

**March 28, 2021
Palm/Passion Sunday
Again & Again, We Draw On Courage**



Through the Palm by Rev. Lauren Wright Pittman

"Drum sounds rise on the air, and with them my heart. A voice inside the beat says, I know you are tired, but come. This is the way." - **Rumi**

"I'm not alone. You're always here, in my heart, between each breath, folded in the lines of my palm." - **Nitya Prakash**

"It is the nature of the strong heart, that like the palm tree it strives ever upwards when it is most burdened." - **Philip Sidney**

"Creativity requires the courage to let go of certainties." - Erich Fromm

"One of the most important struggles of humanity is to ensure that our 'fight against hate' does not become 'hate' itself – while knowing that our neutrality in times of oppression is oppression itself." - **Adeel Ahmed Khan**

ORDER OF WORSHIP

PRELUDE: "The Palms" by Jean-Baptiste Faure; *Patty Meyer, organ*

WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Good morning and welcome! My name is Elisa Lucozzi and I am pastor to the beloved community that is Guilford Community Church. We're so glad you

have joined us this morning for our Palm/Passion Sunday and as we begin Holy Week in our Lenten series “Again & Again: A Lenten Refrain”.

Celebration of maple syrup winners – Lucy Spahr-Blazej, Sylvia Morse, Shirley Squires and Mary Ellen Koehler.

Much gratitude and thanks to Fred Breunig, Rachel Bell, Mary Alice and Peter Amidon, Andy Davis and Al Franklin for creating such a wonderful virtual celebration – total amount raised: \$1200 a full 20% more than projected.

If you need palm crosses as part of next Sunday’s service, you can still pick up a Lenten Kit or if you’d just like a palm cross let us know. You can also make a paper palm. I have a link to the pattern in the additional resources section of the bulletin.

Maundy Thursday service will be April 1st, at 6:00pm. It will be a Zoom format and you will be invited to have your evening meal so we can sit around the table, hear the stories of Jesus’ last night and break bread together. It will also be streamed to YouTube. So, if you don’t feel comfortable potentially being on camera, you can still participate in the service there. It will also be rebroadcast on BCTV on Friday morning, and will be on our website.

Good Friday will be presented by the Southern New England Conference, which pairs the 7 last words of Christ with the final words of 7 BIPOC people who died because of law enforcement’s lethal use of power. This will be on YouTube and also on BCTV at noon, as well as on our website.

Easter Sunday Service will be at our usual time, premiering on YouTube at 10:00 am. It will be anything but usual!

Sunday after Easter, April 11th, we will join pastors from the UCC National Office in worship. Our own conference minister, The Rev. Dr. Lynn Bujnak, will be offering one of the reflections.

Although we really miss being together in person, we continue to gather online because we love and care about our congregation and our community, because we want to maintain physical distancing in a way that helps us to feel connected but also keeps us all safe. Although it is hard to be physically distant from one another, we also know that it can’t keep our hearts from connecting and we know it is indeed the best way of caring for one another right now. Let us keep creating new ways of being church because we know that being church has nothing to do with a building and everything to do with loving each other. Let us gather to be the church in a new way with a welcome wide enough for all.

So, as we begin today let us acknowledge and honor this land we occupy by honoring and acknowledging those First Nation people to whom this land belongs:

We gather here on the bank of the Broad Brook
In the shadow of the great Mount Wantastiquet
In the valley of the rushing Connecticut
to worship and discern together the call of God
to the United Church of Christ for these days,
let us know that we do so on the hunting grounds
and homelands of the Mahican and Penacook people,
as well as the southernmost members of the Abenaki
Tribe.

These people used this land since time immemorial
and are still among us in the present.

We offer them our gratitude and respect,
Our repentance and hope in solidarity with them...

It is a Holy Communion we share of life on earth,
of past and present, of pain and reconciliation,
of mystery and majesty...let us begin.

SILENT MEDITATION and THE LIGHTING OF CANDLES

Family of faith, I invite you to close your eyes.
Rest your feet on the floor beneath you.
Release any tension you are holding—
In your jaw, your neck, your shoulders, your hands, your legs, your feet.

Take a deep breath in and slowly let it out.

The Hebrew word for breath (*ruach*) is the same word for Spirit.
So, as you breathe, imagine that it is God who is filling up your lungs with
energy and love. Trust that God is as close as your very breath.

