

New Hope Lutheran Church

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March 28, 2021
Palm Sunday

Coming Events

All services have been cancelled until April 18, 2021 due to COVID-19.

Mar 30 1:00pm Zoom Raamatupiiri
Apr 4 10:00am Bilingual Easter Service **Zoom**

Apr 18 10:00am Messu † **Voima Hall**
1:00pm Annual Meeting
Regent St, Voima Hall & Zoom
2:00pm Worship Service **Regent St**

In our prayers Fred, Esme, Martha.

Remembering Iiris Petaja 66 yrs.



Blessed Lord; your love was shown for us by your death and resurrection, reminding us that you have beaten death. Even so, we still mourn Lord. At this time we pray for those who are in deep mourning, the family and friends of Iiris Petaja. May they be reminded of your sacrifice, and be comforted with the knowledge that your loving presence is all around them. Bless them, in Jesus' name. Amen.

Opening Hymn – All Glory, Laud and Honor (344)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h3a8FTTrAdE>

Prayer of the Day

Sovereign God, you have established your rule in the human heart through the servanthood of Jesus Christ. By your Spirit, keep us in the joyful procession of those who with their tongues confess Jesus as Lord and with their lives praise him as Savior, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

Psalm 31:9 – 16

⁹ Be merciful to me, LORD, for I am in distress; my eyes grow weak with sorrow, my soul and body with grief.

¹⁰ My life is consumed by anguish and my years by groaning; my strength fails because of my affliction, and my bones grow weak.

¹¹ Because of all my enemies, I am the utter contempt of my neighbors and an object of dread to my closest friends— those who see me on the street flee from me.

¹² I am forgotten as though I were dead; I have become like broken pottery.

¹³ For I hear many whispering, “Terror on every side!” They conspire against me and plot to take my life.

¹⁴ But I trust in you, LORD; I say, “You are my God.”

¹⁵ My times are in your hands; deliver me from the hands of my enemies, from those who pursue me.

¹⁶ Let your face shine on your servant; save me in your unfailing love.

First Reading “**Isaiah 50:4 – 9a**”

4 The Sovereign LORD has given me a well-instructed tongue, to know the word that sustains the weary. He wakens me morning by morning, wakens my ear to listen like one being instructed. **5** The Sovereign LORD has opened my ears; I have not been rebellious, I have not turned away. **6** I offered my back to those who beat me, my cheeks to those who pulled out my beard; I did not hide my face from mocking and spitting. **7** Because the Sovereign LORD helps me, I will not be disgraced. Therefore have I set my face like flint, and I know I will not be put to shame. **8** He who vindicates me is near. Who then will bring charges against me? Let us face each other! Who is my accuser? Let him confront me! **9** It is the Sovereign LORD who helps me. Who will condemn me? They will all wear out like a garment; the moths will eat them up.

Second Reading “**Philippians 2:5 – 11**”

5 In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus: **6** Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; **7** rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. **8** And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death— even death on a cross! **9** Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, **10** that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, **11** and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Gospel “**Mark 11:1 – 11**”

1 As they approached Jerusalem and came to Bethphage and Bethany at the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two of his disciples, **2** saying to them, “Go to the village ahead of you, and just as you enter it, you will find a colt tied there, which no one has ever ridden. Untie it and bring it here. **3** If anyone asks you, ‘Why are you doing this?’ say, ‘The Lord needs it and will send it back here shortly.’” **4** They went and found a colt outside in the street, tied at a doorway. As they untied it, **5** some people standing there asked, “What are you doing, untying that colt?” **6** They answered as Jesus had told them to, and the people let them go. **7** When they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their cloaks over it, he sat on it. **8** Many people spread their cloaks on the road, while others spread branches they had cut in the fields. **9** Those who went ahead and those who followed shouted, “Hosanna!” “Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!” **10** “Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David!” “Hosanna in the highest heaven!” **11** Jesus entered Jerusalem and went into the temple courts. He looked around at everything, but since it was already late, he went out to Bethany with the Twelve.

Sermon

Expanding Our Image

Today is the day we remember the story of how Jesus had some of his disciples borrow the colt of a donkey in order that Jesus might ride it into Jerusalem with crowds of people cheering him on. It's such a familiar story that you may well have just skimmed through the gospel lesson because we all know it so very well. The problem with skimming over the story

however, is that it doesn't really give us much of a chance to reflect on the nuances of these verses. We can easily take the story (as we remember it) at face value and be tempted to move on to something else.

