



Morning Worship (and Spiritual Communion)

(You may like to have a Bible handy, light a candle and have some reflective music playing in the background. This service also includes some music on YouTube so if you can easily access this during this time, you can be prepared. Otherwise do visit the site at a later time.)



Font at St Stephen's. Thanks Claire

Opening Sentences

O Lord, open our lips and our mouth shall proclaim your praise.

The night has passed, and the day lies open before us;
let us pray with one heart and mind.

As we rejoice in the gift of this new day,
so may the light of your presence, O God,
set our hearts on fire with love for you;
now and for ever. Amen.

Silence is kept.

Confession, reading and reflection

Today we celebrate Christ's entry into Jerusalem, riding on a donkey.

Please right click on this link and click on open hyperlink to visit this website

<https://youtu.be/Zo5pfl6z6lA>

for the hymn Ride on Ride on in majesty, sung as part of Songs of Praise in St Mary-le-Tower church, Ipswich.

Confession

A donkey gladly bears your weight,
But we have gone our own way.
The crowds sang your praises,
But we have gone our own way.
A thief will cry to you for mercy,
But we have gone our own way.

Christ enters the hearts of all who welcome him:
Hosanna in the highest!

Alternative collect for Palm Sunday

True and humble king,
hailed by the crowd as Messiah:
grant us the faith to know you and love you,
that we may be found beside you
on the way of the cross,
which is the path of glory.
Amen

Jesus's entry into Jerusalem is recorded in all four gospels. Our reading today is from Matthew 21: 1-11.

When Jesus and his disciples 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,

"Hosanna to the Son of David!
Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord!
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."

You might like to reflect on this reading scrolling down and using two poems:
The Donkey by G K Chesterton and Malcolm Guite's Sonnet for Palm Sunday

The Donkey

When fishes flew and forests walked
And figs grew upon thorn,
Some moment when the moon was blood
Then surely I was born.

With monstrous head and sickening cry
And ears like errant wings,
The devil's walking parody
On all four-footed things.

The tattered outlaw of the earth,
Of ancient crooked will;
Starve, scourge, deride me: I am dumb,
I keep my secret still.

Fools! For I also had my hour;
One far fierce hour and sweet:
There was a shout about my ears,
And palms before my feet.

Palm Sunday

Now to the gate of my Jerusalem,
The seething holy city of my heart,
The Saviour comes. But will I welcome him?
Oh crowds of easy feelings make a start;
They raise their hands, get caught up in the singing,
And think the battle won. Too soon they'll find
The challenge, the reversal he is bringing
Changes their tune. I know what lies behind
The surface flourish that so quickly fades;
Self-interest and fearful guardedness,
The hardness of heart, its barricades,
And at the core, the dreadful emptiness
Of a perverted temple. Jesus come
Break my resistance and make me your home.

Why palms?

The palms leaves almost certainly came from date palms, majestic, tall trees that grow abundantly in the Holy Land. Their long and large leaves spread out from the top of a single trunk that can grow to more than 50 feet in height.

In ancient times, palm branches symbolized goodness, well-being, grandeur, steadfastness, and victory. They were often depicted on coins and important buildings. King Solomon had palm branches carved into the walls and doors of the temple: *On the walls all around the temple, in both the inner and outer rooms, he carved cherubim, palm trees and open flowers. (1 Kings 6:29)*

Palm branches were regarded as tokens of joy and triumph and were customarily used on festive occasions (*Leviticus 23:40, Nehemiah 8:15*). Kings and conquerors were welcomed with palm branches being strewn before them and waved in the air. Victors of Grecian games returned to their homes triumphantly waving palm branches in their hands.

The book of Revelation speaks of people from every nation raising palm branches to honour Jesus: *After this I looked, and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and before the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands. (Revelation 7:9)*

Prayer for Others

Let us pray to God,
who alone makes us dwell in safety:
For all who are affected by coronavirus,
through illness or isolation or anxiety,
that they may find relief and recovery:

Lord, graciously hear us.

For those who are guiding our nation at this time,
and shaping national policies,
that they may make wise decisions:

Lord, graciously hear us.

For doctors, nurses and medical researchers,
that through their skill and insights
many will be restored to health:

Lord, graciously hear us.

