

# THE SUNDAY OF THE PASSION: PALM SUNDAY

## Palm Sunday at Home

Perhaps the most memorable part of the Palm Sunday liturgy is the Commemoration of the Lord's Entrance into Jerusalem. To help us celebrate, the church invites us to carry palm branches as we gather for prayer today. Even so, we remember that liturgy is not a recreation of a past events. Rather, it is an *anamnesis*, an active remembering of the past so that we may live those realities today.

Children (of any age!) may wish to make banners or streamers to wave in the procession and play tambourines or other percussion instruments. You can use palms from last year that you might still have, other tree leaves, or even homemade crafted leaves. The last page of this document features a pattern for making paper palms at home. Each household is encouraged to adapt the following to their own circumstances. knowing that the entire church prays with you as we enter Holy Week.



*Jesus' Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem – Maria C.*

## The Liturgy of the Palms

### Refrain



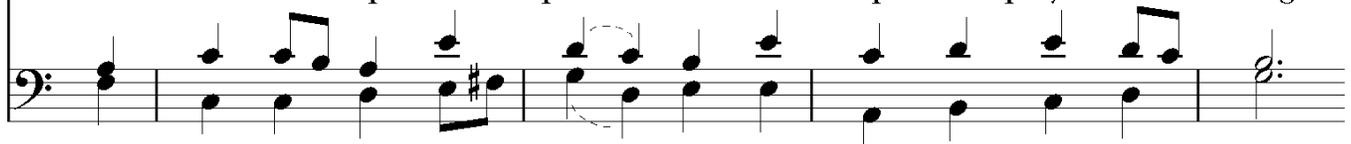
All glo - ry, laud, and hon - or to thee, Re - deem - er, King!



to whom the lips of chil - dren made sweet ho - san - nas ring.



1 Thou art the King of Is - ra - el, thou Da - vid's roy - al Son,  
2 The com - pa - ny of an - gels is prais - ing thee on high;  
3 The peo - ple of the He - brews with palms be - fore thee went;  
4 To thee be - fore thy pas - sion they sang their hymns of praise;  
5 Thou didst ac - cept their prais - es; ac - cept the prayers we bring,



### Repeat Refrain



1 who in the Lord's Name com - est, the King and Bless - ed One.  
2 and we with all cre - a - tion in cho - rus make re - ply.  
3 our praise and prayers and an - thems be - fore thee we pre - sent.  
4 to thee, now high ex - al - ted, our mel - o - dy we raise.  
5 who in all good de - light - est, thou good and gra - cious King.



*Leader* Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord.

*All* **Peace in heaven and glory in the highest.**

*Leader* Let us pray.

Assist us mercifully with your help, O Lord God of our salvation, that we may enter with joy upon the contemplation of those mighty acts, whereby you have given us life and immortality; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

**Reading** Matthew 21:1-11

When Jesus and his disciples had come near Jerusalem and had reached Bethphage, at the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two disciples, saying to them, "Go into the village ahead of you, and immediately you will find a donkey tied, and a colt with her; untie them and bring them to me. If anyone says anything to you, just say this, 'The Lord needs them.' And he will send them immediately." This took place to fulfill what had been spoken through the prophet, saying,

"Tell the daughter of Zion,  
Look, your king is coming to you,  
humble, and mounted on a donkey,  
and on a colt, the foal of a donkey."

The disciples went and did as Jesus had directed them; they brought the donkey and the colt, and put their cloaks on them, and he sat on them. A very large crowd spread their cloaks on the road, and others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. The crowds that went ahead of him and that followed were shouting,

"Hosanna to the Son of David!  
Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord!  
Hosanna in the highest heaven!"

When he entered Jerusalem, the whole city was in turmoil, asking, "Who is this?" The crowds were saying, "This is the prophet Jesus from Nazareth in Galilee."



*Jesus Rides the Donkey into Jerusalem – Maria C.*

*The Palms are then blessed*

*Leader*        The Lord be with you.

*People*        **And also with you.**

*Leader*        Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

*People*        **It is right to give him thanks and praise.**

*Leader:*        It is right to praise you, Almighty God, for the acts of love by which you have redeemed us through your Son Jesus Christ our Lord. On this day he entered the holy city of Jerusalem in triumph, and was proclaimed as King of kings by those who spread their garments and branches of palm along his way. Let these branches be for us signs of his victory, and grant that we who bear them in his name may ever hail him as our King, and follow him in the way that leads to eternal life; who lives and reigns in glory with you and the Holy Spirit, now and for ever. **Amen.**

