

Welcome and notices

Welcome to our Palm Sunday service. Mark is in London with Reuben for an audition, so we pray that that goes well for Reuben, but it does mean that you have the two Mikes this morning.

- Final lent course 12th April 19:30 @ church
- Holy Week services:
 - Wednesday Communion 10am (13 Apr)
 - Maundy Thursday Communion 7.30pm (14 Apr)
 - Good Friday all-age service 10.30am (15 Apr)
 - Good Friday walk of witness 12-3pm
 - Good Friday silent prayer 12-3pm
 - Easter Sunrise service 6.30am (17 Apr)
 - Easter Communion celebration 10.30am
 - Easter Praise 5pm

Call to worship

12-15 The next day the huge crowd that had arrived for the Feast heard that Jesus was entering Jerusalem. They broke off palm branches and went out to meet him. And they cheered:

Hosanna!

Blessed is he who comes in God's name!

Yes! The King of Israel!

Jesus got a young donkey and rode it, just as the Scripture has it:

No fear, Daughter Zion:

See how your king comes,
riding a donkey's colt.

Opening prayer and confession

Great and marvellous are your deeds, Lord God Almighty. Just and true are your ways, King of the nations. Who will not fear you, Lord, and bring glory to your name?

For you alone are holy. All nations will come and worship before you For your righteous acts have been revealed.

Almighty God, nothing is hidden from you, not even the secrets of our hearts. By your Holy Spirit, purify our deepest thoughts, so that we may truly love you and bring honour to your name, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Merciful God, our maker and our judge, we have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed: we have not loved you with our whole heart, we have not loved our neighbours as ourselves: we repent and are sorry for all our sins. Father, forgive us. Strengthen us to love and obey you in newness of life, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Assurance of pardon

Our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness

and to purify for himself are people that are his very own, eager to do what is good. Thanks be to God for his inexpressible gift! **Amen.**

Songs

[Praise is rising](#)

Praise is rising, eyes are turning to You, we turn to You

Hope is stirring, hearts are yearning for You, we long for You

'Cause when we see You, we find strength to face the day

In Your Presence all our fears are washed
away, washed away

Hosanna, hosanna
You are the God Who saves us, worthy of
all our praises
Hosanna, hosanna
Come have Your way among us
We welcome You here, Lord Jesus

Hear the sound of hearts returning to You,
we turn to You
In Your Kingdom broken lives are made
new, You make us new
'Cause when we see You, we find strength
to face the day
In Your Presence all our fears are washed
away, washed away

Hosanna, hosanna
You are the God Who saves us, worthy of
all our praises
Hosanna, hosanna
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We welcome You here, Lord Jesus
Hosanna, hosanna
You are the God Who saves us, worthy of
all our praises

Hosanna, hosanna
Come have Your way among us
We welcome You here, Lord Jesus
Hosanna, hosanna
Hosanna, hosanna

I see the king of glory
I see the King of glory
Coming on the clouds with fire
The whole earth shakes
The whole earth shakes

I see His love and mercy
Washing over all our sin
The people sing
The people sing

[Chorus]
Hosanna
Hosanna
Hosanna in the highest [x2]

I see a generation
Rising up to take their place
With selfless faith
With selfless faith

I see a near revival
Stirring as we pray and seek
We're on our knees
We're on our knees

[Chorus]

Heal my heart and make it clean
Open up my eyes to the things unseen
Show me how to love like You have loved
me

Break my heart for what breaks Yours
Everything I am for Your kingdom's cause
As I walk from earth into eternity

[Chorus x2]

Hosanna in the highest

You are the king of glory

You Are The King Of Glory

You Are The Prince Of Peace

You Are The Lord Of Heaven And Earth

You Are The Son Of Righteousness

Angels Bow Down Before You

They Worship And Adore You

For You Have The Words Of Eternal Life

You Are Jesus Christ The Lord

Hosanna To The Son Of David

Hosanna To The King Of Kings

Glory In The Highest Heavens

Jesus The Messiah Reigns

Offertory prayer

God of life, saviour of the poor, receive with this money gratitude for your goodness, penitence for our pride and dedication to your service in Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Sunday Club prayer

Lord bless the time our children have together may it be a time of joy and exploration of faith. We thank you for those you have called to teach the faith to our children. Lord bless their time together. **Amen.**

Luke 19: 28 – 44

Jesus Comes to Jerusalem as King
28 After Jesus had said this, he went on ahead, going up to Jerusalem. 29 As he approached Bethphage and Bethany at the hill called the Mount of Olives, he sent two of his disciples, saying to them, 30 “Go to the village ahead of you, and as you enter it, you will find a colt tied there, which no one has ever ridden. Untie it and

bring it here. 31 If anyone asks you, ‘Why are you untying it?’ say, ‘The Lord needs it.’”

32 Those who were sent ahead went and found it just as he had told them. 33 As they were untying the colt, its owners asked them, “Why are you untying the colt?”

34 They replied, “The Lord needs it.”

35 They brought it to Jesus, threw their cloaks on the colt and put Jesus on it. 36 As he went along, people spread their cloaks on the road.

37 When he came near the place where the road goes down the Mount of Olives, the whole crowd of disciples began joyfully to praise God in loud voices for all the miracles they had seen:

38 “Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord!”

“Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!”

39 Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to Jesus, “Teacher, rebuke your disciples!”

40 “I tell you,” he replied, “if they keep quiet, the stones will cry out.”

41 As he approached Jerusalem and saw the city, he wept over it 42 and said, “If you, even you, had only known on this day what would bring you peace—but now it is hidden from your eyes. 43 The days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment against you and encircle you and hem you in on every side.

44 They will dash you to the ground, you and the children within your walls. They will not leave one stone on another, because you did not recognize the time of God's coming to you."

This is the word of the Lord

Thanks be to God

Reflection – Mike Gibbs

Palm Sunday - The King arrives – riding on a donkey

[Luke 19:28-44](#)

Palm Sunday offers us a familiar setting. It's the time when we take our palm crosses, wave them in the air and proclaim "Hosanna! Hosanna!" It's the time when we recall an unfolding drama that brought God's plan for the salvation of humankind to fruition.

Who are the main characters in this familiar story, told not only in our gospel reading but also in more detail in Matthew chapter 21, Mark chapter 11 and John chapter 12?

Who is the principal person, the main man? JESUS! And who also was there, the supporting cast, so to speak? THE DISCIPLES! And who also was there, cheering Jesus and placing their cloaks and palm branches in the road; a great crowd which might be described as the audience? THE PEOPLE OF JERUSALEM! But there was also another character in this story, often overlooked or forgotten, but very, very important. Who was it? Here are two clues.

The first comes from the journalist, novelist, essayist and poet Gilbert Keith Chesterton:

*When fishes flew and forests walked
And figs grew upon thorn,*

*Some moment when the moon was blood
Then surely I was born.*

*With monstrous head and sickening cry
And ears like errant wings,
The devil's walking parody
On all four-footed things.*

*The tattered outlaw of the earth,
Of ancient crooked will;
Starve, scourge, deride me: I am dumb,
I keep my secret still.*

*Fools! For I also had my hour;
One far fierce hour and sweet:
There was a shout about my ears,
And palms before my feet.*

And if that's not enough, here's a second clue from the 9th verse of the 9th chapter of the book of the prophet Zechariah: "See, your king comes to you, righteous and victorious, lowly and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey..." So, on this Palm Sunday, let's look for a change at the donkey and then at the lesson Jesus tried so hard to teach.

"Monstrous head and sickening cry, and ears like errant wings..." It's the cry of every person who has ever said "My nose is too long", "My eyes are too close together", "My legs are like tree trunks". It's the cry of every person, old or young, who looks in the mirror and says "Yuk!" Of every teenager that has ever looked at themselves with loathing, wishing they were someone else. James Dobson, the American evangelist, has pointed out that 95% of all teenagers look at their body and wish some part of it could be changed ... and that is true of almost every person at one time or another.

The donkey's cry is the cry of everyone who ever felt they were unimportant, unwanted, no good or no use to anybody, that when God was handing out beauty and gifts and abilities, they were either at the end of the queue or out of the room. It's also the cry of those who have been used, abused and misused through life. Has life been unfair? Have you had to do all the work while others seemed to skip through life with fun and laughter? Have you found yourself with the fluffy end of the lollipop, as Marilyn Monroe so memorably put it?

Have you carried hurts and burdens far more than you feel you should? Do others have all the money, able to do all sorts of exciting things while you scrimp and save to just get by? That's the donkey's cry. He too has been seen as nothing but a beast of burden. Whenever he tries to resist he is beaten into submission. No one ever saw him as beautiful. Never is he chosen for the glamorous tasks. "The tattered outlaw of the earth, of ancient crooked will, Starve scourge, deride me, I am dumb ..."

Then -- the first hint of surprise: "I keep my secret still." What secret could there possibly be for this ugly little animal with a huge head and flappy ears and a voice like a chain saw?

What could a donkey have as a secret? "Fools! For I also had my hour, one far fierce hour and sweet, There was a shout about my ears, and palms beneath my feet." What gives the donkey a sense of his own value - his own self-worth? What over-rides all the derision of others, all the abuses of his life?

It is that the Living God, in Jesus Christ, chose, in His hour of glory; for the one time that Jesus declared his intention and

purpose for all to see; when the praise and adoration of the crowd echoed around; in that one time -- Jesus chose a donkey. And for ever after - no matter what happens to him - the donkey knows, with an unshakable certainty, that he is loved by God; that he is precious in the eyes of the Father.

