

ST. ANDREW'S UNITED CHURCH
March 24, 2024 – Palm & Passion Sunday

Welcome to Worship

Join us for a Zoom Virtual Coffee Time, Sundays at 7:00 p.m.

Email sascha12@sympatico.ca to get the Zoom link.

Prelude

Opening Hymn: VU 122 *All Glory Laud and Honour*

**All glory, laud and honour to you, Redeemer, King,
to whom the lips of children made sweet hosannas ring.**

**1. You are the King of Israel, and David's royal son,
now in the Lord's name coming, our King and blessed one.**

**All glory, laud and honour to you, Redeemer, King,
to whom the lips of children made sweet hosannas ring.**

**2. The multitude of pilgrims with palms before you went;
our praise and prayer and anthems before you we present.**

**All glory, laud and honour to you, Redeemer, King,
to whom the lips of children made sweet hosannas ring.**

**3. To you, before your passion, they sang their hymns of praise;
to you, now high exalted, our melody we raise.**

**All glory, laud and honour to you, Redeemer, King,
to whom the lips of children made sweet hosannas ring.**

**4. Their praises you accepted; accept the prayers we bring,
great author of all goodness, O good and gracious king.**

**All glory, laud and honour to you, Redeemer, King,
to whom the lips of children made sweet hosannas ring.**

Welcome and Announcements

Welcome to everyone, in person and joining online via live stream, to our worship incorporating Palm Parade and the Passion Story. We have two worship services during Holy Week. Maundy Thursday – March 28, 7:00pm – in the sanctuary and on Zoom. The Zoom link is in the News that was sent this past Thursday. Good Friday – April 7, 10:30am – St. Peter's United Church at 203 York Street, a combined effort of St. Mark's, St. Peter's, St. Stephen's on the Hill, and St. Andrew's United Churches. This service is in person and on St. Peter's YouTube channel. This link was also sent with the News.

Hopefully you received one of these things (refer to palm frond) at the door. Today is a day that begins with celebration, but the mood most definitely from the parade of Palms for Jesus entering Jerusalem to the grief of Jesus betrayed, tried, and ultimately crucified. Today we will see the crucifixion of Jesus, the Good Friday story, through the lens of Peter and so we have set up stations. Later in this worship you are welcome to physically walk, to journey to those stations, or you can stay in your seat.

We also have a Social Hour on Zoom, every Sunday night at 7. As always, you can get your Zoom link to join that time of connecting by sending an email to Bev. That email address is also at the end of the video and is on our main YouTube page. The link was also sent with the NEWS.

Inviting Holy Light

Ground ourselves in our breathing and God's Grace.

God, we have gotten used to the shadows in this world that obscure light and hope.

Something in us marvels at your love and light.
As we this candle, remind us that you are warm, and loving,
and that you call each of us to live in your love and warmth.

[candle is lit]

Sung Response: VU 642 *Be Thou My Vision*, vs. 1

**1. Be thou my vision, O joy of my heart; naught be all else to me save that thou art,
thou my best thought, by day or by night, waking or sleeping thy presence my light.**

Nurturing Safe Space

In Psalm 139 the singer proclaims: I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made.

Every creature on this earth is fearfully and wonderfully made, including you... and me. Repeat after me: I am fearfully and wonderfully made... I am fearfully and wonderfully made...

In our diversity is the mystery and beauty and holiness of God. May we celebrate the uniqueness, the quirks, the differences we each bring: Age, Gender, Sexual Orientation, Neurodivergence (that is, we think differently). That diversity reflects the mystery of a Creator whose wisdom is beyond anything we can imagine. We are fearfully and wonderfully made. Amen.

Acknowledging Traditional Territory

We sing of the Creator, who made humans to live and move and have their being in God. In and with God, we can direct our lives toward right relationship with each other and with God. We can discover our place as one strand in the web of life.

We acknowledge that our sacred space is found on the Indigenous territories of the Atikemekshing Anishnawbek and Wahnipitae First Nation. With thankfulness and respect for their stewardship of creation, we seek to live into right relations with all.

Invitation

It is only one week, but this week is a wilderness of emotion and heartbreak. Everything that could happen, happens: celebration, betrayal, feasts, and love made real, hearts are broken, and faith questioned. It all happens here in this one week.

