

## Order of Worship for March 24, 2024

### Prelude:

P: Hosanna to the Son of David!

**C: Hosanna to the Son of David!**

P: Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!

**C: Hosanna in the highest!**

P: Let us pray.... Most merciful God, as the people of Jerusalem with palms in their hands gathered to greet Your dearly beloved Son when He came into His Holy City, grant that we may ever hail him as our King and, when He comes again, that we may go forth to meet Him with trusting and steadfast hearts and follow Him in the way that leads to eternal life.

**C: Amen**

### Mark 11:1-10

P: The Holy Gospel according to Saint Mark, the eleventh chapter.

**C: Glory to you, O Lord!**

Now when they drew near to Jerusalem, to Bethphage and Bethany, at the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two of His disciples and said to them, "Go into the village in front of you, and immediately as you enter it you will find a colt tied, on which no one has ever sat. Untie it and bring it. If anyone says to you, 'Why are you doing this?' say, 'The Lord has need of it and will send it back here immediately.'" And they went away and found a colt tied at a door outside in the street, and they untied it. And some of those standing there said to them, "What are you doing, untying the colt?" And they told them what Jesus had said, and they let them go. And they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their cloaks on it, and He sat on it. And many spread their cloaks on the road, and others spread leafy branches that they had cut from the fields. And those who went before and those who followed were shouting, "Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David! Hosanna in the highest!" And Jesus 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.

P: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

**C: Praise to you, O Christ.**

**Processional Hymn:** *"All Glory, Laud, and Honor"* - Hymn #442

**Children's Anthems:** *"Hosanna! Hosanna!"* and *"Hosanna! Praise Ye the Lord"*

**Children's Message:**

**Old Testament Lesson – Zechariah 9:9-12**

R: Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your king is coming to you; righteous and having salvation is He, humble and mounted on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.

I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim and the war horse from Jerusalem; and the battle bow shall be cut off, and he shall speak peace to the nations; his rule shall be from sea to sea, and

from the River to the ends of the earth. As for you also, because of the blood of My covenant with you, I will set your prisoners free from the waterless pit. Return to your stronghold, O prisoners of hope; today I declare that I will restore to you double.

R: This is the Word of the Lord.

**C: Thanks be to God.**

### **Epistle Lesson - Philippians 2:5-11**

R: Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though He was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Therefore God has highly exalted Him and bestowed on Him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

R: This is the Word of the Lord.

**C: Thanks be to God.**

### **Hymn of Praise: “Hosanna, Loud Hosanna” - Hymn #443**

### **Reading of the Passion Story: Mark 15:1-47**

R: This is the Word of the Lord.

**C: Thanks be to God.**

### **Sermon Hymn: “O Lord, How Shall I Meet You” - Hymn #334**

### **Sermon: Why Are You Doing This? - Mark 11:1-10**

What are you doing? Why are you doing this?

If you're a parent, you get used to asking your kids questions like we heard in today's Gospel lesson. Why are you doing this? Why are you doing that? Sometimes there's an innocent explanation to why they're drawing on the walls. Other times, they can't explain why the sink is overflowing and there's soap all over the bathroom.

As we celebrate Palm Sunday and look into Holy Week, we see the culmination of Jesus' life and ministry. And we see that the misunderstandings that have characterized everything that came before are still present.

Jesus has been dealing with misunderstandings about who he is and what he came to do throughout his ministry. Crowds flocked to him to be healed or fed, but went away once he started saying stranger, crazier things. Even Peter, right after confessing that Jesus was the Messiah, misunderstands what the Messiah would do and tells Jesus that he will never be arrested or killed.

Jesus prepares his disciples to answer the questions they would get as they follow his command. “Go into the village in front of you, and immediately as you enter it you will find a colt tied, on which no one has ever sat. Untie it and bring it. If anyone says to you, ‘Why are you doing this?’ say, ‘The Lord has need of it and will send it back here immediately.’” Jesus warns the disciples that they might be questioned when they go to borrow the donkey.

What must it have been like to run this particular errand for Jesus? Is Jesus really telling two of his followers to run ahead into the town, steal a donkey, and bring it back? Of course, Jesus clarifies by instructing them that if anyone asks about it, just say that Jesus said to do it, but they will bring it back soon.

That's not the only time that question will be asked this week. The chief priests and Pharisees ask that question of Jesus, "Why are you doing this?" They see the spectacle of the triumphal entry and wonder why Jesus is upsetting the status quo.

As the week goes on, more and more people will ask that question. Peter will ask Jesus why are you doing this as he washes his disciples' feet. Jesus prays in the Garden, asking why his Father's will is for him to die, and then asks his disciples why they couldn't stay awake one hour to pray with him. Jesus asks the guards why they come to arrest him in the garden. When Jesus is brought before Pilate, the Roman governor wonders why his man has been brought before him. He wonders why the crowd asks for Jesus' death while demanding the release of Barabbas, a notorious criminal and terrorist.

The crowd that gathered to wave their palms and cheer had a bit of understanding, might have been able to give a partial answer to why they were doing that. They had hopes that Jesus was king, that his lordship was good, that his rule should be desired. The palm branches they waved were a symbol of political liberation. The crowd hoped that Jesus would be the king who would save them, expelling the occupying romans and ending their oppression.

