

Palm Sunday, March 24th 2024

Jesus has invited us. To repentance. Out of our shame. To wonder and dream about what could be. And, to rest.

Now, as we enter into Holy Week, Jesus invites us to cry out. Those in power wanted to silence those who shouted praises lining that street, but Jesus responds, “even the stones would cry out.” Basically, “good luck.” In that is an invite for us to join those shouting praises in the streets!

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 “Sign Hosanna to the King”

Greeting

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Love of God, and the Communion of the Holy Spirit, be with you all.
And also with you.

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 – Luke 19:36-40

³⁶ As he rode along, people kept spreading their cloaks on the road. ³⁷ Now as he was 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!”

³⁹ Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to him, “Teacher, order your disciples to stop.” ⁴⁰ He answered, “I tell you, if these were silent, the stones would shout out.”

The Gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you, O Christ.

Message

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

“If these, the multitudes, this massive crowd, those who shout out, cry out, were to be silenced...

The stones would shout out.”

Imagine for a moment what it must have been like to be there. We try. We do our best to create some semblance of what that day must have been like, we parade around with our palm branches, we wave them, we shout our hosannas, we sing of glory, laud, and honor due to our king, but do we *really* think it was anything even remotely close to that?

This whole situation, this parade, begs the question: How did it get to be this big?

The way it is described sounds like what we have come to understand the championship parades to be here in our time now. Major sports champions parade through the city with folks lined up for blocks, many folks deep along the roadways, to catch a glimpse of the their sports heroes.

But, those parades are scheduled days in advance. Folks know they are going to be happening and have days to make plans to be there. If one needed to, they’d even be able to purchase plane tickets if driving there wasn’t an option. In our world today folks have ample opportunity to plan their pilgrimages to see their heroes of the sport of their choosing.

Was it that way for the multitude that lined the streets to see Jesus? Did the local paper print headlines announcing the parade and celebration that was to come?

Were there news stories and logistics meetings upon logistics meetings to plan the route that would work best to create the best environment for those that wanted to be a part of it?

Probably not.

But. We know, we are told, there was a multitude.

When we hear that word, multitude, I personally don’t think that it is a small number of folks. The dictionary definition is simply, “a large number of people or things.” Okay, that doesn’t really give us an idea either. What is a large number? There are few clues that we can glean to get an idea of just how large this crowd might have been.

First, in the birth narratives that we find in scripture, we hear of the multitude of the heavenly host appearing to the Shepherds in the field keeping watch over their flocks by night. In that story, and perhaps it is because we allow our imaginations to run a bit wild, but I imagine the sky lined with celestial beings. The multitudes, in that context as well as this one, seem like an incredible crowd.

Another clue, we know that this is the time of the Passover and many would be making their way to Jerusalem for the Festival of the Passover. Jesus has made this pilgrimage before. We are reminded of Boy Jesus in the temple, when he as traveled there with his family the days journey that it takes, and when they are on their way home he is lost and left at the temple. The traveling party of family and friends that he and his parents are a part of is so large, and trusted, that it is a couple of days before Mary and Joseph realize his absence. This gives us an idea just how many people would have been making this trek. Jesus and his traveling party would not have been the only one. There would have been numerous traveling parties just like his making their way to Jerusalem for the festival of the Passover.

We also are given an idea of the size of the crowd in the reaction of those who are threatened by what it is that the multitudes were shouting. If it were simply the 12 disciples shouting what the crowd was shouting, those in authority, challenged by their shouts proclaiming the coming of the king, likely could have quietly done away with them. But, they knew that it would take Jesus to silence them, the crowd was simply too large. It wasn't just the twelve, it was a multitude of disciples.

"Teacher, order your disciples to stop." Jesus, order the multitudes that have come to understand what it is that your mission and ministry is about and what it means for them to stop shouting about it in the streets. This new world, this new way, the new commandment that you will bring is a threat to our power as we have come to know and enjoy. Please. Make it stop.

