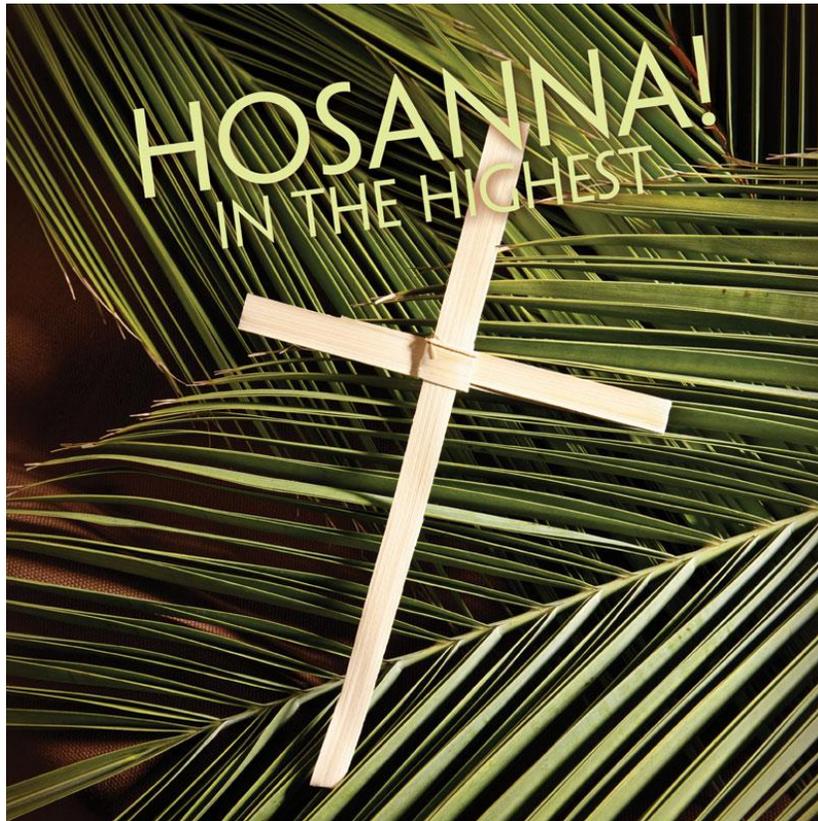


St. John Evangelical Lutheran Church



Pastor Kevin Raddatz
Principal Jon Woldt
501 West Park Ave.
Libertyville, IL 60048
847-362-4424
www.StJohnsLib.com

Palm Sunday

April 5, 2020

In Our World Today ... we are facing an eerie “I don’t know” that can leave us unsure of what to do or think or feel.

In Our Worship Today ... we see someone who does know. And because he knows, we get to know the most important keys to life and love!

All: This is the day the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it!

M: Dear friends in Christ, for five weeks of Lent we have been preparing for the celebration of our Lord’s paschal mystery. Most years our preparations are challenged by the distractions of sunshine and springtime. This year our preparations have been disturbed by distractions of darkness and dismay. So today we come together to regain our focus and to begin the solemn celebration of Holy Week. Christ entered in triumph into his own city, to complete his work as our Messiah: to suffer, to die, and to rise again. Let us remember with devotion his entry that culminated at the empty tomb and follow him with a lively faith. United with him by Baptism, we share in his resurrection and new life.

M: Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

C: **Hosanna in the highest!**

GOSPEL LESSON

Matthew 21:1-11

As they approached Jerusalem and came to Bethphage on the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two disciples, 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. If anyone says anything to you, tell him that the Lord needs them, and he will send them right away.”

This took place to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet:

“Say to the Daughter of Zion,
‘See, your king comes to you,
gentle and riding on a donkey,
on a colt, the foal of a donkey.’”

The disciples went and did as Jesus had instructed them. They brought the donkey and the colt, placed their cloaks on them, and Jesus sat on them. A very large crowd spread their cloaks on the road, while others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. The crowds that went ahead of him and those that followed shouted,

“Hosanna to the Son of David!”

“Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!”

“Hosanna in the highest!”

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

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

M: Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

C: **Hosanna in the highest!**

HYMN - CHRISTIAN WORSHIP - 131 (1,3,5)

All glory, laud, and honor
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.

All glory, laud, and honor
To you, Redeemer, King,
To whom the lips of children
Made sweet hosannas ring.
The people of the Hebrews
With palms before you went;
Our praise and prayer and anthems
Before you we present.

All glory, laud, and honor
To you, Redeemer, King,
To whom the lips of children
Made sweet hosannas ring.
As you received their praises,
Accept the prayers we bring,
O Source of ev’ry blessing,
Our good and gracious King.

If you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any fellowship with the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose. Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others.

Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus:

Who, being in very nature God,
did not consider equality with God something to be grasped,
but made himself nothing,
taking the very nature of a servant,
being made in human likeness.
And being found in appearance as a man,
he humbled himself
and became obedient to death—
even death on a cross!

Therefore God exalted him to the highest place
and gave him the name that is above every name,
that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow,
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,
and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father.

M: Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

C: **Hosanna in the highest!**

CONFESSION OF FAITH The Second Article Explanation of the Apostles Creed

I believe that Jesus Christ, true God, begotten of the Father from eternity, and also true man, born of the virgin Mary, is my Lord. He has redeemed me, a lost and condemned creature, purchased and won me from all sins, from death, and from the power of the devil, not with gold or silver but with his holy, precious blood and with his innocent suffering and death.

All this he did that I should be his own, and live under him in his kingdom, and serve him in everlasting righteousness, innocence, and blessedness, just as he has risen from death and lives and rules eternally. This is most certainly true.

Hymn - Christian Worship - 369

Beautiful Savior, King of Creation,
Son of God and Son of Man!
Truly I'd love thee,
Truly I'd serve thee,
Light of my soul, my Joy, my Crown.

Fair are the Meadows, Fair are the Woodlands,
Robed in flow'rs of blooming spring;
Jesus is fairer, Jesus is purer;
He makes our sorr'wing spirit sing.

Fair is the sunshine, Fair is the moonlight,
Bright the sparkling stars on high;
Jesus shines brighter, Jesus shines purer;
Than all the angels in the sky.

Beautiful Savior, Lord of the nations,
Son of God and Son of Man!
Glory and honor, Praise, adoration
Now and forevermore be thine!

SERMON

Matthew 21:1-11

I don't know. That tightness in my chest? I don't know. Your cough? I don't know. What should I be - doing? ... planning? ... cancelling? I don't know. What's coming next for me, for you? I don't know. What should I know? I don't know.

That crowd on Palm Sunday ... they didn't know either. They didn't know what Jesus was up to. They didn't know what their leaders were up to, plotting against Jesus. They didn't know what Satan was up to. They didn't know what God was up to. They didn't know what was coming. They didn't know.

But Jesus knew. Jesus knew he was headed to Jerusalem. Yes, he knew the leaders of God's people there were plotting to kill him. He knew that Satan was looking to stop him; he knew that even in that cheering crowd, Satan was working to confuse and distract. And Jesus knew what God was up to. So Jesus followed what God gave him to do, and he went to Jerusalem to face the worst and the darkest this world has ever experienced.

Jesus knew what was coming. For months, Jesus had been telling his disciples what he knew: **"The Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, chief priests and**

teachers of the law, and he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life.” And just that morning, Jesus showed that he knew what was coming, down to the details. On the way to Jerusalem, Jesus sent two of his disciples on up ahead: **“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. If anyone says anything to you, tell him that the Lord needs them, and he will send them right away.”** And what did the disciples find? They found things just as Jesus had said. Jesus knew what was coming.

