

Bangor & Holyhead Methodist Circuit

Sunday Worship Sheet – Sunday 28th March 2021 – Palm Sunday

Our Worship was written by Ellie Jones, a Local Preacher and member at St. John's, Bangor.
You may wish to have your Bible to hand.

Call to worship for Palm Sunday

Our journey through Lent brings us with Christ to Jerusalem as he rides in through the gates of the city on a donkey as a sign of peace. The people greet him like a king returning triumphant from war on a mighty charger, waving palm fronds and shouting "Hosanna!", and "Save us, O Lord!". Lord, you gave your life to save us. Help us to help others as you have helped us, in grateful willing service. **Amen**

Hymn: StF.264. *Make way, make way for Christ the King*

Make way, make way for Christ the King
in splendour arrives;
fling wide the gates and welcome him
into your lives.

*Make way (Make way), make way (make way),
for the King of kings (for the King of kings);
make way (make way), make way (make way),
and let his Kingdom in.*

He comes the broken hearts to heal,
the prisoners to free;
the deaf shall hear, the lame shall dance,
the blind shall see.

And those who mourn with heavy hearts,
who weep and sigh,
with laughter, joy and royal crown
he'll beautify.

We call you now to worship him
as Lord of all,
to have no gods before him,
their thrones must fall!

Graham Kendrick (*b.* 1950)
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Prayers of Praise and Adoration

Creator God, maker of all there is, we thank you for your boundless love and your endless mercy and forgiveness. You made the world we live in and gave it to us to care for. Even more than that, you gave us your only Son, who was willing to die for us, to show us how much you love us. We adore him for his sacrifice, so freely given, on our behalf. Accept our grateful praise, O Lord, for all we owe to Jesus Christ, your Son, our beloved friend and brother. **Amen**

Old Testament Reading:

 Psalm 118 :1-2,19-29

Prayers of Confession

We have walked through the weeks of Lent in the footsteps of our Lord, as he prepares to meet his death, to be crucified for our sakes.

Almighty God, forgive us when we were busy with work or family or worries or pain and did not remember. Dear Lord, we wander from you in our daily lives, so easily.

Forgive us when we are too pre-occupied to realise where we are going wrong.

Forgive us for thinking we walk alone and can ignore the needs of others, in our homes, our communities, our world.

Forgive us when we neglect to honour and cherish the world you have given us to live on. Forgive us when we neglect ourselves. Help us to remember that Christ met his death for each one of us. **Amen**

The Lord's Prayer

Because God loves us, and because his Son was willing to die to prove it, our sins are forgiven. Thanks be to God, now and always. **Amen**

Hymn: StF.362. Meekness and majesty

Meekness and majesty,
manhood and deity,
in perfect harmony –
the man who is God.
Lord of eternity,
dwells in humility,
kneels in humility
and washes our feet.

*Oh, what a mystery –
meekness and majesty:
bow down and worship,
for this is your God,
this is your God!*

Father's pure radiance,
perfect in innocence,
yet learns obedience
to death on a cross:
suffering to give us life,
conquering through sacrifice –
and as they crucify,
prays, 'Father forgive.'

Wisdom unsearchable,
God the invisible,
Love indestructible
In frailty appears:
Lord of infinity,
Stooping so tenderly,
Lifts our humanity
To the heights of his throne.

Graham Kendrick (b. 1950)

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Gospel Reading:

 **Mark 11:1-11**

Reflection

Holy Week starts with **Palm Sunday when** we remind ourselves of Jesus's riding into Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover. He rode on a donkey with crowds of people waving palm leaves and spreading their cloaks on the ground in front of him in an atmosphere of excited celebration.

There will be celebration on Easter Sunday, too, at the end of Holy Week, when we remember the stone rolled away from the empty tomb, and bandages neatly folded and a man who was dead, somehow alive again.

In telling ourselves the story of Easter, it would be all too easy to go straight from remembering Christ's joyful reception on his entry into Jerusalem to the joyful discovery of the empty tomb.

But we must not try to escape the ugly week of betrayal and torture which came between. We have to face Christ's death in agony on the cross. Nor must we avoid waiting through the emptiness and despair of Good Friday. We have to try to face Christ's pain and suffering and our part in causing it.

Only in this way can we offer hope to the people who walk in darkness and stand side by side with those in need.

Jesus knew there would be crowds gathered in Jerusalem that week, come to celebrate the Passover, which remembers and gives thanks to God for freeing the Israelites from captivity in Egypt.

