

WORSHIP FOR SUNDAY, APRIL 10, 2022

Pacific Presbyterian Church and First Presbyterian Church of Union, Missouri

PALM/PASSION SUNDAY

GATHERING

PRELUDE

CALL TO WORSHIP

One: This is the day that God has made;
All: **let us rejoice and be glad in it.**
One: We come, thanking God for the gift of salvation.
All: **We come to praise God's marvelous works.**
One: God's steadfast love endures forever!
All: **Blessed is the one who comes in God's name.**

***OPENING HYMN** "Filled with Excitement" GtG 199

**1. Filled with excitement, all the happy throng
spread cloaks and branches on the city streets.
There in the distance they begin to see,
there on a donkey comes the Savior Christ.**

Refrain:

**From every corner a thousand voices sing
praise to the One who comes in the name of God.
Our acclamation breaks forth in shouts of praise,
our triumphant song of joy:
"Hosanna, hosanna to Christ!
Hosanna, hosanna to Christ!"**

**2. As in that entrance to Jerusalem,
hosannas we will sing to Jesus Christ,
to our Redeemer who still calls today,
asks us to follow with our love and faith.**

Refrain:

**From every corner a thousand voices sing
praise to the One who comes in the name of God.
Our acclamation breaks forth in shouts of praise,
our triumphant song of joy:**

**“Hosanna, hosanna to Christ!
Hosanna, hosanna to Christ!”**

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***UNISON PRAYER OF CONFESSION**

**Triumphant God,
we join the crowds of the ages in shouting your praises.
While our lips give you glory,
our lives seldom reflect your purposes.
We sing easily of your greatness
but living faithfully is often beyond us.
We hear of your salvation,
yet sin is still close and real,
daily leading us away from you.
Have mercy on us, O God.
Ride into our hearts with healing grace.
Forgive what we have done and direct who we shall be.
Renew us in love,
and teach us to live in a way
that brings honor and glory to your name;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

***SILENT CONFESSION**

***ASSURANCE OF PARDON**

One: Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord.
All: **Blessed is the one who comes with abundant grace and boundless mercy.**
One: Blessed is the one who has done for us
what we could never do for ourselves,
bringing us life and love forever and ever.
People of God, rejoice!
All: **In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven.**
One: As the Lord has forgiven us,
let us also forgive one another.

***THE PEACE**

One: The peace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.
All: **And also with you.**
(From your seat, a brief sign of peace may be shared: a wave of the hand, a nod of the head, etc.)

THE WORD

SCRIPTURE READINGS Luke 19:29-40 Colossians 3 (selected verses)

LUKE 19:29-38 (New Revised Standard Version)

²⁹ When he had come near Bethphage and Bethany, at the place called the Mount of Olives, he sent two of the disciples, ³⁰ 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. ³¹ If anyone asks you, "Why are you untying it?" just say this, "The Lord needs it." ³² So those who were sent departed and found it as he had told them. ³³ As they were untying the colt, its owners asked them, "Why are you untying the colt?" ³⁴ They said, "The Lord needs it." ³⁵ Then they brought it to Jesus; and after throwing their cloaks on the colt, they set Jesus on it. ³⁶ As he rode along, people kept spreading their cloaks on the road. ³⁷ 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, ³⁸ saying,

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

COLOSSIANS 3 (selected) (New Revised Standard Version)

¹ So if you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. ...

⁵ Put to death...whatever in you is earthly: fornication, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed (which is idolatry). ... ⁷ These are the ways you also once followed, when you were living that life. ⁸ But now you must get rid of all such things—anger, wrath, malice, slander, and abusive language from your mouth. ⁹ Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have stripped off the old self with its practices ¹⁰ and have clothed yourselves with the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge according to the image of its creator. ...

¹² As God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience. ¹³ Bear with one another and, if anyone has a complaint against another, forgive each other; just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. ¹⁴ Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. ¹⁵ ...let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one body. ... ¹⁶ Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly... ¹⁷ And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

SERMON by Pastor Bill Vincent

The first story we have in the Bible of coats – or clothes, or garments of any sort – is when Adam and Eve sew fig leaves together to hide their nakedness – to hide from God (Genesis 3:7). Of course, later on, God sews them clothes of animal hides, presumably to protect them from the elements, and not to ‘protect’ them from God (Genesis 3:21).

One of the more famous stories having to do with coats, or clothes, or garments, is of that famed “*coat of many colors*” (Genesis 37:3). Though the traditional rendering, that may not be the most accurate translation, for it’s not so simple a translation, as other translations have it as “long robe with sleeves” (NRSV, REB) or “decorated tunic” (NJB) or “richly ornamented robe” (NIV). Be that as it may, the coat signaled Jacob’s favoritism toward his young son, and served as a source of pride for that young son, Joseph – and a source of resentment for his brothers. And in the end, the coat, meant to indicate favor and elevate stature, ends up torn and blood-stained.

