

Whitehorse Uniting Church
Sunday 24 March 2024
Palm Sunday Lent 6 A



Introit – Hymn 724 Hosanna

The congregation enter into a procession with palms, cloths, and musical instruments.

Chet Valley Churches 2021

<https://youtu.be/SKHwBamBSPk?si=4OMky8ADrCNTuXVg>

Welcome

We are journeying with Mark's gospel this Easter. Today we focus on a series of events that occurred around and on the Mount of Olives, from the Palm procession to the arrest of Jesus at Gethsemane.



Swanson, John August. Entry into the City, from **Art in the Christian Tradition**, a project of the Vanderbilt Divinity Library, Nashville, TN. <https://diglib.library.vanderbilt.edu/act-imagelink.pl?RC=56544> [retrieved March 17, 2024]. Original source: Estate of John August Swanson, <https://www.iohnaugustswanson.com/>

Call to Worship (Psalm 118:1-2 adapted)

Let us enter the journey to Easter.

Let us give thanks to the Lord. Let us praise him, with Hosannas.

Hosanna, Hosanna, Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

For he is good, his steadfast love endures forever.

Prayer

Maxwell Craig, Lent, and Easter Readings from Iona (*Edit. Neil Paynter*) Wild Goose Publications, Glasgow. www.ionabooks.com Used with permission. (*adapted*)



Swanson, John August. Entry into the City, from **Art in the Christian Tradition**, a project of the Vanderbilt Divinity Library, Nashville, TN. <https://diglib.library.vanderbilt.edu/act-imagelink.pl?RC=56544> [retrieved March 17, 2024]. Original source: Estate of John August Swanson, <https://www.iohnaugustswanson.com/>

O God our Father, we rejoice in the thrill of Palm Sunday. We see again the bright colours of that triumphant Spring Day; we hear the shouts of Hosanna; we wave palm branches in unison with the children of Jerusalem. Yet we know that joy can be short-lived, that a crowd is often fickle; and that we are part of the fickleness. Forgive our broken loyalty, we pray. Make us true followers of Jesus, each day of his coming Holy Week, that as we walk the way of his cross, we may commit ourselves all over again to the fashioning of his Kingdom in Jerusalem, in our own communities and across your world. We ask this in the name of Jesus. Amen

Hymn 724 Hosanna sung by Choir

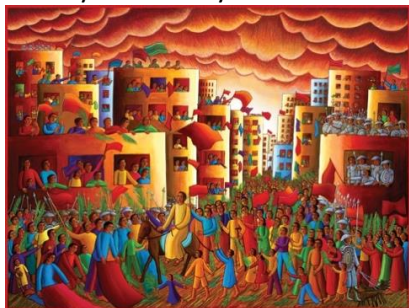
Mark 11:1-11 NRSV updated. First Reading – Jesus’ triumphal entry into Jerusalem

11 When they were approaching Jerusalem, at Bethphage and Bethany, near the Mount of Olives, he sent two of his disciples ²and said to them, “Go into the village ahead of you, and immediately as you enter it you will find tied there a colt that has never been ridden; untie it and bring it. ³If anyone says to you, ‘Why are you doing this?’ just say this: ‘The Lord needs it and will send it back here immediately.’ ” ⁴They went away and found a colt tied near a door, outside in the street. As they were untying it, ⁵some of the bystanders said to them, “What are you doing, untying the colt?” ⁶They told them what Jesus had said, and they allowed them to take it. ⁷Then they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their cloaks on it, and he sat on it. ⁸Many people spread their cloaks on the road, and others spread leafy branches that they had cut in the fields. ⁹Then those who went ahead and those who followed were shouting, “Hosanna! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord! ¹⁰Blessed is the coming kingdom of our ancestor David! Hosanna in the highest heaven!”

¹¹ Then he entered Jerusalem and went into the temple, and when he had looked around at everything, as it was already late, he went out to Bethany with the twelve

Young at Heart

I invite you to spend a moment reflecting on what Palm Sunday means to you and on your memories of Palm Sundays over the years. You’re welcome to share stories.



Swanson, John August. Entry into the City, from **Art in the Christian Tradition**, a project of the Vanderbilt Divinity Library, Nashville, TN. <https://diglib.library.vanderbilt.edu/act-imagelink.pl?RC=56544> [retrieved March 17, 2024]. Original source: Estate of John August Swanson, <https://www.johnaugustswanson.com/>

Hymn 348 Ride on, ride on in Majesty.

North Stoneham & Bassett Parish 2022

<https://youtu.be/uHelX8xTpYs?si=hqGjIDLrqScBupJ>

Mark 14:1-25 NRSV updated Second Reading – The Last Supper



Uhde, Fritz von, 1848-1911. Last Supper, from **Art in the Christian Tradition**, a project of the Vanderbilt Divinity Library, Nashville, TN. <https://diglib.library.vanderbilt.edu/act-imagelink.pl?RC=58166> [retrieved March 17, 2024]. Original source: [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:The_Last_Supper_\(1886\),_by_Fritz_von_Uhde.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:The_Last_Supper_(1886),_by_Fritz_von_Uhde.jpg).