Jesus knew that some people might hope that he had come to set them free politically from their Roman oppressors. But there was a clue to his intent in that he had chosen to ride on a donkey. In those times a king would ride a horse in time of war but a donkey if he came in peace.

So in riding towards his death in this way, Jesus was offering peace to everyone and forgiveness too, and showing the people there at the time, and the whole world down the ages, a way out of their captivity.

Not a literal political captivity of course, but a much more significant captivity, a spiritual captivity, an enslavement to self-centredness and the failure to put God first, which leads to all sorts of wrongdoing. And the way out of their slavery was of course through love, a love that would last beyond death.

When we hear again the familiar story of the "triumphant entry" into Jerusalem, and we hear about the excited crowds shouting, "Hosanna! Hosanna!" may we be forgiven for feeling a bit of envy at the idea of celebrating anything in these lockdown days, particularly with other people in a big crowd, and not socially distanced!

There have been hard times for many of us this last year when our patience and fortitude have been tested by our separation from family and friends.

"Hosanna" originally meant, "Save now" in Hebrew. As if the people calling this saw Jesus as the Messiah of God, the one predicted to come by the prophets.

How soon their delight would run cold that week in which he would be betrayed, accused and sentenced to death by the religious leaders of his country and the representatives of the Roman oppressors wanting a quiet life. And he would be whipped and scourged and crucified like a common thief. How soon "Hosanna" would turn to "Crucify him! Crucify him!".

The ordinary people turned against Jesus. One of his own inner circle betrayed him to the Temple authorities, the very Judas whose feet he had washed and to whom he had offered the bread of his body and the wine of his blood. All his friends fled from him. Even Simon Peter, the Rock on whom the Church would be built, denied knowing him three times.

Who is to say that we would have behaved differently?

All we can do is walk on through Holy Week to Christ's Passion, knowing that on the third day he will be raised from the dead, to give us all hope that such love and forgiveness are ours forever, and will help us through to the better day of tomorrow as Captain Tom might have said. **Amen**

Prayers for others

We pray for the world we live in, struggling to cope with a global pandemic. We pray for the sick and the grieving and all those who care for them. We pray for all those volunteers involved in vaccinating the whole country. We pray that even people in the poorest

countries will be given access to vaccines and treatment. Beyond the pandemic, we pray for all those who face suffering or death because of war or persecution or oppression, or because of starvation or drought or other natural disaster, brought about by the climate emergency. We pray for all of us affected by the pandemic, those struggling financially after losing their jobs, young people whose education has been badly disrupted, the isolated and lonely and also those having too much of each others' company during lockdown. We pray for your church, that we may move forward able to appreciate the best of our heritage but willing to try new ways of reaching out to others in love and compassion. Help us to embrace new technology for what it can offer while still cherishing our face to face services. Revive us all, O Lord, and help us to open the door to let the Holy Spirit blow through all of us, in the strength of your resurrection, so that we as a community will be built up and inspired to reach out to others.

Dear Lord we pray now for those known to us who are in special need of your love and comfort for whatever reason. (Pause) Reach out to those we have named to you now and comfort them with the assurance of your love and forgiveness.

Lastly a prayer for ourselves. We ask you to strengthen us for the work you call us to do. Help us find hope when the going gets tough and fill us with the joy and peace you wish for us. **We ask these prayers in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

Hymn: StF.272. *From heaven you came, helpless babe*

From heaven you came, helpless babe,
entered our world, your glory veiled,
not to be served but to serve,
and give your life that we might live.

*This is our God, the Servant King,
he calls us now to follow him,
to bring our lives as a daily offering
of worship to the Servant King.*

Come see his hands and his feet,
the scars that speak of sacrifice,
hands that flung stars into space
to cruel nails surrendered.

So let us learn how to serve
and in our lives enthrone him,
each other's needs to prefer,
for it is Christ we're serving.

There in the garden of tears
my heavy load he chose to bear ;
his heart with sorrow was torn,
'Yet not my will but yours,' he said.

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Closing prayer

This Holy Week, may we complete the journey of Lent to the foot of the cross.
May we hold God's son in our hearts and know the sacrifice he made for us.
Hosanna, Lord God. Save us now and always.

May your love and blessing remain with us forever. And may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all now and evermore. **Amen.**

PLEASE FEEL FREE TO PASS ON THIS SERVICE SHEET VIA EMAIL, OR PERHAPS PRINT OFF A COPY AND PASS IT TO A FRIEND OR NEIGHBOUR WHO MAY APPRECIATE IT. THANK YOU.