

Sunday 13th April 2025: Palm Sunday

For use by the Central Norfolk Circuit at 10.30am or some other suitable time.

Theme for today is “Make way for Christ the prince of peace”

Lent liturgy

Give us this day our daily bread that lets our hearts sing...

That we can express our loves, our likes, our hates, our fears, the depths of our joys, our sorrows, our hopes, our dreams.

Give us this day our daily bread that lets our hearts sing...

That we can live and be ourselves knowing you hear our songs, that we can sing out our hearts desire.

Give us this day our daily bread that lets our hearts sing...

As you know the songs of our souls, the depths of our being, may those others who hear them through us see you.

O Lord our God, on this Lenten journey,

let us sing and shout and proclaim your way, your Word. Amen.

Hymn StF 262 H&P 160

All glory, Laud and honour

Hosanna to the Son of David! **Hosanna in the highest!**

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. **Hosanna in the highest!**

Sisters and brothers in Christ, during Lent we have been preparing for the celebration of our Lord's death and resurrection. Today we begin this solemn celebration in union with Christians throughout the world. Our Lord Jesus Christ entered Jerusalem in triumph to complete his work as our Saviour; to be rejected, to suffer and die, and to be raised from the dead.

Let us go with him in faith and love, so that, united with him in his sufferings, we may share his risen life.

Prayer:

God our Saviour, whose Son entered Jerusalem as Messiah to suffer and die, may these palms be for us a sign of his victory; may we who carry them ever hail him as king and follow him in the way that leads to eternal life.

With all the faithful, may we enter the new Jerusalem in triumph; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

Hymn StF 565

Only by grace can we enter

Bible readings:

Psalm 118: 1-2, 19-29

Luke 19: 28-40

Reflection

A Palm Sunday message from Rev Jonny Bell

“If these were silent, the stones would shout out.” (Luke 19:40)

Today, we remember Jesus Christ riding into Jerusalem on a donkey. The crowds are cheering, waving palm branches, laying their coats on the road. It looks like a celebration, and it is. But it's also something more: it's a protest.

In Jesus' time, the streets of Jerusalem would have seen many parades—usually for Roman leaders on horses, with soldiers and power on display. But Jesus comes humbly, on a donkey. And yet the people still cheer. Why do they do this? Is it because they believe that he is the one who brings freedom? They had heard and seen (first-hand or from what others have said) what he says about God's love and how God desires the world to be. And it is not the kind of freedom the world gives, but the freedom of God – freedom from fear, from injustice, from being forgotten.

Many of us carry heavy burdens – worries about money, health, loneliness, or the future. Life in rural places can feel quiet, even hidden, and for some, that quiet is painful. But Palm Sunday reminds us that to celebrate Jesus is to say: “We are not forgotten. God is with us.” And that is a powerful thing to say in a world full of suffering.

Even when life is hard, we can still raise our voices, not in denial of pain, but in hope. To sing, to pray, to gather – these are small acts of resistance against despair. Small acts that protest against the sufferings of the world. Small acts that defy the way the world is at the moment.



So, as we walk into Holy Week, let's ask ourselves:

- What does it mean for me to welcome Jesus as my Liberator?
- What would it look like for me to trust that God sees me, here and now?

And maybe, just maybe, we'll find ourselves ready to shout with joy – even if it's through tears.

Hymn StF 611 Brother, sister, let me serve you

Prayers of Intercession for Palm Sunday:

Loving God, Your Son Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a donkey as a different kind of king. You call us to be different too.

We pray that we may bear the fruit of your Spirit – love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. Take firm root in our lives, so we may lovingly serve and welcome all, with no exceptions. Help us to live together in your love and shine as lights in the darkness to reveal your glory in the world.

Lord in your love: Hear our prayer Loving God, at the Last Supper, Jesus washed his Disciples' feet as an example of service. We pray for all those who serve at this time, all those in the NHS, social care and other essential services; all who volunteer or are good neighbours. We thank you for their compassionate love and ask you to bless their work; equip them with the energy and determination they need to go on rising to the needs of the hour. Help us all to seek the common good.

Lord in your love: Hear our prayer Loving God, In the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus experienced distress and anguish over what lay ahead. We pray for all who are experiencing distress and anguish at the present time. All those who are ill; at home or in hospital; those fearful for others; those whose jobs have vanished; whose futures are in great doubt. We thank you for all the efforts made on their behalf and pray that we may all receive your peace and love.

Lord in your love: Hear our prayer Loving God, In Jesus, you love the whole world. So, we continue to pray for those areas where normal, daily life is violence, war and grinding poverty. We continue to remember the situation in Ukraine, Gaza, Myanmar and all the nations of the world dealing with disasters. We pray that as we approach Easter, peace may begin to take root even in these dark places.

Lord in your love: Hear our prayer Loving God, On the cross as Jesus died, your love was glorified. We thank you that He was obedient to death and that you raised Him on high so we know that not even death can separate us from your love. You have redeemed us by love. Jesus is the light of the world; a light which eternally shines and brings hope, that no darkness can quench. Today, we commend all who have died to your eternal joy and care. As we live, work and pray through Holy Week, we thank you that you turn our darkness into light. In your light shall we see light. Merciful Father, accept these prayers for the sake of your Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen

Offer to God your offertory for the week, and say the Lord's Prayer...

Hymn: StF 265 H&P

Ride on, ride on in majesty

Closing blessing –

The God of all grace who has called us to eternal glory in Christ, make us perfect, confirming and strengthening us; and to him be the power for ever and ever.

Amen.