14 It was two days before the Passover and the Festival of Unleavened Bread. The chief priests and the scribes were looking for a way to arrest Jesus^[a] by stealth and kill him, ²for they said, “Not during the festival, or there may be a riot among the people.”

³ While he was at Bethany in the house of Simon the leper,^[b] as he sat at the table, a woman came with an alabaster jar of very costly ointment of nard, and she broke open the jar and poured the ointment on his head. ⁴ But some were there who said to one another in anger, “Why was the ointment wasted in this way? ⁵ For this ointment could have been sold for more than three hundred denarii and the money given to the poor.” And they scolded her. ⁶ But Jesus said, “Let her alone; why do you trouble her? She has performed a good service for me. ⁷ For you always have the poor with you, and you can show kindness to them whenever you wish, but you will not always have me. ⁸ She has done what she could; she has anointed my body beforehand for its burial. ⁹ Truly I tell you, wherever the good news^[c] is proclaimed in the whole world, what she has done will be told in remembrance of her.”

¹⁰ Then Judas Iscariot, who was one of the twelve, went to the chief priests in order to betray him to them. ¹¹ When they heard it, they were greatly pleased and promised to give him money. So, he began to look for an opportunity to betray him.

¹² On the first day of Unleavened Bread, when the Passover lamb is sacrificed, his disciples said to him, “Where do you want us to go and make the preparations for you to eat the Passover?” ¹³ So he sent two of his disciples, saying to them, “Go into the city, and a man carrying a jar of water will meet you; follow him, ¹⁴ and wherever he enters, say to the owner of the house, ‘The Teacher asks: Where is my guest room where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?’ ¹⁵ He will show you a large room upstairs, furnished and ready. Make preparations for us there.” ¹⁶ So the disciples set out and went to the city and found everything as he had told them, and they prepared the Passover meal.

¹⁷ When it was evening, he came with the twelve. ¹⁸ And when they had taken their places and were eating, Jesus said, “Truly I tell you, one of you will betray me, one who is eating with me.” ¹⁹ They began to be distressed and to say to him one after another, “Surely, not I?” ²⁰ He said to them, “It is one of the twelve, one who is dipping bread^[d] into the bowl^[e] with me. ²¹ For the Son of Man goes as it is written of him, but woe to that one by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been better for that one not to have been born.”

²² While they were eating, he took a loaf of bread, and after blessing it he broke it, gave it to them, and said, “Take; this is my body.” ²³ Then he took a cup, and after giving thanks he gave it to them, and all of them drank from it. ²⁴ He said to them, “This is my blood of the^[f] covenant, which is poured out for many. ²⁵ Truly I tell you, I will never again drink of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God.”

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Hymn 25 As pants the hart for cooling streams.

Manchester Cathedral Choir

<https://youtu.be/Q3rva3RaR9k?si=HJO8pPmrQmjAQihc>

Mark 14:26-46 NRSV updated Third Reading – Christ’s agony in the Garden of Gethsemane



Christ's Agony in the Garden, from **Art in the Christian Tradition**, a project of the Vanderbilt Divinity Library, Nashville, TN. <https://diglib.library.vanderbilt.edu/act-imagelink.pl?RC=56482> [retrieved March 17, 2024]. Original source: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/bhsher/33474475>.

²⁶ When they had sung the hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives. ²⁷ And Jesus said to them, “You will all fall away,^[g] for it is written, ‘I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered.’”

²⁸ “But after I am raised up, I will go before you to Galilee.” ²⁹ Peter said to him, “Even though all fall away,^[h] I will not.” ³⁰ Jesus said to him, “Truly I tell you, this day, this very night, before the cock crows twice, you will deny me three times.” ³¹ But he said vehemently, “Even though I must die with you, I will not deny you.” And all of them said the same.

³² They went to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to his disciples, "Sit here while I pray." ³³ He took with him Peter and James and John and began to be distressed and agitated. ³⁴ And he said to them, "My soul is deeply grieved, even to death; remain here, and keep awake." ³⁵ And going a little farther, he threw himself on the ground and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from him. ³⁶ He said, "Abba,^[1] Father, for you all things are possible; remove this cup from me, yet not what I want but what you want." ³⁷ He came and found them sleeping, and he said to Peter, "Simon, are you asleep? Could you not keep awake one hour? ³⁸ Keep awake and pray that you may not come into the time of trial;^[1] the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." ³⁹ And again he went away and prayed, saying the same words. ⁴⁰ And once more he came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were very heavy, and they did not know what to say to him. ⁴¹ He came a third time and said to them, "Are you still sleeping and taking your rest? Enough! The hour has come; the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. ⁴² Get up, let us be going. Look, my betrayer is at hand."

