

Worship in the Home: Sunday of the Passion / Palm Sunday, March 28, 2021

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Worship in the Home

Sunday of the Passion / Palm Sunday March 28, 2021

In this time of world-wide crisis, congregations throughout this church are not able to gather for worship as the body of Christ. While we cannot be together in person, we can hear the word of God and hold each other in prayer. We offer this brief resource as an aid for prayer in the home. As with our prayers in the gathered assembly for worship, you are encouraged to prepare or adapt them locally for your context.

This week, the center of the church's year, is one of striking contrasts: Jesus rides into Jerusalem surrounded by shouts of glory, only to be left alone to die on the cross, abandoned by even his closest friends. Mark's gospel presents Jesus in his complete human vulnerability: agitated, grieved, scared, forsaken. Though we lament Christ's suffering and all human suffering, we also expect God's salvation: in the wine and bread, Jesus promises that his death will mark a new covenant with all people. We enter this holy week thirsty for the completion of God's astonishing work.

In response to the mass shootings in recent days, you may wish to include in worship the following or another prayer related to gun violence. A more extended rite, "Lamenting Gun Violence" is available in All Creation Sings Leaders Edition (p. 107) and on sundaysandseasons.com.

God, our healer and our refuge, we pray for all who suffer from gun violence. With your mercy, bind up their wounds, restore their bodies, and heal their hearts. Comfort the mourners and embrace the lonely. With your might, empower us to change this broken world. Make us advocates for a stable society, alive with hope in you. We ask this through the one once wounded for our transgressions and now standing with us in our sorrows, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Amen.

Set out on a table in front of you a green branch, a house plant, or simply a drawing of a leaf or branch. Then speak this acclamation:

Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord.

Hosanna in the highest.

Proclamation Gospel: Mark 11:1-11

The holy gospel according to Mark.

Glory to you, O Lord.

Jesus enters Jerusalem

¹When they were approaching Jerusalem, at Bethphage and Bethany, near the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two of his disciples ²and said to them, "Go into the village ahead of you, and immediately as you enter it, you will find tied there a colt that has never been ridden; untie it and bring it. ³If anyone says to you, 'Why are you doing this?' just say this, 'The Lord needs it and will send it back here immediately.'" ⁴They went away and found a colt tied near a door, outside in the street. As they were untying it, ⁵some of the bystanders said to them, "What are you doing, untying the colt?" ⁶They told them what Jesus had said; and they allowed them to take it. ⁷Then they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their cloaks on it; and he sat on it. ⁸Many people spread their cloaks on the road, and others spread leafy branches that they had cut in the fields. ⁹Then those who went ahead and those who followed were shouting, "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!" ¹¹Then he entered Jerusalem and went into the temple; and when he had looked around at everything, as it was already late, he went out to Bethany with the twelve.

The gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

About this reading:

When in the past we have read this text in church and carried the palm branches, we were celebrating the presence of Jesus Christ coming among us as we began all the services of this Holy Week. But you may trust that Christ comes also now to your home, to be with you as you begin this week of prayer, apart from others but still together with the whole church. Blessed indeed is the One who comes!

If you have a hymnal (or using the graphic below), you might now sing or read "All Glory, Laud and Honor" (Evangelical Lutheran Worship 344), "Pave the Way with Branches" (All Creation Sings 928), "Blessed Is the One" (All Creation Sings 929).

[All Glory, Laud, and Honor](#)

[Pave the Way with Branches](#)

[Blessed Is the One](#)

The Prayer of the Day may be prayed.

Let us pray.

A brief silence is kept before the prayer.

O God of mercy and might, in the mystery of the passion of your Son you offer your infinite life to the world. Gather us around the cross of Christ, and preserve us until the resurrection, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

First Reading: Isaiah 50:4-9a

The image of the servant of God is one of the notable motifs in the book of Isaiah. Today's reading describes the mission of the servant, whom early Christians associated with Jesus. Like Jesus, the servant does not strike back at his detractors but trusts in God's steadfast love.

⁴The Lord God has given me
the tongue of a teacher,

that I may know how to sustain
the weary with a word.
Morning by morning the Lord God awakens—
awakens 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;
⁸the one who vindicates me is near.
Who will contend with me?
Let us stand up together.
Who are my adversaries?
Let them confront me.
^{9a}It is the Lord God who helps me;
who will declare me guilty?

