

*into his courts
with praise...*



A Service of the Word
for
Sunday 29 March 2026
Palm Sunday.

A Service of the Word for Sunday morning

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INTRODUCTION

*“When he entered Jerusalem, the whole city was in turmoil,
asking, ‘Who is this?’.”*

Matthew 21:11.



THE CONFESSION

The grace of God has dawned upon the world with healing for all.
Though we have grieved him, yet he will heal us if we confess our
sins in penitence and faith.

**Almighty God,
I confess that I have sinned against you
in thought, word and deed;
I have not loved you with all my heart;
I have not loved my neighbours as myself.
Have mercy upon me,
cleanse me from my sins,
and help me to overcome my faults,
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

Receive God's forgiveness

May the Father forgive us
By the death of His Son
And strengthen us
To live in the power of the Spirit
All our days. **Amen.**

PRAISE

O Lord, open my lips...
and my mouth shall proclaim your praise.
Give me the joy of your saving help...
and sustain me with your life-giving Spirit.

THE COLLECT

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.

*Suggested hymn to sing or read **Ride on, ride on in majesty.***

THE WORD OF GOD.

Isaiah 50:4-9a.

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.
The Lord God has opened my ear,
and I was not rebellious,
I did not turn backwards.
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.

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;
he who vindicates me is near.

Who will contend with me?

Let us stand up together.

Who are my adversaries?

Let them confront me.

It 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.

Psalm 118:19-24.

Open to me the gates of righteousness, ♦
that I may enter and give thanks to the Lord.
This is the gate of the Lord; ♦
the righteous shall enter through it.
I will give thanks to you, for you have answered me ♦
and have become my salvation.
The stone which the builders rejected ♦
has become the chief cornerstone.
This is the Lord's doing, ♦
and it is marvellous in our eyes.
This is the day that the Lord has made; ♦
we will rejoice and be glad in it.

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.

Suggested hymn to sing or read Hosanna, hosanna.

GOSPEL

Matthew 21:1-11.

When they 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 fulfil 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.'

REFLECTION – Who is this man?

Who is this? Who is this man? He's not an ordinary man – he teaches convincingly about God. He claims God is his father! He heals, he forgives sins, he calms storms, he even raised Lazarus from the dead. Is he the Messiah?

Who is this man? Why is he upsetting the Pharisees and the teachers of the law so much? Is it because they're frightened of there being a rebellion, and the Romans cracking down on them, on the Jews, the people of God? Would it be better all round if they got rid of him somehow?

Who is this, who is this man? Every time I read this passage telling of Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem, this phrase strikes me and sticks in my mind. I found myself singing a Christmas song which we often sing or have sung to us at that time. It's called 'Since the day the angel came' or 'Thorn in the straw'. It starts with Mary, pregnant with Jesus, on her way with Joseph to Bethlehem, and carries on to the birth in the stable. One verse tells of Mary watching Jesus through the years, growing, becoming a young man, and starting his ministry. That verse continues: 'And when the miracles began, she wondered
'Who is this man, and where will this all end?'

Who is this man, and where will this all end?

Can you imagine being there, perhaps on the way to Jerusalem for the Passover festival too, seeing Jesus mount the donkey and begin his journey into Jerusalem? Perhaps you've heard something about him, heard of the healings, of his teaching, the rumours that he's a prophet, or even the Messiah.... do you get a sudden glimpse of recognition and realise it's true?

Or perhaps you see someone take off their cloak and lay it down on the dusty road for Jesus to ride over – and another, and another, and others who haven't got cloaks breaking off palm branches to lay in front of him. Suddenly **all** around you are joining in – people are shouting 'Hosanna to the Son of David', and
'Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.'

And you find yourself caught up in it all. If this really is the Son of David, the Messiah, you want to be a part of it, and you pull off a branch of palm, and run and lay it on the road – 'Hosanna, hosanna!'

You look up as Jesus passes by on the donkey – how does he look? He turns, looking around and you find yourself looking into his eyes

What do you see?

When I imagined it, I saw deep brown eyes, knowing me, seeing through me, into me. Compassionate, searching. He looks at me, deeply troubled, yet serene at the same time. Intelligent, and challenging, yet loving too. It seems to last for an eternity and then it's over, you run to keep up while Jesus and his followers finish their procession to the gate. Then they're swallowed up into the town and everything settles down again.

