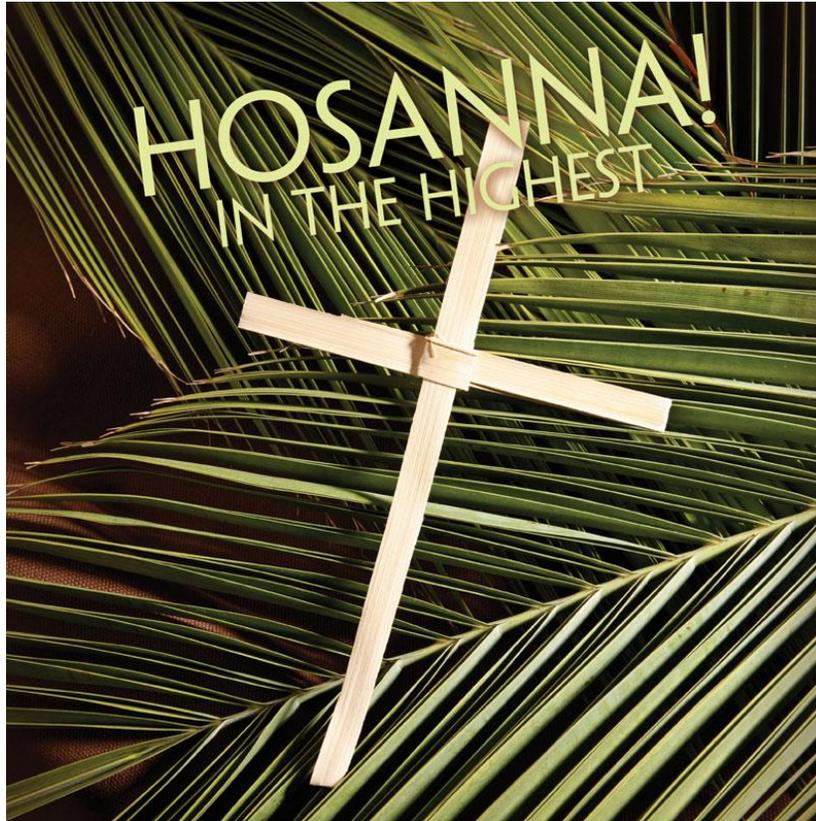


St. John Evangelical Lutheran Church



Pastor Kevin Raddatz
Principal Jon Woldt
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WE WELCOME OUR GUESTS and pray that all who are with us today are blessed by the message of God's Word in our lessons and hymns and by an encouraging and warm welcome. Our worship service is designed to focus us on Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. The Holy Spirit does that by exposing our need for Christ and by showing us the wonders of God's grace in Christ: forgiveness and peace, help and hope for life in this world, and life forever with God in heaven. The notes below may be helpful for your worship and time with us today. If you have questions, please ask! We are blessed to have you with us!

At this time our services are for people wearing masks and social distancing! Please know that even as we experience this awkwardness, your Good Shepherd holds you close to his heart and goes with you to share his love!

We Care about Your Children

We love to have children with us in worship.

If your children are crying loudly, our nursery, Gathering Area (back of church), and downstairs Fellowship Hall are audio-equipped for you and your young children. When your children are ready, come back so we can worship together.

We Care about Your Special Needs

Hearing Assistance for those with hearing aids is provided through our *Hearing Loop*. More information is available from an usher.



A wheelchair lift is available for your assistance; please ask an usher.

Our Facilities

Restrooms are in our Fellowship Hall, downstairs and to the right of the kitchen.

Palm Sunday

March 28, 2021

Pre-Service Music



Hosanna, Loud Hosanna - Sam Ellison
All Glory Laud and Honor - Sam Ellison
O Jesus, King of Glory - Gerhard Krapf
All Glory, Laud, and Honor - Kevin Hildebrand

IN OUR WORSHIP TODAY ... we join the first Palm Sunday crowd in praising Jesus as Lord!

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 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.**

HYMN

All Glory, Laud, and Honor
Hymn 131
(Stanzas 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.