Now I invite you to still your mind. Imagine your mind as a river.
Thoughts will drift into view; they always do.
However, instead of holding onto those thoughts, allow yourself to let them
float by.

And listen. Listen deep. Listen far. Listen wide. Listen.

The sound of your breath is the sound of the Divine. This is a holy space.

CALL TO WORSHIP

One: The story of faith is a story of courage.

All: It took courage for John the Baptist to prepare the way.

One: It took courage for Mary to say, "Here I am. Use me."

All: It took courage for the disciples to drop their nets and follow Jesus.

One: It took courage for the paralyzed man's friends to lower him through the roof.

All: It took courage for Peter to walk on water.

One: It took courage for Zacchaeus to give half of his possessions to the poor.

All: It took courage for Jesus to enter Jerusalem on a donkey.

One: Faith has never been easy. It is a journey of courage.

All: Again and again, God, show us the way.

One: Let us worship a brave and courageous God.

OPENING HYMN: "Two Processions" by Amanda Udis-Kessler; *Ellen Crockett, Cathy Hess and Patrice Murray; Patty Meyer piano*

Two processions entering Jerusalem,
Two opposing kingdoms on display.
Which of these processions are we part of?
Which one will we follow on its way?

Will we shout "Hail Pilate" or "Hosanna"
When we have a choice whose praise to sing?
Will we trust the violent mighty ruler?
Will we trust the peaceful peasant king?

Two processions entering Jerusalem,
Power of love against the love of power.
Will we choose the path of domination?
Will we let compassion have its hour?

God has had a dream of joyful justice.
Rome has spun a nightmare of neglect.
If we join the commonwealth of servants
We may bring God's joy and justice yet.

Two processions entering Jerusalem:
Realm of hope, dominion built on fear.
As we choose the path that love has opened,
We will see the realm of hope draw near.

BLESSING OF THE PALMS: "Blessing of the Palms" written by Rev. Caela Simmons Wood (adapted)

Bless these parade palms, O God of Celebration.

May they remind us of the simple joys of living.

May we remember the excitement that comes with following Christ.

Bless these protest palms, O God of Justice.
May they remind us that Empire is not a thing of the past.
May they make us bold and brave to stand up against injustice.

Bless these funeral palms, O God of Comfort.
May they remind us of the road that lies ahead.
May they encourage us in times of grief and pain.

*Bless the palms of our hands, O God of Healing
May they remind us that we are called to be Your love in this world.
May they be used to help, to heal and to pray.

We give You thanks for the parade, the protest, the processional. We give You
thanks for the palms of our hands which we can use to help and heal.
Guide our steps through this holiest of weeks
as we cry out together "Hosanna, Hosanna, Hosanna!" Amen.

PRAYER OF INVOCATION/OPENING PRAYER:

“The Poet Thinks about the Donkey” by Mary Oliver

On the outskirts of Jerusalem
the donkey waited.
Not especially brave, or filled with understanding,
he stood and waited.
How horses, turned out into the meadow,
leap with delight!
How doves, released from their cages,
clatter away, splashed with sunlight.
But the donkey, tied to a tree as usual, waited.
Then he let himself be led away.
Then he let the stranger mount.
Never had he seen such crowds!
And I wonder if he at all imagined what was to happen.
Still, he was what he had always been: small, dark, obedient.
I hope, finally, he felt brave.
I hope, finally, he loved the man who rode so lightly upon him,
as he lifted one dusty hoof and stepped, as he had to, forward.

PREPARATION FOR CONFESSION

Glennon Doyle, a famous author and writer, frequently uses the phrase, “We can do hard things.” It’s one of her many mottos in life. As a result, this

declaration, “We can do hard things”, has become an anthem for so many. You can buy these words on poster prints, on greeting cards, and even on coffee mugs. These five simple words aren’t particularly radical. So, when I stop to think about why they have caught hold for so many, I can only assume that it is because life and faith require courage. Vulnerability requires courage. Relationships require courage. Advocacy and justice require courage. Facing our privilege requires courage. Faith requires courage.

Even confession requires courage.

So, friends, let us do hard things. Let us confess together, trusting that God is always there, cheering us on, in every courageous act. Let us pray.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

God of palm branches and hallelujahs:
we confess—we love a good Palm Sunday celebration.

We love the sound of a joyful parade.
We love shouting, “hallelujah!”
We love that Palm Sunday means Easter is just around the corner. We love good news.

However, if we slow down and pay attention,
we know that Palm Sunday was not a walk in the park for You.

There was risk. There was fear. There was the threat of violence. You were leading a peaceful protest against an unjust empire, And the whole world knew it.

Forgive us for glossing over the courage this day took. Remind us that the story of faith is a story of courage, and even we can do hard things.
With hope we pray. Amen.

WORDS OF FORGIVENESS

One: Family of faith, even when we gloss over the truth, even when our courage fails us, even when we doubt that we can do hard things, God believes in us. God loves us. God forgives us. Hear and believe this truth.

All: We are known.

We are loved.

We are forgiven.

Again and again and again. Amen.

CHILDREN'S STORY: "When You Are Brave" by Pat Zietlow-Miller, illustrated by Eliza Wheeler. Background music: "Begin" by Matthew LeBarge; *Mary Alice Amidon*

PRAYER FOR THE CHILDREN

CHILDREN'S HYMN: "Merchant's Carol" Traditional English; *Tony Barrand, with Andy Davis accordion, Fred Breunig fiddle, from the GCC 2018 Palm Sunday service.*

As we rode down the steep hillside
Twelve merchants with our fairing
A shout across the hollow land
Came loud upon our hearing
A shout, a song, a thousand strong
A thousand lusty voices
Make haste, said I, I know not why
Jerusalem rejoices.

As through the olives fast we rode
And louder came the shouting
Oh, such a noise must mean, said we
A King beyond all doubting
Spurred on, did we, the King to see
And left the mules to follow
Nearer, clearer rang the noise
Along the Kidron hollow.

Behold, a many-coloured crowd
About the gate we found there
But one among them all we marked,
A man who made no sound there
Still louder ever rose the crowd's
Hosanna in the highest
O King, thought I, I know not why
In all this joy Thou sighest.

Then He looked up, He looked at me;
But whether He spoke I doubted
How could I hear so calm a speech
While all the rabble shouted?
And yet these words, it seems, I heard
I shall be crowned tomorrow
It filled my heart with sudden smart
And filled my bones with sorrow.

We followed far, we traded not

But long we couldn't find Him
The very folk that called Him King
Let robbers go and bind Him
We found Him then, the sport of men
Still calm among their crying
Well we knew His words were true
He was most kingly dying.

READING: "Peaceful Protest" by Rev. Sarah Are; *Ellen and Larry Crockett*

I wonder if Jesus could feel His heartbeat
In His throat, the way I do when I'm afraid.
I wonder if He had to take deep breaths,
In through His nose, out through His mouth,
Tricking His body into a state of calm.

I wonder if He was nauseous, like I am
When I'm headed into a hard conversation.
I wonder if He had to summon His courage,
Tucking fear away so that He could hold onto
What mattered most with both hands.

I wonder, because time has taught us that it is not uncommon
for a peaceful protest to start or end with an unjust death.

So I wonder,
did He know?
Was He afraid? Did anyone see it?

I want to hold what matters most with both hands.

SCRIPTURE: *Ellen and Larry Crockett*

John 12:1-19

Six days before the Passover Jesus came to Bethany, the home of Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead. ² There they gave a dinner for him. Martha served, and Lazarus was one of those at the table with him. ³ Mary took a pound of costly perfume made of pure nard, anointed Jesus' feet, and wiped them with her hair. The house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume. ⁴ But Judas Iscariot, one of his disciples (the one who was about to betray him), said, ⁵ "Why was this perfume not sold for three hundred denarii and the money given to the poor?" ⁶ (He said this not because he cared about the poor, but because he was a thief; he kept the common purse and used to steal what was put into it.) ⁷ Jesus said, "Leave her alone. She bought it so that she might keep it for the day of my burial. ⁸ You always have the poor with you, but you do not always have me."

⁹ When the great crowd of the Jews learned that he was there, they came not only because of Jesus but also to see Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead. ¹⁰ So the chief priests planned to put Lazarus to death as well, ¹¹ since it was on account of him that many of the Jews were deserting and were believing in Jesus.

¹² The next day the great crowd that had come to the festival heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem. ¹³ So they took branches of palm trees and went out to meet him, shouting,

“Hosanna!

Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord—
the King of Israel!”

¹⁴ Jesus found a young donkey and sat on it; as it is written:

¹⁵ “Do not be afraid, daughter of Zion.
Look, your king is coming,
sitting on a donkey’s colt!”

¹⁶ His disciples did not understand these things at first; but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things had been written of him and had been done to him. ¹⁷ So the crowd that had been with him when he called Lazarus out of the tomb and raised him from the dead continued to testify.^[a] ¹⁸ It was also because they heard that he had performed this sign that the crowd went to meet him. ¹⁹ The Pharisees then said to one another, “You see, you can do nothing. Look, the world has gone after him!”

CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE Hymn:#617

“Write These Words in Our Hearts ...”

ANTHEM: “**Ride On King Jesus**” African American spiritual, arr. Peter Amidon; *GCC Virtual Choir, Stefan Amidon percussion*

SERMON: “Palms, Passion and Protest”

Every year on Palm Sunday, it is the song which was our first anthem, this morning, that rises up inside of me - “Ride On King Jesus!” There are many renditions of this rousing piece that you can find on YouTube, but my favorite by far, besides our own version that Peter so lovingly arranged for us, is one by the “In HIS Presence” Gospel Choir. You’ll find the link to watch it in the additional resources section of the bulletin. But be warned, you may want to have a seatbelt handy! There is a wall of sound that hits you even on the first note that has the ability to knock you flat, even if you’re not hearing it live. The conviction and power come right through the screen. “Ride on King Jesus! No man can a-hinder thee!”

May the words of my mouth and the meditations of all of our hearts be acceptable in your sight, loving and gracious God.

This is what's known as a traditional spiritual, born out of the African American tradition. What makes it that? Well, if you saw the video, (which I'll post on our Facebook page) what will be evident, if it wasn't somehow evident from even just hearing it sung, is pure confidence and deep, powerful joy!

It is important to also note in spirituals, that at their cores, are also a deep, if even unstated, history of struggle, despair and discouragement. At the heart of these lyrics is the sentiment that although those who have experienced long and difficult battles – slavery, poverty, oppression, discrimination, violence – they have dug deep down to discover an inner confidence, knowing that in the end, Jesus and all he stands for, will have the final victory, that Jesus is the one true king, a king of the people who will be victorious in setting us free.

The lyrics of the song point me to another interpretation of the Palm Sunday procession, that it was not just a cheerful parade welcoming a much talked about itinerant preacher, but instead a protest - an act of self-advocacy that gave the authorities great cause for worry. The people of Jesus' time were a people with a history of oppression and exile. They were a valley of dry bones looking for a breath of hope. They were a people calling for change.

“Hosanna” is a word that has come to mean “hooray”. However, it really originated from a prayer used for rain drought which literally means “Help, please” or “Save, I beseech you”. Under Roman rule, the people cried out when they saw an alternative leader. They wanted *Him* to be King not a puppet King appointed by the authorities, but a King of the people. They wanted a King who would lead with love, not with fear and oppression.

It is a less well-known historical fact that a Roman imperial procession was also entering Jerusalem for Passover from the other side of the city. We heard about this in our hymn, “Two Processions”. It happened every year: the Roman governor of Judea, whose residence was in Caesarea on the coast, rode up to Jerusalem in order to be present in the city, in case there were riots at Passover, the most politically volatile of the annual Jewish festivals. With him came soldiers and cavalry to reinforce the imperial troops in Jerusalem. Thus, for Passover that year, two very different processions entered Jerusalem. They proclaimed two very different and contrasting visions of how this world can and should be: the kingdom of God versus the kingdoms, the powers, of this world. The former is about justice and the end of violence. The latter are about domination and exploitation.

Jesus pre-arranged this way of entering the city. In other words, it was a planned political demonstration. Of course, it was also religious: Jesus did so because of his passion for God and the kingdom of God. We're reminded that the crowds were also brave to show up that day and join in this protest, and

the next time Jesus was surrounded by a crowd, he would be carrying a cross and the crowd around him would be shouting “crucify him!” Jesus drew on courage to face his journey to the cross.

In our own country and across the world, we have seen people rise up in defiance and resistance in unprecedented numbers over this past year, even during a pandemic. Following the killing of George Floyd, people took to the streets in record numbers, supporting people of color from all walks of life, crying out “hosanna!” The militarized forces of local police departments were there in force to “keep the peace”, but more likely to try and reinforce the status quo. We have seen this same pattern played out through history – power that was supposed to be about peace and service, turning into oppression and destruction. It is hardly an anomaly. In fact, it feels all too familiar. It seems that the Palm Sunday story continues to be played out even now.

“Hosanna!” Not only did they welcome him with their voices, they welcomed him in most of the Gospels by laying their cloaks on the ground for his humble carrier to walk upon. Did you know that it was only the Gospel of John that specifically names palm branches being used to welcome Jesus? The synoptic Gospels all mention cloaks. All of the Gospels mention Jesus riding a donkey. So why not Cloak Sunday or even Donkey Sunday?

Yet it is the palm branch that has become the symbol for this Sunday in the church liturgical season. A palm branch is a symbol of victory, triumph, peace and eternal life originating in the ancient Near East and Mediterranean world. The palm, sacred in Mesopotamian religions, and in ancient Egypt, represented immortality. In Judaism, a closed frond of the date palm is part of the festival of Sukkot.

A palm branch was awarded to victorious athletes in ancient Greece, and a palm frond or the tree itself is one of the most common attributes of Victory personified in ancient Rome.

Since a victory signals an end to a conflict or competition, the palm developed into a symbol of peace. In Christianity, not only is it a symbol associated with welcoming Christ into Jerusalem, but as a symbol of victory. It has also come to specifically symbolize victory of the spirit over the flesh. So, perhaps it is a foreshadowing symbol of Jesus’ victory over death.

Jesus’ entrance into Jerusalem creates an ironic vision. Jesus, in what might seem to be a self-aggrandizing act, chooses to ride a donkey, a lowly “work-horse” of an animal, a donkey, not a war stallion like one might expect of someone proclaimed to be a king. He aligns himself once again with those who are oppressed, recalling his own mother’s ride into Bethlehem – a young, unwed teenager, pregnant with a child who is not of her betrothed. We see Jesus embodied the deepest levels of humility and a show of non-violence. It is the absence of violence and dominance that is most striking - strikingly ironic when we think about terrible acts of violence to come. Jesus’ humble ride on a

donkey shames the notion of harsh rule and reveals it as unnecessary. Jesus' message in this act is that oppression is not required to win the loyalty of the people – that a gentle, peaceful, and humble leader can win the hearts of people without the use of fear.

This “protest” is one of the final acts that leads to a plot against Him, to His arrest, trial, conviction, and execution. It is Christ's “passion” for justice, His love for those whom society would just as soon forget, that makes Him such a threat to those who only use their power to fulfill greedy and oppressive intentions.

This Palm Sunday, not unlike last year, I also find myself thinking about the other palms – the palms of our hands and the many ways in which these palms can symbolize praise, welcome and peace. This story often recalls to us a parade. And what do we often do while watching a parade? We clap. We put our palms together to make a noise that symbolizes cheer and perhaps gratitude.

But there are other associations I make with palms, more closely connected to protesting. During the summer of 2014, there were many protests following the death of Michael Brown, one of the far too many who are gone too soon because of police brutality. During the protests following his murder, peaceful demonstrators had their “hands up” to show Michael's non-threatening posture during the encounter with police that resulted in his death. “Hands up, don't shoot” became a mantra in memory of Michael, sometimes without even using words – a simple posture in memory and in protest.

And once again in 2018, “hands up, don't shoot” came into the spotlight in response to the shooting at Margery Stoneman Douglas High School, in Parkland, Florida. It is these palms that I also think about and hold as a sacred symbol today. This posture carries with it protest, but also a position of praise or worship, a position of blessing, in that I remember Jesus, the gentle man who used His palms to heal and comfort, to touch those who others would have cast aside, to cradle the chins of small children.

Of course, over this last year, palms, the washing of ones' hands, has taken on both the symbolism of prayer and blessing, or protest and resistance against this virus that claimed so many lives. Even now, we see glimpses of that day when we will once again be able to press our palms together in an act of greeting – a hand shake or simply being able to hold each other's hands again.

The Palm Sunday story and the Passion are both long ago, and they're also right now. It's history, but it's also our own story. Then, as now, the crowds ask, “Who is this?” Then, as now, the answer lies not in the structures of oppressive power and domination, but in the mysterious, gentle influence of meekness and love, which, in the end, is what those in authority fear the most, because they cannot control it. Again and again, we draw on courage – courage

to recognize and face our own prejudices and the injustices in our community and country. Again and again, we draw on courage to face the journey toward the cross with Jesus. Like Jesus, we “who believe in freedom” are called to be part of the story, part of the protest and part of the passion.

Let Christ’s passion encourage you toward being passionate about those things in life that matter most – relationship, compassion, love. Take these hands, these palms, and use them to manifest love in the world, by blessing or protest. May they be one and the same. Let us continue to wash these palms and wave these palms from a safe distance – from porches and cars, from across the street, and welcome Jesus the best way we can, by loving our neighbor, continuing to keep them safe and doing our part to help create a world where no one will have to die from COVID. Let us be boldly anchored in love. Love like Jesus loves. Love like someone’s life depends on it, because it does!

As we begin this Holy Week, let the story of Christ’s passion continue to haunt and challenge us to follow The Way. As Jesus enters the city gates, may He also enter your heart, so that we, too, can wave the palms of love’s victory, so that those shouts of “Hosanna!” can be transformed into shouts of “Alleluia!” Amen.

PASTORAL PRAYER: by Maren Tirabassi

First untie the donkey
the one that’s standing at the gate
waiting to be untied —
from some sorrow
or some guilt,
from someone else’s judgment —
too young for the ride, or too old,
too much ink on the skin,
Parkinson’s in the hands,
pregnant in the belly.

First untie the donkey,
the one that’s standing at the gate
waiting to be untied –
from some abusive relationship
or really intricate self-made knots.

This is the donkey God wants for the ride –
a burro with no documents,
or some other not-yet-ridden,
gender-outside or recovery-thin.

So first untie the donkey –
the one who wants a parade,
willing to carry joy

and a premonition of cross
at the same time,
longing for a day of song and danger
fetlock deep in palms,
and a life that will always echo,
Hosanna.

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

I refuse to believe that I am powerless.
I refuse to believe that injustice and hatred are simply the way it has to be.
I refuse to believe that I am better or more deserving than my neighbor.
I refuse to believe that my self-worth is rooted in my accomplishments or appearance.
I refuse to believe that the Church is dying, because I see God all around me.
I refuse to believe that the traditions of old are the only path for moving forward.
I refuse to believe that I cannot make a difference.
So with hope in my heart, I will strive to live a life of courage, conviction, and compassion, Just as Jesus taught us. Amen.

ANTHEM: “Venez Mon Dieu” traditional from Haiti, arr. Andy Davis
GCC Virtual Choir; Connie Green flute, Dwayne Johnson trumpet, Andy Davis accordion, Patty Meyer piano

Introduction to Prayers of the People:

This is the time in our service where I invite your prayers – prayers of concern or sorrow, prayers of celebration and joy. If you have something or someone you would like our gathering to pray for you can type it into the comments section that accompanies this live feed.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE: *Emma Davis*

Leader: Jesus, Light of the World, how quickly the joy and exuberance of the people on this day, was turned hostile and angry by political manipulation, and even Your friends betrayed You. Let us walk with You through this coming Holy Week, remain in Your presence, and never deny that You are our Savior.
Hosanna to our Messiah!

All: Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord!

Leader: Light of the World, help us to engage the hearts and minds of the leaders of this world, our country, and our community, that we may eliminate the fear-mongering, posturing, and oppression that leads to a death like Yours. Hosanna to our Messiah!

All: Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord!

Leader: Jesus, Light of the World, enfold with Your loving arms, those who are ill, desperate, or hopeless, and those who worry and care for them. Hosanna to our Messiah!

All: Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord!

Leader: Jesus, Light of the World, as You came to lead us all into the glory of eternal life, turn our grief into joy and comfort, knowing those we mourn are with You now in everlasting peace. Hosanna to our Messiah!

All: Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord!

Leader: Jesus, Light of the World, we pause in this moment to offer You our other heartfelt intentions and petitions, aloud or silently. Hosanna to our Messiah!

All: Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord!