Call to Worship

Hosanna! Hosanna!
HOSANNA! HOSANNA!

Hosanna! Which means, "Save us, now!"
Hosanna! God Saves!

Blessed is the one who comes in God's name!
Blessed is God's reign of love and peace!
Hosanna in the highest!

Opening Prayer

Eternal God, this morning we have come to cheer you on.
We can feel the excitement of the crowds who welcomed Jesus with such joy,
and we want to join in, to share their hope, remembering your promise of a saviour.
Bless us as we greet your Son, who arrives now. In his name we pray. Amen.

The Prayer that Jesus Taught

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Thy 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 trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kin-dom, the power and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

Palm Sunday Scripture Reading – John 12:12-16

Let us pray: God, as we hear this story, bless us with fresh ears and open hearts and minds, that we may experience you among us, receive your call to new life, and respond with our whole being to the grace you so freely offer. May we receive these Scripture Stories in new and healing ways. Amen.

This story, as many do, begin with “the next day”, just before this story, Jesus has raised his friend Lazarus from death, and then, while Jesus is eating with Lazarus and sisters Mary and Martha, Mary anoints Jesus’ feet – symbolism to remind us that Jesus will soon die.

The next day the great crowd that had come for the festival heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem. They took palm branches and went out to meet him. They shouted,

“Hosanna! Blessings on the one who comes in the name of the Lord!
Blessings on the king of Israel!”

Jesus found a young donkey and sat on it, just as it is written,
Don’t be afraid, Daughter Zion.
Look! Your king is coming,
sitting on a donkey’s colt.

His disciples didn’t understand these things at first. After he was glorified, they remembered that these things had been written about him and that they had done these things to him.

Before we experience the Palm Parade. This is a repeat-after-me prayer:
Loving God,
Be with us as we journey.
Be with us as we parade for peace.
Be with us as we journey
into the tough times;
Jesus knowing he will be arrested,
let down by his friends, and dying.
Remind us that we are not alone. Amen.

Palm Parade Hymn: VU 128 *Sanna, Sannanina* (SING SEVERAL TIMES)

Sanna, sannanina, sanna, sanna, sanna.
Sanna, sannanina, sanna, sanna, sanna.
Sanna, sanna, sanna, sannanina,
sanna, sanna, sanna.
Sanna, sanna, sanna, sannanina,
sanna, sanna, sanna.

We Journey with Peter in 6 Stations (Sophia & Benjamin)

We are now going to journey with Peter and Jesus through the Good Friday story. If you are adventurous, you can get up and physically make this journey that begins at the first Station, to my left. You are welcome to stay seated as the artwork will also be on screen while the story is told.

Station 1: Peter resists, then receives the foot washing

Reading: John 13:1-15 Common English Bible

Jesus and his disciples were sharing the evening meal. The devil had already provoked Judas ... to betray Jesus. Jesus knew the Father had given everything into his hands and that he had come from God and was returning to God. So he got up from the table and took off his robes. Picking up a linen towel, he tied it around his waist. Then he poured water into a washbasin and began to

wash the disciples' feet, drying them with the towel he was wearing. When Jesus came to Simon Peter, Peter said to him, "Lord, are you going to wash my feet?"

Jesus replied, "You don't understand what I'm doing now, but you will understand later."

"No!" Peter said. "You will never wash my feet!"

Jesus replied, "Unless I wash you, you won't have a place with me."

Simon Peter said, "Lord, not only my feet but also my hands and my head!"

Jesus responded, "Those who have bathed need only to have their feet washed, because they are completely clean. You disciples are clean, but not every one of you." He knew who would betray him...

After he washed the disciples' feet, he put on his robes and returned to his place at the table.

He said to them, "... You call me 'Teacher' and 'Lord,' and you speak correctly, because I am. If I, your Lord and teacher, have washed your feet, you too must wash each other's feet."

(Reader continues:)

Now, I invite you to look at the Artwork. Look closely at it, and as you do, what do you see? How do you feel? Consider Jesus' commandment to "wash one another's feet." Whose feet are you being called to wash? Take a slip of the dissolvable paper and write the names of people and/or communities you feel called to serve. When you are finished, hold onto your paper, it will be used later.