For the vulnerable and the fearful,
for the gravely ill and the dying,
that they may know your comfort and peace:

Lord, graciously hear us.

We commend ourselves, and all for whom we pray,
to the mercy and protection of God.

*Merciful Father,
accept these prayers
for the sake of your Son,
our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.*

The Lord's Prayer

A short Spiritual Communion

The Book of Common Prayer reminds us that if we offer ourselves in penitence and faith, giving thanks for the redemption won by Christ crucified, we may truly 'eat and drink the Body and Blood of our Saviour Christ', even when we cannot receive the sacrament physically in ourselves.

You may wish to say or pray

Lord, have mercy.
Christ, have mercy.
Lord, have mercy.

O God,
help me to trust you,
help me to know that you are with me,
help me to believe that nothing can separate me from your love
revealed in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Please right click on this link and click on 'open hyperlink ' to visit this website
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3dtbzFdFTnc&feature=youtu.be>

where you will hear the choir of St David's church sing an anthem by Nigel Walsh – (Christ has no body but you - a setting of words attributed to St Teresa of Avila.) Thanks to Nigel for this.

Giving thanks for Christ's death and resurrection you may wish to say

Thanks be to you, Lord Jesus Christ,
for all the benefits you have given me,
for all the pains and insults you have borne for me.
Since I cannot now receive you sacramentally,
I ask you to come spiritually into my heart.
O most merciful redeemer, friend and brother,
may I know you more clearly,
love you more dearly,
and follow you more nearly, day by day. Amen.
(after the Prayer of St Richard of Chichester)

The Conclusion

The Lord bless us and watch over us;
The Lord make his face to shine upon us and be gracious to us;
The Lord look kindly upon us and give us peace. Amen.

Let us bless the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

Scroll to next page for this Sunday evening

This Sunday Evening

Churches Together in Devon in common with Churches Together throughout England are asking that at 7pm each Sunday evening, you light a candle in the windows of your home as a visible symbol of the light of life, Jesus Christ, our source and hope in prayer.

Night Prayer



If you are able to do so, you might wish to light a candle near a window.

Opening prayer:

Come, O Spirit of God,
and make within us your dwelling place and home.
May our darkness be dispelled by your light,
and our troubles calmed by your peace;
may all evil be redeemed by your love,
all pain transformed through the suffering of Christ,
and all dying glorified in his risen life. Amen.

Psalm 23 for these times

God is the healthcare folk
all around us:
encouraging us to stay home,
reminding us to wash our hands
so we can help others be safe,

teaching us how to be mindful
and watch over ourselves and others.

Even as we shelter,
we will not give in to fear,
for God is with us,
in those who phone us and care for us,
in those who shop for us,
and those who treat us.

Around a lonely table,
in a houseful of family,
in a hospital with strangers,
God feeds us with grace,
pouring out hope upon us,
filling us with peace in the sleepless night.

(This version of Psalm 23 is by Thom Shuman, a pastor in Ohio and also an associate member of the Iona Community, who have made this available.)

Prayers for the nation, for those in need, and for those close to you.

Let us pray to the Lord, who is our refuge and stronghold.
For the health and well-being of our nation, that all who are fearful and
anxious may be at peace and free from worry:
Lord, hear us, Lord, graciously hear us.

For the isolated and housebound, that we may be alert to their needs, and
care for them in their vulnerability:
Lord, hear us, Lord, graciously hear us.

For our homes and families, our schools and young people, and all in any kind
of need or distress:
Lord, hear us, Lord, graciously hear us.

For a blessing on our local community, that our neighbourhoods may be places
of trust and friendship, where all are known and cared for:
Lord, hear us, Lord, graciously hear us.

We commend ourselves, and all for whom we pray, to the mercy and protection of God.

Merciful Father, accept these prayers for the sake of your Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

The Conclusion

God our Father, by whose mercy
the world turns safely into darkness and returns again to light:
we place in your hands our unfinished tasks,
our unsolved problems, and our unfulfilled hopes,
knowing that only what you bless will prosper.

To your love and protection
we commit each other and all those we love,
knowing that you alone are our sure defender,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen