



KNOX CHURCH, DUNEDIN

Palm Sunday

10am – Sunday 3 April 2020

This service can be accessed from the Knox Church YouTube Channel
<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCYksSjG0llfO0NeogNIGs7A>
or from the Knox Church <https://knoxchurch.net/>

Pre service music from around 9.45 am

Call to worship

Kia noho a Ihowa ki a koutou. May God be with you. Then words from Psalm 118.

Hymn

from Glory to God, 2013 Westminster John Knox Press (Winchester New) – Henry Hart Milman

1 Ride on, ride on in majesty!
Hark! all the tribes hosanna cry;
Thy humble beast pursues its road
with palms and scattered garments
strowed.

2 Ride on, ride on in majesty!
In lowly pomp ride on to die;
O Christ, thy triumphs now begin
o'er captive death and conquered sin.

3 Ride on, ride on in majesty!
The hosts of angels in the sky
look down with sad and wondering eyes
to see th'approaching sacrifice.

4 Ride on, ride on in majesty!
In lowly pomp ride on to die;
bow thy meek head to mortal pain;
then take, O God, thy power, and reign.

Assurance of forgiveness and the sharing of peace

E te whanau, know that because of what God has done in Christ, we are forgiven. Thanks be to God. Kia tau tonu te rangimarie o te Ariki ki a koutou. The peace of Christ be with us all.

Children - Jordan Redding

This Sunday is Palm Sunday! Today we remember the story of Jesus' triumphant entry into Jerusalem a week before his death. You can read the story in your Bibles: Matthew 21:1-11

Often Christians make palm crosses to remember Palm Sunday. You can make your own with flax branches or cabbage leaves.

Making palm crosses...

Here are some easy to follow instructions:

<https://www.origamispirit.com/2012/04/how-to-make-a-palm-sunday-cross/>

<https://www.catholicicing.com/how-to-fold-a-palm-cross-in-10-easy-steps/>

When you're finished, here are some things you can do with your palm cross:

- Keep it by your bedside as a prayer tool!
- Stick it to your front door or letterbox so that passers-by can see your cross!
- Post a photo to the Knox facebook page so that we can all see your handy work and be encouraged together.

Sing along...

When Jesus entered Jerusalem everyone rejoiced and sang: Hosanna to the Son of David.

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest!

Here is a song based on that verse. You can sing along or play it yourself (in the video, I play it on guitar, capo fret 4).

Hosanna in the highest

Jordan Redding

A7 D A D G D/F# A7 D A D Em7
Ho - san - na Hosan - na Ho - san - na in the high - est! Ho - san - na Hosan - na Ho - san - na

7 D A D A7 D A D G D/F# A7 D A D Em7 D A
to the Lord! Glo-ry glo-ry glo-ry in the high - est! Glo-ry glo-ry glo-ry to the

16 D A7 D A D G D/F# A7 D A
Lord! Bless-ed Bless-ed Bless - ed is he who comes in God-'s name Bless-ed bless-ed

22 D Em7 D A D A7 D A D G D/F# A
Bless - ed is the Lord. Ho - san - na Hosan - na Ho - san - na in the high - est! Ho -

29 D A D Em7 D A D A7 D
san - na Ho-san - na Ho - san - na to the Lord!

Readings – read by Lincoln Coe

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.

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 fulfill 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."

Anthem

Reflection – “Living in the spaciousness of God”

This sermon takes us from the expanse of Galilee, through the Jerusalem gates, to the confines of the city, to the pinpoint of the cross. So let's begin.

Like nearly everyone else, I have stayed at home now for over a week. I have driven the car only once. And I have only walked as far as the edge of our neighbourhood.

With a limited horizon, I have become aware of the dimension of space, not outer space, not the frontier, more the space we are spending our time in, our bubble. In many ways, that space has shrunk.

We are fortunate to have many windows in our space, our home, and through our windows we see trees and birds and clouds – and the number of cats that traverse our property! This space has become the place we not only sleep and eat and relax – it is also now where we work. And for many of us it is where we teach our children or offer counselling or manage staff or what?

Today we heard the Palm Sunday story of Jesus and his followers entering the city of Jerusalem. Up until now, they had been in Galilee, travelling freely, healing and teaching, conversing and partying, calling and following.

Now they were on the outskirts of the city, with a colt and a donkey.

They came to the gate of the city. It represented a transition to a different space, a space more risky, more dangerous, where the authorities watched and waited. Jesus and his followers couldn't do anything now without being noticed. Powerful unseen forces lurked down narrow alleys. And beyond them, people of influence in a building somewhere started talking and planning. One way or other, this movement needed to end.

The people of the city looked on but they didn't know what to make of it. "Who is this? people asked as they peered from their balconies or complained about the noise or closed their doors to keep out the sound. More protestors from troublesome Galilee?

As the week progressed, followers fell away. Even the closest ran. They couldn't keep up with his praying. They didn't have his determination. So he became steadily more isolated. Until the shouts of hosanna became the shouts of crucify him. And the space became more and more confining, pressing in, shutting down. That's what the rulers wanted, of course. Now a solitary figure, with but one or two alongside, his mother, his friend, he carried his own cross. And then he was lifted up and nailed to the cross. And there, with two criminals, he died. Cursed. Betrayed. Forsaken. Naked. Alone. Crucified.

On that cross, what had been so spacious and expansive and free and inclusive - remember the Samaritan woman at Jacob's well, the fishers called from their nets, the tax collector called from his desk, the religiously divided communities to whom he reached, people sick for years offered healing – all of that free-ranging ministry now became a lonely shut down criminal on a cross.

A pinpoint. A vortex. A focus. From broad Galilee, through the Jerusalem gate, to Jesus on a cross. Palm Sunday marks a key transition.

And yet, and yet.

On that cross, through the utter commitment of Jesus to the way of God, the way of non-violence, the way of love, through that never giving up, there opened out for you and me the most spacious life we can ever know. Through that most narrow of ways, the death of Jesus on a cross, the broadest of love was let loose in the world. We were ushered into an open space, with broad horizons and total acceptance and incredible inclusion.

A place of freedom to move and explore and most of all to know love and to love. We were ushered into the very realm of God.

In Philippians, we read that God empties Godself. Emptiness makes space, space for every one of us.

In our shrunk space, we live with the spacious God.

And so we can make space for others, in care. Staying home to protect each other. Phoning people. Talking to neighbours over the back fence. Buying groceries. Praying for the people in our street. Putting a palm cross on our letter box. Finding a window to place a bear. Sending a message of encouragement. Still giving what we can to people in need.

We cannot process outside, but we can process inside, going with Jesus this week, through the Jerusalem gates, through the garden of sorrows, along the via dolorosa, to the cross.

And there to know that even in the smallest of spaces, we live in the spaciousness of God.

Prayer for others and the Lord's Prayer – led by Mavis Duncanson

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.

Hymn

from Glory to God, 2013 Westminster John Knox Press (tune Ellacombe CH4 247)

1 Hosanna, loud hosanna,
the little children sang;
through pillared court and temple
the joyful anthem rang.
To Jesus, who had blessed them,
close folded to his breast,
the children sang their praises,
the simplest and the best.

3 "Hosanna in the highest!"
That ancient song we sing,
for Christ is our Redeemer;
the Lord of heaven, our King.
O may we ever praise him
with heart and life and voice,
and in his blissful presence
eternally rejoice.

2 From Olivet they followed
'mid an exultant crowd,
the victor palm branch waving,
and chanting clear and loud;
the Lord of earth and heaven
rode on in lowly state,
nor scorned that little children
should on his bidding wait.

Blessing