Mark 14:43-46 NRSV Updated - Fourth Reading - Jesus betrayed by a kiss.



Douffet, Gerard, 1594 - 1660 or 61. Taking of Christ, from **Art in the Christian Tradition**, a project of the Vanderbilt Divinity Library, Nashville, TN. <https://diglib.library.vanderbilt.edu/act-imagelink.pl?RC=54953> [retrieved March 20, 2024]. Original source: http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Douffet,_G%C3%A9rard_-_Taking_of_Christ_with_the_Malchus_Episode_-_c._1620.jpg

⁴³ Immediately, while he was still speaking, Judas, one of the twelve, arrived, and with him there was a crowd with swords and clubs, from the chief priests, the scribes, and the elders. ⁴⁴ Now the betrayer had given them a sign, saying, "The one I will kiss is the man; arrest him and lead him away under guard." ⁴⁵ So when he came, he went up to him at once and said, "Rabbi!" and kissed him. ⁴⁶ Then they laid hands on him and arrested him.

Moment of quiet Reflection

Sermon – Rev Tina

In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, amen.

The journey to Easter began on the Mount of Olives, a place that overlooks Jerusalem. A significant place, for Jesus. It is where Jesus began his journey into Jerusalem on a donkey from a village called Beth phage. It is where he returned to Bethany, to have a meal at Simon the Leper's home and was anointed for death by an unknown woman. It was where he prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane, which is at the foot of the Mount of Olives and prayed "Abba Father," remove this cup from me.



Everyone plays a part in this dramatic story. We are the crowds who follow Jesus into Jerusalem, into our church and community. Everyone has a part to play in the lead up to the crucifixion of Jesus. And there are many events in-between Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem and his arrests. What Jesus did during that time may have led to his arrest. Let us explore what happened to Jesus that contributed towards his arrest.

From the very beginning people are willing to provide for Jesus and help him, promptly offering up a colt for his procession. Later on, when the religious authorities plot to secretly arrest Jesus, they must be careful. Jesus, wanting to protect them asks them to look for a man with a water pitcher, which was unusual because only women carried water pitchers in their culture. Perhaps the Roman's didn't know that. This secret searching leads to a man offering



Image – T Lyndon

his house as a place for the Last Supper. With the triumphant entry into Jerusalem disciples and crowds treat Jesus as a king, throwing their priceless outer robes, most likely family heirlooms, over a donkey or on the road for Jesus to ride over, like a king, where their robes are destroyed by dirt and animal dung. People are willing to offer up what they own for Jesus, livestock, a house, robes that are priceless heirlooms and costly nard. The crowds choose to be generous and wave palm branches that are normally waved for the emperor or victorious celebrations. They hope he has come to liberate them.

Jesus chooses to be a humble king, riding on a donkey, not in a chariot or on a stallion or warhorse. He rode triumphantly into Jerusalem, through those enormous gates, along the narrow-cobbled streets, followed by the crowds, who recognised him as their messiah and king.

Crowds yelled Hosanna, as in Psalm 118, which means victory over Israel's enemies. At the time the Romans occupied Jerusalem and oppressed the people. They were enemies. People calling out, Hosanna, would have been making a political statement. Hosanna is like saying: "Save us." "Save us Jesus." King David is remembered, hope for Israel's restoration and independence. Jesus is called the anointed one, son of David, the Messiah. The one who comes in the name of the Lord.

The day after Jesus' arrival in Jerusalem he clears the Temple of the moneylenders and reclaims it for God. He begins to save the people, teaching and healing them in the Temple, and the authorities come to fear him and are jealous of him. Jesus confronts the chief priests and scribes about their behaviour, and they question his authority, but they are afraid of arresting him when crowds who support him are present. In the end, the chief priests, and scribes plot to seize Jesus when no one is looking and kill him.

Jesus has a meal at the Last Supper. Common plates of food were offered, and the disciples dipped bread into the food and ate it. This still happens today, in Morocco. Common plates of food symbolise intimacy in relationships, where all were welcome to share the meal, including Judas. Jesus says: "One of you will betray me," as Judas dips his bread into the common plate. In a moment of intimacy, of community, Judas decides to betray Jesus. Then we hear the words that have become words for our communion, Jesus' gift to us.

Jesus is aware of the danger he and his disciples face. He takes a break and goes to Simon the Leper's house for a meal and finds comfort from the most surprising people. He is anointed for death, by an unknown woman, who showed great love, despite opposition from Jesus' disciples. Jesus makes it clear the woman with the alabaster jar of priceless nard from the Himalayas will be remembered. Alabaster is a type of marble and nard is an essential oil extracted from a flower that smells a bit like honeysuckle which grows in the Himalayas. Jesus says the woman will be remembered forever for her love shown to him. All of us are remembered for the love we show to others, and we remember the love shown to us. Love is the signature of a true follower of Jesus.

