

Plymouth Congregational United Church of Christ

Palm Sunday

April 5, 2020

9:30 a.m.



A Just Peace Church
An Open and Affirming Congregation
A God is Still Speaking Congregation
Our faith is 2000 years old; our thinking isn't.

GATHERING

Welcome

Prelude

The beginning of the prelude is an invitation to silent, personal preparation for the worship of God.

Call to Worship

One: Lent began in the wilderness; it concludes in Jerusalem.

All: We now come near to the end of one story. Another will soon begin.

One: We have followed Jesus this far; today the last week begins with a parade but will descend into betrayal, falseness, rejection, and torment.

All: And we witness, once more, that he taught and walked in love through every step of the journey.

Hymn

"All Glory, Laud, and Honor"

Blk#217 (v.1)

Verse 1

**All glory, laud, and honor
to you, O Christ, we sing,
to whom the lips of children
made sweet hosannas ring.
The people of the Hebrews
With palms adorned your way;
our praise and prayer and anthems,
we offer you this day.**

Prayer of the Day

One: How weary we are from these days of isolation and worry; how broken our dreams and hopes have become in these days. But, as we offer our prayers, God will remember us – our dreams, our hopes, as well as our failings, and will restore us to new life. Let us join our voices together, as we pray, saying,

All: Hosanna, O God in the highest! How you come to us in ways we never expect. A king on a donkey? A Savior on a cross? How can we recognize you, with us, among us? Will your message come through? Will the palms we wave with joy today be thrown down tomorrow with doubt? May your Spirit guide us through this Holiest of Weeks, beside us, around us, before and behind us, within us, as we pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

Silence for Personal Reflection

God's Promise of New Life

One: The wideness of God's mercy, the range of God's forgiveness, the infinite love of God, the Heart of hope which is never empty: all these gifts are ours, as God restores us to the fullness of life meant for us.

All: May we commit our hearts into yours, so we may learn how to love as deeply as you. May we commit our hands into yours, so we may be taught how to serve others with joy.

Response

"Give Me a Clean Heart"

Blk#188

**"Give me a clean heart so I may serve you.
God, fix my heart so that I may serve you.
For I am not worthy of all the blessings.
Give me a clean heart and I'll follow you."**

Sign of Peace

One: When you can see the divine in yourself, you will be able to see the divine in everyone and everywhere.

All: God's grace is beyond us, yet lives in each heartbeat, the source of creation from which peace derives.

One: Let us greet one another with signs of peace.

HEARING THE WORD

Scripture Lessons

Hebrew Lesson Psalm 118:1-2, 19-29

Gospel Lesson Matthew 21:1-11

One: Here end the readings from our tradition. May God grant us wisdom and courage to live our faith boldly.

All: Amen

Message

"A Triumphant Entry through Empty Streets"

*Hymn

"Jesus, the Joy of Loving Hearts"

Blk#329 (v.3)

Verse 3

**We taste of you, the living bread,
and long to feast upon you still;
We drink of you, the fountain-head;
our thirsty souls from you we fill.**

CELEBRATION OF HOLY COMMUNION

Invitation to the Table

For Holy Communion this morning, I invite you to lend Christ your table. On the first day of Holy week long ago, people throughout Judea arrived at the dusty gates of Jerusalem, primed with "Hosanna" in their hearts and Jesus asked to borrow a donkey. On the Thursday that followed, Jesus rented or was given John Mark's mother's Upper Room to celebrate the Passover with the disciples.

On the afternoon of the resurrection, Jesus was invited into a house in Emmaus and used the bread of that hospitality to break and bless. Lend Christ your table, your bread, your cup and your heart, for, as the disciples told the person who loaned the donkey, "The Lord has need of it."

Prayer of Consecration

We are one bread, one body, one cup of blessing. Though we are many throughout the earth and this church community is scattered, we are one in Christ. In your many kitchens, and living rooms, rest your hands lightly upon these elements which we set aside today to be a sacrament. Let us ask God's blessing upon them.

All: Gentle Redeemer, there is no lockdown on your blessing and no quarantine on grace. Send your Spirit of life and love, power and blessing upon every table where your child shelters in place, that this Bread may be broken and gathered in love and this Cup poured out to give hope to all. Risen Christ, live in us, that we may live in you. Breathe in us, that we may breathe in you.

Words of Remembering

We remember that Paul the apostle wrote letters to congregations throughout places we now call Greece, Turkey and Macedonia, and they were the first "remote" worship resources. Our online service has a long heritage. The Communion words sent to the church at Corinth were these:

For I received from the Lord what I also handed on to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took a loaf of bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body that is for you. Do this in remembrance of me." In the same way he took the cup also, after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me." For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

Sharing of the Elements

Pastor: Let us in our many places receive the gift of God, the Bread of Heaven.

All: We are one in Christ in the bread we share.