Station 2: Jesus foretells Peter's denials

Reading: John 13:31-38

When Judas was gone, Jesus said, "Now the Son of Humanity has been glorified, and God has been glorified in him. If God has been glorified in him, God will also glorify the Son of Humanity in himself and will glorify him immediately. Little children, I'm with you for a little while longer. You will look for me—but, just as I told the Jewish leaders, I also tell you now—"Where I'm going, you can't come."

"I give you a new commandment: Love each other. Just as I have loved you, so you also must love each other. This is how everyone will know that you are my disciples, when you love each other."

Simon Peter said to Jesus, "Lord, where are you going?"

Jesus answered, "Where I am going, you can't follow me now, but you will follow later."

Peter asked, "Lord, why can't I follow you now? I'll give up my life for you."

Jesus replied, "Will you give up your life for me? I assure you that you will deny me three times before the rooster crows."

(Reader continues:)

Again, I invite you to look more closely at the artwork on screen or at Station 2. What do you see? How does it make you feel? Take a slip of dissolvable paper and write the names of people you profoundly love. When you are finished, as with the last piece of paper, hold onto that paper, you will use it later.

Station 3: Peter draws his sword

Reading: John 18:1-11

After he said these things, Jesus went out with his disciples and crossed over to the other side of the Kidron Valley. He and his disciples entered a garden there. Judas, his betrayer, also knew the place because Jesus often gathered there with his disciples. Judas brought a company of soldiers

and some guards from the chief priests and Pharisees. They came there carrying lanterns, torches, and weapons. Jesus knew everything that was to happen to him, so he went out and asked, "Who are you looking for?"

They answered, "Jesus the Nazarene."

He said to them, "I Am." (Judas, his betrayer, was standing with them.) When he said, "I Am," they shrank back and fell to the ground. He asked them again, "Who are you looking for?"

They said, "Jesus the Nazarene."

Jesus answered, "I told you, 'I Am.' If you are looking for me, then let these people go." ...

Then Simon Peter, who had a sword, drew it and struck the high priest's servant, cutting off his right ear.

Jesus told Peter, "Put your sword away! Am I not to drink the cup the Father has given me?"

(Reader continues:)

Look at the artwork in front of you or on your screen. What do you notice about it? How does it make you feel? I invite you to pray with me the prayer on the screen:

Holy One, our world seems ensnared by violence. We grieve those high-profile acts of violence, nation against nation, person resorting to violence against another. We don't make headlines for it, but we harm one another too, and for this, God, we are sorry.

We name the reality of increasing incidents of intimate partner violence. We are part of this system, whether we harm someone directly, or indirectly. We see our society allowing violence, through poverty, homelessness, racism, marginalization, and discrimination of many forms.

God of grace, have mercy on us, and save us from our weak resignation to these evil forms of violence. Amen.

Station 4: Jesus is arrested, and Peter denies Christ

Reading: John 18:12-18

Then the company of soldiers, the commander, and the guards from the religious leaders took Jesus into custody. They bound him and led him first to Annas. He was the father-in-law of Caiaphas, the high priest that year. (Caiaphas was the one who had advised the religious leaders that it was better for one person to die for the people.)

Simon Peter and another disciple followed Jesus. Because this other disciple was known to the high priest, he went with Jesus into the high priest's courtyard. However, Peter stood outside near the gate. Then the other disciple (the one known to the high priest) came out and spoke to the woman stationed at the gate, and she brought Peter in. The servant woman stationed at the gate asked Peter, "Aren't you one of this man's disciples?"

"I'm not," he replied. The servants and the guards had made a fire because it was cold. They were standing around it, warming themselves. Peter joined them there, standing by the fire and warming himself.

(Reader continues:)

When we think of violence, we think of the deliberate, active kind. In this station, we are confronted with the violence of inaction. Peter has now seen the lengths that power would go to silence Jesus. When asked if he was one of Jesus' disciples, Peter freezes. He must suspect that, if his association to Jesus were made known, he might be met with the same violence. Please join me in prayer:

Merciful God, we confess those times when we have been inactive bystanders in the face of someone else's victimization. Forgive us for choosing our own well-being over justice. Amen.

