



Online Worship for St Paul's URC
and South Croydon United Church
Led by Rev'd Martin Knight

Opening Music – 'Fanfare' by Leonard Bernstein
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aCCELxO6rPg>

Welcome and Call to Worship

Welcome Friends, to our online worship for St Paul's URC and South Croydon United Church on this Palm Sunday at the beginning of Holy Week.

Wherever you are at home or on the bus, feel free respond loud and clear with the responses to our call to worship:

Jesus is coming

SHOUT HOSANNA

He's riding on a donkey

SHOUT HOSANNA

Open the gates

SHOUT HOSANNA

Open the ancient doors

SHOUT HOSANNA

Don't be afraid

SHOUT HOSANNA

Wave the branches

SHOUT HOSANNA

Spread out your coats

SHOUT HOSANNA

Peace in heaven

SHOUT HOSANNA

Glory in highest heaven

SHOUT HOSANNA

'All people that on earth do dwell'

Grace Community Church

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JmGwHdNtpEw>

All people that on earth do dwell,
sing to the Lord with cheerful voice:
him serve with fear, his praise forth tell,
come ye before him and rejoice!

The Lord, ye know, is God indeed;
without our aid he did us make;
we are his flock he doth us feed,
and for his sheep he doth us take.

O enter then his gates with praise,
approach with joy his courts unto;
Praise, laud and bless his name always,
for it is seemly so to do.

For why? The Lord our God is good,
his mercy is forever sure;
his truth at all times firmly stood,
and shall from age to age endure.

Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost,
the God whom heaven and earth adore,
from earth and from the angel host
be praise and glory evermore.

Words: William Kethe

Prayers of Praise and Confession

The Lord's Prayer

*God of Promise,
we are taken by surprise at each Palm Sunday.
We so want Jesus to be powerful,
a ruler who will smite the world of all evil,
and make all things good and easy for us.*

*Rather, he comes in humility to serve,
and calls us to have the strength to be humble servants.*

*We give thanks for this gift that saves us!
Hosanna, save us from ourselves,
that we might be the best we can be.*

*In the words of St Francis,
"Make us instruments of your peace.
Where there is hatred, let us sow love;
where there is injury, pardon;
where there is doubt, faith;
where there is despair, hope;
where there is darkness, light;
where there is sadness, joy.*

*Eternal One,
grant that we may not so much seek to be consoled as to console;
to be understood as to understand;
to be loved as to love;
For it is in giving that we receive;
it is in pardoning that we are pardoned;
it is in dying that we are born again to eternal life."*

Show us your Way this Holy Week, O Eternal One.

Let us say together the words of the Prayer that Jesus taught us;

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.

Lead us not into temptation

But deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory

Forever and ever. Amen

Psalm 118: 1-2, 19-29 – read by John Wagstaff

(NRSV)

¹ O give thanks to the LORD, for he is good;
his steadfast love endures for ever!

² Let Israel say,
'His steadfast love endures for ever.'

¹⁹ Open to me the gates of righteousness,
that I may enter through them
and give thanks to the LORD.

²⁰ This is the gate of the LORD;
the righteous shall enter through it.

²¹ I thank you that you have answered me
and have become my salvation.

²² The stone that the builders rejected
has become the chief cornerstone.

²³ This is the LORD's doing;
it is marvellous in our eyes.

²⁴ This is the day that the LORD has made;
let us rejoice and be glad in it.

²⁵ Save us, we beseech you, O LORD!
O LORD, we beseech you, give us success!

- ²⁶ Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the LORD.
We bless you from the house of the LORD.
- ²⁷ The LORD is God,
and he has given us light.
Bind the festal procession with branches,
up to the horns of the altar.
- ²⁸ You are my God, and I will give thanks to you;
you are my God, I will extol you.
- ²⁹ O give thanks to the LORD, for he is good,
for his steadfast love endures for ever.

'Welcome to the City (but one wee word of advice)'

by Ian Cowie

*Lord Jesus,
if only you would come to our city like you did Jerusalem.
We've some great hymns to sing to welcome you!
Our tambourines would be out to lead the singing;
we'd wave our scarves and dance.
You would get a real red-carpet welcome – 5 star treatment.*

*There would be a religious revival.
It would be wonderful.
If only you would come here
to our country
to rescue us.*

*But in case you do,
just one wee word of advice –
stick to religion, but be careful.
Don't interfere with politics, or economics, or big business and
all that,*

and be careful not to make unpopular changes in the way we worship.

*Save us from what might happen in the next life, yes,
but leave us to go on our own way,
the way we are used to in this life.*

*If you get it wrong,
who know?*

We, too, might have to liquidate you.

'Ride on, ride on in majesty'

Sung by Chet Valley Churches

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CUYCxw0quuQ>

Ride on, ride on in majesty!
Hark, all the tribes Hosanna cry.
Thine humble beast, pursues his road
with palms and scattered garments strowed.

