

Haverhill Methodist Church – Worship at Home
Sunday 5th April 2020
6th Sunday in Lent and Palm Sunday

https://youtu.be/yY255K_faMw

Welcome message from Sarah Glasswell

Welcome to our house this week for our worship together. Today is Palm Sunday, and an all age service.

You are all welcome here, friends, family, visitors.

There are videos for you to watch, and I encourage you to follow the service sheet and click on the links in order, if you are using the internet. If you are only reading this, then you are not forgotten. Your worship joins with those us who are watching too, all to God's glory, and he unites us as members of His family.

Let's read the words from Psalm 9, vs 1-2

¹ I will give thanks to you, LORD, with all my heart;

I will tell of all your wonderful deeds.

² I will be glad and rejoice in you;

I will sing the praises of your name, O Most High.

We pray...

Father God we are glad and rejoice in you and your love. We lift your name high Jesus, in all of our places and situations. We thank you that as we gather in spirit you are with us. Amen

Sadly, today we are not able to hand out palm crosses. You might have one or two from previous years that you could find and put up in your home, or even in your window.

We are going to revisit the story of Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem and consider what we might learn from it.

Sonja has recorded a song for us, Hosanna, Hosanna. Please sing it if you can.

Our reading for today is taken from **Mark 11, vs 1-11**, please read it now.

<https://youtu.be/kHQRsWXvUFg>

All age talk

It's amazing to think of Jesus riding into the city to the cheers and praise of so many people.

Finally, they recognised him as the Messiah, the one God would send to save everyone, and who they had been waiting for, for hundreds of years. It is strange though that such an important person, in fact, THE most important person would come riding on a donkey. Important people would usually have a very impressive big horse, or maybe a chariot. But not Jesus. Even though Jesus is the Son of God, he never showed off. He never tried to be a celebrity. He always pointed people to God the Father. In the Old Testament Zechariah prophesied that the Messiah would come, riding on a donkey. A prophecy is when God gives a message about the future to someone, to tell other people. It helps us to believe that Jesus really is the Messiah.

At the end of the story that Abigail read for us, it says that Jesus went to the temple once he had arrived in Jerusalem. The temple was their church. But because it was already getting late he went with his disciples, his closest friends, to Bethany. Bethany was a village about 2 miles from Jerusalem, and that's where Mary, Martha and Lazarus lived. It is thought that Jesus stayed with his good friends. He wouldn't have had much money, and even if he did, I don't think he would have chosen to stay in a posh hotel.

It's just a small detail in the story, but I love it because it shows how important his friends were to Jesus.

Jesus is all about relationships, not fame. People are so important to him. Just as Jesus loved staying with his friends, he also loves staying with us. He is so happy to be our friend; and when we welcome him, like the people in Jerusalem welcomed him, he will live within us, and never leave us.

You could try to recreate that Bible story in your home. You could act it out or use toys. If you act it out, choose someone strong to be the donkey!

If you would like to do a craft, here is a link from the Methodist Church website to make palm leaf with an optical illusion!

<https://docs.google.com/file/d/0B0RweH-3Ryl0eDhLREkzYXVDc2M/edit>

You might like to sing along to the following song, Make Way, Make Way
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aICQ7fb0hEA>

Creative prayers

These are brought to us by Claire, Katie and Hannah, and we are really grateful for the work they put into this.

<https://youtu.be/3Lv-3uh4xgY>

We are now going to lead you through some prayers.

We are going to use our hands to help us. If you like you can draw around your hand on a piece of paper. We used green, like palms.

On one paper hand write the things you are thankful for.

On the other, write the people or situations you want to pray for.

Let us pray:

Heavenly Father we lift our hands up to praise you. Thank you for your triumphant entry to Jerusalem. As we begin this Holy Week, we say thank you for the blessings we have, such as having ways to communicate with family and friends.

Father God, we lay our hands out to ask you to help the people you have laid on our hearts this morning. Family, friends, our wider Church family, key workers... Keep us safe and healthy in body and mind.

And Lord, we put our hands out to our sides as we reflect on this Holy Week and heading towards this difficult and different Easter time.

Lord, in your mercy.

Hear our prayer.

Please join us we say the Lord's Prayer together

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, the power and the glory,
for ever and ever.
Amen.

Sermon

To begin the sermon, watch the following clip, which was filmed in Jerusalem.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=evtOaOl1XSo>

https://youtu.be/gHX_bf-TdzU

We like things neat, all tied up, making sense. There are so many times in the Bible when we don't have that luxury!

There are many contrasts, and they can be challenging to understand, they require faith and trust in God.

We are currently being forced into living in a world of contrasts.

Where we are being told to stay safely inside, but many still need to brave the outside world in order to keep the country running, and people cared for.

Where many are still working, but at home – in their sanctuaries, their space usually reserved for family and friends, for leisure and for rest.

Where some are far more connected to friends and family than they ever have been because they feel the pull to gather together, even whilst apart, and get through it. The time I have spent in touch with my family through messages and video calls has increased dramatically.

While we do stay in touch, it's never been this much! And it has been a blessing. I know that won't be the case for everyone though, so let's make sure we are staying in touch with our less connected friends, family, church family and neighbours. While we are apart, we can be together in new ways.

Some of us are swapping our roles on a daily basis from parent to teacher and back again. And indeed, child to student and back. It takes quite some adjustment; I can tell you!

Contrasts can be grating on us, uncomfortable, unsettling and challenging. They can invite us to think and pray, to ask God to reveal to us their meaning and any actions we should take. Contrasts can cause us to solve problems, to change things for the better.

We find contrasts in the Palm Sunday story.

