



**April 2, 2023**

**Sunday of the Passion  
Palm Sunday  
Service of Holy Communion**

Today, we encounter the paradox that defines our faith: Jesus Christ is glorified king and humiliated servant. We too are full of paradox: like Peter, we fervently desire to follow Christ, but find ourselves afraid, denying God. We wave palms in celebration today as Christ comes into our midst, and we follow with trepidation as his path leads to death on the cross. Amid it all we are invited into this paradoxical promise of life through Christ's broken body and outpoured love in a meal of bread and wine.

We begin this week that stands at the center of the church year, anticipating the completion of God's astounding work.

**+GATHERING+**

*The Holy Spirit calls us together as people of God.*

**WELCOME**

**BLESSING OF THE PALMS & PROCESSION**

*See Insert*

**PRAYER OF THE DAY.**

Sovereign God, you have established your rule in the human heart through the servanthood of Jesus Christ. By your Spirit, keep us in the joyful procession of those who with their tongues confess Jesus as Lord and with their lives praise him as Savior, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**Amen.**

The assembly is seated

**+WORD+**

*God speaks to us in scripture reading, preaching and song.*

**CHILDRENS' MESSAGE**

**FIRST READING****Isaiah****50:4-9a**

A reading from Isaiah.

*The servant of the Lord expresses absolute confidence in his final vindication, despite the fact that he has been struck and spit upon. This characteristic of the servant played an important role in the early church's understanding of the suffering, death, and resurrection of Jesus.*

<sup>4</sup>The 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 he wakens—  
wakens my ear  
to listen as those who are taught.

<sup>5</sup>The Lord GOD has opened my ear,  
and I was not rebellious,  
I did not turn backward.

<sup>6</sup>I 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.

<sup>7</sup>The 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;

<sup>8</sup>he who vindicates me is near.  
Who will contend with me?  
Let us stand up together.

Who are my adversaries?  
Let them confront me.

<sup>9a</sup>It is the Lord GOD who helps me;  
who will declare me guilty?

The word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

**SECOND READING****Philippians****2:5-11**

A reading from Philippians.

*Paul uses an early Christian hymn to help us comprehend Jesus' obedient selflessness on the cross and how God has made Christ lord over all reality. The perspective of the cross becomes the way we rightly understand God, Christ, our own lives, and fellowship within the community of Christ.*

<sup>5</sup>Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus,

<sup>6</sup>who, though he was in the form of God,

did not regard equality with God

as something to be exploited,

<sup>7</sup>but emptied himself,

taking the form of a slave,

being born in human likeness.

And being found in human form,

<sup>8</sup>he humbled himself

and became obedient to the point of death—

even death on a cross.

<sup>9</sup>Therefore God also highly exalted him

and gave him the name

that is above every name,

<sup>10</sup>so that at the name of Jesus

every knee should bend,

in heaven and on earth and under the earth,

<sup>11</sup>and 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.**

**HOMILY****Hymn*****My Song Is Love Unknown* ELW 343**

**1**     ***My song is love unknown,  
my Savior's love to me,  
love to the loveless shown***

*that they might lovely be.  
Oh, who am I that for my sake  
my Lord should take frail flesh and die?*

**2**     *He came from his blest throne  
salvation to bestow;  
the world that was his own  
would not its Savior know.  
But, oh, my friend, my friend indeed,  
who at my need his life did spend!*

**3**     *Sometimes we strew his way  
and his sweet praises sing;  
resounding all the day  
hosannas to our king.  
Then "Crucify!" is all our breath,  
and for his death we thirst and cry.*

**4**     *We cry out; we will have  
our dear Lord made away,  
a murderer to save,  
the prince of life to slay.  
Yet cheerful he to suffering goes  
that he his foes from thence might free.*

**GOSPEL**                      **Matthew**                      **26:14-27:66**  
(For text, please turn to special insert)

**HYMN OF THE DAY**     **O Sacred Head, Now Wounded ELW 351**

**1**     O sacred head, now wounded,  
with grief and shame weighed down,  
now scornfully surrounded  
with thorns, thine only crown;  
O sacred head, what glory,  
what bliss till now was thine!  
Yet, though despised and gory,  
I joy to call thee mine.

