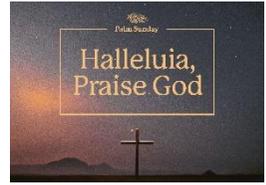




'Worship at home' April 10th 2022 Palm/Passion Sunday



Today is **Palm/Passion Sunday** and marks the beginning of **Holy Week**, in which we remember Jesus' passion through the events in Jerusalem that resulted in Jesus' death on a cross, and later his glorious resurrection to new life. **Light a candle** in your worship space, as we reflect on the light and hope of Christ which shines through the shadows of this week.

Opening based on *Isaiah 50:4-9a*

Every morning, we listen for God
in the voice of the new day;

**We have heard the Lord
in the chorus of creation.**

Into our joys and sorrows,
our struggles and suffering,
God speaks;

**We have heard the Lord
in the cheer of encouragement
and murmurs of comfort.**

When we face insult
and the injury of injustice and exclusion;

**We hear the Lord call us
beloved, righteous and true.**

With determination, let us set our face like flint,
and journey on with Jesus to whatever awaits us
in our mission as bearers of God's kingdom;

We will stand together, as a community of love and hope.



You may be familiar with the Palm Sunday processions and celebrations that are often held in churches on this day. However, we also remember that for Jesus and his followers, this day marked a turning point that led to Jesus being arrested, tried and condemned. It is likely that the favour of the crowds was 2

too much for those in authority, who were threatened by Jesus' growing popularity and wanted him out of the way. For Jesus and his followers, perhaps this day was not such a celebration, but a step into the unknown. Palm Sunday is also called Passion Sunday, and in many congregations the focus turns to the events of Jesus' last week. In this context, the word *passion* comes from the Latin verb *patior, passus sum*; meaning "to suffer, bear, endure". From this also comes the words "patience" and "patient". Jesus, in courageous obedience, patiently endured.

We live in times of uncertainty. There is uncertainty about the pandemic and what might happen from here. There is uncertainty about global power struggles and politics and ensuing conflict. There is uncertainty about climate change and its long-term effects.

**How do you face
times of uncertainty?**

**Where do you find
strength and courage?**

**At such times, what do you learn
about yourself?**

About your faith? About God?



The gospel of Luke was written in a time of uncertainty, with disease, power struggles, politics and conflict. There was uncertainty about safety as a new religious community emerged, embracing both Jews and Gentiles. The writer of Luke and Acts seeks to give the church a new sense of Christian identity and mission at a crucial turning point.

Times of unprecedented uncertainty test our faith.

Luke 19: 28-40

After Jesus said this, he went on in front of them toward Jerusalem. As he came near Bethphage and Bethany at the Mount of Olives, he sent two disciples ahead with these instructions: "Go to the

village there ahead of you; as you go in, you will find a colt tied up that has never been ridden. Untie it and bring it here. If someone asks you why you are untying it, tell him that the Master needs 3

it." They went on their way and found everything just as Jesus had told them. As they were untying the colt, its owners said to them, "Why are you untying it?" "The Master needs it," they answered, and they took the colt to Jesus. Then they threw their cloaks over the animal and helped Jesus get on. As he rode on, people spread their cloaks on the road. When he came near Jerusalem, at the place where the road went down the Mount of Olives, the large

crowd of his disciples began to thank God and praise him in loud voices for all the great things that they had seen: "God bless the king who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven and glory to God!" Then some of the Pharisees in the crowd spoke to Jesus. "Teacher," they said, "command your disciples to be quiet!" Jesus answered, "I tell you that if they keep quiet, the stones themselves will start shouting." Good News Bible



Jesus entered Jerusalem amidst a number of uncertainties. We can imagine the uncertainty of the disciples, as Jesus sends them to bring an unriden colt. There was uncertainty about how he would be received as he rode into the city, and about what was to await him in the days to come. Yet Jesus

obediently and courageously trusted God. He entered willing to engage with the issues and the politics of the day, both within the Temple cult of his own religion and with the Roman occupying forces. The nature of his arrival was politically subversive and sure to attract attention of the Roman military.

**When have you been called
to show courageous obedience
in the face of uncertainty?**

Holding fast to our faith in times of trouble, believing that God holds all manner of things for the future good of this planet, including our lives and communities, brings us strength as we face uncertainty.

In Jesus' times, a person's cloak was an important garment, providing warmth, security, and protection. In this story, Jesus' followers offer up their cloaks: the disciples place their cloaks on the colt, and the crowd spread their cloaks on the ground to make a path for Jesus. If we view these cloaks as symbols of our desire for security and protection, this act of surrendering them is a sign of commitment to, and participation in, Jesus' actions. It is an action of faith, a show of trust and belief in him as the Messiah. Jesus' followers show courageous obedience in the face of uncertainty.

Prayer

Lord Jesus, we give praise to you,
as we remember your courage and audacity
on that day when you rode into Jerusalem
on the colt of a donkey.



Today, as we enter Holy Week,
we who know you and love you, and who know what awaits you,
bring our worship of all you have done
in obedience and trust in God.

You offered your whole self in love and grace,
for the power of God to be revealed
through your humility and sacrifice.

Strengthen us, as we accompany you on this journey again,
and grow more of yourself and God's kingdom way in us.

May who we are bring glory and honour to your name, Amen.

Closing

Have faith and courage in uncertain times.

Go praising and rejoicing in God,
knowing that Jesus is with you always,
holding you in love and grace,

as the events of Holy Week unfold, the shouting dies,
and the shadow of the cross beckons.