



seeking: Where are you headed?

April 2, 2023

*An asterisk * invites you to stand in body or in spirit, and you are invited to read aloud responses found in **bold**.*

We welcome you to First Lutheran Church!

Palm Sunday

The Prelude sets the tone for our Palm Sunday processional: "All glory, laud, and honor!"

Prelude — "Improvisation for Palm Sunday"

Alexander Guilmant

*Proclamation

Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Most High.
Hosanna in the highest!

*Processional Gospel — Matthew 21:1-11

The holy gospel according to Matthew, the 21st chapter.
Glory to you, O God.

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 Most High!

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 Jesus.

Praise to you, O Christ.

*Children's Sermon

*Proclamation

Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Most High.
Hosanna in the highest!

During the Procession, all are invited to join in the parade around the Sanctuary. Take your bulletin with you and join the choir on the chorus of the hymn, or remain in your seat and sing along with the full hymn in the hymnal!

*Procession of Palms

*Processional Hymn — no. 344

“All Glory, Laud, and Honor”

Refrain

The musical notation consists of two staves of music in common time, treble clef, and a key signature of one flat. The first staff begins with a dotted half note followed by eighth notes. The second staff begins with a quarter note followed by eighth notes. The lyrics "All glo - ry, laud, and hon - or to you, re-deem - er, king," are written below the first staff, and "to whom the lips of chil - dren made sweet ho - san - nas ring." are written below the second staff.

*Palm Sunday Litany

- | | |
|--|-----------------------------------|
| A: Where is he going? | D: Should we follow? |
| B: Isn't he from Nazareth? | A: Should we watch? |
| C: Can anything good come from Nazareth? | B: Should we sing, “Hosanna”? |
| D: Is he headed to Jerusalem? | C: Stay awake! |
| A: Do you think Jerusalem is safe? | A: He's on the move. |
| B: Does he know that Pilate is here? | B: Where is he going? |
| C: Where is he going? | C: Listen. |
| D: Does he know the city is dangerous? | D: Where is he going? |
| A: Does he see the Pharisees watching? | A: Watch. |
| B: Is this the one we've been waiting for? | B: Where is he going? |
| C: Could this be the Messiah? | C: Stay close. |
| D: Where is he going? | D: Where is he going? |
| A: The crowds are singing, “Hosanna!” | A: Sing, “Hosanna.” |
| B: Should I lay down my cloak? | All voices: Hosanna! Amen! |
| C: Is this the beginning of the end? | |

*Prayer of the Day

May God be with you. And also with you. Let us pray.

Holy God, sometimes it's hard to hear you over the hosannas. Sometimes it's hard to hear you over the noise of city streets. Sometimes it's hard to hear you over our racing thoughts, our mental to-do lists, or our desire to fit in. Sometimes it is hard to hear you in this noisy world. So just as you stopped traffic in Jerusalem, stop traffic here. Pause the rush. Open the gates. Dwell among us, until your Word is all we can hear. We are listening. We are laying down our cloaks. Amen.

Our children aid in our worship as they sing about Jesus and his entrance into Jerusalem!

Offering of Our Gifts

Music at the Offering

“Look Who’s Coming”

Michael Bedford

Youth Choir, Sarah Chambers, director
Brenda McHugh, piano; David Marlow, trumpet

*Offering Prayer

A: God of goodness and growth, all creation is yours, and your faithfulness is sure. Receive the gifts we bring, and nourish us to proclaim your abiding love in our communities and in the world, through Jesus Christ, our strength and our song. Amen.

The Passion of Christ

as told from the gospel of Matthew

We turn to Matthew's gospel to hear his account of Jesus' last night with his disciples and his arrest, sentencing, and execution. Throughout the telling of this story, elements of our congregation's typical worship order appear in different places to highlight the experiences of Jesus and his followers.

*The Passover and The Last Supper – Matthew 26:14-29

*Communion Prayers

P: Our seeking does not go unanswered, and for that we are grateful. As we see and as we seek, pour out your Spirit on this ordinary bread and cup. May this meal be the nourishment we need to continue seeking you in the world.

Until your promised day, we will pray. Until your promised day, we will seek, singing:

*Lord's Prayer — pg. 163, front of hymnal

*Invitation to the Table

P: Friends, if your seeking has led you here, if your weary heart followed breadcrumbs all the way to this sanctuary, then I have good news: you do not have to seek anymore.

This table is God's Table. So if you came here looking for justice, then rest in the comfort that all will be fed here. If you came seeking beauty, then let your spirit marvel at the beauty of a community coming together. If you came seeking a brush with the Divine, then know that God is present in this ordinary meal. So kick off your walking shoes. Let your weary heart stop the search. We are standing on holy ground. This is God's Table. All are invited. Come.

At the start of our Holy Week, we expand our liturgy to include this sung plainchant setting of the Lord's Prayer, found in the front section of the hymnal.

We observe continuous communion this morning. During this time, you are invited into meditation as we sing these repetitive Taizé refrains.