Jesus comes riding a donkey, a symbol of peace, not of military might. Jesus did talk about providing for their needs, about making people whole, to give them a full life. But the people were caught up in their own wish fulfillment fantasies and not paying attention to what Jesus' actions and words told them about what was really going on.

That leads to the sharp change in the crowds' tone and message. Those unrealized expectations, those hopes that they fear will remain unfulfilled. The crowd cheers for Jesus, they wave palm branches and sing, "Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest." However, all these victorious chants were fickle because in only a few short days, such chants will cease when they shout, "Crucify Him!"

That leads to the most important person to whom we need to ask the question. Why are you doing this, Jesus? Why are you going through all of this suffering, all of this pain? Why are you doing this for this crowd that turns on you, for these disciples that flee from you, betray you, deny you? Why are you doing this?

Why? I'm doing this for you, Jesus answers. I'm doing this because I love you. I'm doing this because this is what needs to be done to save you. That's why Jesus did it.

And that's why we're doing this, coming together to remember the events of this week. We come together to be reminded of the punishment our sins deserve. We will witness our Lord instituting His Supper and washing his disciples' feet, battling Satan in the Garden of Gethsemane in prayer, and being betrayed by Judas. We will also witness Good Friday and Christ's suffering and Passion. But remember why Jesus does it all: out of love for you.

What are you doing? Why are you doing this? Why are you here? Why did you choose to come to church today, when so many people didn't make that choice? Why are you here? Out of a sense of nostalgia, hoping for some blessing, praying to do well on that exam or project coming up? Fifty-eight percent of Iowans attend religious services less than once a year, and only 23% attend weekly or more.

How many times in our lives do we do things that we do not fully understand but feel convicted to do? How many times have we done things because Jesus has commanded it, but it looks like foolishness to others. Love our enemies? Nonsense. Give away our hard-earned money to the poor? Foolishness! We may not be stealing a donkey for Jesus, but we do things because Jesus has told us to, and these commands do indeed have a larger purpose, even if they look like foolishness to the world.

Rev. Glenn F. Merritt, former director of Disaster Response for the LCMS, said "Lutherans assisting with relief and recovery efforts are often asked, 'Why are you doing this? The door then is open for the sharing of the Gospel.'"

Why are you doing this? Because of what Jesus went through for us, we are here. We hear the stories. We're reminded of our sin and our need for a savior. And we're reminded of our savior, of all that Jesus did for us. That's why we're doing this. I think that's a good reason.

**Confession of Faith:** 2<sup>nd</sup> Article of Creed p. 322

**Sharing Our Ministry**

**Offering and Voluntary:**

**Prayers:**

**Confession on Palm Sunday:**

P: How we would like the parade to go on forever, Lord, with every moment of life a time of joy, of gladness, of swaying palms and singing children!

**C: But behind the sounds of joy on this day we hear the hiss of Judas, the curses of Peter, the contempt of Caiaphas, the cowardly pleading of Pontius Pilate, the screams of the mob. In those sounds we hear sounds of our own souls.**

P: We recognize our own guilt, our own struggling against God's clear commands, our own desperate need for rescue.

**C: We look to you, O Lord, as You enter Jerusalem riding on the donkey. We know that You know what is to come, that You can hear the sounds of Your own suffering and death.**

P: Yet, You go forth willingly, trusting the Father, carrying out His perfect will of love, and offering Your life as the sacrifice for our sins. For we know this:

**C: You have heard our cry, "Jesus, remember me!"**

**Announcement of Victory:**

P: The Lord Jesus Christ has heard our cry. In this Holy Week we see and experience God's answer to that cry. On Good Friday we shall "Behold the lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" And on Easter morning we shall receive once more the guarantee of our victory over sin, Satan, and the grave. Thus in the stead and by the command of my Lord Jesus Christ, I forgive you all your sins in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, for the forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation have been given you through your Savior. Amen.

**Holy Communion:**

P: Lift up your hearts.

**C: We lift them up to the Lord.**

P: Let us give thanks for His glory.

**C: We give thanks; we rejoice in His presence.**

P: Thanks and praise be to You, O Father, who sent Your only Son into the world to be a man, born of a woman, to die for us on a cross that was made by us.

**C: He came for us, help us to accept His coming.**

P: He walked among us, a man, on our earth, in our world of conflict, and commanded us to remember His death, His death which gives us life; and to wait for Him until He comes again in glory.

**C: We remember His death; we live by His presence; we wait for His coming.**

P: On the night when He was betrayed...we obey His command; we await the gift of Himself.

**C: Come, Lord Jesus, Come.**

**Lord's Prayer:**

**Distribution and Hymns:**

*"No Tramp of Soldiers' Marching Feet" - Hymn #444*

*"Come, Thou Precious Ransom, Come" - Hymn #350*

**Prayer After Communion:**

P: Lord Jesus Christ, in this humble meal we remember Your death until You come again.

**C: It is a reminder of the shouts of "Crucify!"**

P: In this meal we look to another banquet.

**C: It is a prelude to our shouts of "Hosanna!"**

**Blessing: (Pastor)**

**C: Amen.**

**Closing Hymn: "Ride On, Ride On in Majesty" - Hymn #441**

**Postlude:**