

A circular inset image of a palm frond, showing the characteristic fan-like structure of the leaves. The frond is green and set against a light purple background. The entire image is framed by a thin red border.

Holy Wholly

Palm Sunday

March 28, 2021



Ascension Lutheran Church

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All are welcome!

HOLY VESSELS



A LENTEN SEASON OF RECOVERY

Introduction

In this Lenten “season of recovery” for our physical, communal, mental, intellectual, and environmental health, we will explore the healing narratives of Jesus that tell of divine solidarity with human suffering and remind us that we can begin a journey toward making something beautiful from that which is seemingly broken. Beach glass offers us a multifaceted symbol of this transformative process.

GATHER

*People gather around Jesus as his reputation becomes known from town to town.
As we gather virtually or physically, we too are yearning for presence,
for peace, for help.*

Welcome to Worship

When they had come near Jerusalem and had reached Bethphage, at the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two disciples, saying to them, “Go into the village ahead of you, and immediately you will find a donkey tied, and a colt with her; untie them and bring them to me. If anyone says anything to you, just say this, ‘The Lord needs them.’ And he will send them immediately.” This took place to fulfill what had been spoken through the prophet, saying,

“Tell the daughter of Zion,
Look, your king is coming to you,
humble, and mounted on a donkey,
and on a colt, the foal of a donkey.”

The disciples went and did as Jesus had directed them; they brought the donkey and the colt, and put their cloaks on them, and he sat on them. A very large crowd spread their cloaks on the road, and others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. The crowds that went ahead of him and that followed were shouting,

Leader: “Hosanna to the Son of David!

People: “Hosanna to the Son of David!

Blessed is the one who comes

Blessed is the one who comes

in the name of the Lord!

in the name of the Lord!

Hosanna in the highest heaven!”

Hosanna in the highest heaven!”

When he entered Jerusalem, the whole city was in turmoil, asking, “Who is this?” The crowds were saying, “This is the prophet Jesus from Nazareth in Galilee.”

Opening Song

Hosanna!

Verse 1

**Hosanna! Hosanna! Hosanna in the highest!
Hosanna! Hosanna! Hosanna in the highest!**

Chorus

**Lord we lift up Your name
With hearts full of praise!
Be exalted oh Lord my God!
(1st) Hosanna in the highest
(2nd) Glory to the King of kings!**

Verse 2

**Glory! Glory! Glory to the King of kings!
Glory! Glory! Glory to the King of kings!**

CCLI Song # 21545

Carl Tuttle

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P We have seen that the stories of Jesus’ healing ministry are filled with words *and* deeds. When he rides into Jerusalem, the people had hopes he would heal the oppressive system they were living under. We know that his healing was not confined to that moment in history, but offers a new way of life that has made a case for compassion for all, especially “the least,” ever since.

As we head into the events of Holy Week, we begin to see that our ability to forgive ourselves and others is the foundation that can

P transform infirmities and allow us to move on. We integrate our beliefs and actions for the health of the whole. The parade of compassionate power we celebrate today is underscored by a another healing story of transformation, symbolizing our ability to fuel our movement of recovery. We glorify God for beautiful words *and* works of wholeness and share that treasured beauty with others. We know there will still be pain, but we also know love will win.

**Vessels, holy and whole
Broken, needing the One
Open, body and soul
Healer, come.**

APPROACH

People opened their lives to Jesus. We are drawn to the Healer—opening our hearts with honesty about our lives and finding assurance that offers peace.

Prayer of Confession

P We have approached confession each week in Lent in such a way that we lay bare the brokenness in order to begin the process of healing.

Along the way we have acknowledged our need to restore our own Holy Vessels while attending to our role in the healing of the community and the world.

The work of healing will continue as we integrate all we have learned with all that we will do moving forward. For now, we remember how hard it is to move from thinking to doing.

Let us pray:

P Forgiving God,

We have opened ourselves to healing and sometimes it is easier to pray nice prayers than to do the hard work of putting into action what needs to happen.

Help us remember the sacred nature of the holy vessels that we are, fragile and susceptible to shattering and yet capable of transformation. Help us to see ourselves as you see us.

Help us to believe in our ability to change and heal as you believe in us.

Help us, Healer.

Show us our strength.

Forgive our inertia.

Move us to move one step at a time toward greater care.

In this silence, we sense and acknowledge our yearning for wholeness.

Silence is kept for reflection

**Vessels, holy and whole
Broken, needing the One
Open, body and soul
Healer, come.**

Assurance

P In invite you to return to that warm orb of light that lives deep within you once again. It may already be aglow with the excitement of the parade—the presence of Jesus leading us on.

But if you are struggling, or have struggled in this season of recovery, to feel this warmth of assurance within you, do not despair.

You are not the one who has to create the light.

It just is.

P And it is a pilot light that never goes out. You will at some time begin to notice it returning to your awareness.

Know this: You are never alone in the struggle.

No. Matter. What.

Jesus is on the journey with us.

Life's parade is not passing you by.

You are part of this Body of Christ, a community seeking healing.

For you, for me, for all.

Take a deep breath in to let this truth fill you...
and breathe out with the relief of assurance.

Peace

P I invite you to imagine the warmth that surrounds you extending to those who may be next to you in close proximity.
Imagine it extending beyond your walls to the neighborhood...

the wider community...

the church...

and seeing it spread like the rising sun,

let it expand to all the world.