Jesus is on a very significant journey, it's the start of Easter week (as we now know it) and he is riding into Jerusalem, fulfilling the prophecy in Zechariah, and yet he isn't going very far, just a couple of miles from the downtrodden village of Bethany. He would have done the journey before, and after. And yet this time it is completely different.

Zechariah describes Jesus as righteous and victorious, and the crowd recognise him as Messiah, Saviour, as they shout 'hosanna', meaning please save. Any yet he does not look victorious at all. He is on a borrowed donkey, he comes in meekly, humbly; as we heard on the video, humble in the Hebrew meaning poor or afflicted.

Jesus, the King, the Messiah arrives into Jerusalem with a welcome for royalty. People are cheering and shouting, laying down their cloaks and laying down palm branches that they would have cut from nearby fields, as was the custom. And yet he isn't on the regal powerful, impressive white horse. Just a meek, poor donkey.

And yet these contrasts also perfectly reflect Jesus character while on earth. You might remember the words from Philipians 2 vs 6-8 '(Jesus) who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death – even death on a cross!'

It might have even seemed strange to see this Jesus, who had very little and told people to sell their possessions and give to the poor, riding in with wealth and pomp.

You could also look to The Beatitudes in Matthew chapter 5 for a wonderful list of contrasts. The meek inherit the earth, those who mourn will find comfort, blessed are the persecuted because they will have a great reward in heaven one day. Perhaps later today you could read through them and ask God to speak to you through them.

Perhaps this week, as we lead up to Good Friday and Easter Sunday you could think about the contrasts that you are living with now and ask God

to speak to you about those, to show you the blessings for now and those to come in the future.

You could also think about the contrasts Jesus would have experienced as he went through Easter week, read through the Easter story and seek them out.

Amen

You might like to listen to, or sing, a song or two at this point.

Ride On, Ride On In Majesty (traditional, from Songs of Praise, with words on screen)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zo5pfl6z6IA>

Way Maker (contemporary, live worship with words on screen)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iJCV_2H9xD0

You are here, moving in our midst
I worship You, I worship You
You are here, working in this place
I worship You, I worship You

Way maker, miracle worker
Promise keeper, light in the darkness
My God, that is who You are
Way maker, miracle worker
Promise keeper, light in the darkness
My God, that is who You are

You are here, touching every heart
I worship You, I worship You
You are here, healing every heart
I worship You, I worship You

Even when I don't see it, You're working
Even when I can't feel it, You're working
You never stop, You never stop working
You never stop, You never stop working

For You are touching every heart, healing every heart
You turn my life around, oh God, You are, my way maker
Ah, You're a miracle, miracle, miracle worker

Prayers of thanksgiving

I wonder if the things you are thankful for are changing? I have never been so delighted and grateful that Tim came home with a whole chicken to roast last weekend! The week before I had managed to find a tray of chicken thighs and was grateful for that at the time because there was very little meat left on the shelves.

I invite you now to get up and collect a few things from your home and/or garden that you are thankful for now that maybe you wouldn't have thought of a while ago.
Put them together in a little display.

I wonder if you have ever thanked God for toilet rolls before these last few weeks?!

All good things come from God, however mundane they may seem.

Look at your items and spend some time in prayer, sincerely thanking God for all that you have, the small and insignificant and the most precious.

You might like to take a photograph if you can do so easily to remind yourself in the future of what is meaningful to you right now. Perhaps we could send David Frost our lists to go into the Faithtime document!

It's time for our final songs now.

All Glory, Laud and Honour (traditional with words on screen)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j2vnmHE-flA>

Good Good Father (contemporary, with words on screen)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-ak0OoFBw3c&list=RD-ak0OoFBw3c&start_radio=1

I've heard a thousand stories of what they think you're like
But I've heard the tender whispers of love in the dead of night
And you tell me that you're pleased
And that I'm never alone

You're a good good father
It's who you are, it's who you are, it's who you are
And I'm loved by you
It's who I am, it's who I am, it's who I am

I've seen many searching for answers far and wide
But I know we're all searching
For answers only you provide
'Cause you know just what we need
Before we say a word

(You're a good good father)

Because you are perfect in all of your ways
You are perfect in all of your ways
You are perfect in all of your ways to us
Oh, it's love so undeniable
I, I can hardly speak

Peace so unexplainable
I, I can hardly think
As you call me deeper still
As you call me deeper still
As you call me deeper still
Into love, love, love

(You're a good good father)

<https://youtu.be/YS6zP5A8Tdo>

Next week is Easter Sunday. It will be a testing time for us to not be together, but again, God will unite us as we celebrate our risen Lord within our homes.

I invite you to make a cross to put in your window on Good Friday and Easter Saturday. You can be creative with how you do that!

It would be lovely on Easter Day to decorate our crosses with flowers, or anything else you can find that is fitting and depicts celebration, hope and new life.

Let's say the grace together...

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all, evermore, Amen.

I bless you and your families in the name of Jesus Christ to know his presence with you each day, to be connected to those you love who are not with you and to be healthy and full of peace this week. Amen

I found a lovely song, sung by the Brooklyn Tabernacle Choir, I thought it very fitting for these times and thought you might enjoy it too. It's called My Life is in Your Hands.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AS6tQYJVO80>

Here are the words for those not watching.

You don't have to worry, don't you be afraid
Joy comes in the morning, troubles they don't last always
For there's a friend in Jesus, who will wipe your tears away
And if your heart is broken, just lift your hands and say
Oh I know that I can make it, I know that I can stand
No matter what may come my way, my life is in Your hands
With Jesus I can take it, I know that I can stand
No matter what may come my way, my life is in Your hands
So when your tests and trials, they seem to get you down
And all your friends and loved ones, are nowhere to be found
Remember there's a friend named Jesus, who will wipe your tears away