



Kaurihohore Historic Church

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Kaurihohore / Kamo Co-operating Parish Sunday 10 April 2022 – Palm Sunday

Our service today has been prepared by Rosalie Gwilliam, one of our Lay Preachers

To prepare for sharing in this service I invite you to arrange 7 candles which have been used over the next few weeks leading up to Easter. Light 2 of them before you begin your Worship time.

Welcome

Hymn: Shout Hosanna

Jan Chamberlin

Tune HFTC 38 Praise my Soul ...

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hbZQhFMvrWc>

Come with crowds along the pathway,
Wave your palm branch, shout and sing:
Strew the road with outer garment,
All your loud hosannas bring.
Celebrate the wondrous moment:
On a donkey rides a king.

Not for him the golden trappings,
nor a crown upon his head:
not a tall, imposing stallion,
but a donkey's calf instead.
Yet the people recognise him,
greet him with their arms outspread.

Hail him as your king, redeemer
hail the son of God on high:
humble in his hour of glory,
on to suffer and to die.
Shout hosanna, alleluia,
to our saviour riding by.

This Sunday of the Palms and Passion provides the entry point into the week called Holy. For in spite of the absence of good in the words and actions that rain down upon Jesus, the Holy One is not done with Jesus even when eyes close and stones seal. These stories beckon us to live with trust and for good, when all is well, and when all is not well. Our worshipful engagement with this day's texts will beckon us to follow Jesus into Jerusalem, to witness his passion and trust, that we in turn might be faithful witnesses who trust in God in word and deed, in life and death.

Call to Worship

based on Psalm 118: 27-29

Start the celebration!

March with palm branches into this place of worship

The Lord is our God.

We will bring our praise and thanks to the God who has given us light.

Prayer

Lord God, we greet you on this Palm Sunday morning with our songs and shouts of praise.

We greet you as King of all.

We give thanks for your openness and inclusivity.

We celebrate the way you reach out to the broken, the downcast, the lonely and the excluded.

Let us come to worship you today, with an openness to humility and compassion.

Let us turn our backs on pride and power, and follow in your footsteps

Let us seek to be more like you. Amen

Lenten Liturgy

We have gathered here, week after week, sharing a common quest for a deeper faith and a deeper experience of the divine. I invite you now to close your eyes and let go of the things that distract and concern you. Listen! The time is drawing near. Jesus is preparing to enter Jerusalem. How will we greet him? Will we follow him all the way to the Cross?

The power of Jesus is that he lived what he taught, even when it led to his death. He lived with an abiding awareness of God, radiating the light of God in all he said and did. But that light was too much for the world. There are forces today, as there were in ancient Judea, that conspire to put it out. Where are we in this drama? What are we willing to risk to follow Jesus?

(Silent time.)

As we extinguish this light, we acknowledge the darkness and pain of illness and disease in the world.

(A candle is extinguished.)

Let us pray.

Loving God, there are so many choices before us every day. Choices offered by our friends, our families, our culture, our own past. Some of them encourage the well-being of the earth, ourselves and our neighbours; others are destructive. Help us to distinguish between them. May we learn from the choices of Jesus and embody compassion, justice, and inclusion in all we say and do. Amen.

Hymn FFS 79: *Who Will Carry the Cross With Me*

Who will carry the cross with me?

asks the Christ, the Son of God.

Who will carry the cross with me,

walk the way of love?

Who then will turn and follow me?

asks the Christ the Son of god.

Who will turn then and follow me,

hear the call and come?

Who will live every day through me?

asks the Christ the Son of God.

Who will live every day through me,

showing fruits of grace?

Who will eat of my bread with me?
asks the Christ the Son of God.
Who will eat of my bread with me,
broken and renewed?

Who will give up their life for me?
asks the Christ the Son of God?
Who will give up their life for me,
and surrender all.

Who will welcome me with palms?
asks the Christ the Son of God.
Who will walk along with me,
showing love to all?

Psalm 118

Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good!

His faithful love endures forever

Let all Israel repeat:

His faithful love endures forever.

Open for me the gates where the righteous enter, and I will go in and thank the Lord.

These gates lead to the presence of the Lord, and the godly enter there.

I thank you for answering my prayer and giving me victory!

The stone that the builders rejected has now become the cornerstone.

This is the Lord's doing, and it is wonderful to see.

This is the day the Lord has made. We will rejoice and be glad in it.

Please, Lord, please save us. Please, Lord, give us success.

Bless the one who comes in the name of the Lord. We bless you from the house of the Lord.

The Lord is God, shining upon us. Take the sacrifice and bind it with cords on the altar.

You are my God, and I will praise you! You are my God and I will exalt you!

Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good! His faithful love endures forever.

Prayer of Centring and Renewal

May we be your disciples today, O Jesus, where we know what we cry, where we take to heart the hosannas and live them beyond the parade.

May we be your supporters today, O Jesus, where we know the saviour you are, where we intend to follow you from gate to garden.

May we be your voice today, O Jesus, where we cry out against the protests, where we stake our faith and lives on what you begin here today.

Lord's Prayer

Scripture Readings:

In the readings today we move beyond the jubilant crowds of followers towards the true revelation of Jesus' identity and purpose on the cross. Jesus' passion unfolds as those in power abuse an innocent man. Psalmist and prophet lend perspectives on what it means to refuse to repay evil with evil, and to choose instead to speak and act with gracious forbearance and unswerving trust in God's purposes. The question posed in these passages is not simply what we make of Christ's passion in the words and deeds that Luke records. The more fundamental question is this: What does Christ's passion make of us?

Isaiah 50: 4-9

Luke 19: 28-40

Reflection:

On Palm Sunday the Jesus bandwagon is well and truly rolling and everybody wants to be on it. It has rolled through the Judean countryside for weeks and weeks and now is approaching the end of the journey – Jerusalem, the Holy City, the seat of power, the place where the Messiah would establish himself and rid the nation of its oppressors.

Jesus certainly hasn't come out and said that he's going to do that, but that's the rumour circulating through this diverse and very excited crowd, and they are sure that Jesus has enough enemies in Jerusalem that unless he's planning something rather big, you'd reckon he'd know better than to walk there.

But public opinion is on his side. Everyone in this excited crowd of followers – disciples as well as everyday folk from the towns and villages they passed through – everyone is jumping on the bandwagon. The tickertape is reigning down. The people are dancing and chanting 'Jesus, Jesus, Jesus.' Placards are held high. Palm branches, whipped off the trees as they walked, are being waved, people are throwing their coats in front of him, and perhaps even the odd pair of knickers. Jesus is recording the highest opinion poll rating ever, knocking off even mask wearing and mandates.

But public opinion is a fickle thing. As we shall hear again this Friday, just a few days later the cry of the crowd has become a snarling call for blood. 'Crucify him! Crucify him! Crucify him!'

How could that be so fickle? How could they call for him to be crowned King one day and crucified the next? Enthroned one day and electric chaired the next? Who are these people and how could they abandon him so easily?

I'm sure that these people following Jesus were ordinary folk like you and me – families, children and seniors, fast walkers and slow walkers, who saw in Jesus a leader who cared for everyone regardless of their position in society or their wealth. They welcomed a king who would lead them to a better way of life.

But people are fickle, and we could go into all sorts of explanations about failed expectations, about how they had a certain sort of image in their minds about what sort of Messiah they wanted and how they were not prepared to accept a Messiah on different terms. We could go into the details about the complex power play that was going on and the way public opinion was being manipulated. We could talk about the psychology of crowd behaviour and how people will get swept along in a mob mentality to do things that they would never do on their own with time to think about it. I think we have seen something of mob mentality recently in the protest in Wellington.

We could explore more of these things and they would yield up valuable information, all of them would contribute to our knowledge of what happened back then, and today, and how and why.

But, I don't think we need to do that. If we really want to understand how these people could sing Jesus' praise one day, and call for his death the next, I don't think we need to look any further than ourselves.

The contents of our own hearts and the quality of our behaviour. You see, my guess is that most of you are not that different from me, and I know what I am capable of.

I know that I can stand here and sing praises to Jesus one day, and walk by on the other side of the road another day, as he lies in the gutter.

I know that I can be lost in wonder and praise at the gracious mercy of God one day, and then turn around and make an unfair judgment on someone the next day, just writing them off, without showing any sign of the grace I have been shown has begun to rub off on me.

I don't think I am alone. You see, it is easy to cheer for Jesus, to wave palm branches and sing praises in the gathered assembly. It's not difficult to join in the singing here each Sunday morning and honour Jesus as Messiah and King of the universe. But there's a lot more to following Jesus than just cheering from the sidelines.

What do these praises mean when, talking to a neighbour with extreme vaccination beliefs and love and justice just don't fit, do you honour Jesus with your actions or do you relent and crucify him?

What do all the words of commitment mean when you find yourself in a group of people discussing the use of time and money that perhaps isn't how you would see the community need?

What do the words, 'praise' and 'crucify' mean when you find yourself in a group discussing what a fraud Jesus Christ was, and how his followers only caused misery in the world? Misinformation! Do you praise him with your lips or crucify him with your silence.

How could the crowd be so fickle? How could they cheer for Jesus one day and call for his blood the next? Perhaps they were just like us.

It's a sobering realisation, but don't despair. This is not the end of the story. On Thursday night we will pick up the story again and follow what happens to Jesus and to his people just like us. We'll hear of him kneeling at the feet of people just like us and washing our feet and promising us that we'll be a part of him. And on Friday, we'll look in horror at the extent of what people just like us can do and we'll hear him say for us 'Father, forgive them, they don't know what they are doing'. And by Sunday, who knows what we might become?!!

Prayers for Others

Among the crowds so busy with the moment, can we spot the woman shouting hosanna as she tries to forget the lack of food for her table?

We pray for the hungry

In the chaos of the people laying coats on the road, busy with the moment, do we notice the one who remains silent, lonely, even in a crowd?

We pray for the lonely

In the moving hordes crying for salvation, busy with the moment, can we see the person who isn't out for the day, but whose home is the street?

We pray for the homeless.

In the sway of the masses eager to see, busy with the moment, will we spot the one looking among the crowd for someone long gone?

We pray for those grieving.

In the moment of the pack caught up in hysteria, busy with the moment, can we recognise the one with wounds and hurt from a different violence?

We pray for those in conflict.

In the baying of the mob, cheering without knowing why, busy with the moment, will we notice the change from hosanna to crucify and those who must suffer?

We pray for ourselves and why we are here. Amen

Hymn HFTC 120: All Glory Praise and Honour

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fjGRDSMPV2g>

Epilogue

And so the cross, that tree of shame –

How beautiful it once was, covered in autumn gold, but hated winter has set in and rotted away all life.

It stretches there, like some gargoyle of shame, waiting for its bearer, who has carried it long enough.

And haunting its starkness are all the words of love but even they do not soften it.

What good is it now to sing words of love? What irony to speak of hope? But it is the only good there is, for here, in the shadow of this cruel love such words still make sense, and this week of all weeks, we must sing with faith, talk of hope, and long eagerly for the dawn, for this last irony, is the beginning of love.

Benediction

The blessing of Almighty God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit be with us all now and always.

Sung Amen