Because Jesus knew what was coming, it didn't matter what he was up against. Because Jesus knew what was coming, it didn't matter who or how many were up against him. Because Jesus knew what was coming, he could ride into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday, and could return again and again that week to face his enemies. Why? Jesus knew he was doing what God gave him to do. He knew God would work his plan and God would keep him safe. And that night he could go to sleep in peace.

But what about on Maundy Thursday? That night Jesus wouldn't hear a friendly “Welcome home.” That night Jesus and his disciples wouldn't be doing the Waltons' “Good night, St. Jim; good night, St. John.” No, that night Jesus would be betrayed and arrested. And Jesus knew it. But that didn't stop Jesus. Knowing what was coming, Jesus went back to Jerusalem. That night he went out to the Garden of Gethsemane where he knew Judas could find him. Jesus even made it easy for Judas to find him; Jesus led the way to meet Judas and that mob that would arrest him. Why? Jesus knew what was coming. Jesus knew that God was working his plan and Jesus was working his part in that plan.

Jesus knew it wouldn't be easy or fun. Jesus knew it would cost him - more than any of us could ever pay or endure. But Jesus also knew what God had in store for him, and what God has in store for you. Not only did Jesus know that his Palm Sunday trip to Jerusalem wasn't a one-way trip (he would get to leave), Jesus also knew that his Maundy Thursday trip to Jerusalem was not a dead-end trip (it wouldn't end in his death!). In the same way, Jesus knew his Good Friday trip to the cross, and to the tomb, was not a dead-end trip. Jesus knew that as he trusted himself into his Father's care, no matter how dark things looked, in the end, God would deliver him. Jesus knew that; he trusted that. He knew, he trusted he was safe in God's plan and safe in God's care. He knew, he trusted he was safe to go to Jerusalem. Jesus knew, he trusted he was safe to go even to the cross.

But as Jesus headed to Jerusalem, he didn't just see what God had in the works for him, Jesus also saw what God has in the works for you. Heading into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday, Jesus was showing himself as God's King ready to do battle for God and his people. But heading into Jerusalem on Maundy Thursday, Jesus was giving himself as God's lamb, ready to be

sacrificed for the sins of the world. You see, Jesus' death wasn't just the work of Satan, an act of war against God. Jesus' death was the work of God, an act of holy judgment on your sin and mine, an act of loving sacrifice for your sin and mine. As Jesus headed into Jerusalem, as he went to the cross, he knew what was coming, he knew the cost, the bloody cost, the soul-wrenching **"My God, my God, why have you forsaken me"** cost. Jesus knew the cost, but he also knew the end. He knew God would deliver him to live and reign in heaven. And he knew God would deliver you - forgiven, set free for life with him in heaven.

Jesus knew what was coming. And with Jesus, we know what is coming. Yes, we know that darkness and death are coming. But, more importantly, we know that with Jesus, life and light is coming! We get to look forward - in the end we will be safe with God.

What does that mean for today? Today we are safe with God. Think about what that means. Today, we are safe with Jesus, safe in the hands of Jesus. But there's more. Why? Why are we safe? For what purpose are we safe? Not just safe to be safe. Not just safe to be comfortable. Not just safe to be looking out for ourselves. What did Paul say? **"If you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any fellowship with the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose. Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others."**

At a time like this, it can be so easy to circle the wagons and think only of ourselves and those with us. At a time like this, it can be so easy to make sure we have enough toilet paper for ourselves, that we hold on to our money for ourselves, because who knows what's coming. Jesus knows. Jesus knows and he has us here for a purpose. Not just to make sure we have enough, but to work through us to make sure they have enough. To work through us to make sure they have enough of his love, his peace, his promise. So don't just circle the wagons. Open your hearts. Be part of what Jesus has going here. Open your hearts. Check in, check up on the people in your life. Don't just text; talk. Don't just talk; listen. Listen, listen so you can know how to help. Listen so you can know how to share what Jesus has going.