Station 5: Peter denies Christ again and again

Reading: John 18:19-27

Meanwhile, the chief priest questioned Jesus about his disciples and his teaching. Jesus answered, "I've spoken openly to the world. I've always taught in synagogues and in the temple, where all the Jews gather. I've said nothing in private. Why ask me? Ask those who heard what I told them. They know what I said."

After Jesus spoke, one of the guards standing there slapped Jesus in the face. "Is that how you would answer the high priest?" he asked.

Jesus replied, "If I speak wrongly, testify about what was wrong. But if I speak correctly, why do you strike me?"

Then Annas sent him, bound, to Caiaphas the high priest.

Meanwhile, Simon Peter was still standing with the guards, warming himself.

They asked, "Aren't you one of his disciples?"

Peter denied it, saying, "I'm not."

A servant of the high priest, a relative of the one whose ear Peter had cut off, said to him, "Didn't I see you in the garden with him?" Peter denied it again, and immediately a rooster crowed.

(Reader continues:)

Look closely at a portion of the artwork, "The Descent" by T. Denise Anderson. As you gaze upon the art, what do you see? How do you feel? Take your two slips of dissolvable paper (from Stations 1 & 2) and place them in the water basin. Watch them dissolve into the water. In this act, we symbolically participate in Peter's denial. We recognize the times we have turned away from those we love and from those whom God has called us to serve. We feel the pain of facing the worst part of ourselves.

Invitation to Present Offering

Offering Hymn: VU 382 *Breathe on Me, Breath of God, vs. 1*

**1. Breathe on me, breath of God, fill me with life anew,
that I may love what thou dost love, and do what thou wouldst do.**

Offering Prayer

Endless Giving God, we gather today to remember the gift you gave the world. You love us so much that you allowed the political powers to crucify Jesus. We can hardly imagine such a horror. And yet, we know the story doesn't end on Good Friday. That is why we dare to offer our gifts. We know that our offerings, even on this day, are an Easter message. We give because we hope and love. Receive them and convert them into new life. Amen.

Anthem: *Palm Sunday*

by Carlton Young. © 1982 by Hope Publishing Company

Prayers of Community:

In Jesus, Loving God, you came to us in humility, reaching out to all God's little ones with mercy and compassion. You ask us to do the same.

In gratitude for all the mercy and compassion we have known, we pray for those who find themselves in humble circumstances:

Hear us as we pray:

For the unhoused in our communities, and for refugees wherever they take shelter; (Pause)
especially we name the Supervised Consumption Sites set to close here and around Ontario, and
we lament the closure of SACY, the Youth and Young Adult shelter, this past week.

For all who find themselves without enough resources to cope when necessary things are so
costly; (Pause)

for those who live in isolated communities and lack the access, care and technology most of us
take for granted; (Pause)

embrace them, O God, in your mercy, and humble us, lest we put too much trust in our lifestyles
as the source of life's goodness.

Hear us as we pray for all those who have been humbled by unexpected circumstances: for those
who face illness or injury; (Pause)

for those who know death or disaster, fear or failure; (Pause)

for victims of crime and those who suffer through the misjudgment or mistake of others; (Pause)
and we pray for those who suffer because of the consequences of their own actions and choices.

(Pause)

Embrace them, O God, in your mercy, and humble us, lest we imagine we can live our lives
untouched by trouble.

Hear us as we pray for all those who have not yet learned the lessons of humility:

for those who live carelessly endangering themselves and others; (Pause)

for those who abuse the trust and power in their positions, betraying those whose interests are in
their hands; (Pause)

and we pray for those who mislead others to protect their own interests or indulge their fame with
no thought for the consequences. (Pause)

Finally, but not at all least, we pray for leaders in our world, that you will grant them wisdom,
mercy and courage to speak truth, sometimes at great risk. We pray for your church, near and far,
particularly we pray for Goulais River United Church in Goulais River on our Regional Council
prayer cycle today. We pray for all faith communities in our world, each reminding us that we are
part of an interdependent, fragile world and community, and that we are called to love...called to
love... called to love.

