

ORDER OF SERVICE FOR PALM SUNDAY 2021 – SHEPPARTON UNITING CHURCH

Introit: 52 (TiS) 'Let us sing to the God of salvation'

Call to worship:

Rejoice, O people of Zion! Shout in triumph, O people of Jerusalem! Look, your king is coming to you. He is righteous and victorious, yet he is humble, riding on a donkey – riding on a donkey's colt. (Zechariah 9:9)

Let Israel rejoice in their Maker; let the children of Zion rejoice in their King. (Ps. 149: 2)

Let us worship God.

Hymn: 333 (TiS) 'All glory laud and honour'

Prayer of Thanksgiving and Confession:

Almighty God, you have created us in your wisdom and saved us by your grace, and you empower us by your Holy Spirit to live to your honour and to your glory.

Accept the praise and thanksgiving of our hearts and the devotion of our minds as now we worship and praise you.

Grant that as we recall the events of your Passion, your Holy Spirit may move us to true penitence, firmer faith, and greater loyalty to you for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord.

We thank you for the victory obtained through the cross. Our hearts rejoice as we shout Hosanna in the highest, blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!

We thank you for going ahead of us to fight our battle so that today, we have VICTORY over all things in Jesus name.

O Lord, who on this day entered the rebellious city that later rejected you:

We confess that our wills are as rebellious as Jerusalem's, our faith is often more show and pomp than substance, and our hearts are in need of cleansing.

Have mercy on us, Son of David, Saviour of our lives; help us to lay at your feet our cloaks of self-righteousness, and put at your feet all that we have and all that we are, trusting you to forgive what is sinful, to heal what is broken, to welcome our praises and to receive us as your own.

In the name of Jesus Christ, we pray. **Amen.**

Declaration of forgiveness:

Doxology: 772 (TiS) 'Worship, honour, glory, blessing.'

Young Church: 'Dave the Donkey' (ppt – presentation)

Reading: Mark 11: 1-11

Musical items – Tongans

Sermon: 'Triumphal entry to a dead end.'

- I wish I was there on that first Palm Sunday to witness with my own eyes what was happening. The joy, the excitement, the noise and the celebration. It was probably the greatest show that Jesus ever received on earth.
- This was a day for the common people. Those who were not used to the kind of attention that Jesus had paid them. They were the ones ignored by the those in power, as the Psalmist says, "I am forgotten like a dead man, out of mind."
- This is what was appealing to the common people of Jesus's day and for many of us today. Jesus had power to heal the sick, to exorcise demons and even raise the dead to life.
- But he did not look through the powerless as if they were not there or abuse them as something to be used.
- Jesus took the Bridegroom image seriously to describe his relationship to the world. He came among human beings as a bridegroom, a Lover of the world.
- He became the bridegroom for the unclean, the unloved, the forgotten, the ignored and on this day, they burst into song. "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord."
- Even the donkey was borrowed from a person in the next village. A donkey that has never been ridden.
- Jesus had always been at odds with the Scribes and the Pharisees over the interpretation of Scripture and tradition. The debate over table fellowship, fasting and Sabbath observance.
- This triumphal entry into Jerusalem is again how Jesus protested the subordination of human need and welfare to the rigid and unfeeling application of the law and tradition.
- Jesus is inviting us in this Palm Sunday celebration to advocate for those who are oppressed by political, religious and even cultural expectations.
- We lay our cloaks at Jesus feet to show our preparedness to walk with Jesus to Jerusalem and to suffer for those who have been told that suffering means sin and the presence of suffering means God has removed his hand from them.
- We put palm leaves on the road as sign that we do not believe that one must earn God's love as if it is something that we deserve in the first place.
- Ultimately, Jesus would lay down his life for all who are powerless used by the powerful for their greedy ends.
- We should, and we must walk with Jesus to Jerusalem to confront the religious establishments, churches included, for replacing a loving God with a god who is out for retribution and revenge.
- As we know, it was a dead end for Jesus in this triumphal entry but a new beginning for all who love him. Death will not stop his life of loving which we are called to do and be.

Hymn: 348 (TiS) 'Ride on, ride on in majesty.'

Notices/ Joys & Concerns

Offering:

Prayers of the People:

Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is the One who comes in the name of the Lord. Crowds cheered when you came to Jerusalem; you came to bring peace, but the civil authorities did not welcome you. Jesus, we pray for your world: for peace that brings an end to violence, oppression and war; for peace that enables all people to live with dignity and justice; for world leaders and for all who commit their lives to work of peace.

Jesus, Son of David, let us follow in your way;

let us walk with you to Jerusalem.

Crowds cheered when you came to Jerusalem; you came to bring love, but you were betrayed and deserted by your friends. Jesus we pray for this community: for our families and friends, for those whom we work and learn; for the hungry, the homeless and those without hope for the future; for all who live in fear or despair and all who know the pain of betrayal.

Jesus, Son of David, let us follow in your way;

let us walk with you to Jerusalem.

Crowds cheered when you came to Jerusalem; you came to bring healing to the sick and release to the captive, but you were beaten, imprisoned and killed. Jesus, we pray for all in need: for prisoners of conscience and those held without trial; for all whose beliefs lead them to frightening and lonely places; for the friendless, the unwanted and all from whom we turn away; for the sick and all who mourn.

Jesus, Son of David, let us follow in your way;

let us walk with you to Jerusalem.

Crowds cheered when you came to Jerusalem; you came to bring the freedom of the Spirit, but the chief priests plotted your death. Jesus, we pray for your church: for a church freed from false dogma and legalism, discord and division; for a pilgrim church, ready to travel where you lead; for all leaders of your church and for those who minister in your name.

Jesus, Son of David, let us follow in your way;

let us walk with you to Jerusalem. Amen.

Hymn: 446 (TiS) 'Glorious things of you are spoken.'

Blessing: 779 (TiS)