

**Sermon followed by Service ~ March 29, 2026 - Palm Sunday Zechariah 9:9-10**

Cats hiss and arch their backs. Dogs growl and bare their teeth. Puffer fish puff themselves big. Rattlesnakes rattle. Bulls snort and paw at the ground. In the face of danger, they all send the same message: “Don’t mess with me.”

On that first Palm Sunday, Jesus knows danger and trouble are ahead, but what does he do? He doesn’t rattle swords or beat battle drums. He doesn’t mount a war horse and ride tall over everyone. On that first Palm Sunday, as Jesus approaches Jerusalem, Jesus knows he’s entering enemy territory, not just a city ruled by the Romans, but a city ruled by chief priests and church people who want Jesus dead and out of their way. Jesus knows he’s entering enemy territory, but he doesn’t try to sneak in. And he doesn’t come in arching his back, baring his teeth, puffing himself big, rattling, snorting, riding in as a warrior on a war horse. Instead, what does Zechariah tell us? Jesus comes “**gentle and riding on a donkey.**”

“**Gentle and riding on a donkey.**” That’s a whole different message than hissing and snorting, growling and rattling. A donkey sends a whole different message than a war horse. Jesus’ mission and message wasn’t “Don’t mess with me”; Jesus’ mission and message was “Peace.”

Jesus could have rode in with an army of war horses and war chariots with an army of angels riding them. He could have come commanding and demanding. He could have cleared out Pontius Pilate and his Roman soldiers before they crucified him. He could have cleared out Annas and Caiaphas and their corrupt church and city council before they demanded: “Crucify him.” He could have cleared out the Pharisees and Sadducees before they went after him. He could have cleared out the worldly who would betray him and the weak who would deny him. He could have cleared out the sinners and the hypocrites. I could go on. He could have cleared out any and all who would rather fail him than follow him. He could have set up his own little compound, safe and secure.

He could have. But what? Who would have been left? If Jesus came on a mission to judge and clear out any and all who weren’t and wouldn’t line up right with God, who would have been left? I know I wouldn’t make the cut. Would you? The souls that sins, it shall die. I should make clear - there is a day when Jesus will come in judgment, a day Jesus will come with his angel armies. The

Jesus who rides gentle in our lesson will come back with judging power to send any and all who oppose him, any and all who go without him to hell.

But that's not what we have in our lesson today. In our lesson today, on Palm Sunday, Jesus didn't come riding a war horse with war chariot and warring angels to set up his own little compound, safe and secure. No, Jesus came riding on a donkey; he came gentle, righteous, and having salvation. That's right. Jesus didn't come to command and demand. He came to supply and provide, to bring us what we need - rightness to cover our wrong, a sacrifice to pay for our sin.

So what did Jesus bring? He brought himself. Jesus brought his life lived right to cover our wrong. To cover the days we've wasted without God, he brought his life lived with God. To cover the days we've lived against God, he brought his life lived for God. But that's not all. On that first Palm Sunday, Jesus was on his way to Jerusalem to offer his life as God's sacrifice to pay for and atone for our sin. To pay for all we've done wrong. To pay for all we've failed to do right. To pay for everything we've refused to do right. The angry scowl and scolding that we had coming; the whooping and the whipping, the beating that we deserve; the guilt and shame, the time-out that felt like hell - **"My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"** - Jesus took it all. Without hissing or growling, rattling or snorting - Jesus took it all for us. So he could give his all for us.

What does that get to mean for us? Today, with Jesus, you have his righteousness and his peace. God sees you right by him, right for life with him, life the way that it is supposed to be - forever in heaven. In our lesson, Zechariah gives us a little picture of heaven, a little picture of the peace we'll have in heaven, and it is so much better than the peace we have here. Here, in this world, how does the peace thing seem to work? The pastor promises peace. But before we get too far, what? The world out there, the world in here are fighting against us. Soon we're fighting with ourselves and each other. But what does Zechariah tell us? With Jesus, **"The battle bow will be broken."** In heaven, the world out there and the world in here won't be fighting against us. In heaven, we won't be fighting with each other. God's peace in Jesus will work peace and make peace in us and around us, in us and between us.

But we don't have to wait for heaven to work peace and make peace, do we?. What did Paul say in our epistle lesson? **"Let your attitude be the same as that of Christ Jesus."** When the world around us wants to fight us, we don't have to

hiss and growl, rattle and snort. We're here with a message, on a mission, to share peace and forgiveness; we're here to love with kindness and mercy and grace.

Are you thinking what I thought? "But" "But if we don't hiss and growl, if we don't rattle and snort, people will take advantage of us. If we don't hiss and growl, rattle and snort, people will walk all over us. If we don't hiss and growl, rattle and snort, we won't have any peace."

What if Jesus thought that way? What if Jesus would have lived that way? What if, instead of giving himself, Jesus looked out for himself? What would he have gained? An escape from the cross? What would he have lost? Himself! In looking to save himself from shame, he would have lost his name, his identity; he wouldn't be the Jesus who saved us from our sin. In looking to save his glory as Lord, he would have lost his glory as Savior. In looking to save his body comfort, he would have lost his inner soul comfort of being right. In looking to save his future, he would have lost the future God had for him - to have us with him in heaven. In other words, in looking to save himself, he would have lost himself and lost us.

But Jesus didn't settle for the quick and easy here and now. He didn't settle for hissing and growling, rattling and snorting. Jesus didn't settle on self. Instead, Jesus gave himself. And in the face of danger, Jesus rode. He rode with confidence knowing what Zechariah prophesied 550 years earlier - **"Rejoice greatly, O Daughter of Zion! Shout, Daughter of Jerusalem! See, your king comes to you, righteous and having salvation, gentle and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey."** This past week, I re-read Zechariah. Again and again in Zechariah we see Jesus on the way to the cross. But that's not all! Again and again in Zechariah we see what we later see in the book of Revelation - Jesus wins! No matter who or how many are against him - Jesus and his Church wins! On that first Palm Sunday, Jesus rode into Jerusalem knowing Zechariah's prophesy. Jesus rode into Jerusalem knowing he would win. He rode into Jerusalem knowing God's blessing - **"Blessed is he who comes in the name of the LORD!"** And Jesus rode into Jerusalem knowing what it would mean for you - peace and life with God. Amen.

Hosanna in the highest!

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

# Palm Sunday

March 29, 2026

## Pre-Service Music

*Piano Selections* – Valerie Floeter  
*Bereden vag for Herran* – Mark Schultz  
*Kingsfold* – Valerie Floeter  
*Valet will ich dir geben* – Otto Schenk

## PALM SUNDAY PROCESSION



(Our children will join in a palm processional through the church to the altar during our first hymn. The children gather before the service in the Fellowship Hall at 8:45.)

**IN OUR WORLD TODAY ...** we see how people with power and glory like to get things done.

**IN OUR WORSHIP TODAY ...** we see how Jesus uses his power and glory to accomplish his purpose - he surrenders his power and glory and wins for himself and for us a place in glory with God.

**M:** The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you.

**C:** **And also with you.**

**M:** Dear friends in Christ, for five weeks of Lent we have been preparing for the celebration of our Lord's paschal mystery. Today we come together 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:** Let us go forth in peace,

**C:** **In the name of the Lord.**

**PALM PROCESSION - SUNDAY**

**PROCESSIONAL HYMN**

*"All Glory, Laud, and Honor"*  
**Hymn 412**

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 Blessèd One. (Refrain)

The company of angels  
is praising you on high,  
and we with all creation  
in chorus make reply. (Refrain)

The people of the Hebrews  
with palms before you went;  
our praise and prayer and anthems  
before you we present. (Refrain)

To you before your passion  
they sang their hymns of praise;  
to you, now high exalted,  
our melody we raise. (Refrain)

As you received their praises,  
accept the prayers we bring,  
O Source of ev'ry blessing,  
our good and gracious King. (Refrain)

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

C: **Hosanna in the highest!**

SCHOOL SONG - SUNDAY

*"The King of Glory Comes"*

Hymn: 548

The King of glory comes; the nation rejoices.  
Open the gates before him; lift up your voices.

