tombs and entered the holy city and appeared to many. ⁵⁴ 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, “Truly this man was God’s Son!”^[m]