

Palm Sunday, April 2nd 2023
Unfinished: Called to experience God's presence

Processional Reading: Luke 19:29-35

When he had come near Bethphage and Bethany, at the place called the Mount of Olives, he sent two of the disciples, 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. If anyone asks you, 'Why are you untying it?' just say this, 'The Lord needs it.'" So those who were sent departed and found it as he had told them. As they were untying the colt, its owners asked them, "Why are you untying the colt?" They said, "The Lord needs it." Then they brought it to Jesus; and after throwing their cloaks on the colt, they set Jesus on it.

Processional Hymn: "All Glory Laud and Honor" #344

Pastor: Rejoice greatly, O daughter Zion!
Shout aloud, O daughter Jerusalem!
Lo, your king comes to you;
triumphant and victorious is he,
humble and riding on a donkey,
on a colt, the foal of a donkey.

**Congregation: "Hosanna!
Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the
Lord!
Blessed is the coming kingdom of our ancestor
David!
Hosanna in the highest heaven!"**

Processional Anthem

Prayer of the Day

Everlasting God, in your endless love for the human race you sent our Lord Jesus Christ, a humble king. Let his way continue to show us how to live lives of grace and mercy. As we know where we are headed this Holy Week, help us to see your action through your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

Children's Message

Gospel – John 12:12-19

¹²The next day the great crowd that had come to the festival heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem. ¹³So they took branches of palm trees and went out to meet him, shouting, "Hosanna! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord—the King of Israel!" ¹⁴Jesus found a young donkey and sat on it; as it is written: ¹⁵"Do not be afraid, daughter of Zion. Look, your king is coming, sitting on a donkey's colt!" ¹⁶His disciples did not understand these things at first; but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things had been written of him and had been done to him. ¹⁷So the crowd that had been with him when he called Lazarus out of the tomb and raised him from the dead continued to testify. ¹⁸It was also because they heard that he had performed this sign that the crowd went to meet him. ¹⁹The Pharisees then said to one another, "You see, you can do nothing. Look, the world has gone after him!"

The Gospel of the Lord. **Praise be to God.**

Message

People of God, grace to you and peace from God, and from our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. AMEN

We've come to the last Sunday in the Season of Lent and our series; *Unfinished: Discovering God's Call in the Not Yet*, and today we get the story of Christ's triumphal entry into Jerusalem. A story of a people unaware of what is to come, who in the moment show a sign of upmost hospitality and praise, lining the streets with their cloaks for Jesus to pass by, shouting "HOSANNA" as he does.

We asked the question in our Bible Study last week: Did they even know?

From our Lent resource:

It would be helpful to draw ourselves into the ordinariness of so much of this story. After all, it is in the ordinary that most of this unfinished life is lived. Throughout the Palm Sunday narrative, and the Passion Narrative that soon follows, it is in the ordinary that Jesus shows up. It is in the ordinary that God is present. It is in and through the ordinary that God's extraordinary love is made manifest. A religious festival. A parade. All leading to a meal. Bread. Wine. Prayers. Things gone wrong. Betrayal. Court proceedings. Despair. Death. Through all of this, God is never absent. The Palm Sunday story calls us in our own, unfinished, ordinary lives to expect God to be present, and to look for the experiences of God's presence even, and perhaps especially, in the places and circumstances we least expect.

The crowd that day went with what everyone was doing. They heard that a King would be coming into their city and they lined the streets to meet him. Their shouts of Hosanna literally translate as "save us," so they knew what they were shouting, but did they know the larger story that they were a part of?

They knew there was a king in their midst, but did they know that it was the Almighty King? King of Kings? Or, were they just happy that there was something new?

Do we know? We know the whole story. We know where this is all headed and why it is all happening. But, do we know where we would find ourselves if we had been there? We know what their shouts of "HOSANNA – God Save Us" mean, because we know the whole story.

But, would we have been aware of God's presence in that moment? In that parade? Amid those shouts?

It does us well to admit what we don't know. We think we need to have all the answers, but sometimes these three words can be the most powerful, "I don't know," as long as we allow them to draw us to deeper understanding and wondering.

So, we should note:

- Sometimes it is hard to realize where God shows up
- Sometimes it feels like God is absent
- Sometimes when "things go wrong," we are pretty sure God isn't there
- God is never absent
- God is present in the ordinary
- God often shows up in ways we least expect.

And when we allow ourselves to come to those realizations, we ask ourselves the following:

- When, where, and how have I encountered or experienced the presence of God today?
- What surprised me about where I encountered or experienced the presence of God today?
- What do I need for tomorrow?