We don't know all of what Jesus has going. The crowd on that first Palm Sunday didn't know either. But they got one thing right - on that day they didn't just go about their own thing. They stopped. They looked. They listened. And they jumped in with Jesus. Amen.

Prepare the Royal Highway



1 Pre - pare the roy - al high - way; The
 2 God's peo - ple, see him com - ing: Your
 3 Then fling the gates wide o - pen To
 4 His is no earth - ly king - dom; It



King of kings is near! Let ev - 'ry hill and
 own e - ter - nal King! Palm branch - es strew be -
 greet your prom - ised King! Your King, yet ev - 'ry
 comes from heav'n a - bove. His rule is peace and



val - ley A lev - el road ap - pear!
 fore him! Spread gar - ments! Shout and sing!
 na - tion Its trib - ute too should bring.
 free - dom And jus - tice, truth, and love.



Then greet the King of glo - ry, Fore - told in
 God's prom - ise will not fail you! No more shall
 All lands, bow down be - fore him! All na - tions,
 So let your praise be sound - ing For kind - ness



sa - cred sto - ry:
 doubt as - sail you! Ho - san - na to the
 now a - dore him!
 so a - bound - ing:



Lord, For he ful - fills God's Word!

This hymn reminds us that Advent is a season of preparation, as King Jesus comes to rule in our hearts and lives and leads us to his heavenly kingdom.

PRAYER

O Lord, you rule over all things, and you know all things - our maybes, our possibilities, and our certainties with you! By your Spirit, work in us peace in your promises, confidence in your care, and a sacrificing love that reflects your love. When we don't know, lead us to follow the example of that first Palm Sunday crowd - lead us praise you with anything and everything we have. We entrust all our unknowns into your knowing love and reign. Amen.

LORD'S PRAYER

**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.**

- M: The Lord bless you and keep you.
The Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you.
The Lord look on you with favor and give you peace.
- C: *(spoken)* Amen.

A Closing Word

We encourage you to join us this week as Jesus takes us to his cross and the empty tomb. In your worship folder and also on our webpage, you will find a Holy Week Reading Plan to set us up for Good Friday and Easter, and also our Holy Week Worship Plan. We invite you to join us online - at wels.net - this Palm Sunday evening for a Palm Sunday message from our WELS President Mark Schroeder. May God bless us through the cross to Easter!

CLOSING HYMN

"Ride On, Ride On in Majesty"
Hymn 133 (vs. 1, 2, 5)

Ride on, ride on in majesty!
Hark! All the tribes hosanna cry.
O Savior meek, pursue your road
With palms and scattered garments strowed.

Ride on, ride on in majesty!
In lowly pomp ride on to die.
O Christ, your triumphs now begin
O'er captive death and conquered sin.

Ride on, ride on in majesty!
In lowly pomp ride on to die.
Bow your meek head to mortal pain,
Then take, O Christ, your pow'r and reign.

A HOLY WEEK READING PLAN

This Reading Plan will set you up for Good Friday and Easter.

Monday - Matthew 26:1-30 - Preparations - for Jesus, against Jesus, by Jesus

Tuesday - Matthew 26:31-56 - Jesus Warns; Jesus is Arrested

Wednesday - Mt 26:57- 27:10 - Jesus before the Jewish Leaders; Peter Tested; Judas Despairs

Thursday - John 13:1-17 - A Maundy Thursday Special - Jesus Washes His Disciples' Feet

Friday - Matthew 27:11-31 - Jesus on Trial Before Pontius Pilate and Taken to be Crucified

A Holy Week Worship Plan

Palm Sunday Evening - Join us online for a short Palm Sunday message from WELS
President Mark Schroeder, at WELS.net

Good Friday - Join us online for Jesus' "Seven Words from the Cross."

Easter - Join us online as we celebrate the resurrection and victory of Jesus Christ!

OFFERING

*If you prefer online giving, you may scan
this code with your mobile device.*