What just happened? What just happened to you? Could Jesus really be the Messiah? You want to know more of him, to feel those eyes on you again, to hear him speak, and yet you're afraid. Something's going to happen soon. You saw it in his eyes. With someone like **him** in Jerusalem, in the festival time, with the Romans around on guard, well, you can't meet Jesus and not get involved. There'll be trouble alright – but how will it end?

'Who is this man? And where will this all end?'

Another phrase which Mary wonders, laying the baby Jesus down to sleep in the straw-filled manger was

'Will it always be so bitter, yet so sweet?'

Having the angel come to her and tell her she's going to bear God's son – and then the shame of being unmarried, yet bearing a child. Giving birth in the stable, then having the shepherds visit, wanting to see the baby, the Saviour, the Messiah, with their tale of angels and glory.

It must have been like that for Jesus on the first Palm Sunday – so bitter, yet so sweet. Acknowledged as Messiah, praised and worshipped, but he knows suffering and death will follow. People shouted 'Hosanna' which meant 'save us' which Jesus had come to do – but not in the way that people seemed to be expecting. Not in a way that anyone would expect.

We're all invited to keep company with Jesus and the disciples this week. You can follow the story piece by piece, day by day through the end

section of any of the gospels in the New Testament of the Bible. You could come to one or more of the special services this week – see the notices, or look for posters.

Every year in Holy Week we hear the story of Palm Sunday, what happened in the Temple, the Last Supper, the Garden of Gethsemane, and Good Friday, good because it was the day Jesus died for us, paying the price for our sins on the cross. We hear of the joy, the pain and suffering, betrayal and we're challenged again –

Who is this man?

Was he just a man, well meaning or mistaken?

Was he a rabbi, a teacher?

Was he a rebel, against the system?

Was he an imposter, a blasphemer, claiming to be God's son, even though he wasn't?

Was he a prophet, bringing God's word to us?

Or was he actually the Messiah, God's Son, come to save us?

Every year we are challenged and must make up our minds again. Keep your palm cross near to remind you, and ponder

What will **you** decide?

Sheila Falkner.

*Suggested hymn to sing or read **When I survey the wondrous cross.***

THE CREED

All I believe in God the Father,
whose loving care is the pattern for family life.

I believe in Jesus, the Son of God,
who lives in my heart through faith,
and fills me with his love.

I believe in God the Holy Spirit,
who strengthens me with power from on high.

I believe in one God;
Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.

THE PRAYERS

A time of quiet prayer for

- *The universal Church - Bishops, synods and all leaders church*
- *The leaders of the nations*
- *The natural world and the resources of the earth*

Lord Jesus, you are the Prince of Peace.

**Look upon our divided world
to be with those who are victims of violence.**

**We pray for the people of Ukraine
and all who have been subjected to the cruelty of others.**

**Help us to know the gift of your peace
in the power of your Spirit and
we ask you to soften the hearts
of those who can stop the fighting.**

**Creator God, we ask for your aid as your children of light
living in the darkness of our world.**

Amen.

Cumbria Ecumenical Spirituality Group.

Finishing with the South Calder Mission Community prayer...

**Heavenly Father we thank you for the life of your Church
in this place, and in all the villages of the South Calder
Mission Community;
for all who have served and worshipped you in years gone by,
for all who make up your family in our churches today,
for the faith we have in common, and for the people and
traditions which make each church unique.
By your Spirit, guide and equip us,
that together we might find new ways
to reach out to our local community,
to show your love to our neighbours,
and to encourage them
to follow the Lord Jesus in their lives.
Father, we offer ourselves to your service,
In the unity of the Holy Spirit,
And in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen**

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

THE CONCLUSION

*Suggested hymn to sing or read **From heaven you came (Servant King)**.*

The following prayer is said

**Be with me, Lord, as I finish my prayer today.
May my lips always speak the truth;
may my eyes which have read your word
see only what is good;
and may my life as well as my worship
be always pleasing in your sight,
for the glory of your name. Amen.**

And now may the Lord who brought us to birth by his Spirit,
strengthen us for the Christian life.

May the Lord who provides for all our needs
sustain us day by day.

May the Lord whose steadfast love is constant as a mother's care,
send us out to live and work for others.

And the blessing of God Almighty,
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
be with us and remain with us always.

Amen.

So now may I go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

In the name of Christ. Amen.

Links for the hymns

Ride on, ride on in majesty.

<https://youtu.be/CUYCwx0quuQ>

Hosanna, hosanna.

<https://youtu.be/SKHwBamBSPk>

When I survey the wondrous cross.

<https://youtu.be/9EikGeNuoBA>

From heaven you came (Servant King).

<https://youtu.be/E4963QPHAIM>