Leader: Jesus, Light of the World, as we begin this Sacred week, endow our spiritual leaders with extraordinary grace, that through You and them, we may all be drawn together in Your saving embrace. Hosanna to our Messiah!

All: Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord!

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Now let us say together the prayer that Jesus taught us using whatever words help us to embody its promise. May we bring about one small glimpse of the (kingdom) of God, a kin-dom where all are well, all are fed and free, where all are whole, where all know love, where *all* know they are beloved.

Let us pray: Our Father, (Our Father/Mother, Our Creator) who art in heaven, hallowed be thy Name. Thy kingdom (kin-dom) 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 trespasses against us and lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom (kin-dom), and the power, and the glory now and forever. Amen.

CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE: Hymn #278
“Hear our Prayer, Oh Lord...”

THE OFFERTORY

The crowds offered you their coats to walk on, they waved palm branches, honoring Your presence. Today we honor You, Lord, with our faithful tithes and offerings. We lay these gifts before You, humble tokens of our love, a public display of affection for our King of Kings. Amen.

Supporting the church and the mission of the church is more important than ever. You can still send in your weekly offerings to the church via US mail **38 Church Dr. Guilford, VT 05301** or consider using our online "offering plate" by going to the church's website and clicking the PayPal donation button on the home page. So now let us gather up all these offerings as well as the offering of our time and talents and dedicate them to continuing the work of our still speaking God.

DOXOLOGY: *Katharine, Breunig, piano*

PRAYER OF DEDICATION

God, You have given each of us gifts to use as members of the body of Christ. Here are our gifts – the work of our hands, our hearts, and our lives. We pray that they may help to bring the Good News of Jesus Christ to our world, today and always, here and everywhere. Amen.

THE CLOSING HYMN: “Deep Calls to Deep” by Mary Alice Amidon; *GCC Choir with Patty Meyer piano* (from March 22, 2020 with no congregation and a reduced choir; one of our first services in the pandemic)

Deep Calls to Deep

words and music by Mary Alice Amidon

1. Deep calls to deep in the thun - der of the ca - ta-racts,
2. Heart calls to heart in the breath and in the still - ness.
3. Soul calls to soul in the night and in the mor - ning.
4. Sound calls to sound in the cry and in the qui - et.

5
Deep calls to deep in the waves u - pon the shore.
Heart calls to heart beat - ing e - ver strong.
Soul calls to soul reach - ing farth - est heights.
Sound calls to sound when there are no words.

9
Deep calls to deep, when the heart is o - pen;
Heart calls to heart, to souls we still re - mem - ber.
Soul calls to soul ho - ri - zon to ho - ri - zon.
Sound calls to sound in/the voice and in the e - cho.

13
Deep calls to me, calls to you, calls us all.

BENEDICTION

As you leave this space,
may your mouth speak of God's goodness.
May your arms hold those in need.
May your feet walk toward justice.
May your heart trust its worth.
May your soul dance in God's grace.
And may this be your rhythm -
Again and again and again,
until God's promised day.
In the name of the Lover, the Beloved, and Love itself,
go with courage, go with heart, go in peace.
Amen.

THREEFOLD AMEN: Hymn #291 *Emma Davis*

POSTLUDE: "O Sacred Head Now Wounded" Melody, Hans Leo Hassler;
Harmonized by Johan Sebastian Bach; *Patty Meyer, organ*

For Further Prayer and Reflection:

[Ride On King Jesus sung by the In HIS Presence Gospel Choir](#)

[Hosanna from Jesus Christ Superstar \(Sing-along\) with John Legend](#)

[Jesus Christ Superstar Live in Concert starring John Legend](#)

Live TV version of this blockbuster musical based on the life of Jesus

[The Passion by Tyler Perry](#)

A modern day Passion Play set to contemporary music featuring Tyler Perry, Jencarlos Canela, Trisha Yearwood, Seal and Yolanda Adams

[Another Seven Last Words](#)

A Good Friday reflection by Iranian-American journalist, photographer, and filmmaker, Shirin Barghi.

[University of Michigan Men's Glee Club: Seven Last Words of the Unarmed](#)

A choral work by composer Joel Thompson based on the seven last words of unarmed black men before they were killed.

[Gay Passion of Christ by Qspirit](#)

The Passion of Christ: A Gay Vision by Douglas Blanchard