This hymn central to Holy Week is broken into three sections throughout the service.

Distribution of Communion

Canticle — pg. 164, front of hymnal

“Lamb of God”

Hymn — no. 472

“Eat This Bread”

Hymn — no. 642

“Ubi Caritas”

Hymn — no. 262

“Wait for the Lord”

Prayer After Communion

P: God of manna and mustard seeds, we came to this Table hungry and we leave feeling full—full of hope, full of promise, full of what could be. May we always seek you the way you seek after us. With grateful hearts we pray, amen.

Peter's Denial Foretold – Matthew 26:30-35

Response — no. 349, Stanzas 1 & 2

“Ah, Holy Jesus”

Setting by John Ferguson

Stanza 1: All Stanza 2: Low Voices

Jesus Prays in Gethsemane – Matthew 26:36-46

***Response — Prayers of Intercession**

You are welcomed and encouraged to sing the melody line or to join the choir in harmonizing.

After each petition and at the close, "Stay with Me" will be sung one time.

The musical notation consists of two staves. The top staff is in G major with a common time signature. It features a melody line with quarter notes and eighth notes, accompanied by a harmonic bass line. The lyrics "Stay with me, re - main here with me, watch and" are written below the melody line. The bottom staff is in G major with a common time signature, showing a harmonic bass line. The lyrics "pray. Watch and pray." are written below the bass line. The music concludes with a final section where the bass line continues while the melody line is absent.

***Prayers of Intercession**

A: Sustained by God's abundant mercy, let us pray for the church, the world, and all of creation.

Save your creation, O God. Every living being you have made has purpose. Give us renewed appreciation of wild animals that are vital to our ecosystem, service animals who accompany their human companions, and beloved pets who live alongside us. Hear us as we pray:

Save the peoples of the earth, O God. Restore dignity to those who are scorned and persecuted for their religious beliefs or political activism, and deliver them from the hand of their enemies. Bring peace to places of conflict and strife. Hear us as we pray:

Save those who cry to you in any need, O God. Watch over all who are incarcerated or awaiting trial, and stand with those who are unjustly accused. Be present with those feeling isolated, lonely, or fearful. Hear us as we pray:

Save us at the last, O God. We give you thanks for your saints of old who embodied your servant love. As you came to their aid, so deliver us in times of trial, that every knee would bend in praise to you. Hear us as we pray:

We lift our prayers to you, O God, trusting in your steadfast love and your promise to renew your whole creation; through Jesus Christ our Savior. **Amen.**

The Betrayal & Arrest – Matthew 26:47-56

Response — no. 349, Stanzas 3 & 4

"Ah, Holy Jesus"
Setting by John Ferguson
Stanza 3: High Voices Stanza 2: Choir

Jesus Before the High Priest – Matthew 26:57-68

Affirmation of Faith

P: You are invited to share in this affirmation of faith:

We believe in a God who walks headfirst into the world's suffering,

who lights a candle in the darkest night,

who pulls back the curtain so we can see the stars.

We believe in a God who does not shy away from the truth,

who is bold in seeking justice, and humble in taking power.

We believe in a God who sees our hurt and wraps love around it,

cocooning us in hope, tethering us to one another.

We believe in a God who is always carrying us

from the pain of the world into the hope of a new day.

That is where God is headed. That is where we follow. May it be so. Amen.

***Peter's Denial – Matthew 26:69-75**

***Confession and Forgiveness**

For today's prayer of confession we are going to recall the start of worship and read the Palm Sunday story together. As we read through the story, we will pause to admit the places where we so often and so easily could change the narrative. So read with me, trusting that no matter what we do or don't do, this story ends with love. Let us pray:

As they approached Jerusalem, entering Beth-Phage at the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent off two disciples with the instructions, "Go into the village straight ahead of you, and immediately you will find a tethered donkey and her colt standing beside her. Untie them and lead them back to me. If anyone questions you, say, 'The Rabbi needs them.' Then they will let them go at once."

God, forgive us for the times when we do not trust your word and do not follow where you lead. We long to be the ones who can go into the village ahead of you. Forgive us when we play it safe.

This came about to fulfill what was said through the prophet,

"Tell the daughter of Zion,

'Your sovereign comes to you without display riding on a donkey, on a colt — the foal of a beast of burden.'

God, forgive us for forgetting that you are always coming toward us. You are drawing near, like a ruler on a donkey. Help us find you in our midst.

So the disciples went off and did what Jesus had ordered. They brought the donkey and her colt, and after they laid their cloaks on the animals, Jesus mounted and rode toward the city. Great crowds of people spread their cloaks on the road, while some began to cut branches from the trees and lay them along the path.

Creator God, forgive us for the moments when we choose greed over generosity, or when we choose our self-image over our loyalty to you. Give us the courage to be unabashed in our faith. Give us the strength to throw our coats on the road.

This telling of Jesus' entry into Jerusalem will sound slightly different; we now hear from the Inclusive Translation.