Word of God, word of life.
Thanks be to God.

Psalm 31:9-16

⁹Have mercy on me, O Lord, for I^l am in trouble;
my eye is consumed with sorrow, and also my throat^l and my belly.
¹⁰For my life is wasted with grief, and my^l years with sighing;
my strength fails me because of affliction, and my bones^l are consumed.
¹¹I am the scorn of all my enemies, a disgrace to my neighbors,
a dismay to^l my acquaintances;
when they see me in the street^l they avoid me.
¹²Like the dead I am forgotten,^l out of mind;
I am as useless as a^l broken pot.
¹³For I have heard the whispering of the crowd; fear is^l all around;
they put their heads together against me; they plot to^l take my life.
¹⁴But as for me, I have trusted in^l you, O Lord.
I have said, "You^l are my God.
¹⁵My times are^l in your hand;
rescue me from the hand of my enemies, and from those who^l persecute me.
¹⁶Let your face shine up-^l on your servant;
save me in your^l steadfast love."

Second Reading: Philippians 2:5-11

Christ did not act to attain status and glory but was obedient to God even to the point of death. Following Christ's example, we do not seek personal status or glory but care for others as God cared for us in Christ's death.

⁵Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus,
⁶who, although being in the form of God,
did not regard equality with God
as something to be exploited,
⁷but relinquished it all,

taking the form of a slave,
being born in human likeness.
And being found in human form,
⁸he humbled himself
and became obedient to the point of death—
even death on a cross.
⁹Therefore God also highly exalted him
and gave him the name
that is above every name,
¹⁰so that at the name of Jesus
every knee should bend,
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,
¹¹and every tongue should confess
that Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father.

Word of God, word of life.
Thanks be to God.

Gospel: Mark 15:1-39

The Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ, according to Mark.

Glory to you, O Lord.

The passion story in Mark's gospel presents Jesus as one who dies abandoned by all. He shows himself to be the true Son of God by giving his life for those who have forsaken him.

¹As soon as it was morning, the chief priests held a consultation with the elders and scribes and the whole council. They bound Jesus, led him away, and handed him over to Pilate. ²Pilate asked him, "Are you the King of the Jews?" He answered him, "You say so." ³Then the chief priests accused him of many things. ⁴Pilate asked him again, "Have you no answer? See how many charges they bring against you." ⁵But Jesus made no further reply, so that Pilate was amazed.

⁶Now at the festival he used to release a prisoner for them, anyone for whom they asked. ⁷Now a man called Barabbas was in prison with the rebels who had committed murder during the insurrection. ⁸So the crowd came and began to ask Pilate to do for them according to his custom. ⁹Then he answered them, "Do you want me to release for you the King of the Jews?" ¹⁰For he realized that it was out of jealousy that the chief priests had handed him over. ¹¹But the chief priests stirred up the crowd to have him release Barabbas for them instead. ¹²Pilate spoke to them again, "Then what do you wish me to do with the man you call the King of the Jews?" ¹³They shouted back, "Crucify him!" ¹⁴Pilate asked them, "Why, what evil has he done?" But they shouted all the more, "Crucify him!" ¹⁵So Pilate, wishing to satisfy the crowd, released Barabbas for them; and after flogging Jesus, he handed him over to be crucified.

¹⁶Then the soldiers led him into the courtyard of the palace (that is, the governor's headquarters); and they called together the whole cohort. ¹⁷And they clothed him in a purple cloak; and after twisting some thorns into a crown, they put it on him. ¹⁸And they began saluting him, "Hail, King of the Jews!" ¹⁹They struck his head with a reed, spat upon him, and knelt down in homage to him. ²⁰After mocking him, they stripped him of the purple cloak and put his own clothes on him. Then they led him out to crucify him.

²¹They compelled a passer-by, who was coming in from the country, to carry his cross; it was Simon of Cyrene, the father of Alexander and Rufus. ²²Then they brought Jesus to the place called Golgotha (which means the place of a skull). ²³And they offered him wine mixed with myrrh; but he did not take it. ²⁴And they crucified him, and divided his clothes among them, casting lots to decide what each should take.