As an example, one thing we might miss is that Mark's take on this story is rather different from what we find in the gospels of Matthew or Luke where, upon arriving in Jerusalem, Jesus drove out the retailers located in the temple. According to Mark, once Jesus arrived at the temple, he simply looked around but since it was late, he headed back to his lodgings outside the city. No tirade about turning the temple into a shopping mall, or driving out the retail sector. In most other ways, Mark's version is the same except for this one incident, but I suspect our questioning the lack of such an outrageous event never occurred to most of us; especially if we have glossed over the story.

My point here is that its important to ask ourselves some questions as we read through scripture in order to get more out of it. When we search for answers, we gain new knowledge in that search.

A question I've had regarding the Palm Sunday event as recorded in all of the gospels is: Why did Jesus bother with such a stunt? What was the point? After having walked all over Galilee and making the trip to Jerusalem by foot, certainly he had the stamina to make the relatively short walk into Jerusalem! And it is quite clear that he didn't ride a full-sized donkey, but rather a colt, a young donkey not even fully grown, meaning Jesus' feet may have been practically dragging on the ground. It is also made clear that this colt had never been ridden, meaning it was an unbroken animal. Have any of you ever attempted to ride an animal that has never been ridden before? Generally, they do not take to it very well. Ask anybody who has participated in a rodeo.

So we probably should be asking ourselves; why would Jesus go through such an ordeal? Only John's gospel gives us a partial answer, indicating that this was foretold by the prophet Zechariah, that their king would arrive seated on a donkey's colt. In essence, Jesus was fulfilling another prophecy, all part of proving that he was the long-awaited one.

There is however, more to it than that. Anyone with access to a colt could arrange for such an event and claimed to be the messiah. The point of using such a third-rate mode of

transportation was also the symbolism. From the beginning Jesus had stressed that he never came to overthrow existing structures of power by force, but rather through humility. He spoke often of being a servant, not a master. Humility was Jesus' trademark and - unlike the powerful of that time who arrived in the capital on a war horse, riding high up above the people - Jesus arrived in a humble fashion. He may have been riding an animal, but he was still at eye-level with the people. He wasn't above them, he is one of them.

The event also illustrates something about God's power and the kingdom of God. So often we equate the kingdom of God as being kind of like the way things run now, but with a lot more honesty and ethical choices. Going by the words of Jesus throughout the New Testament and the way he rode into Jerusalem however, that image is rather skewed.

Jesus many times proclaimed that the kingdom of God is pretty much an upside down version of how things run in our day. In the kingdom of God, the powerful are at the bottom of the heap, and the poor, the underprivileged, and those formerly trampled are on top. Financial reserves have no place in the kingdom of God, as earthly riches are useless. Forgiveness for failures are prioritized over accusations of guilt. Power cannot be gained by brute force or wealth, but by an attitude of servanthood and a love for others. And I realize that - for some people - this is a pretty scary scenario because they have formed their entire lives on the current premise.

So when we imagine Jesus' ride into Jerusalem, it would do us well to go beyond our current image, and expand our imagination to see the symbolism of what is to come in the future. The true king is not powerful in ways we might imagine, but rather humble; an attitude we would do well to copy. The messiah of the believers comes to us today riding an animal that is three sizes too small for him, with his feet probably dragging on the ground, all with the purpose of being at our level so we can look directly into his loving eyes, and respond to that love that will save us all. Hosanna! Amen.

Prayers

Relying on the promises of God, we pray boldly for the church, the world, and all who are in need:

In Jesus you came among us as a suffering servant. Give your church humility. Redeem your people from pride and the certainty that we always know your will. Heal us and empower

us to confess Christ crucified. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

In creation, life springs from death. Redeem your creation awaiting resurrection: restore host habitats and endangered species. Create new possibilities for areas affected by climate change, grant relief from natural disasters, and nurture new growth. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Jesus was handed over to the powers of this world. In all nations, instruct the powerful, that they would not exploit their power but maintain justice. Sustain soldiers, and guide those who command them, that they serve those in greatest need. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

On the cross Jesus joined all who feel forsaken. Abide with those who are condemned to death. Defend those who are falsely accused. Console and strengthen those who are mocked or bullied. Accompany all who suffer, grant respite and renewal. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

You called followers to tend Jesus' body in death. Sustain hospice workers and funeral directors. Bless this congregation's ministries at times of death: those who plan and lead funerals, all who offer support in grief. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

You inspired the centurion to confess Jesus as your Son. We praise you for the faith you have given to people of all places and times. Give us also such faith to trust the promises of baptism and, with them, to look for the resurrection of the dead. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

We entrust ourselves and all our prayers to you, O faithful God, in the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord, who taught us to pray...

Lord's Prayer

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen.

Hymn - Go to Dark Gethsemane (347)

[Go To Dark Gethsemane\(vocal with lyrics\) - YouTube](#)