He knows there is meaning and purpose in his creation. That secret sustains him no matter what else happens. No matter how great the disaster, how prolonged the hurt, the donkey holds up his head, for he was chosen by God. And, even more than that, he carries on his back to this day the cross of Jesus.

Do you look at the way your life has turned out and wish that it was all different? Do you long for something to change that would make it all bearable? Are you too fat, too thin, too tall, too short? Is there is hair where there shouldn't be and none where there should? Always something is wrong and I suspect that feeling of wrongness stays with many people throughout their adult life. That is why the diet and slimming industry flourishes and fitness centres and park-runs are so popular.

But more important that the physical shape we are in is the way we see ourselves - our personalities and characters. Some would echo the donkey. They have a personality with monstrous head and sickening cry and ears like errant wings. Many if not most of us don't like ourselves; we are quick to criticize and slow to praise. Many of us think we should have done better with our lives. Many see the sands of time running out and realise that their dreams will never be realised.

How incredibly sad that so few have discovered the donkey's secret. How sad because it was what Jesus was trying so hard to teach. Jesus said (Luke 7:22/Matthew 11:5) that he came that the blind might see, the deaf hear and the lame walk, while the poor have the good news proclaimed to them. His words were about physical healing, yes - but far more importantly he was talking about each one of us who has been crippled in our spirit, so many who are spiritually blind.

- Blind to the real Jesus.
- Blind to the great secret.
- Blind to the overwhelming truth that will set us free.

Free for ever from carrying the burdens of guilt and hurt. Free for ever to walk as you have never walked before. As Isaiah promises, in chapter 40, verse 31, those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.

What is the donkey's secret? He was chosen by God. Do you not know that each one of us is chosen by God? It is an amazing truth that is so very hard for people to grasp. Yet it is so simple. You and I have meaning because we are chosen by God.

You would not be here today if you have not already, in some way, felt his hand on your life. But it is far more than that. Like all the great promises of the Bible, this one is repeated over and over again: **God chose you.**

Yes you, with all your strengths and weaknesses, your idiosyncrasies and foibles. God chose you. Listen to Psalm 139: 13 For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's

womb. 14 I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well. 15 My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place, when I was woven together in the depths of the earth. 16 Your eyes saw my unformed body; all the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be.

Yes, **God created you. He chose you.** He decided before you were born whether you would be male or female, have brown eyes or blue, be tall or short, whether you were to have skill in mathematics or could fashion things with your hands. You were chosen before you were born, and a role for your life has been given.

If you can't sing like Maria Callas, then probably He is not calling you to be an opera singer. His gifting for you is in another direction. Do not break your heart over what He, in his wisdom, has not given you. God made crows as well as canaries. Look at the things you can do and thank Him for that.

Listen to Ephesians 2:10: "For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do". God designed us to do the tasks He prepared for us. Each one of us has been given gifts to fit the tasks God has for us. No one is outside the plan of God. No one is useless. No matter what others may be able to do, you were created by God for a purpose. In this life it is possible that you may never know what that purpose is. But it is real just the same. For you are loved by the Living God.

Are you thinking that we come a long way from the donkey? No! For Chesterton's donkey had discovered what Jesus was talking about when He said (John 14:27): "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid".

When you discover the amazing truth that you are special to God, that He not only knows about you, but that He knows you and loves you, then a peace will come into your life that nothing can shake. Like the donkey you will still have troubles. He was still starved, scourged, derided but his secret gave him a total confidence and peace to face the worst this world can bring, knowing the joy and peace given only by the Living God.

If you have believed the lies of Satan, believed that you are unattractive, that you are useless and have few skills or talents with which to serve God and bless others; if you have lived in satanic deception, hear now the truth of God.

- He created you -- and nothing that God makes is rubbish.
- Jesus came to set you free from Satan's deception and lies.
- Only Jesus can make you whole.
- Come to Him and discover the full life He came to give.

This, I am confident, is one truth Jesus tried so hard to show, in those last hours of his life, for He knew how much we need His love.

Let's pray:

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.

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.

Amen.

Prayers of intercession

Everlasting God, you call us to your service and so we ask that you make us worthy of your calling; and to hear us as we intercede and give thanks to you through Jesus Christ your Son.

Lord, in your mercy: **hear our prayer**

Holy God, as we gather for worship in a place that is not ours but yours, we thank you for our Ecumenical partners in the mission of the Christian Church both here and worldwide; teach us all to serve you as you deserve, putting aside sectarianism whilst healing any divisions that keep us on the path towards your kingdom.

