

Eastminster Presbyterian Church
SERVICE FOR THE LORD'S DAY
Palm/Passion Sunday

March 28, 2021

VOLUNTARY

Melody Davis

OPENING HYMN 196 *All Glory, Laud, and Honor*

CALL TO CONFESSION

On this side of resurrection, we believe that we could never have been part of the jeering crowd. But we must ask an honest question: With what kind of crowd do we associate in our day and time? Whatever our answer, God's response is this: Trust always, in my mercy and my love.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

When our words and actions reflect a reluctance to confess Jesus as Lord of our lives, forgive us. When we fear that humbling ourselves will be seen as weakness, forgive us. When we betray your love for us through our lack of love for you and others, forgive us. Loving God, empower us with your Holy Spirit so that our lives continually glorify you and our tongues forever confess that Jesus Christ is our Lord! Hear our prayer! Amen!

ASSURANCE OF GOD'S PARDON

Our prayer is heard and in Jesus Christ, thanks be to God, we are loved and we are forgiven!

RESPONSE 582 *Glory to God Whose Goodness Shines on Me*

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

God of wisdom, as we listen for your Word, may your Spirit so guide our thoughts and actions that we look with expectation and excitement for the new possibilities of ministry you set before us. For your Word that does not fade nor wither, we offer our thanksgiving. Amen.

OLD TESTAMENT READING (*Pew Bible, page681*)

Isaiah 50: 4-9a

Morning by morning he wakens— wakens my ear to listen as those who are taught. ⁵The Lord God has opened my ear, and I was not rebellious, I did not turn backward. ⁶I gave my back to those who struck me, and my cheeks to those who pulled out the beard; I did not hide my face from insult and spitting. ⁷The Lord God helps me; therefore I have not been disgraced; therefore I have set my face like flint, and I know that I shall not be put to shame; ⁸he who vindicates me is near. Who will contend with me? Let us stand up together. Who are my adversaries? Let them confront me. ⁹It is the Lord God who helps me; who will declare me guilty? All of them will wear out like a garment; the moth will eat them up.

ANTHEM

Hosanna! Blessed Is He
Sanctuary Choir

John F. Wilson

NEW TESTAMENT READING (*Pew Bible, page 51*) Mark 11, 14 and 15, selected verses

Beginning in chapter 11, we remember that as Jesus was coming near the towns of Bethpage and Bethany, close to the Mount of Olives he sent two disciples ahead, telling them that they will find a colt, one that has never been ridden. They are to untie it, and bring it to him. This colt he will ride into Jerusalem. If people are curious and ask why, Jesus says tell them the Lord needs it, and after borrowing it, he will return it.

The disciples used their coats as a saddle blanket for Jesus. Then as Jesus entered Jerusalem, others put their coats down in a makeshift colorful path and also spread palm leaves on the ground. As Jesus rode in the crowd shouted: “Hosanna! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord! ¹⁰Blessed is the coming kingdom of our ancestor David! Hosanna in the highest heaven!”

It was late in the day when Jesus arrived, but he still wanted to make a brief stop at the Temple. After that, he and the disciples traveled back out to Bethany for the night.

From chapter 14, we remember that Jesus has come to Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover and because of what he has been teaching, preaching, doing, the scribes and chiefs are not happy that he is in town, fearing his popularity. So they begin scheming about ways to arrest and have him put to death.

As this was being plotted, while Jesus was still in Bethany at the house of Simon the leper, the house where we hear the beautiful story the woman who breaks open the alabaster jar full of the costly ointment called nard. She was criticized, even scolded for being wasteful.

But Jesus said, “Let her alone; why do you trouble her? She has performed a good service for me. ⁷For you always have the poor with you, and you can show kindness to them whenever you wish; but you will not always have me. ⁸She has done what she could; she has anointed my body beforehand for its burial. ⁹Truly I tell you, wherever the good news is proclaimed in the whole world, what she has done will be told in remembrance of her.”

And we hear of Judas Iscariot’s willingness to betray his Lord to the chief priest for money, on the lookout for opportunities to do so.