Humble us all, O God, in your mercy. Help us to heed your call to care for neighbours, and
ourselves. We pray in the name of your beloved, Jesus, Amen.

Station 6: Jesus is Crucified

Reading: John 19:1-30

Then Pilate had Jesus taken and whipped. The soldiers twisted together a crown of thorns and put
it on his head, and dressed him in a purple robe.

Over and over they went up to him and said, "Greetings, king of the Jews!" And they slapped him
in the face.

Pilate came out of the palace again and said to the Jewish leaders, "Look! I'm bringing him out to
you to let you know that I find no grounds for a charge against him." When Jesus came out,
wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe, Pilate said to them, "Here's the man."

When the chief priests and their deputies saw him, they shouted out, "Crucify, crucify!"

Pilate told them, "You take him and crucify him. I don't find any grounds for a charge against him."

The religious leaders replied, "We have a Law, and according to this Law he ought to die because
he made himself out to be God's Son."

When Pilate heard this word, he was even more afraid. He went back into the residence and spoke to Jesus, "Where are you from?" Jesus didn't answer. So Pilate said, "You won't speak to me? Don't you know that I have authority to release you and also to crucify you?"

Jesus replied, "You would have no authority over me if it had not been given to you from above. That's why the one who handed me over to you has the greater sin."

From that moment on, Pilate wanted to release Jesus.

However, the religious leaders cried out, saying, "If you release this man, you aren't a friend of the emperor! Anyone who makes himself out to be a king opposes the emperor!"

When Pilate heard these words, he led Jesus out and seated him on the judge's bench at the place called Stone Pavement. It was about noon on the Preparation Day for the Passover.

Pilate said to the religious leaders, "Here's your king."

The religious leaders cried out, "Take him away! Take him away! Crucify him!"

Pilate responded, "What? Do you want me to crucify your king?"

"We have no king except the emperor," the chief priests answered. Then Pilate handed Jesus over to be crucified.

The soldiers took Jesus prisoner. Carrying his cross by himself, he went out to a place called Skull Place (in Aramaic, Golgotha). That's where they crucified him—and two others with him, one on each side and Jesus in the middle. Pilate had a public notice written and posted on the cross.

It read "Jesus the Nazarene, the king of the Jews."

... the chief priests complained to Pilate, "Don't write, 'The king of the Jews' but 'This man said, 'I am the king of the Jews.'"

Pilate answered, "What I've written, I've written."

When the soldiers crucified Jesus, they took his clothes and his sandals, and divided them into four shares, one for each soldier. ...

Jesus' mother and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene stood near the cross. When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to his mother, "Woman, here is your son." Then he said to the disciple, "Here is your mother." And from that time on, this disciple took her into his home.

After this, knowing that everything was already completed, in order to fulfill the scripture, Jesus said, "I am thirsty." A jar full of sour wine was nearby, so the soldiers soaked a sponge in it, placed it on a hyssop branch, and held it up to his lips.

When he had received the sour wine, Jesus said, "It is completed."

(Candle is extinguished on the Communion Table, and taken away.)

Bowing his head, he gave up his life.

Blessing

"Prone to wander, Lord, we feel it, prone to leave the God we love." Friends, we are more like Peter than we may like to admit. Our Lord has died and we were not there. And so, today, we grieve with Peter.

Our wandering hearts are heavy. But as we leave this place, may we remember: our wandering heart is always tethered to the love of God.

God's abundant grace existed for Peter and it exists for you. God's love never runs out. So go now in peace, trusting that streams of mercy shall find us all. Amen.

Closing Hymn: VU 133 *Go to Dark Gethsemane*

1. Go to dark Gethsemane,
you that feel the tempter's power;
your Redeemer's conflict see;
watch with him one bitter hour;
turn not from his grief away:
Learn from him to watch and pray.

2. See him at the judgement hall,
beaten, bound, reviled, arraigned;
see him meekly bearing all;
love to all his soul sustained.
Shun not suffering, shame, or loss:
learn from Christ to bear the cross.

3. Calvary's mournful mountain view;
there the Lord of glory see,
made a sacrifice for you,
dying on the accursed tree.
"It is finished," hear his cry:
trust in Christ and learn to die.

We leave the sanctuary in silence.

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