Who is the King of glory? How shall we call him?  
He is Immanuel, the promised of ages. (Refrain)

In all of Galilee, in city or village,  
he goes among his people, curing their illness. (Refrain)

He gave his life for us, the pledge of salvation;  
he took upon himself the sin of the nations. (Refrain)

He conquered sin and death; he truly has risen,  
and he will share with us his heavenly vision. (Refrain)

**PRAYER OF THE DAY**

M: Let us pray.

God our Father, we remember how Jesus entered Jerusalem and was welcomed as a king by those who shouted "Hosanna" and spread their clothing and palm branches in his path. Accept our praise, and listen to our prayers as we rejoice in our triumphant King, Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord.

C: **Amen.**

**OLD TESTAMENT LESSON**

**Zechariah 9:9-10**

Rejoice greatly, Daughter Zion!  
Shout, Daughter Jerusalem!  
See, your king comes to you,  
righteous and victorious,  
lowly and riding on a donkey,

on a colt, the foal of a donkey.  
I will take away the chariots from Ephraim  
and the warhorses from Jerusalem,  
and the battle bow will be broken.  
He will proclaim peace to the nations.  
His rule will extend from sea to sea  
and from the River to the ends of the earth.

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

C: **Hosanna in the highest!**

HYMN

*"Prepare the Royal Highway"*  
Hymn 302

Prepare the royal highway;  
the King of kings is near!  
Let ev'ry hill and valley  
a level road appear!  
Then greet the King of glory,  
foretold in sacred story: (Refrain)

Hosanna to the Lord,  
for he fulfills God's Word!

God's people, see him coming:  
your own eternal King!  
Palm branches strew before him!  
Spread garments! Shout and sing!  
God's promise will not fail you!  
No more shall doubt assail you! (Refrain)

Then fling the gates wide open  
to greet your promised King!  
Your King, yet ev'ry nation  
its tribute too should bring.

All lands, bow down before him!  
All nations, now adore him! (Refrain)

His is no earthly kingdom;  
it comes from heav'n above.  
His rule is peace and freedom  
and justice, truth, and love.  
So let your praise be sounding  
for kindness so abounding: (Refrain)

#### EPISTLE LESSON

#### Philippians 2:1-11

Therefore if you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any common sharing in 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 of one mind. Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.

In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus:

Who, being in very nature God,  
did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage;  
rather, he made himself nothing  
by taking the very nature of a servant,  
being made in human likeness.  
And being found in appearance as a man,  
he humbled himself  
by becoming 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 acknowledge 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!**

#### 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, say 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 Daughter Zion,  
'See, your king comes to you,  
gentle and riding on a donkey,  
and 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 and placed their cloaks on them for Jesus to sit on. 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 heaven!"

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!**

**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 OF THE DAY**

*"No Tramp of Soldiers' Marching Feet"*

**Hymn 414**

No tramp of soldiers' marching feet

with banners and with drums,  
no sound of music's martial beat:

"The King of glory comes!"

To greet what pomp of kingly pride

no bells in triumph ring,  
no city gates swing open wide:

"Behold, behold your King!"

And yet he comes. The children cheer;

with palms his path is strown.

With ev'ry step the cross draws near:

the King of glory's throne.

Astride a colt he passes by

as loud hosannas ring,  
or else the very stones would cry

"Behold, behold your King!"

What fading flow'rs his road adorn;

the palms, how soon laid down!

No bloom or leaf but only thorn

the King of glory's crown.

The soldiers mock, the rabble cries,  
the streets with tumult ring,  
as Pilate to the mob replies,  
“Behold, behold your King!”

Now he who bore for mortals' sake  
the cross and all its pains  
and chose a servant's form to take,  
the King of glory reigns.  
Hosanna to the Savior's name  
till heaven's rafters ring,  
and all the ransomed host proclaim  
“Behold, behold your King!”

**SERMON**

**Zechariah 9:9-10**

In Times of Trouble – Ride to Serve and Ride to Victory!