Let this be our peace. Amen.

I invite you to open your eyes.

The peace of Christ is with you.

All And also with you.

BELIEVE

People were fortified by Jesus' words and deeds that revealed care for all—especially those marginalized. We strengthen our belief in the possibility for renewed health and vigor for all.

A Contemporary Word

“What we do comes out of who we believe we are.”

—Rob Bell—

An Ancient Word

P The Holy Gospel according to St. Mathew, the 9th chapter.

All **Glory to you, O Lord.**

And after getting into a boat he crossed the sea and came to his own town. And just then some people were carrying a paralyzed man lying on a bed. When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, “Take heart, son; your sins are forgiven.” Then some of the scribes said to themselves, “This man is blaspheming.” But Jesus, perceiving their thoughts, said, “Why do you think evil in your hearts? For which is easier, to say, ‘Your sins are forgiven,’ or to say, ‘Stand up and walk’? But so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins”—he then said to the paralytic—“Stand up, take your bed and go to your home.” And he stood up and went to his home. When the crowds saw it, they were filled with awe, and they glorified God, who had given such authority to human beings.

Matthew 9: 1-8

P The Gospel of our Lord.

All **Praise to you, O Christ.**

Apostles' Creed

P Let us join together with one voice confessing our faith with the words of the Apostles' 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.**

ASK

People who were healed by Jesus were not afraid to ask. And so we come before the Holy One, making our petitions and desires known, trusting the work of the Spirit.

Prayers of Intercession

L Healer of our every ill,
especially when we find it difficult to believe or trust that sorrow will end,
we come before you to make our petitions known.
Hear our cries for healing of body, mind, and spirit.
We know that already you are at work among us,
showing us the way to recovery from the toxicities and grief of our time.

Even when we cannot seem to believe it,
we know that you see beauty in our brokenness.

We pray especially for those who feel there is no end to sorrow,
that no matter what we do or how hard we work to bring
peace and justice to our world, it feels like we cannot gain traction.
We give thanks that when we cannot bring ourselves to the healing
source of your love, there are others around us that, through words and
actions, bring us hope once again.

Help to also be those who offer hope when we have the opportunity
on this parade of compassion called life.

And so we lift our prayers spoken and unspoken to you, O Lord, as you
hear the cries of our hearts.

Lord, in your mercy.

All You hear our prayer.

Song of Preparation

Make Us Holy, Make Us Whole

In your love, make us whole.
May we rest in your compassion.
Calm the lost, weary soul
in the warmth of your love.
May your peace fill our hearts.
May we know the love of Jesus.
By your grace, you console.
Make us holy, make us whole.

CCLI Song # 3315976
Mark Friedman

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KNOW

The parting words Jesus gave to those he healed were often as much balm as the healing act itself. We hear the words of encouragement from the One who makes beauty from brokenness.

Holy Communion

P Our God is with you!

All And also with you!

P Lift up your hearts

All We lift them up to our God.

P Let us give thanks to our Sovereign God

All It is right to give our thanks and praise.

It is right, and a good and joyful thing,
always and everywhere to give thanks to you.
In the beginning you breathed life into raw materials,
creating and animating containers of beauty and goodness.

We, your Holy Vessels, were fired in the kiln of love
until we shined with your light.
Susceptible to shattering, we find ourselves broken,
unable at times to remember your promise of repair.
You remind us time and again that, though broken,
we are held in your presence
and made whole by your grace.

When Jesus ascended,
he promised to be with us always.
In the power of your Word and Holy Spirit,
we are not alone.

On the night in which he gave himself up for us,
he took bread, gave thanks to you, broke the bread,
gave it to his disciples, and said:
“Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you.
Do this in remembrance of me.”

When the supper was over, he took the cup,
gave thanks to you, gave it to his disciples, and said:
“Drink from this, all of you;
this is my blood of the new covenant,
poured out for you and for many
for the forgiveness of sins.
Do this, as often as you drink it,
in remembrance of me.”

All Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

P Joining with all who are being transformed, let us pray the prayer Jesus taught us.

All 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.

The Invitation and The Meal

P Beloved: here is bread; here is wine. Here is Jesus.
Come and be fed.

Sharing the Meal

Post Communion Blessing

P The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace.

All Amen

RESPOND

*Scriptural accounts of healing often end with responses from the “crowd” of witnesses.
How will we proceed into the brokenness of this world and respond as
the Body of Christ?*

Stewardship of Life & Ministry Announcements

Sending Song

You are My All in All

Verse 1

You are my strength when I am weak;
You are the treasure that I seek.
You are my all in all.
Seeking You as a precious jewel, Lord to give up I'd be a fool.
You are my all in all.

Chorus

Jesus Lamb of God worthy is Your name.
Jesus Lamb of God worthy is Your name.

Verse 2

Taking my sin, my cross my shame
Rising again I bless Your name.
You are my all in all.
When I fall down You pick me up;
When I am dry You fill my cup.
You are my all in all.

CCLI Song # 825356

Dennis Jernigan

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Blessing

P Now go with confidence that God is making us whole and holy,
recovering our depth of love for all
and our joy of living in this world.

May the words of Jesus ring in your ears:
“Take heart.”

And may the Spirit hover, move, and deliver
salve to your soul ✝ and a spring in your step.

All Amen.

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Holy Vessels

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