Pastor: Let us in our many places receive the gift of God, the Cup of Blessing.

All: We are one in Christ in the cup we share.

Prayer of Thanksgiving

Let us pray in thanksgiving for this meal of grace, rejoicing that, by the very method of our worship, we have embodied the truth that Christ's love is not limited by buildings made with human hands, nor contained in human ceremonies, but blows as free as the Spirit in all places.

All: Spirit of Christ, you have blessed our tables and our lives. May the eating of this Bread give us courage to speak faith and act love, not only in church sanctuaries, but in your precious world, and may the drinking of this Cup renew our hope even in the midst of pandemic. Wrap your hopeful presence around all whose bodies, spirits and hearts need healing, and let us become your compassion and safe refuge; for we pray in the name of him who taught us to pray together, saying:

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 debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the Kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

SENDING

Hymn

“Ride On! Ride On in Majesty”

Blk#215 (v.2)

Verse 2

**Ride On! Ride on in Majesty!
As crowds of people come to see
And shout hosannas, lifting high
Their praise for one about to die.**

Benediction

Postlude

Keeping in Prayer

Dick Brace
Sheri Stanley
Mary
John Smathers
Family of Bob Rines

Jesse Armstrong
Barbara
P.V. George
Patti Dyszinsky

Cassie & Kevin
Vickie Flener
June Thomas
Wendy & Steven Colby
Maroni Family

Prayers for Our Nation and for the World!

Bob Feeny as he explores his Call to ordained ministry.
Sam Lovett, Member-in-discernment in the Merrimack Association

Holy Week Schedule

Maundy Thursday - April 9th at 7:00 PM

Good Friday - April 10th at 7:00 PM

Easter Sunday - April 12th at 9:30 AM

PREPARE COMMUNION BEFORE WORSHIP

Our Palm Sunday and Maundy Thursday worship services will include the celebration of the Lord's Supper. We encourage you to participate in the sacrament and to prepare bread and cup before the service begins. Here is a suggested preparation.

Before the time of the service, you will want to prepare some bread, a slice or a small loaf of any kind of bread. In some parts of the world tortilla, rice cake or cassava are used as this element which is defined not as a wheat product, but as the most common food of the people. Let it be something you alone or you with others in your house may break and share. Prepare a cup or cups of juice — perhaps grape or cranberry — or wine, with or without alcohol.

Set these elements in the living room or kitchen where you experience worship electronically with our faith community. Perhaps you want to put them on a lovely cloth or fabric that reminds you of a special time or a person deeply connected with you in the communion of saints. Perhaps you will light a candle, place a flower/plant or the photograph of someone you wish to bring into the circle of faith beside the bread and the cup. Thank you for your preparation.

PREPARATION FOR GOOD FRIDAY

The Tenebrae Service we will be having on Good Friday includes the extinguishing of candles after each reading. If you would like to participate in the extinguishing of candles in your home, please have 7 candles lit at the beginning of the service. You will be invited to extinguish a candle after each reading.

Announcements

One Great Hour of Sharing offering is scheduled for today, **April 5th**. One of the important ways our offering reaches people is to bring relief to those affected by disasters, especially the pandemic this year that pretty much is affecting people everywhere. Please give generously. Please mark OGHS on the memo line of your check.

HOPE Fund - The need for assistance through our HOPE Fund will increase as families at risk need assistance paying for their rent, heating, electricity and medications. Please, in lieu of Easter Flowers, consider giving to the HOPE Fund to assist our neighbors in the Plymouth area. Make your check out to PCUCC and write HOPE Fund in the memo. Send to Plymouth Congregational UCC, PO Box 86, Plymouth, NH 03264.

Our church is closed to all events until further announcement.
The Worship Services will be live-streamed on our Facebook page.
Please check for Constant Contact and the Facebook page
for information about upcoming Worship Services.

Pastor's Office Hours

During this time of "social distancing" and working remotely,
Pastor Mike will be at the church periodically.
Please feel free to contact him by email at pastor@uccplymouth.org,
or his cell phone at 603-960-0196.

The Rev. Michael Carrier, Bridge Pastor
Deborah Healey, Office Administrator
David Williams, Director of Music
Ashley Paine, Organist/Pianist
Gale Adams-Davis, Co-Director of Faith Formation
Julie Kelsey, Co-Director of Faith Formation
Larry Spencer, Treasurer
Celia Woolverton, Grace Counseling

pastor@uccplymouth.org
office@uccplymouth.org
musicdirector@uccplymouth.org
organist@uccplymouth.org
windygla2@yahoo.com
faithformation@uccplymouth.org
treasurer@uccplymouth.org
gracecounseling@uccplymouth.org

Plymouth Congregational United Church of Christ
4 Post Office Square, P.O. Box 86 Plymouth, NH 03264
(603) 536-2626 ~ office@uccplymouth.org ~ www.uccplymouth.org