From the 15th chapter, we hear of the preparations for sacrificing the Passover Lamb and the disciples asking Jesus about how to prepare a holy feast. Reading almost like a mystery story, Jesus tells them to go into town and follow a man carrying a water jar. The man will lead them to a house and the disciples will say to the owner: ‘The Teacher asks, Where is my guest room where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?’ The owner Jesus says will show you a large upstairs room, furnished and ready. Make preparations there.

It is in this room, with Jesus and the twelve, that Jesus reveals what he knows: “Truly I tell you, one of you will betray me, one who is eating with me.” They begin to deny. Jesus says, “It is one of the twelve, one who is dipping bread into the bowl with me.²¹ For the Son of Man goes as it is written of him, but woe to that one by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been better for that one not to have been born.” Even in the face of death and betrayal, Jesus gives thanks to God for their meal...bread to eat and wine to drink. The bread becomes the symbol of Christ’s body given and Christ’s blood shed for our salvation.

Following the meal, Jesus and the disciples head to the Mount of Olives where Peter’s denial of deserting Jesus during his time of suffering . We hear the pleading prayer of Jesus in the Garden of Gethesame and we hear Jesus’ words as the disciples can’t remain awake with him: “ Enough! The hour has come; the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners.⁴²Get up, let us be going. See, my betrayer is at hand.”

Judas betrays Jesus. Peter deserts Jesus and the rest of the story we know..crucify him! Crucify him. A crown of thorns. A heavy cross. A word of forgiveness. A last breath. A rock rolled in front of a tomb, separating life from death.

HYMN 518 *Your Only Son (Lamb of God)*

SERMON

The Truth of the Good News

Sherry Holloman

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

Philippians 2: 5-11

Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness. And being found in human form, he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death—even death on a cross. Therefore God also highly exalted him and gave him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

PRAYERS OF THE CHURCH AND THE LORD’S PRAYER

We pray to you, Good and Gracious God, by lifting up to your our heartfelt prayers. Answer us, Lord. Become our salvation. Throughout time and trial, you have led us through the wilderness on paths long and toilsome. Together, we follow you to the dark hour when you will be betrayed and broken. As our faces are turned to the cross, strengthen our wearied souls that we might continue with faithful footsteps and follow the course that you have set. On this day, you begin marching toward your death, a death to which we have been sealed in our baptisms. Together, we are preparing to take the plunge into the darkness of that cold and lonely tomb. What will we find there? Is there truth to be found in the darkness of this week? We gather to begin holy week, a week, though dark and dismal, that is nevertheless a preparation for resurrection - a resurrection to which we have been sealed in our baptisms. Together, we are preparing

to be renewed by the light of the empty tomb. What will we find there? What truths will be discovered in the light of Easter morning. As we march together to Jerusalem, through Gethsemane, and to the hill of the cross, we bring with us the concerns that are on our hearts this day. Be with those who need the hope of resurrection, with those who have lost loved one, when all seeking health and home, be there for all are without voice, and be with us all as we prepare for your death and look forward to your new life and the new life we have in you. Help us to rest in the comforting truth that in life and in death we belong to you. We offer our thanksgiving praying as our Lord prayed: **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 debts, as we forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, forever. Amen.**

OFFERTORY SENTENCE

May our gifts of time, talent and money shout God's good news of love in Jesus Christ!

PRESENTATION OF TITHES AND OFFERINGS

OFFERTORY ANTHEM

Behold the Savior
Sanctuary Choir

Dana Mengel

RESPONSE 605 *Praise to God the Father*

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

We come to meet you Jesus in the joy of giving. You gave your life for us, walking the road to Jerusalem. Freely we have received, freely we give. We lay these resources at your feet: our hosannas to the one who comes in the name of the Lord.

DISMISSAL AND BLESSING

And so it begins, we walk through this week, from palms now to passion, and it is Jesus we seek. Each moment we walk through these days now with Jesus, is time to see people, the way Jesus...sees us. To watch for the ones, who need hope, who need kindness. Seeking the light, not the darkness that blinds us. As we walk through these days, may the love we now know be spread to each person we meet.

And may God who now blesses and keeps us in love, whose face shines upon us with grace from above, who looks on us with such joy and such favor, may this God, three in One give us peace. Amen

CLOSING HYMN 198 *Ride On! Ride On in Majesty!*