People of God, what we've found to be true throughout this season of Lent and our exploration of this theme that we are a people unfinished, is that we don't go about this exploration alone. God is continually present in the moments that we find ourselves in and the moments we look back on.

As we wind down this season of Lent and enter into Holy Week, I pray that we would be attentive to where it is that God has been, and continues to be, active in our stories. We have come to know and trust that God comes alongside in this journey called life. Let us turn our hearts and minds to where God is active today.

Thanks be to God. AMEN

Apostle’s Creed

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,
Creator of heaven and earth.
I believe in Jesus Christ, God’s only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.
I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic church, the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.**

Prayers of Intercession

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

A brief silence.

Save your church, O God. Enable us to boldly confess in every time and place that Jesus Christ is Lord. With the humility of a servant, equip congregations, synods, and other ministry settings to proclaim your extravagant love for all. Merciful God,
receive our prayer.

Save your creation, O God. Every living being you have made has purpose. Give us renewed appreciation of farm animals who labor in the fields, service animals who accompany their human companions, and beloved pets who live alongside us. Merciful God,
receive our prayer.

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 where conflict runs deep (*especially*). Merciful God,
receive our prayer.

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 (*We pray especially for Peyton, Matt, David, Verna, Irene, Connie, Clarice, Steve, Kathy, Val, Jacob, Keith and JoJo, Bob and Joanne, Bill and Bonnie, Frank and Heather, Bob and Sonja, Bill and Betty, Tom and Kay, Sherm and Mary, Sandy*). Merciful God,
receive our prayer.

Save us in your love, O God. Guide the work of church musicians, pastors, choirs, readers, deacons, technicians, acolytes, and all who assist in worship. Sustain them in their leadership as they accompany congregations through this Holy Week. Merciful God,
receive our prayer.

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. Merciful God,
receive our prayer.

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.

Offering

Offertory Prayer

God of good gifts,
receive these and all our offerings
as we present them in faithful service
for the sake of your gospel.
Prepare our hearts to receive you in this meal
as you pour out your very presence
through Christ Jesus, the wellspring of eternal life.
Amen.

Words of Institution

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

Communion

Prayer

Embodied God,
at your table, we have tasted the goodness of Jesus.
With the eyes of our hearts open to your promise,
empower us to hear the needs of our neighbors
and touch the world with your love.
Amen.

Blessing

God, the giver of love,
✠ Christ, the resurrection and the life,
and the Holy Spirit of rebirth
bless you in this Lenten journey.
Amen.

Sending Song **"I Want Jesus to Walk with Me"**

#325

Enter into Holy Week

Psalm 31:9-16 Read Responsively by Verse

- ⁹Have mercy on me, O LORD, for I am in trouble;
my eye is consumed with sorrow, and also my throat and my belly.
¹⁰**For my life is wasted with grief, and my years with sighing;
my strength fails me because of affliction, and my bones are consumed.**
¹¹I am the scorn of all my enemies, a disgrace to my neighbors, a dismay to my acquaintances;
when they see me in the street they avoid me.
¹²**Like the dead I am forgotten, out of mind;
I am as useless as a broken pot.**
¹³For I have heard the whispering of the crowd; fear is all around;
they put their heads together against me; they plot to take my life.
¹⁴**But as for me, I have trusted in you, O LORD.
I have said, "You are my God.**
¹⁵My times are in your hand;

rescue me from the hand of my enemies, and from those who persecute me.