**HYMN**

*“Rejoice, the Lord is King”*  
**Hymn 524**

Rejoice, the Lord is King!  
Your Lord and King adore!  
Rejoice, give thanks and sing,  
and triumph evermore:  
Lift up your heart, lift up your voice!  
Rejoice, again I say, rejoice!

The Lord, our Savior, reigns,  
the God of truth and love;  
when he had purged our stains,  
he took his seat above:  
Lift up your heart, lift up your voice!  
Rejoice, again I say, rejoice!

His kingdom cannot fail,  
he rules o'er earth and heav'n;

the keys of death and hell  
are to our Jesus giv'n:  
Lift up your heart, lift up your voice!  
Rejoice, again I say, rejoice!

Rejoice in glorious hope!  
Our Lord and judge shall come  
and take his servants up  
to their eternal home:  
Lift up your heart, lift up your voice!  
Rejoice, again I say, rejoice!

#### OFFERING

*If you prefer online giving, you may scan  
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*(You heard our school children sing today. Tuition Grant Fund envelopes are available in the pew rack to support affordable tuition for our school.)*

#### PRAYER

M: Lord Jesus, you entered Jerusalem to take up your final steps to the cross. You came as a conquering, yet humble, King. Your victory was won through your death on the cross and your triumphant resurrection. You came not to be served, but to serve, and to give your life as a ransom for many. Jesus, our humble and serving King,

**C: Help us to follow in your footsteps.**

M: Lord Jesus, help us by your Spirit to serve others as you served and sacrificed your life for us. Work through our hands and eyes and hearts to bring comfort and hope to those in need. Jesus, our humble and serving King,

**C: Help us to follow in your footsteps.**

M: Lord Jesus, we live now in your kingdom, yet we long for the day when we will see you return in glory as King and Judge. Until that day, help us to be faithful servants and citizens of your kingdom. Jesus, our humble and serving King,

C: **Help us to follow in your footsteps. 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.**

#### BLESSING

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: **Amen.**

#### CLOSING HYMN

*"Ride On, Ride On in Majesty"*

**Hymn 411**

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!  
The angel armies of the sky  
look down with sad and wond'ring eyes  
to see th' approaching sacrifice.

Ride on, ride on in majesty!  
Your last and fiercest strife is nigh.  
The Father on his sapphire throne  
awaits his own anointed Son.

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.

## Postlude

*"Winchester New"* by Jeremy Bakken

*"Promised One"* by Carl Ziebell

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## SPECIAL THANKS

We thank our children and for blessing our Sunday worship.

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<b>Holy Thursday</b>	<b>April 2</b>	<b>7:00pm</b>
<b>Good Friday</b>	<b>April 3</b>	<b>7:00pm</b>
<b>Easter Service</b>	<b>April 5</b>	<b>9:00am</b>
<b>Followed by Easter Fellowship</b>		
<b>(No worship service on Saturday, April 4)</b>		

- Holy Thursday** Jesus, the Son of God himself, invites you to the Upper Room to show you “the full extent of his love.” Join him at his table as he gives you his body and blood, “given and shed for you, for the forgiveness of your sins.” Witness the Rite of the Stripping of the Altar and strengthen your resolve to never abandon the Lord. (Plan to leave the service quietly, reflecting on the love of our Lord.)
- Good Friday** Alone in the dark, forsaken by God, Jesus pays for your sin and the sin of the world. Join us for a Good Friday Tenebrae Service, a service of shadows and darkness, reminding us of the darkness of our sin and guilt, the darkness of the world’s hate and anger against God, and, yes, the darkness of God’s curse on our sin, all charged against Jesus.
- In a Tenebrae service, candles are extinguished and lights are dimmed to impress on us the utter darkness and loneliness, the horrible curse that Jesus faced on the cross. As you hear of Jesus’ burial and the service closes, expect to hear the *strepitus* and see a sign of hope. (Again, plan to leave the service quietly, reflecting on the love of our Lord.)
- Easter Sunday** We can’t wait for the sun to come up! We have a living Jesus to meet! Join us for Easter service at 9 and food and fellowship immediately following the service. You don’t have to be quiet leaving this service – rejoice and tell your world the best news of the year - Jesus lives!