The crowds — those who went in front of Jesus and those who followed — were all shouting,

“Hosanna to the Heir to the House of David!
Blessed is the One who comes in the name of the Most High!
Hosanna in the highest!”

Son of David, give us the conviction to shout your name from the rooftop. Give us the wisdom to sing, “Hosanna!”

As Jesus entered Jerusalem, the whole city was stirred to its depths, demanding, “Who is this?” And the crowd kept answering, “This is the prophet Jesus, from Nazareth in Galilee.”

With hope in our hearts we pray to you, Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth in Galilee. Amen.

Family of faith, there will be days when we withhold our praise. There will be days when we dare not follow. There will be days when we ignore God’s call, when we choose comfort over courage, and ourselves over others. But even on those days, even on our worst days, we belong to God. Hear and believe the good news of the gospel: Nothing can separate us from God’s love. God embraces you with divine mercy, forgives you your sins in Christ’s name [☩], and revives you in the Spirit’s power.
We are loved, forgiven, and sent out to serve. Hosanna! Amen.

Judas – Matthew 27:1-10

Response — no. 349, Stanza 5

“Ah, Holy Jesus”

Setting by John Ferguson

Stanza 5: All Sing

Two musical meditations are offered after these portions of our reading; one is an arrangement of a familiar German chorale, and the other an African American spiritual (hymns 351 & 350).

The Trial – Matthew 27:11-26

Response — “O Sacred Head, Now Wounded”

Setting by Charles Callahan

Rebecca Carpenter, flute

The Crucifixion – Matthew 27:27-37

Response — “He Never Said a Mumbalin’ Word”

Setting by Hal Hopson

Sanctuary Choir

Like our communion time, we will sing this in a Taizé style, repeating this refrain many times. Commit it to memory. Sing with your eyes closed as we pray.

The Death – Matthew 27:38-61

Response — no. 616, sung several times

“Jesus, Remember Me”

A Reading from Paul’s letter to the Phillipians — Philippians 2:5-11

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.

Hear these words of old **as we seek to know God today.**

Choral Benediction — “O Come and Mourn with Me Awhile” Setting By Mark Sedio
Sanctuary Choir

*O come and mourn with me awhile; come, gather at the Savior's side;
in sorrow deep behold the Lamb; Jesus, our Love, is crucified.*

*Alone he takes on all our faults, and bears the pain of earthly pride.
Incarnate Word, begotten Son; Jesus, our Love, is crucified.*

*Come, ponder now this gracious act, God's own anointed, sanctified;
his dying words now take to heart; Jesus, our Love, is crucified.*

-Frederick W. Faber

***Blessing & Dismissal**

P: As you leave this place, may God bless you with seeking.
Seek out the hungry. Seek the weary. Seek the good in every person you pass.
Seek out the hopeful. Seek the faithful. Seek God in each of us.
As you seek and as you wonder, may you find what you are looking for.
A: In the name of our loving God, who is always seeking us, go now in peace. **Amen.**

*You are invited into a time of silent prayer and reflection in the Sanctuary.
Feel free to use the altar rail, and please depart in silence
to respect those remaining for meditation.*

You are invited to join us on Thursday at 7:00 p.m.

Acknowledgements

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Worship Assistants

Pastor: Chris Culuris

Director of Music: Emily Bruflat

Assisting Minister: Nancy Timm

Audio/Video: Rachel Ribar

Reader: Annalise Rivas

Ushers: Mike Stewart, John Nadeau, Tom

Thorkelson

Musicians: Sunday School Music, Sanctuary Choir;

Rebecca Carpenter, flute; David Marlow, trumpet

Communion Preparers: Banks Family

Communion Servers: John Bipes

Announcements

- Refreshments after worship today will be served by the Stewardship Committee.
- Please join us in the Dining Hall following worship today as we conclude our *Making Sense of Luther* series.
- Next Sunday, an Easter Sunday Continental Breakfast, hosted by the Fellowship Committee, will be offered in the Gathering Space beginning at 9:00am. Sweet rolls, fruit and beverages will be served. A free will donation will be collected.

Prayers

- We lift up prayers for those on our long-term list: Elgene Lund, Chuck Petry, Bob Cady, Joan Williams, Betty Gustafson, Glenn Stryker, Erika Schuldt, Ursula McRostie, Karen Wendroth, Allen Storkson, Gene Roemhildt, Karen Smithers, Paul Aasen, Shirley Storkson, Dorothy Lutz, Claire Cardwell, and Ella Twaddle.
- We pray for the family of Judy Mechura who died on March 17; she is the sister in law of Kathryn Christenson.
- We pray for those who mourn family and friends who have recently died.



Holy Week at First Lutheran 2023:

April 2, 10:00 a.m. - Palm/Passion Sunday

April 6, 7:00 p.m. - Maundy Thursday

April 7, 12:00 p.m. - Good Friday Organ Recital

April 7, 7:00 p.m. - Good Friday Service

April 8, 7:00 p.m. - Easter Vigil

April 9, 10:00 a.m. - Easter Sunday