²⁵It was nine o'clock in the morning when they crucified him. ²⁶The inscription of the charge against him read, "The King of the Jews." ²⁷And with him they crucified two bandits, one on his right and one on his left. ²⁹Those who passed by derided him, shaking their heads and saying, "Aha! You who would destroy the temple and build it in three days, ³⁰save yourself, and come down from the cross!" ³¹In the same way the chief priests, along with the scribes, were also mocking him among themselves and saying, "He saved others; he cannot save himself. ³²Let the Messiah, the King of

Israel, come down from the cross now, so that we may see and believe." Those who were crucified with him also taunted him.

³³When it was noon, darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon. ³⁴At three o'clock Jesus cried out with a loud voice, "Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?" which means, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" ³⁵When some of the bystanders heard it, they said, "Listen, he is calling for Elijah." ³⁶And someone ran, filled a sponge with sour wine, put it on a stick, and gave it to him to drink, saying, "Wait, let us see whether Elijah will come to take him down." ³⁷Then Jesus gave a loud cry and breathed his last. ³⁸And the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. ³⁹Now when the centurion, who stood facing him, saw that in this way he breathed his last, he said, "Truly this man was God's Son!"

The gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you, O Christ.

If a larger household desires a passion reading designed for multiple readers, you may wish to use the optional PDF below.

[The Passion According to St. Mark](#)

Having read these readings, think on this:

As the Psalm today says, fear is certainly all around. This story of the suffering of Christ powerfully fits our time, and we can recognize ourselves in the fearful crowd, if not also in the betrayers and killers. But why does God in Christ enter into such agonies? To plant hope and life and God's very self deep in all human suffering, so that from now on there is no place of hurt and sorrow where Jesus Christ is not there first. To defeat all dread and death and sin, so that we might no longer live in fear. To plant the mind of Christ in us, so that we might turn to our neighbor in love.

If you have a hymnal (or using the graphic below), you might now sing or read "O Sacred Head, Now Wounded" (Evangelical Lutheran Worship 351/352); "Jesus, I Will Ponder Now" (Evangelical Lutheran Worship 345).

[O Sacred Head, Now Wounded](#)

[Jesus, I Will Ponder Now](#)

Then pray these intercessions:

On this Sunday of the Passion, we pray for all in need, responding to each petition with words from today's psalm, "save us in your steadfast love."

A brief silence.

O God of majesty, mercy and might, hear and heed our fervent prayers:
for the church around the world, that the faithful be nourished by your presence in the word,
for bishops, pastors, and deacons, that they be strengthened for their tasks of ministry;
for those who are providing the necessary technology for our worship at this time, . . .

A brief silence.

O holy God, we pray to you:

save us in your steadfast love.

For the earth, that it be saved from pollution and disregard;
for endangered animals, that they and their habitats be protected;
for scientists, that their knowledge of your earth will guide our society's choices, . . .

A brief silence.

O creating God, we pray to you:

save us in your steadfast love.

For peace throughout the world;
for an end to terrorism and religious violence;
for all elected leaders, that they serve the common good, . . .

A brief silence.

O mighty God, we pray to you:

save us in your steadfast love.

For the countries hardest hit by the coronavirus;
for the fearful and the sick and their families;
for medical personnel and hospitals, . . .

A brief silence.

O compassionate God, we pray to you:

save us in your steadfast love.

For all who are facing the criminal justice system;
for those wrongly accused of crime;
for those who are incarcerated, that they be kept safe, . . .

A brief silence.

O righteous God, we pray to you:

save us in your steadfast love.

For those whose needs we know,
for those whose needs are hidden;
for all who are sick, for the hungry,
for the dying; for those we name here, . . .

A brief silence.

O benevolent God, we pray to you:

save us in your steadfast love.

And finally we pray for ourselves:

A longer period of silence.

O loving God, we pray to you:

save us in your steadfast love.

With thanks for this Holy Week; with thanks for the support of our community of faith;
with thanks for the saints who struggled through life and died in you;
we praise your salvation now and unto our end.

A brief silence.

O eternal God, we pray to you:

save us in your steadfast love.

Into your hands, gracious God, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your mercy, through
the merits of Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Amen.

If you have a hymnal (or using the graphic below), you might now sing or read "Jesus, Keep Me Near the Cross" (Evangelical Lutheran Worship 335); "Were You There" (Evangelical Lutheran Worship 353).

[Jesus, Keep Me Near the Cross](#)

[Were You There](#)

Then conclude with these prayers:

Let us pray,

A brief silence is kept before the prayer.