At Gethsemane Jesus prayed for the cup of suffering to be removed. He is weak and needy as he struggles with his call. He needed love and support from his closest disciples, the ones he brought to the transfiguration. But they were weary and fell asleep and were not there for him in his hour of need. They failed him and this is the stuff of real life. It's about our humanity and brokenness. It is what Jesus loves about us and has experienced himself. It is what he came to heal.

After much struggle and prayer, Jesus accepts his call and God's will for him. He finds the strength to go on. As we do, when we believe in him and look to him, for how to live our lives.

Jesus and the disciples would have stood on the Mount of Olives and looked over Jerusalem and seen a great deal from a distance, before and after entering into Jerusalem with Jesus. Perhaps that night in Gethsemane, Jesus saw the crowds coming to arrest him, with their torches of fire and weapons, that spoke of them seeing Jesus as a political figure. Perhaps the authorities and crowd considered him a zealot or did this to set him up, where they could present him as a threat to Rome.

Yet, Jesus never set out to be a political figure or zealot or to create conflict.

Judas the one leading the crowd chooses a kiss that normally symbolises love and makes the kiss into a weapon of betrayal.

In the end Jesus was right. He was abandoned, denied, and betrayed by his disciples.

Where is the hope in all of this, for us? We know this is not the end of the story. It is a beginning. The beginning of Jesus offering hope to the world.

Hymn 725 Taize song sung by Choir.

In our darkness there is no darkness with you O Lord

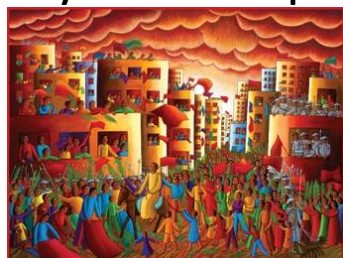
Ashburton & Moorland Mission Community 2022

https://youtu.be/Y4FM0dbV9ng?si=UuRrF1lu_Z41Ssuh

Offering Prayer

Lord and giver of every good thing we bring to you our lives and gifts for your kingdom all for transformation through your grace and love made known in Jesus Christ our Savior, amen.

Prayers of the People



Spend some time praying for cities in Gaza, Ukraine, and Australia.

Pray for peace and the end of famine in Gaza.

Pray for peace and an end to war in Ukraine.

Pray for peace and an end to the crime wave in Australia and hardship caused by inflation and lack of housing.

Pray for those who are suffering within our congregation and local community.

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father in heaven hallowed be your name
 your Kingdom come your will be done on earth as in heaven
 give us today Our Daily Bread
 forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us
 save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil
 for the Kingdom, the power and the glory are yours now and always Amen

Candle Prayers

You're welcome to light a candle and pray.

Hymn 333 All glory Praise and honour

YouTube Mr Jared Haselbarth OP 2023

<https://youtu.be/XyfZQpuROHE?si=nBkHZLHLcR5hh9Qq>

Blessing

Uniting in Worship - Prepared by the National Working Group on Worship and approved by the Assembly Standing Committee for use in the Uniting Church in Australia 2005

Let us go forth in peace and remember.

Goodness is stronger than evil.

Love is stronger than hate.

Light is stronger than darkness.

Life is stronger than death.

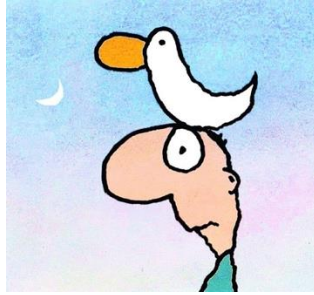
Victory is ours.

Through Christ who loved us. Amen

Hymn 778 Shalom to you now – tMt video

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2oqiFenpWxY&list=PL5dbbdzyKBag-mEd9gTgdyYNQLIsLD2rC&index=35>

Pastoral Care tips – Rev Tina



Leunig – used with permission.

Holy Week

Try to spend some time with God over the coming Holy Week and reflect upon the readings for Holy Week. May you find them life giving.

Monday

Isaiah 42:1-9
Psalm 36:5-11

Tuesday

Psalm 72:1-14

Wednesday

Psalm 70
Hebrews 12:1-3

Pilgrimage Walk.

I have asked Lynne to attach a copy of the Pilgrimage Walk Booklet. You're welcome to use it as you walk around Blackburn Lake Sanctuary. Maps are available at the information Centre. *The Monthly* will have a reflection on what some of our members experienced, on Sunday 17th March 2024, after Lunch at Miss Lucy's and doing the pilgrimage walk.



Many thanks to Lorraine Grant and Penny.