**¹⁶Let your face shine upon your servant;
save me in your steadfast love.”**

John 12:27-36

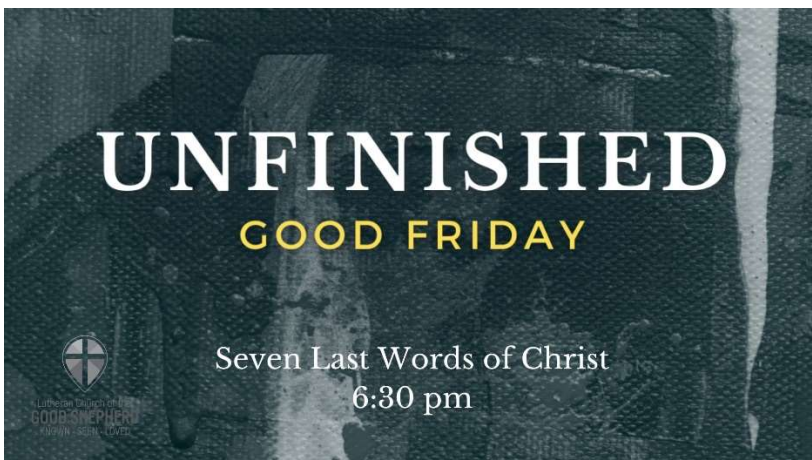
²⁷“Now my soul is troubled. And what should I say—‘Father, save me from this hour’? No, it is for this reason that I have come to this hour. ²⁸Father, glorify your name.” Then a voice came from heaven, “I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again.” ²⁹The crowd standing there heard it and said that it was thunder. Others said, “An angel has spoken to him.” ³⁰Jesus answered, “This voice has come for your sake, not for mine. ³¹Now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world will be driven out. ³²And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself.” ³³He said this to indicate the kind of death he was to die. ³⁴The crowd answered him, “We have heard from the law that the Messiah remains forever. How can you say that the Son of Man must be lifted up? Who is this Son of Man?” ³⁵Jesus said to them, “The light is with you for a little longer. Walk while you have the light, so that the darkness may not overtake you. If you walk in the darkness, you do not know where you are going. ³⁶While you have the light, believe in the light, so that you may become children of light.” After Jesus had said this, he departed and hid from them.

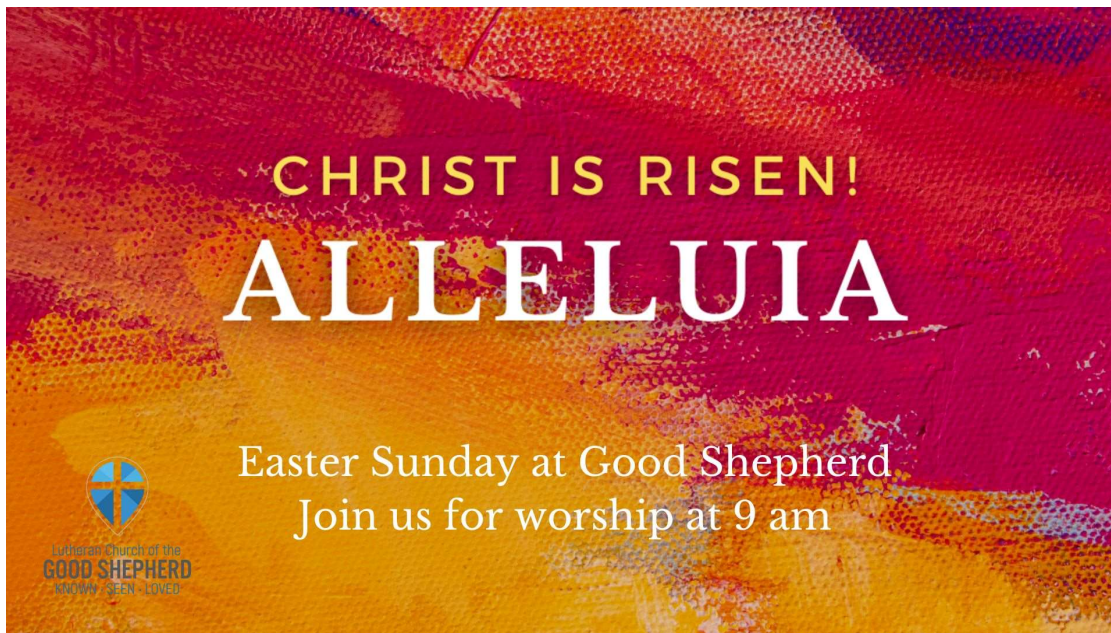
Go in Peace. Our Holy Week worship continues with Maundy Thursday Worship at 6:30 pm.

We hope you’ll join us for a Fellowship Brunch in the Fellowship Hall.

2023 Financial Snapshot

Month of March		Year-to-Date	
Total Revenue	\$21,619	Total Revenue	\$58,673
Total Expenses	\$24,822	Total Expenses	\$54,854
Monthly Difference	-\$3,203	Difference for the Year	\$3,819





At Good Shepherd we have an exciting future ahead of us. On Sunday, April 16th we begin a journey to discern it, and your voice is critical.

We invite you to stay after worship (until noon) for a time of conversation, led by Pastor Pete Reuss and Clyde Walters of GSB Fundraising, as together we listen to what God has in store for our future together at Good Shepherd.

For so long we've gone with the flow, responding to what God is up to as it arises, and as fun as it has been to fly by the seat of our pants, it is time to intentionally listen to where God is leading us. This is a wonderfully hopeful time for us as a congregation. We've made commitments as a congregation to a bright future, and the pledges that we saw come in only affirmed that.