Funny thing about coats, clothes, garments. They serve such a variety of purposes: to protect and keep warm; to hide, and cover modestly; to conceal, and convey stature; to indicate role and purpose; to call attention to, and to fade into the background.

And Jesus rides into Jerusalem on a path strewn with all of this.

Yes, the people, in their excitement, are offering up their praise and their devotion. I mean, to throw down your clothing that it might be trampled upon by a colt is to show great devotion and loyalty to the one riding the colt.

And I’m sure, in the moment, the people really meant it. You don’t offer up your clothes to be trampled upon – and possibly ‘dumped’ on (if you catch my drift) – unless you really mean it.

Or unless you’re really foolish...perhaps even fooling yourself.

The sad truth, as events to come will prove, is that many – most, all(?) – of those who cast their cloaks upon the way, were mere flashes in the pan...or like those seeds that fall upon shallow soil which sprout today and shrivel tomorrow.

For all too soon the cries of “Hosanna!” would translate into cries of “Crucify!”

And the way strewn with coats would become splattered with his sweat and blood...and his death.

Would that we could take back those cloaks offering up hollow loyalty and shallow commitment. Would that we could pave his way with something more substantial and significant, more firm, more faithful.

Actually, that first Palm Sunday experience – and our veritable participation in it – may be as real as it gets. Shouting our praise one day; cursing under our breath the next. Affirming our allegiance now; slinking into the shadows some time when. So strong and certain one moment; so weak and uncertain the next.

But, unbeknownst to the crowd then – and all too often forgotten by us now – he rides into Jerusalem for all those many moments. He rides into Jerusalem for all our foibles and all

our fickleness. He rides into Jerusalem in the midst of the glory and the travesty of life. He rides into Jerusalem in the light of day and into the dark of night. He rides into Jerusalem for us and for our sake, and even for our sin, and especially for our salvation.

But we cling to our coats – and our concealment – wanting to hide from others the error of our own ways and the darkness of our own heart.

We wrap ourselves in fig leaves of our own making, presenting a strong front and a happy face, asserting a vast array of skills and abilities that are nowhere to be found beneath the surface.

We robe ourselves in mantles of prestige and power, position and self-importance, ever masking the self-loathing and self-doubt within.

And God, once again, sews for us and offers to us clothes and robes and coats of a different make and manner and meaning.

And all we need do is follow that path paved with our colt-trampled coats – follow that path to a man hanging bare and naked upon a cross. And there to clothe ourselves anew and afresh and faithful.

“Clothe yourselves with the new self” (Ephesians 4:24 NRSV). *“Put on the Lord Jesus Christ”* (Romans 13:14 NRSV) *“Clothe yourselves with compassion...and above all...with love.”*

What does it mean to put on a different coat like that?

We do not want it to be superficial: only skin (or coat) deep.

But truly to clothe yourself differently.

“Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus,” Paul wrote to the Christians in Philippi (Philippians 2:5-8 NRSV).

In putting on this new coat, Paul exhorts us to have the same mind as in Christ, who emptied himself, humbled himself; who was obedient, who was a servant.

How can we have that same mind when our mind is so full of ourselves?

Later on in that same letter, Paul writes,

Finally, beloved, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.

(Philippians 4:8 NRSV)

Focus our thoughts on, fill our minds with

- whatever is true...not false;
- what is honorable...not despicable;
- the just...not the unfair;
- the pure...not the wretched;
- what is pleasing to God...not what we know is offensive to God;
- the commendable...not the forgettable;
- the excellent...not the shabby;
- that which is worthy of praise...not what is worthy of condemnation.

“But it’s a dog-eat-dog world out there,” you say. “We worry about ourselves, fear for our lives and our livelihood. If we don’t look out for ourselves, who will? If we don’t fend for ourselves, who will?”

And then we hear these words, “Do not worry.”

“Do not worry,” Jesus said, “about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, or about your body, what you will wear. ... For...your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But strive first for the kingdom of God and God’s righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.” (Matthew 6:25,32-33 NRSV)

And maybe if we were to reflect on those words, we’d realize that sounds a lot like how Jesus himself lived.

If we would put on Christ and his way,

-if we would fill our hearts and our minds with his compassion and patience,

-if we would clothe ourselves with his humility and kindness,

-if we would live our lives out of his hope and trust,

then God will provide the rest.

Zach Williams confesses his – and our – difficulty with living this life.