Lord, in your mercy: **hear our prayer**

Creator God, we pray for the nations of the world and for their right dealing one with another, especially between Russia and Ukraine where we pray for a cessation of hostilities and a declaration of peace. May barriers of race, creed, gender and colour be broken down and political freedom established where there is oppression and suppression of new ideas. We pray for educational development and for a more just economic structure which pays people fairly for their labour.

Lord, in your mercy: **hear our prayer**

Father God, we thank you that no matter how widely spread throughout the world our families may be, our hearts may be joined together in prayer. We also thank you for the means of modern technological communication that enable us to keep so closely in touch with those we love, which means we not only hear our loved ones but also see them.

Lord, in your mercy: **hear our prayer**

Gracious God, look mercifully upon those whose lives have been shattered by illness. Help them and those who care for them to be freed from resentment and give them the strength to seek your will, whatever it might be, in every situation.

(We especially pray for...)

Lord, in your mercy: **hear our prayer**

Merciful God, we remember the slenderness of the thread which separates life from death, and the suddenness with which it can be broken. Help us also to remember that whatever occurs in life we are surrounded by your love. Help those bereaved by the loss of a loved one to find in your love peace and reassurance.

((We especially pray for...))

Lord, in your mercy: **hear our prayer**

Eternal God, giver of love and power, your Son Jesus Christ has sent us into all the world to preach the gospel of his kingdom: confirm us in this mission, and help us to live the good news we proclaim in all that we do and say.

Merciful father: **accept these prayers for the sake of your Son, our Saviour, Jesus Christ. Amen**

Song/hymn before communion

Waymaker

[Verse 1]

You are here, moving in our midst
I worship You, I worship You
You are here, working in this place
I worship You, I worship You
You are here, moving in our midst
I worship You, I worship You
You are here, working in this place
I worship You, I worship You

[Chorus]

Way maker, miracle worker
Promise keeper, light in the darkness
My God, that is who You are
Way maker, miracle worker
Promise keeper, light in the darkness
My God, that is who You are

[Verse 2]

You are here, touching every heart
I worship You, I worship You
You are here, healing every heart
I worship You, I worship You

[Verse 3]

You are here, turning lives around
I worship You, I worship You
You are here, mending every heart
I worship You, I worship You

[Chorus]

Way maker, miracle worker
Promise keeper, light in the darkness
That is who You are
Way maker, miracle worker
Promise keeper, light in the darkness
My God, that is who You are

[Bridge]

You wipe away all tears, You mend the broken heart

You're the answer to it all, Jesus

You wipe away all tears, You mend the broken heart

You're the answer to it all, to it all, Jesus...
yeah

[Chorus]

Way maker, miracle worker

Promise keeper, light in the darkness

My God, that is who You are

Way maker, miracle worker

Promise keeper, light in the darkness

My God, that is who You are

[Verse 4]

You are here, touching every life

I worship You, I worship You

You are here, meeting every need

I worship You, I worship You

The Peace

The Lord calls us to be peacemakers. He gives us his peace and invites us to share it.

The peace of the Lord be always with you.
And also with you.

Let us share with one another a virtual sign of peace.

Communion - The Act of Breaking Of Bread

As we start to gather around the Lords table shall we in a moments silence recall why we are here and what we are here to do.

We come to this table not because we must, but because we may. We come not because we are strong, but because we

are weak. We come not because we have perfect faith, but because we have questions and even doubts, but we come nonetheless because Jesus invites us to come and we will never be turned away.

The apostle Paul tells us of the institution of the Lord's Supper:

For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: The Lord Jesus on the night he was betrayed, took bread, (pick up bread and break it) and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, 'This is my body which is for you; do this in remembrance of me.' In the same way, after supper he took the cup, (pick up cup or pour wine into it) saying, 'This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me.' For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes. (1 Corinthians 11: 23–26)

The Lord's Prayer

Shall we say together the prayer our Lord taught us

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. Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and for ever. Amen.

Distribution of the Bread and Wine

If you require a gluten free wafer please ask.

If you do not wish to receive communion, you are welcome to receive a blessing.

Parents, if you believe your children are ready in understanding to take communion, please indicate that they can receive the bread and wine. Otherwise, please ask for a blessing.

Please use this time for silent prayer and reflection or join quietly in the singing.

Prayer After Communion

Shall we say together the prayer for after communion

Gracious God, we praise you for what you have given and for what you have promised us here. You have made us one with all your people in heaven and on earth. You have fed us with the bread of life and renewed us for your service. Now we give ourselves to you; and ask that our daily living may be part of the life of your kingdom, and that our love may be your love reaching out into the life of the world; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Closing song/hymn

Crown him with many crowns

Closing Prayer and Blessing

To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood, and has made us to be a kingdom and priests to serve his God and Father, to him be glory and power for ever and ever! **Amen.**

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.
In the name of Christ. Amen.