- 2 How pale thou art with anguish,  
with sore abuse and scorn;  
how does thy face now languish,  
which once was bright as morn!  
Thy grief and bitter passion  
were all for sinners' gain;  
mine, mine was the transgression,  
but thine the deadly pain.
- 3 What language shall I borrow  
to thank thee, dearest friend,  
for this thy dying sorrow,  
thy pity without end?  
Oh, make me thine forever,  
and should I fainting be,  
Lord, let me never, never  
outlive my love to thee.
- 4 Lord, be my consolation;  
shield me when I must die;  
remind me of thy passion  
when my last hour draws nigh.  
These eyes, new faith receiving,  
from thee shall never move;  
for all who die believing  
die safely in thy love.

## **APOSTLES' CREED**

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,  
creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,  
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,  
born of the virgin Mary,  
suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, died, and was buried;  
he descended to the dead.  
On the third day he rose again;**

he ascended into heaven,  
 he is seated at the right hand of the Father  
 and he will come to judge the living and the  
 dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit  
 the holy catholic church  
 the communion of saints  
 the forgiveness of sins  
 the resurrection of the body,  
 and the life everlasting. Amen.

### PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

... Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**  
 ... revealed in Christ crucified. **Amen.**

### SHARE THE PEACE

The peace of Christ be with you always.  
**And also with you.**

### +MEAL+

*God feeds us in the presence of Jesus Christ.*

**OFFERING** *An offering is gathered for the mission of the church,  
 including the care of those in need.*

### Handbell Choir Anthem **O Sacred Head Now Wounded**

Arr. By M. and S. Eithun

**OFFERTORY RESPONSE COME TO THE TABLE ELW 481**

Come to the table of mercy,  
 prepared with the wine and the bread.  
 All who are hungry and thirsty,  
 come, and your souls will be fed.  
 Come at the Lord's invitation;  
 receive from his nail-scarred hand.  
 Eat of the bread of salvation;  
 drink of the blood of the Lamb.

## OFFERING PRAYER

Let us pray.

God of good gifts,

Receive these and all our offerings  
as we present them in faithful service  
for the sake of your gospel.

Prepare our hearts to receive you in this meal  
as you pour out your very presence  
through Christ Jesus, the wellspring of eternal life.

**Amen.**

## GREAT THANKSGIVING

### DIALOGUE

The Lord be with you. **And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts. **We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

## PREFACE

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy,  
that we should at all times and in all places  
give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God,  
through our Savior Jesus Christ,  
whose suffering and death gave salvation to all.

You gather your people around the tree of the cross,  
transforming death into life.

And so, with all the choirs of angels,  
with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven  
we praise your name and join their unending hymn:



## HOLY, HOLY, HOLY

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Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow'r and  
 God of might, heav - en and earth are full of your  
 glo - ry. Ho - san - na in the high - est.  
 Bless - ed is the one who comes in the name of the  
 Lord, Ho - san - na, ho - san - na in the high - est.  
 Ho - san - na, ho - san - na in the high - est.

## THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE

### ECHARISTIC PRAYER

We give you thanks, Father, through Jesus Christ,  
 your beloved Son, whom you sent in this end of the ages  
 to save and redeem us and to proclaim to us your will.

He is your Word, inseparable from you, through whom

you created all things, and in whom you take delight.  
He is your Word, sent from heaven to a virgin's womb.  
He there took on our nature and our lot and was shown  
forth as your Son, born of the Holy Spirit and of the virgin  
Mary. He, our Lord Jesus, fulfilled all your will and won  
for you a holy people; he stretched out his hands in suffering  
in order to free from suffering those who trust you.

He is the one who, handed over to a death he freely  
accepted, in order to destroy death, to break the bonds  
of the evil one, to crush hell underfoot, to give light to the  
righteous, to establish his covenant, and to show forth the  
resurrection, taking bread and giving thanks to you, said:  
Take and eat; this is my body, given for you.  
Do this for the remembrance of me.

In the same way he took the cup, gave thanks,  
and gave it for all to drink, saying: This cup is the new  
covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the  
forgiveness of sin.  
Do this for the remembrance of me.

Remembering, then, his death and resurrection,  
we take this bread and cup, giving you thanks that  
you have made us worthy to stand before you and  
to serve you as your priestly people.

Send your Spirit upon these gifts of your church;  
gather into one all who share this bread and wine;  
fill us with your Holy Spirit to establish our faith in truth,  
that we may praise and glorify you through your Son  
Jesus Christ; through whom all glory and honor are yours,  
almighty Father, with the Holy Spirit, in your holy church, both  
now and forever.

**Amen.**

## **LORD'S PRAYER**

**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;  
 and lead us not into temptation  
 but deliver us from evil.**

**For thine is the kingdom  
 and the power, and the glory,  
 forever and ever. Amen.**

## **INVITATION TO COMMUNION**

*You are invited to come forward to the front of the nave to receive the Meal. The bread will be distributed by the Presiding Minister. Gluten free wafers are available. Please ask. The wine, served in small glasses, can be received on either side of the front. Also in each tray you will find glasses containing white grape juice as an alternative to the wine. Return to your seats via the side aisles, placing your empty glasses in the baskets provided along the way. In returning to your seats, pause to pray and give thanks for the life- giving graces you have received in this holy meal offered us by the crucified-risen Jesus.*

Taste and see that the Lord is good.

## **COMMUNION**

**COMMUNION HYMN** *Lamb of God*

ACS p. 40

Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the world; have mer-cy on  
 us. Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the world; have  
 mer-cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the  
 world; grant us peace, grant us peace.

**TABLE BLESSING**

The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace.

**POST COMMUNION PRAYER**

Let us pray.

Embodied God,

at your table, we have tasted the goodness of Jesus.

With the eyes of our hearts open to your promise,

empower us to hear the needs of our neighbors

and touch the world with your love.

**Amen.**

**+SENDING+**

*God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world.*

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**BLESSING**

God, the giver of love,  
 ✚ Christ, the resurrection and the life,  
 and the Holy Spirit of rebirth  
 bless you in this Lenten journey.  
**Amen.**

**SENDING HYMN *Christ, the Life of All the Living* ELW 339**

- 1 Christ, the life of all the living,  
 Christ, the death of death, our foe,  
 Christ, yourself for me once giving  
 to the darkest depths of woe:  
 through your suff'ring, death, and merit  
 life eternal I inherit.  
 Thousand, thousand thanks are due,  
 dearest Jesus, unto you.
  
- 2 You have suffered great affliction  
 and have borne it patiently,  
 even death by crucifixion,  
 fully to atone for me;  
 for you chose to be tormented  
 that my doom should be prevented.  
 Thousand, thousand thanks are due,  
 dearest Jesus, unto you.
  
- 3 Then, for all that bought my pardon,  
 for the sorrows deep and sore,  
 for the anguish in the garden,  
 I will thank you evermore;  
 thank you for the groaning, sighing,  
 for the bleeding and the dying,  
 for that last triumphant cry,  
 praise you evermore on high.

**DISMISSAL**

Go in peace. Serve the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

**POSTLUDE**

**WORSHIP LEADERS for Sunday, April 2, 2023**

The Rev. Les Swenson, Deacon Gwynne Hopko

**Assistant Minister:** Terry Gustafson

**Lector:** Bob Herold

**Tech Team:** Abigail Griffin, Ken Griffin, Kyle Galvin, Noah Galvin

**Ushers:** Tina Beaudoin, Gerald Beaudoin, Carol Emond

**Altar Guild:** Denise Martin

**Readers for Passion Story:** Paul Martin, Terry Gustafson, Matt Girard, Bob Herold, Steve Adam, Jill Little, Pastor Swenson

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## True Humility

The servanthood of a teacher in Isaiah, the outcast in the psalm, those who bow down in Philippians: today's readings teach humility. On this day we move from Christ's triumphant ride on a humble donkey to the humiliation of the cross. The humility of the characters in the passion story is in question: Judas, Pilate, the Twelve, chief priests and elders, Barabbas, the crowd, the soldiers, two bandits. Among other things, their lack of humility is what brings about the passion of Christ. There is only one truly humble person in this story: Jesus the Christ. Matthew's humble Jesus cries out from the cross to ask God why he has been forsaken.

Only in the stories of the resurrection do other humble characters appear: the centurion, the women, Joseph of Arimathea. A careful look at the complexity of humility in the palm and passion stories could set up a reflective theme carried through to Easter. Who in each story do we regard as humble? Why? How does our humility compare? Are there characters who seem to gain or lose humility in the course of the story from the triumphant entry to the resurrection? A deep and meaningful understanding of humility is a worthy and lasting gift to take away from the season of Lent and the celebration of Easter.

Joseph of Arimathea is a particularly good character on which to base an understanding of humility. A close look at all references to him in the Gospels, and a bit of creative narrative, create an image of a truly humble believer. He is referenced in both canonical and apocryphal texts. His devotion represents deep humility that leads to the very finest of good works as he cares for the body of Jesus.