Oh, I have days I lose the fight

Try my best but just don't get it right

Where I talk a talk that I don't walk

And miss the moments right before my eyes

Somebody with a hurt that I could have helped

Somebody with a hand that I could have held

When I just can't see past myself

And then he offers this prayer:

Lord, help me be

A little more like mercy, a little more like grace

A little more like kindness, goodness, love, and faith

A little more like patience, a little more like peace

A little more like Jesus, a little less like me

(“Less Like Me”)

It is a prayer – and a commitment, and a heart –

to make our discipleship undeniably visible to the world ... [to] demonstrate

to the world that we are followers of Jesus ... first and foremost clothed in

Christ. (Jill Duffield, *Lent in Plain Sight*, “Ritual Coats”)

You see, the world has already seen, and heard, our “Hosannas” and what comes from that: a cross and a death; a denial and betrayal; a rejection and abandonment.

The question is: Will the world see, and hear, now our hope and our faith, and our love?

-Hope in one who conquers death by dying.

-Faith in one who goes to hell and back...for us.

-Love for one who embraces us in his nail-scarred arms.

“Put on the Lord Jesus Christ.”

And show the world that we have truly embraced that path, and that cross, and that man.
So fully embraced that man as to have “put him on” and “clothed ourselves” with his life
and his way and, above all, his love.

That not only do we lay our coats before him. We lay our lives before him.

***HYMN “Lord, I Want to Be a Christian” GtG 729**

**1. Lord, I want to be a Christian
in my heart, in my heart;
Lord, I want to be a Christian
in my heart.
In my heart, (in my heart,)
in my heart, (in my heart,)
Lord, I want to be a Christian
in my heart.**

**2. Lord, I want to be more loving
in my heart, in my heart;
Lord, I want to be more loving
in my heart.
In my heart, (in my heart,)
in my heart, (in my heart,)
Lord, I want to be more loving
in my heart.**

**3. Lord, I want to be more holy
in my heart, in my heart;
Lord, I want to be more holy
in my heart.
In my heart, (in my heart,)
in my heart, (in my heart,)
Lord, I want to be more holy
in my heart.**

**4. Lord, I want to be like Jesus
in my heart, in my heart;
Lord, I want to be like Jesus
in my heart.
In my heart, (in my heart,)
in my heart, (in my heart,)
Lord, I want to be like Jesus
in my heart.**

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***AFFIRMATION OF FAITH**

**In life and in death we belong to God.
Through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,
the love of God,
and the communion of the Holy Spirit,
we trust in the one triune God, the Holy One of Israel,
whom alone we worship and serve.**

**We trust in Jesus Christ,
fully human, fully God.
Jesus proclaimed the reign of God:
preaching good news to the poor
and release to the captives,
teaching by word and deed
and blessing the children,
healing the sick
and binding up the brokenhearted,
eating with outcasts,
forgiving sinners,
and calling all to repent and believe the gospel.
Unjustly condemned for blasphemy and sedition,
Jesus was crucified,
suffering the depths of human pain
and giving his life for the sins of the world.
God raised this Jesus from the dead,
vindicating his sinless life,
breaking the power of sin and evil,
delivering us from death to life eternal.**

**With believers in every time and place,
we rejoice that nothing in life or in death
can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.**

(from A Brief Statement of Faith, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Book of Confessions)

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Pastor: We cry, "Hosanna" ...
People: ...Lord, save us!

THE LORD'S PRAYER *(Contemporary)*

**Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.**

**Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
 as we forgive those who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial
 and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
 and the glory are yours
now and forever. Amen.**

OFFERING

Invitation

Reflection

**Unison Prayer of Dedication*

Loving God:

**we remember with thanksgiving
 the life that we have because of you.
and we give you thanks for Jesus Christ, your Son.**

**Make us grateful every day
 for the privilege of offering ourselves
 for the well-being of all your world.**

**By your grace, may all that we do
 show the glory of your name
 and serve the good of your people.**

**Clothe us with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience,
 that we may be Christ for others.**

In his name we pray. Amen.

SENDING

***CLOSING HYMN** “A Cheering, Chanting, Dizzy Crowd” GtG 200

**1. A cheering, chanting, dizzy crowd
had stripped the green trees bare,
and hailing Christ as king aloud,
waved branches in the air.**

**2. They laid their garments in the road
and spread his path with palms
and vows of lasting love bestowed
with royal hymns and psalms.**

3. When day dimmed down to deepening dark
the crowd began to fade
till only trampled leaves and bark
were left from the parade.

4. Lest we be fooled because our hearts
have surged with passing praise,
remind us, God, as this week starts
where Christ has fixed his gaze.

5. Instead of palms, a winding sheet
will have to be unrolled,
a carpet much more fit to greet
the king a cross will hold.

A Cheering, Chanting, Dizzy Crowd...

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***CHARGE AND BLESSING**

Pastor: ...And let the gathered people of God say...

People: ...Amen.

POSTLUDE

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