Ride on, ride on in majesty!
In lowly pomp ride on to die!
O Christ, thy triumphs now begin
o'er captive death and conquered sin.

Ride on, ride on in majesty!
The last and fiercest strife is nigh;
The Father on the sapphire throne
awaits his own anointed Son.

Ride on, ride on in majesty!
In lowly pomp ride on to die!
Bow thy meek head to mortal pain;
then take, O God, thy power and reign!

Words: Henry Hart Milman

¹² The next day the great crowd that had come to the festival heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem. ¹³So they took branches of palm trees and went out to meet him, shouting,

'Hosanna!

Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord—the King of Israel!'

¹⁴Jesus found a young donkey and sat on it; as it is written:

¹⁵ 'Do not be afraid, daughter of Zion.

Look, your king is coming, sitting on a donkey's colt!'

¹⁶His disciples did not understand these things at first; but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things had been written of him and had been done to him.

'Who are you in the story?'

*God alive among us,
may we make that vital connection between your word and our lives.*

Our Lent course this year, which has been shared with St Paul's and SCUC, has been a much more immersive experience. We have been encouraged to really hear and enter-into the passage we've listen to. We've heard each reading two or three times, read nice and slowly so that we might imagine ourselves in the scene. Which character do we identify with? What is surprising or interesting or strange? What do we feel as we listen?

So, I'd like us to do the same thing with the incredibly well-known story of Jesus entry into Jerusalem, riding on a donkey.

Perhaps we know it too well and the words float from one ear and out the other side?

John's is a relatively short account, so I'm going to read it again, slowly, and I suggest you take a few deep breaths and try and place yourself in the scene – who do you identify with?

Perhaps you're someone in the crowd?

Someone who's heard about Jesus' healing and is looking for help, someone longing for a new king to overthrow the Romans, a suspicious leader from the Temple come to spy, a woman shocked at the respect Jesus gave the woman at the well.

Place yourself in the scene:

¹² The next day the great crowd that had come to the festival heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem. ¹³So they took branches of palm trees and went out to meet him, shouting, 'Hosanna!

*Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord—
the King of Israel!*

¹⁴ Jesus found a young donkey and sat on it; as it is written:

¹⁵ 'Do not be afraid, daughter of Zion.

*Look, your king is coming,
sitting on a donkey's colt!*

¹⁶ His disciples did not understand these things at first; but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things had been written of him and had been done to him.

This Palm Sunday, I found myself wondering what Jesus would say or do if he were to ride into Croydon in a battered old, second hand car?

As someone in the crowd, what would I want or expect from him? That's if I'd even be in the crowd – would I even believe that a messiah would come?

What would he be overturning soon after his arrival in our temples?

I have a suspicion that I'm so jaded by the world and it's injustice, that I'd expect someone like him to be crucified!

Or I'd be alongside those shouting 'Crucify', because I've misunderstood too – and I'm part of the problem.

So many questions and thoughts as we see Jesus enter, in glory, laud and honour, on a donkey. There would have been questions and opinions throughout the crowd then as well, and from the disciples, so I'm happy to leave them up in the air and to allow the events of Holy Week to speak for themselves – to inform us of who Jesus is.

Here, imagined by Nick Fawcett, are the thoughts of Simon the Zealot, watching the events and wondering to himself...

*What a day it was,
a day I shall never forget –
the voices raised in jubilation,
the arms outstretched in welcome,*

*the crowds lining the streets,
waving their palm branches,
hurling down their cloaks,
welcoming their king,
the Son of David,
the one who came in the name of the Lord.*

*They believed that at long last the waiting was over,
The Messiah finally come to set them free.
We believed it too, come to that.*

*After all his talk of suffering and death we dared to hope
he'd got it wrong,
and for a moment as I watched him I wondered if he felt the
same –
the way he responded to the cheers,
laughter playing on his lips,
a smile on his face,
a twinkle in his eyes.
He was enjoying himself, I'm sure of that,
Determined to savour the moment.*

*But then I noticed it,
as we drew near to Jerusalem,
a tear in the corner of his eye –
so unexpected.
Not a tear of joy but of sorrow,
trickling slowly down his face,
silent testimony to his pain.*

*He wasn't fooled by it at all,
not like the rest of u.
He knew what they wanted,
how they would change.
He knew they would offer the cross if he rejected their crown,
but still he continued, resolute to the end;
that's the extraordinary thing.
It was a day to remember,*

a day on which they welcomed their king.

*But none imagined, least of all I,
that the crown would be made of thorns,
and the throne reached via a cross.*

I would encourage all of us, to take part in our Holy Week Services, so that we can journey with Jesus to the Cross and engage with those stories that will help us to understand for ourselves, who Jesus is – instead of skipping straight from Palm Sunday to Easter Sunday, missing that important time to dwell in the dark and to more profoundly experience the light.

I wish you every blessing as we journey together towards the Resurrection.