Merciful God, accompany our journey through these forty days. Renew us in the gift of Baptism,
that we may provide for those who are poor, pray for those in need, fast from self-indulgence, and
above all that we may find our treasure in the life of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

Offering Prayer

Faithful God, you walk beside us in desert places, and you meet us in our hunger with bread from
heaven. Accompany us in this meal, that we may pass over from death to life with Jesus Christ,
our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

Please remember to mail in your offerings so that Grace can continue to serve you. (Our mailbox has a lock on it, so is secure.)

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us:

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial, and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen.

Almighty God, Father, + Son, and Holy Spirit, bless us now and forever.
Amen

Devotional Music Links: For your individual or group devotion, you may desire to listen to the following choral recordings made available through Augsburg Fortress. "[Ride On, King Jesus \(A Palm Sunday Medley\)](#);" "[Just a Closer Walk with Thee](#);" "[Ah, Holy Jesus](#);" "[Holy God, Holy and Glorious](#);" "[When I Survey the Wondrous Cross](#)."

Readings for the Week: Monday (commemoration of Albrecht Dürer, died 1528; Matthias Grünewald, died 1529; Lucas Cranach, died 1553; artists) Psalm 36:5-11. **Tuesday** 1 Corinthians 1:18-31. **Wednesday** Isaiah 50:4-9a. **Maundy Thursday** (commemoration of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, theologian, died 1945) John 13:1-17, 31b-35. **Good Friday** (commemoration of Mikael Agricola, Bishop of Turku, died 1557) John 18:1—19:42. **Resurrection of Our Lord / Vigil of Easter** Romans 6:3-11.

Resurrection of Our Lord / Easter Day (commemoration of Benedict the African, confessor, 1589) Acts 10:34-43 *or* Isaiah 25:6-9; Psalm 118:1-2, 14-24; 1 Corinthians 15:1-11 *or* Acts 10:34-43; Mark 16:1-8 *or* John 20:1-18.

Due to copyright restrictions, we are only able to provide downloadable hymns that are in the public domain and selected hymns for limited use. Other suggestions provided above may be found in *Evangelical Lutheran Worship*. To purchase copies of *Evangelical Lutheran Worship* and *All Creation Sings* for the home, visit the [Augsburg Fortress website](#) or call 1-800-328-4648. Selected hymns from *All Creation Sings* will be provided for limited use.

Reflection text: Gordon Lathrop. Intercessory Prayer: Gail Ramshaw

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Thank you to those who clean the Church following worship.

Special Meeting, April 11th following worship.

Synod Assembly, 30 April – 2 May.

Good Friday Worship will be held April 2nd at 6:30 pm

Please keep in your prayers this week: Kevin Johnson, Barbara Metzger, Rob Johnson and Steve Lindberg (Streeter Family Friend's & Kin), Cal Curtis & Patty Thompson (Carole Holten's Son-in-Law & Sister), Emily (Ben & Casey's Daughter), Bob Broberg, Carole Holten, Donna Jackson-Hein, Lois Goossen (Friend of Newgard's), Larry (Jean Newgard's Brother).

Pastor's Mid-week Reflections for March 24, 2021

Swing into spring! This is the first week of this new season, and the last before Holy Week, starting with Palm Sunday, March 28.

This is also a big week in my family history. My parents were married March 25, 1947, the 61st birthday of my grandmother Clara Sass. We didn't have "mud days" in Missouri, but we could have plenty mud this time of year. In fact, I can remember my Dad pulling cars stuck in the mud with our "B" John Deere tractor on our quarter-mile farm lane leading to a combo birthday and anniversary get-together. Those were the days...

Now we live in a much different world, especially after this last year of change and re-arrange. We look forward desperately to more and more "normalcy," whatever that means.

In Rick Nelson's song "Garden Party," I recall the line, "If memories are all I sing, I'd rather drive a truck." Memories matter to some degree, but we live in the present. As someone said, it's called the "present" because it's a gift from God. The past is gone, and the future's not here yet.

We were planning to celebrate Bethel's centennial anniversary last September, but had to postpone for obvious reasons. For the time being anyway, all churches need to minister in the name of Christ, as best we can. There's always mission work to do, and He's counting on me and you.

Pastor Bill Sass