

2nd April, 2023

The paper-version Service



To Begin: Find a Bible and a comfortable place.

If safe, light a candle and read prayerfully through the service. If you have access to worship music, choose a song and listen to it as you begin or read, or even sing, the song from this Sunday's Service.

Opening Prayer: Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hidden: cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy name; through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Song:

Ride on, ride on in majesty!
Hark! All the tribes hosanna cry.
O Saviour meek, pursue your road,
with palms and scattered garments
strowed.

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

Ride on, ride on in majesty!
The angel armies of the sky

look down with sad and wondering
eyes
to see the approaching sacrifice.

Ride on, ride on in majesty!
Your last and fiercest strife is nigh.
The Father on his sapphire throne
awaits his own anointed Son.

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



The Good
Shepherd
Four Marks

Responding to God's Love

The Sermon by Rev. Howard Wright: Palm Sunday.

Read Philippians 2:5-11 and Matthew 27:11-31.

There is a danger that we go straight from Palm Sunday to Easter Sunday, without pausing at Good Friday.

Jesus been teaching for past three years – he’s just 33 years old. And there are differing views of Jesus, as there is still today. Who do we see and how will we respond?

There is a fascination with him, his teaching and miracles are unique and have raised hope. There is a National Hope of overthrowing the Romans, but, others are worried this might disturb their enjoyed privileged position. And there is a Personal Hope of relationship with God, but others are anxious that they would lose their personal benefits of a monopoly on religious thinking.

Both these hopes are raised and celebrated in Palm Sunday. Jesus is heralded as previous heroes had been – the former kings and the more recent Maccabees. But over the next few days questions are raised. Jesus is clearly good, perhaps very good, **but** is he God?

For some there was hope, for both national and personal salvation from this ‘messiah’ figure. For others this is impossible. Jesus is clearly human and any claim to messiahship and ‘God’ is scandalous and dangerous to the religious monopoly and arrangement with the political power.

There is always a danger that, as others have commented, God having made us in his image that we repay the compliment and try to make him in ours. There is a risk that we decide for him, what he will bless or not, based upon our current, political thinking, personal ambitions, and passions. The crowd, representative of us, took their place that Awful Friday and made their decision.

As we’ve been told, evil triumphs as good women and men, go with their feelings, or allow others to lead them, failing to take their own responsibility for their actions and choices. Humankind is tragically quick to

move from adoration to anger and hatred when facing disappointment of our hopes. Thank God, Jesus is not like us!

Jesus goes passively. He has given his life to us in his activity, now he gives us his death in passivity. This is the passion of Christ, and the word passion comes from the same route as passivity – it is a humble submission, in Jesus' case to his own will and love to save us! As we read in verse 8 of Philippians 2: *'And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death – even death on a cross.'*

Read Isaiah 53.

Here we see the extraordinary love of the Father, through the Son, by the Holy Spirit. What love. Oh that we would comprehend it.

Read: John 3:16-17; 1 Peter 2:24-25; 1 John 4:9-10 and; Ephesians 1:4b-8a

As we come to Jesus, what will we see? Will we risk creating him in our own image, casting him in our wants. Or will we come to God, who in Jesus was putting us back together with him into the relationship we have always needed and for which we crave – even if we don't realise it!

... God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people's sins against them. ... God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. (2 Corinthians 5:17-21)

Will we worship this Lord and God – the crucified Lord – who gives his life for our freedom? Will we live and walk in this freedom now and forever?

Prayers: *Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. (Philippians 4:4-6)*



- Pray for this day, and the coming week.
- Pray for justice, mercy, peace, and hope.
- Pray for individuals, neighbours, and for family & friends.
- Pray for the Church.

Collect: Palm Sunday. Almighty and everlasting God, who in your tender love towards the human race sent your Son our Saviour Jesus Christ to take upon him our flesh and to suffer death upon the cross: grant that we may follow the example of his patience and humility, and also be made partakers of his resurrection; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

The Lord's Prayer: *Almighty God, in Christ you make all things new: transform the poverty of our nature by the riches of your grace, and in the renewal of our lives make known your heavenly glory; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.*

Blessing to be declared over yourselves, The Good Shepherd, the communities around us and our whole nation. 'The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you; the Lord turn his face towards you and give you peace.' (Numbers 6:24-26 NIV).

The Notices: We are now holding services in the building on Sundays at 8am and 9.30am, and are live streaming the 9.30 service. This Paper Service will continue for the moment and is generally available the week after the service.

- Tea and Chat & Bowls: Wed. 19th April at 2pm, Church Hall and Church.
- Coffee and Questions: 26th April at 11am in Church Hall.
- Tea and Praise TBA.
- COGS Tots: 2nd Mondays.
- COGS Tinytots: Monday mornings.
- Messy Church: Second Sundays of the month.