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

C: **Hosanna in the highest!**

PRAYER OF THE DAY

We praise you, O God, for the great acts of love by which you have redeemed us through your Son, Jesus Christ. As he was acclaimed by those who scattered their garments and branches of palm in his path, so may we always hail him as our King and follow him with perfect confidence; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

OLD TESTAMENT LESSON

Zechariah 9:9-10

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.
I will take away the chariots from Ephraim
and the war-horses 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!**

EPISTLE LESSON

Philippians 2:5-11

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!**

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!**

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

716 No Tramp of Soldiers' Marching Feet



1 No tramp of sol - diers' march - ing feet With
2 And yet he comes. The chil - dren cheer; With
3 What fad - ing flow'rs his road a - dorn; The
4 Now he who bore for mor - tals' sake The



ban - ners and with drums, No sound of mu - sic's
palms his path is strown. With ev - 'ry step the
palms, how soon laid down! No bloom or leaf but
cross and all its pains And chose a ser - vant's



mar - tial beat: "The King of glo - ry comes!" To
cross draws near: The King of glo - ry's throne. A -
on - ly thorn The King of glo - ry's crown. The
form to take, The King of glo - ry reigns. Ho -



greet what pomp of king - ly pride No
stride a colt he pass - es by As
sol - diers mock, the rab - ble cries. The
san - na to the Sav - ior's name Till



bells in tri - umph ring, No ci - ty gates swing
loud ho - san - nas ring, Or else the ve - ry
streets with tu - mult ring, As Pi - late to the
heav - en's raft - ers ring, And all the ran - somed



o - pen wide: "Be - hold, be - hold your King!"
stones would cry, "Be - hold, be - hold your King!"
mob re - plies, "Be - hold, be - hold your King!"
host pro - claim, "Be - hold, be - hold your King!"

SERMON

Matthew 21:1-11

They look a little bit out of place, don't they? - the palm branches. If we were in Florida or California, Jerusalem or Jericho, a Mexican or a Middle Eastern restaurant, they could look right in place. But here, up north, they look a bit out of place. And that's what makes them so perfectly in place! They remind us, not just of Palm Sunday, but they remind us how out of place Palm Sunday can feel.

Go back to the first Palm Sunday. Turn the pages in your Bible before and after Palm Sunday. One page after another, this Palm Sunday time feels like an awkward time. Both before and after, miracles to celebrate. But at the same time, day after day, Jesus keeps dropping hints of death. And not just hints, Jesus keeps up an uneasy talk of death, death for himself. And that leads to talk of death for his disciples. With what is coming in Jerusalem, Jesus and his disciples are on edge. Jesus is tormented by what's coming; his disciples are afraid. And for good reason! God is working his crushing curse; Jesus' enemies are working their hate, planning how to get rid of Jesus. Jesus has the cross ahead of him, and he knows it. The disciples have trouble ahead of them, and they know it. They know that powers of evil are stacked up, lining up against them. And so with Jesus, they have reason to cheer. But

with all the darkness and dread in their lives, cheering and celebrating on Palm Sunday could have felt really out of place.

It could be easy to think the same thing, that same way today. Over a year of pandemic, over a year of COVID-time, over a year of death and dread. And what's ahead? Freedom, relief, release? Or surges; a mutant, mutating virus; people letting loose, too much, too soon? What's coming? You know what's coming - more death, more taxes, and that's not all, is it? You know this - pre-COVID life was no walk in the park, was it? Broken families, broken promises, broken hearts, broken spirits; maybe at home, maybe at work feeling squeezed, crushed by hard heads and harder hearts; always getting older, bodies breaking down, cancers, arthritis. And what do we have in the news? Whether you see evil people working evil, or broken people breaking hearts, we live in a hard, dark, heart-broken and heart-breaking world. And there's no vaccine that's going to fix that, is there? Looking around and looking ahead, it's easy to make the case: "This is no time to be celebrating; no time to be cheering; no time to be praising."

Palm Sunday and praise, Palm Sunday celebrating can feel very much out of place. Especially when we think about how we've given sin and Satan a place in here (head) and in here (heart). When we remember what we've done, what we've said, what we've thought; when our guilt and our shame are feeling fresh; it doesn't matter what going on out there, praising God and celebrating Jesus can feel so out of place in here, not so?

It's easy to make the case - palms and praise, cheering and celebrating were out of place then, and palms and praise, cheering and celebrating are out of place now. I imagine that's why God put Palm Sunday just where he did. He could have put Palm Sunday a year earlier in a happier time, when the crowds for Jesus were bigger, when the crowds against Jesus were quieter. He could have put Palm Sunday later; after Easter; after parading through hell, Jesus could have gone on a Palm Sunday victory tour around the world. Or he could have put Palm Sunday even later when Jesus was on the way up to ascend into heaven - that would have been a great fit; that would have been a great show.

Instead, in a really awkward time, on the edge of the world's worst darkness, we see Jesus riding as a king on a donkey. Sounds strange, doesn't it? Riding a donkey, what's Jesus showing us? Jesus didn't come to parade and prance and look good; Jesus didn't come to win the world by force; Jesus came to serve. He came to serve his people in their greatest need - not our need for comfort and convenience right here, right now; but our need for rightness, our need for peace and hope, our need for God. And so on the edge of the world's worst darkness, a time of dread, a time when evil was working itself up to work its worst, at a time when so many people were feeling a need for God, a need for someone to step in and make things right, Jesus shows himself as God's King. Not a king who would rule by force, but a King who would serve and sacrifice himself for his people. And so Jesus rides into Jerusalem as a King, God's King on a donkey to bring God's peace to his people. Peace that he would win with a crown of thorns on his head. Peace he would win with that sign nailed to his cross - Jesus of Nazareth King of the Jews. Peace he would win by refusing to give in to sin and Satan, by refusing to give in to fear and anger. Peace he would win by satisfying God's demands for justice, by dying in place of his people, in place of you and me.

As Jesus rode that donkey into Jerusalem, did anybody in the cheering crowd know what Jesus would do for them that Good Friday? I doubt it. But that didn't stop Jesus. Today he had a message to send - to his disciples, his people, even his enemies. When praise and cheer seem out of place, when hope and confidence in God seem out of place, remember Jesus on Palm Sunday. With all that was

going on, with all that was at work against him, it would have been a good time for Jesus to lie low, to keep quiet, to stay out of sight. But Jesus had something to show his people, to show you and me.

You see it as he directs his disciples with just the right directions to find the donkey. You see it as Jesus gives just the right answer for anybody who would object. You see it as Jesus rides calm and in control, as he accepts the praise of the crowd. You see what Jesus is showing us - Jesus knows what's up ahead. Jesus knows the darkness and dread; Jesus knows the evil at work. But that's not all. Jesus knows what he's going to do. No matter who he has against him, no matter what he has ahead of him, Jesus isn't backing down or backing away; he's calm and in control. No matter how much the world is coming together against him, Jesus is calm and in control; he has things under control. He doesn't have to hide himself or hide his people - "Don't stir up too much attention." No, Jesus isn't worried; he doesn't have to hide; he rides in control. And when the people praise him, when the children sing their praises, Jesus doesn't quiet them: "Not yet, not now; we don't know how it'll work out. Let's see what happens before we get too fired up." No, Jesus knows what's coming. Jesus knows what he's about to do. He knows what the Father is about to do. He knows how they will keep their promise. Jesus knows the victory, the life he has for his people. He knows the victory, the life he has for you. And so Jesus rides in peace, calm and in control.

Think about it. Even with all that was going on back then, it wasn't too soon, it wasn't out of place for Jesus and his church to celebrate and cheer. That same thing is true today. Even with all that is going wrong today, it's not too soon; it's not out of place for us to celebrate, for us to cheer what Jesus has going. We're not jumping the gun. Jesus has things under control; he's working his plan; he's keeping his promise; he has you covered. And let me say this: "You're not crashing the party; you're not out of place. No matter what you've done in the past; no matter what ugly has gone through your head; no matter what ugly has come out of your mouth; it doesn't matter how out of place you might feel with Jesus. When you're with Jesus, you're not out of place. When you're with Jesus, you're not crashing the party. When you're with Jesus, it doesn't matter what happens out there. Just like on Palm Sunday, Jesus is calm and in control - with peace for you!

And what do we say to that?

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

HYMN

"Hosanna, Loud Hosanna"
Hymn 130

Hosanna, loud hosanna, The little children sang;
Through pillared court and temple The lovely 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 victor palm branch waving And chanting clear and loud.
The Lord of saints and angels Rode on in lowly state
Nor scorned that little children Should on his bidding wait.

"Hosanna in the highest!" That ancient song we sing,
For Christ is our Redeemer, The Lord of heav'n, our King.
Oh, may we ever praise him With heart and life and voice
And in his royal presence Eternally rejoice.

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, humble 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, humble 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, humble 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.**

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. Amen.

CLOSING HYMN

“Ride On, Ride On in Majesty”

Hymn 133

(Stanzas 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 power and reign.

Postlude

“Hosanna to the King”

By Sam Ellison

OFFERING

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Conference of Presidents addresses concerns about the Equality Act

Some have been asking about the potential impact of the proposed federal Equality Act on Christian churches and religious organizations, including our own synod.

The Equality Act was first passed by the U.S. House of Representatives in 2019 but was not adopted by the U.S. Senate at that time. It was passed again by the House of Representatives on Feb. 25, 2021, and may well be introduced into the Senate in the near future.

The Equality Act seeks to make sexual orientation and gender identity a protected class, just like one's biological sex, under our nation's current federal non-discrimination laws. As a church we do not express opinions on purely political matters. However, the concern in this case is that aspects of the Equality Act could make it very difficult for the church to carry out its mission and could jeopardize our religious freedom to preach and teach God's Word faithfully.

At this point, there is much we don't know. For one thing, it is not known when or if the Senate will discuss the Equality Act, although it could be at any time. For another thing, if the Senate should pass the Equality Act, it is not known what specific restrictions would be imposed on Christian churches and institutions or what the result will be when legal firms appeal to the courts in regard to religious freedom concerns.

This concern is due to the fact that in its present form the Equality Act appears not to provide for religious exemptions. It is possible, therefore, that identifying certain types of behavior as sinful could be considered unlawful hate speech under the provisions of this act. It could result in the loss of our tax-exempt status. It could also affect the ability of our colleges to receive federal funding for scholarships, grants, and loans for their students. There are several other ways in which carrying out our normal daily operations as churches and schools could potentially be affected in regard to things like facilities, health insurance policies, and sports programs.

Our entire focus as a Christian church is to proclaim God's law and gospel in order to convict people of sin and to assure people of forgiveness through the sacrificial death of Christ our Savior. We recognize that the only way for people to have an appropriate view of any situation of life, including matters of sexual identity, is to know and believe in Jesus. As a result, we do not believe that seeking to prevent a law from coming into existence will change anyone's heart. We also do not make it our goal to simply change anyone's external behavior. Further, we do not in any way condone behavior that shows hatred or disrespect to any individual. Such behavior is also sinful.

Our desire and responsibility, however, is to continue practicing our faith in humility and love, as we share with ourselves and others what God says in his Word for our eternal good. As individual Christian citizens, you may well exercise your citizenship by contacting your U.S. senators to express any concerns you may have. We encourage all of you to pray that, if the Equality Act should become law, no aspect of the law will be allowed to compromise our ability to share God's Word freely. In other words, pray that religious exemptions be maintained, as has been the constitutional right the Lord has allowed us to enjoy for many years. While the Bible does not guarantee that right, it has been a blessing that we have cherished. If that should not be the case, then we further encourage your prayers that the Lord would give us the boldness and courage to be faithful to him, no matter the earthly consequences, as we work together as brothers and sisters in Christ to continue to carry out our Savior's mission. The work of God's kingdom will always move forward.

We will certainly keep alert to further developments and communicate those when appropriate.

God, have mercy on us and give us your peace, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Serving with you in Christ,
WELS President Mark Schroeder



Maundy Thursday	April 1	7:00pm
Good Friday	April 2	3:00pm & 7:00pm
Easter Service	April 4	6:30am
Easter Service	April 4	9:00am
Easter Service	April 4	11:00am

Maundy 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 Good Friday at 3 and 7. We are offering two services to help with social-distancing. Note the time of our early service (3p) is EARLIER than usual to coincide with the time of our Savior’s death. This year, instead of our traditional Tenebrae Service, our services will focus on the Seven Words of Jesus from the cross. We are not asking for reservations.

Easter Sunday We can’t wait for the sun to come up! We have a living Jesus to meet! Join us for Easter services at 6:30, 9, and 11. Seating is limited, so please reserve a place. Our registration link is on our webpage calendar and on our News page. You don’t have to be quiet leaving this service – rejoice and tell your world the best news of the year - Jesus lives!