



Church At Home
St. Timothy's Lutheran Church – Pembroke, Ontario
Palm Sunday **March 29, 2026**

Invocation

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

Processional Gospel Matthew 21:1-11

The holy gospel according to Matthew.

Glory to you, O Lord.

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."

Blessing of the Palms

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Let us pray.

We praise you, O God, for redeeming the world through our Savior Jesus Christ. Today he entered the holy city in triumph and was proclaimed messiah and king by those who spread garments and branches along his way. Bless these branches and those who carry them. Grant us grace to follow our Lord in the way of the cross, so that, joined to his death and resurrection, we enter into life with you; through the same Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

Prayer of the Day

Everlasting God, in your endless love for the human race you sent our Lord Jesus Christ to take on our nature and to suffer death on the cross. In your mercy enable us to share in his obedience to your will and in the glorious victory of his resurrection, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen

Homily

I greet you in the name of Jesus, the One who died for us. Amen.

As a child, Palm Sunday was one of the few times that I remember pomp and circumstances in the church. Walking down the center aisle with my Sunday School teachers; waving either real palms or ones that were made from green construction paper. Some of the adults smiled at us from their pews; others watched (probably to make sure we were perfect angels) while others sang a glorious majestic hymn led by the magnificent organ. I felt important.

Moving the hands of time forward some thirty years, I was able to watch our own little Sarah march down the aisle waving palm branches. My view was from the choir loft. I felt like I was in a tree, watching the parade from the vantage point of looking down. There I waited for ladies and for men to take their coats off and toss them into the aisle. In many ways I was reliving in my mind what had happened on that first Palm Sunday as Jesus rode the borrowed donkey into Jerusalem; but here, not a robe was tossed.

Palm Sundays was always seen as a royal day fit for a king. It was one of my favourite Sundays of the year.

Yet something happened. Sometime in the 80's or 90's, in the midst of important liturgical renewal, this day changed to Palm/Passion Sunday. It is a memo I never received! Yes, I understand some of the logic behind the change – it was in response to the decline in attendance of Holy Week services. Many folks no longer attend Maundy Thursday and Good Friday services; they would move from the hosannas for Palm Sunday to the hosannas of Easter and miss the journey to the cross entirely. Therefore, a portion of the Passion story was now to be read on Palm Sunday. Well, as I said, I missed the memo. So we will not read a portion of the Passion story; we will save that for Good Friday. Instead, let us reflect on the day and what meaning it has for us.

We are still in the season of Lent which is not a build up to Good Friday but rather a season of preparation to follow Jesus as a disciple. The gospel readings for this year have originated from Matthew. Each week we have had stories of Jesus revealing who he is to a variety of characters including; Nicodemus, the Samaritan woman, the man who received his sight, and last week, Lazarus and his sisters Mary and Martha and the various responses they in turn gave to him. So what we have, on this the Sixth Sunday of Lent; Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem is meant to be a capstone to these readings and shout our own Hosannas to Jesus, the one we have come to know so well through the story of others.

This being said, Jesus triumphal entry wasn't a first century version of the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade or the Rose Bowl Parade. It was meant as a statement. Matthew is clear: Jesus rode into town as a returning king. Moreover, the crowds greeted him as such. Hosanna, they repeated meaning – "save us". These cries had both religious and political overtones. They greeted him as the Lord's Messiah. These people had seen the many miracles he performed and come to believe that he was the Messiah sent to them. There was an expectation that came with being the Messiah; Jesus could overthrow the Romans.

This was the fear of the Romans and culminated in the death of Jesus. Yes, Jesus offended the religious authorities of the day; yet more importantly, Jesus proclaimed another kingdom – the kingdom of God and called people to give their allegiance to this kingdom first! Jesus was a threat.

The tragedy of the day is that the people half right. He did come as God's Messiah. But they misunderstood what that meant – not change by violence, but rather the love of God. The love of God: which breaks down barriers differences and kingdoms so that we are one; God's beloved children.

The other tragedy of the day is that the religious and political authorities are also half right. Jesus was a threat and for that matter he still is. He threatens the way in which we seek to establish our future by hoarding wealth and power. He threatens our habit of drawing lines and making rules about who is acceptable and who is not – who is in and who is not. Yet, they are so wrong in thinking that they can eliminate this threat by violence; by crucifixion. Jesus' resurrection affirms that God's love is stronger than hate and God's life is stronger than death. Jesus enters fully into the confusion and chaos of our days as fully as he did the turmoil in his own and that is good news.

My friends in Christ. What is hard about Lent is that many of us have, at some time in our life, come to seek our identity and security on things other than God. The blessing is that none of these other things are up to the job. No matter what we trust in, we will be disappointed, as only God's Word can declare us not just acceptable but as blessed and beloved. Jesus' journey to the cross shows us just how far he was willing to go to show to us God's unconditional love, grace, mercy and acceptance. And knowing this, and accepting this whether we name it on Palm Sunday, Passion Sunday or the Sixth Sunday of Lent there is good reason to shout Hosanna, Hosanna, Hosanna, with all the joy and hope we have.

Amen.

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

Benediction

The Lord bless you and keep you,
The Lord's face shine upon you and be gracious unto you,
The Lord look upon you with favour and give you (+) peace. Amen.

Prayers used by permission by Augsburg Fortress – Sundays and Seasons

STTLC Communiqué

In Our Prayers Today.....Mike Harrington, Lila Martinat, Irlavere Tubbe, Bobby Keuhl, Adele Krieger, Tracy Schori and Christa Reitlingshoefer.

We are doing it again! Lenten Food Drive – in support of St. Joseph’s Food Bank starts today and will continue until Easter. If you are able, please support this drive as the need is great. Watch as the table in the entrance grows with food as we support others. (Please check the expiry dates on the items.) Also, clean, empty egg cartons (one dozen size) are now being accepted as these can be re-used.

Please note.....cash donations should be given directly to them and not through offering envelopes. Thank you.

Camp Lutherlyn Camper Sponsorships – St. Timothy’s is sponsoring up to 5 children/youth for 1 Week each at Camp Lutherlyn this summer. You can obtain an Application Form from the church office and you can register your child online at lutherlyncamp.ca and then going to the Registration Page.

Easter Flowers – If you would like to make a donation for flowers in our sanctuary on Easter Sunday, please contact the church office.

Services of Holy Week

Maundy Thursday – 7:00 pm Holy Communion

Good Friday – 9:30 am Worship Service

Easter Sunday –Resurrection of our Lord

8:30 am and 11:00 am

He is Risen! He is Risen Indeed!