'My song is love unknown'

Sung by Chet Valley Churches

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bWRcAa-nFIA>

My song is love unknown,
my saviour's love to me;
love to the loveless shown
that they might lovely be:
O, who am I, that for my sake
my Lord should take frail flesh and die?

He came from his blest throne,
salvation to bestow;
but men made strange, and none
the longed-for Christ would know:
but Oh, my friend, my friend indeed,
who at my need his life did spend!

Sometimes they strew his way
and his sweet praises sing,
resounding all the day
hosannas to their king.
Then 'crucify' is all their breath,
and for his death they thirst and cry.

Why, what hath my Lord done?
What makes this rage and spite?
He made the lame to run,
he gave the blind their sight:
sweet injuries! yet they at these
themselves displease, and 'gainst him rise.

They rise and needs will have
my dear Lord made away;
a murderer they save,
the prince of life they slay!
Yet cheerful he to suffering goes,
that he his foes from thence, might free.

In life no house, no home,
my Lord on earth might have;
in death no friendly tomb,
but what a stranger gave.
What may I say? Heav'n was his home;
but mine the tomb wherein he lay.

Here might I stay and sing
no story so divine;
never was love, dear King,
never was grief like thine!
This is my friend in whose sweet praise
I all my days could gladly spend.

Words: Samuel Crossman

Prayers of Intercession

*Gentle Christ,
you set your face to Jerusalem –
the place of trial,
of torture and death –
surrounded by noise,
by expectation and hope;
love unknown,
vulnerability unrecognised.*

*Gentle Christ,
we will walk with you;
we will weep with you;
we will watch with you;
our eyes on you,
our hearts with you,
our lives for you;*

*in humility,
in awe,
in peace.
As we wait with you, here and now,
we walk and weep and watch
with the broken of our world:*

*(silence to recall recent local and global news)
our eyes and hearts and lives for them.*

*As we wait with you,
we walk and weep and watch
with those we know who are hurting or in pain:*

*(silence to recall those in our minds)
our eyes and hearts and lives for them.*

*As we wait with you
we wait with each other and with ourselves.
In humility,
in awe,
in peace. Amen*

Notices

- Thank you to those who organised and took part in Desert Island Discs No.2!
- And to those who donated Easter Eggs via SCUC for Hestia.

Holy week and easter services

Maundy Thursday

Thursday 1st April – 7:30pm

United Zoom service with Purley URC and South Croydon United Church

Good Friday

Friday 2nd April – 9:30am

United Zoom service with South Croydon United Church

11am ***Croydon Walk of Witness on Youtube*** (*Spot your minister!*)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZLt1wizx87s&ab_channel=JesusProduction

Holy Saturday

Saturday 3rd April – 2-4pm

Easter Egg Hunt at St Paul's (*Book a time slot with Fran as part of Covid precautions*)

Giving Easter Eggs to our Community

Easter Sunday

Sunday 4th April – 10:30am

Zoom Service – SCUC in church, led by Doreen Wright

- If restrictions are reduced in line with Government Guidance, St Paul's is aiming to reopen on the 18th April – as Covid-secure as we can be. We will be able to confirm nearer the time, with strong reminders about the importance of our risk assessment and how we need to behave to keep everyone safe!

'All glory, laud, and honour'

Sung by Chet Valley Churches

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eBfJyjDolwA>

*All glory, laud, and honour
To thee, Redeemer, King
To whom the lips of children
Made sweet hosannas ring.*

Thou art the King of Israel
Thou David's royal Son
Who in the Lord's name comest,
The King and Blessed One:
All glory, laud, and honour...

The company of angels
Are praising Thee on high
And mortal men and all things
Created make reply:
All glory, laud, and honour...

The people of the Hebrews
With palms before Thee went
Our praise and love and anthems
Before Thee we present:

All glory, laud, and honour...

To Thee, before Thy passion
They sang their hymns of praise
To Thee, now high exalted
Our melody we raise:

All glory, laud, and honour...

Thou didst accept their praises
Accept the prayers we bring,
Who in all good delightest
Thou good and gracious King:

All glory, laud, and honour...

Words: Theodulf, Bishop of Orleans, 820AD

Sending Forth & Blessing

We tell your story

We follow in your footsteps

LEAD US INTO HOLY WEEK

We Walk towards the city

We wait in the garden

LEAD US ONTO HOLY GROUND

We journey towards death

We hope for resurrection

LEAD US INTO HOLY JOY.

*And the blessing of God,
Parent, Son and Spirit,
goes with us. Amen*

Closing Music –

'O sacred head, sore wounded'

sung by The Gesualdo Six

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R_OBbjAfVrI

*My days are few, O fail not,
With thine immortal pow'r,
To hold me that I quail not
In death's most fearful hour:
That I may fight befriended,
And see in my last strife
To me thine arms extended
Upon the cross of life.*

All words and music used with permission
CCLi: 212639
CCL Streaming License: 199867