

In-Home Worship Guide for Palm Sunday - April 5, 2020

*Out of an abundance of caution we continue to Practice Social Distancing. For now, there is no in-person worship in the sanctuary. But Worship still happens. Use this guide as it meets your needs.*

*For your convenience a recording of the hymns and the message with Darlene and Ron are posted on the church's Facebook page: First United Methodist Church Cuero Facebook.*

Let the people proclaim: Let everything that has breath – **Praise the Lord!**

Hymn #278:           “Hosanna, Loud Hosanna”           (Recorded on Facebook.)

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 earth and heaven 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 heaven our King.  
O may we ever praise him with heart and life and voice,  
and in his blissful presence eternally rejoice.

Unison Invocation:

*Almighty God, we give thanks for Jesus who rode in triumph into Jerusalem. We praise you that he came as the conqueror, not of force and military might, but of love and peace. In the spirit of those who sang, "Hosanna to the Son of David" so long ago, we join that great chorus of those who confess Jesus Christ as Lord, to the glory of your name. Amen.*

Hymn #277            “Tell Me the Stories of Jesus”            (Recorded on Facebook.)

Tell me the stories of Jesus I love to hear;  
 things I would ask him to tell me if he were here;  
 Scenes by the wayside, tales of the sea,  
 stories of Jesus, tell them to me.

First let me hear how the children stood round his knee,  
 and I shall fancy his blessing resting on me;  
 words full of kindness, deeds full of grace,  
 all in the lovelight of Jesus’ face.

Into the city I’d follow the children’s band,  
 waving a branch of the palm tree high in my hand;  
 one of his heralds, yes, I would sing  
 loudest hosannas, Jesus is King!

Prayer of Confession: (Pray aloud together.)

*Holy God, as we remember your Son’s triumphal entry into Jerusalem, we confess that all too often we have been part of the crowd. When things go our way, we believe our lives are good because we worked hard. When things do not go our way, we blame others for our troubles. God, help us to take responsibility, not only for our own lives, but for the lives of our neighbors. Forgive us when we have forgotten your commandments and have failed to love our neighbors as ourselves, but instead have judged others, believing them not worthy of our help or our compassion. Forgive us of our faults, and renew in us a sense of your love, justice and mercy. Guide us in ways we might live out your commandments more fully in our lives. Help us to seek Christ in the suffering in this world, and guide us as the body of Christ to be your hands and feet. In your Son’s name we pray. Amen.*

**Reading from the Gospel: Matthew 21:1-11**

(Please read passage at this time.)

Message for the day (Recorded on Facebook.)

I have read this story from each of the Gospels so many times. I know many of you have as well. I've preached on this passage. I've read commentaries on this passage. I've listened to others preach this passage. And in reading it once again, in the midst of all that is swirling around us with the Covid-19 Pandemic, I was struck by the simplicity of Jesus' entry.

Jesus enters humbly. No war chariot. No massive stallion. No armed escort. Jesus chooses humble as he approaches what is to be the final week of his life. No doubt, there was quite a commotion with his entry, but Jesus kept his part simple. I wonder, was Jesus teaching us a lesson with this under-stated entry? Was he trying to tell us something about ourselves? To be a person of faith you don't really need a lot of flash. Simple will do. Sometimes less truly is more.

Given a choice Jesus went with basic. He had no need, no interest in trying to impress anyone. He was simply being himself. He entered not as a celebrity or a power-broker, but as a faithful servant. Yes, given a choice Jesus went with just the basics.

Basic is what we seem to be doing at the moment with our worship. We aren't able to meet in large groups. Our Sanctuary is closed for now. We rely on prayer and devotional materials, on a worship guide from the pastor or a TV service or two. We use what we have around the house. We set in our kitchen, the back porch, or some place that feels right. Things seem a little basic.

Perhaps you are isolated much as Darlene and I are with just your pets. And perhaps the only contact you have at the moment with friends and family is a phone call or facetime. And it is amusing how just a few decades ago those were options our ancestors couldn't have imagined.

But we have our faith. We have a rich history of liturgy and writings to pull from. We have the memories of times spent in worship together and the dream of what that day will be like when once again we sound the bells of our church calling us to worship. But for now, we keep it basic. And on this day, we remember how Jesus kept it basic with his entry. As we keep our worship basic, we can smile, lift our palm branch and shout Hosanna and know that is all we need to do. It is all we need to say. Hosanna indeed!

Please take a moment now to lift up joys and concerns and pray the Lord's Prayer.

*The week began with a celebration, an entry with the crowds shouting Hosanna. But all so quickly the cheers faded. By the end of the week Jesus would be betrayed, arrested, given a mockery of a trial and executed in the most brutal way the Romans knew – crucifixion. His body was placed in a borrowed grave. Let us remember and sing as we finish our time of worship.*

Hymn #298            “When I Survey the Wondrous Cross”    (Recorded on Facebook.)

When I survey the wondrous cross on which the Prince of Glory died,  
My richest gain I count but loss, and pour contempt on all my pride.

Forbid it Lord that I should boast, save in the death of Christ, my God;  
all the vain things that charm me most, I sacrifice them to his blood.

See, from his head, his hands, his feet, sorrow and love flow mingled down.  
Did e're such love and sorrow meet, or thorns compose so rich a crown?

Were the whole realm of nature mine, that were an offering far too small;  
love so amazing so divine, demands my soul, my life, my all.

Benediction

And so it begins, we walk through this week  
From palms now to passion, and it is Jesus we seek.  
Each moment we walk through these days now with Jesus,  
Is time to see people, the way Jesus ... sees us.

To watch for the ones, who need hope, who need kindness.  
Seeking the light, not the darkness that blinds us.  
As you walk through these days, may the love you now know  
Be spread to each person you meet on the go.

And may God who now blesses and keeps you in love,  
Whose face shines upon you with grace from above,  
Who looks on you with such joy and such favor,  
May this God, three in One give you peace and life to savor. Amen