And Jesus, with a touch of snark, answered, "I tell you, if these were silent, the stones would shout out."

What does it mean for us as people of faith that even if the crowds would have stopped shouting in the streets of the new king that Jesus was, that even the stones would have cried out.

Jesus knew that the good news of God's love is a message that cannot be contained by those in power who are threatened by it. He knew it was a lost cause, for even if you were able to silence those who cried out, that the stones of the earth would join the chorus.

People of God, this is an invitation for us to join the multitudes!

We find ourselves on this, the Sunday of Holy Week, knowing full well what is to come, just as Jesus knew full well what was to come to him, with an invitation to cry out what it means for us here and now!

We know the goodness of this story, in all the pain and suffering of the savior that will come with it, and it is a story that needs to be proclaimed.

We hear Jesus' urging that even if we try to temper how urgent and needed the Good News of God's Love for God's people is, the stones will cry out.

As we enter Holy Week, Jesus invites us into the story. To wonder together what it may have been like. To hear together the story that we maybe know so well. To hear it again. To come together as communities gathered some 2000 years ago, to long for the hope of Easter resurrection.

Thanks be to God. AMEN

Song of the Day: What Wondrous Love Is This?" #666

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

Trusting in God's promise to reconcile all things, let us pray for the church, the well-being of creation, and a world in need.

A brief silence.

Blessed One, today the church sings glad hosannas as we enter Holy Week. Prepare us to bear witness to Christ's suffering and death endured for our sake. Gather your people around the cross and comfort us with resurrection hope. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Renew your good creation and protect the balance of life on earth. Encourage the work of foresters, scientists, arborists, gardeners, and river keepers. We pray for the health of pollinating insects, songbirds, and native plants. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Establish peace and justice among the nations. We pray especially today for the tragedy that continues to unfold in the middle east and the Holy Land this Holy Week. Hold to account any with authority to judge others. Grant that courts, legislatures, and local governments will serve with integrity and compassion. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Bring hope to any who feel forsaken or forgotten. Make a way for refugees and asylum seekers. Reunite families enduring separation. We pray for any who are incarcerated, institutionalized, or in foster care, that they may know your love. Be with those who are sick, seeking healing and wholeness. We pray especially for *Matt, David, Clarice, Steve, Kathy, Val, Cherri, Peggy, John, Keith and JoJo, Bob and Joanne, Frank and Heather, Bob and Sonja, Bill and Betty, Tom and Kay, Sherm and Mary, Dan and Sharon, Roger and MaryLee.*

Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Give energy and joy to our pastor/s, deacons, worship leaders, and musicians. Bless those preparing for baptism and those preparing to receive their first communion. Watch over those who travel. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

Blessed One, our times are in your hand. Sustain us in discipleship throughout our lives and receive us into everlasting life. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Accompany us on our journey, God of grace, and receive the prayers of our hearts, through Jesus Christ, our Savior.

Amen.

Peace

Offering

Offertory Prayer

Jesus, you are the bread of life
and the host of this meal.

Bless these gifts that we have gathered
that all people may know your goodness.

Feed us not only with this holy food
but with hunger for justice and peace.

We pray this in your name.

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

Generous God,
at this table we have tasted your immeasurable grace.
As grains of wheat are gathered into one bread,
now make us one loaf to feed the world;
in the name of Jesus, the Bread of life.

Amen.

Blessing

Beloved,
we are God's own people,
holy, washed, renewed.
God bless you and keep you,
shower you with mercy,
fill you with courage,
and ✠ give you peace.

Amen.

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

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.

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

Luke 19:41-44

⁴¹ As he came near and saw the city, he wept over it, ⁴² saying, "If you, even you, had only recognized on this day the things that make for peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes. ⁴³ Indeed, the days will come upon you when your enemies will set up ramparts around you and surround you and hem you in on every

side. ⁴⁴They will crush you to the ground, you and your children within you, and they will not leave within you one stone upon another, because you did not recognize the time of your visitation from God.”

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.