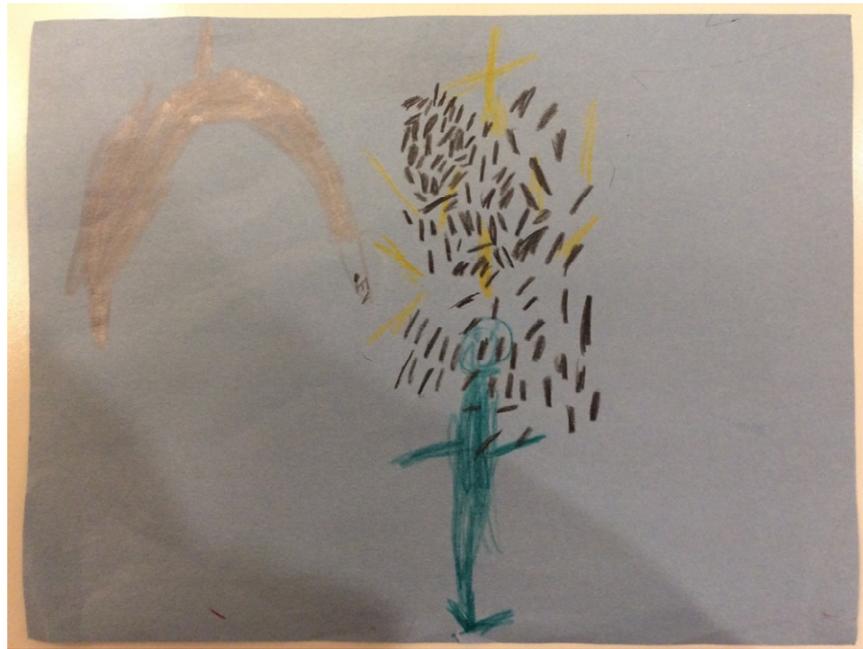
*Leader*        Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

*People*        **Hosanna in the highest!**

*If circumstances allow, a short procession around the house (inside and/or outside!) would be appropriate, with all responding, "Hosanna to the Son of David!"*

**Reading**      Philippians 2:5-11

Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus,  
who, though he was in the form of God,  
did not regard equality with God  
as something to be exploited,  
but emptied himself,  
taking the form of a slave,  
being born in human likeness.  
And being found in human form,  
he humbled himself  
and became obedient to the point of death--  
even death on a cross.  
Therefore God also highly exalted him  
and gave him the name  
that is above every name,  
so that at the name of Jesus  
every knee should bend,  
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,  
and every tongue should confess  
that Jesus Christ is Lord,  
to the glory of God the Father.



*All Creation Praises God (including a Whale!) – Julia C.*

### **A Reflection**

*Grace to you and peace from God our Father,  
and from the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.*

Palm Sunday is one of those days that manages to be both fun and “funny” at the same time. Fun, because everyone likes a parade...the preparation, the jostling, the rising anticipation of “look, here he comes!” At the same time “funny,” because we know that the procession that we join with joy turns into a trek out to Golgotha. Our parade route today becomes, by the end of the week, the way of the Cross.

As we walk through Holy Week, other contradictions abound: strength is concealed in humility, betrayal is hidden in friendship, victory is veiled in defeat, life is shrouded in death, God is emptied out into human form. It’s no wonder that Paul told the Corinthians that the Cross is a stumbling block and foolishness (1 Cor. 1:23).

On a typical Palm Sunday, we would read one of Passion accounts; this year it would be Matthew’s. The Passion story is central to our faith, brimming with details. I sometimes wonder if we get too caught up in those details, fixated on the questions of “who” and “what” and “how.”

This year, praying with, but apart from, each other, we commemorate Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem, and then focus on Paul's writing to the Philippians about the "why."

Paul weaves into his letter a hymn that was already in use in the church's worship, a hymn aching with beauty about the God who loves us so deeply, so thoroughly, that he pours himself out to be born in human likeness. Listen again:

Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus,  
who, though he was in the form of God,  
did not regard equality with God  
as something to be exploited,  
but emptied himself,  
taking the form of a slave,  
being born in human likeness.

Human likeness. Like you; like me. In the flesh, Jesus becomes obedient to the point of death – even death on a cross, that shameful, degrading, excruciating instrument of execution. Our God, on the Cross. Now, there's a contradiction – stumbling block and foolishness, indeed.

Pastor David Lose reminds us that Paul is speaking here of the Incarnation – God's willing choice to take on our lot and our life in Jesus so that God might identify with us wholly and completely. Why? So that we might know God's profound love for us, God's desire to be in complete solidarity with us, and God's commitment to be always for us.

But, seriously...us? What in the world is going on here? Or, more beautifully, in the words of Samuel Crossman:

O who am I  
that for my sake  
my Lord should take  
frail flesh and die?

Who are we, indeed, that God thought we were worth God's very life? Our God, on the Cross. How can this be? When I was a boy, adults always seemed to have the same answer for this kind of question: the answer was "Because." But as Christians, we know that the answer

really is “Love.” The self-giving love of God that means we never have to fear that our final destination is the grave.

This self-giving love of God in Jesus not only saves us from death, but it also calls us to a lifelong journey in the way of the Cross. God does not call us to the “what” – to imitate the specifics of Jesus’ passion. God does, however, call us to the “why” – to a life of self-offering love both to God and to one another.

God calls on us to follow Jesus, even when we’re not really sure where the road will take us. Isn’t this the daily pattern of our life in God? Following faithfully? With faith in the promises of the One who comes in the name of the Lord that anywhere we find ourselves he has already been, and that where he is, we shall one day be.

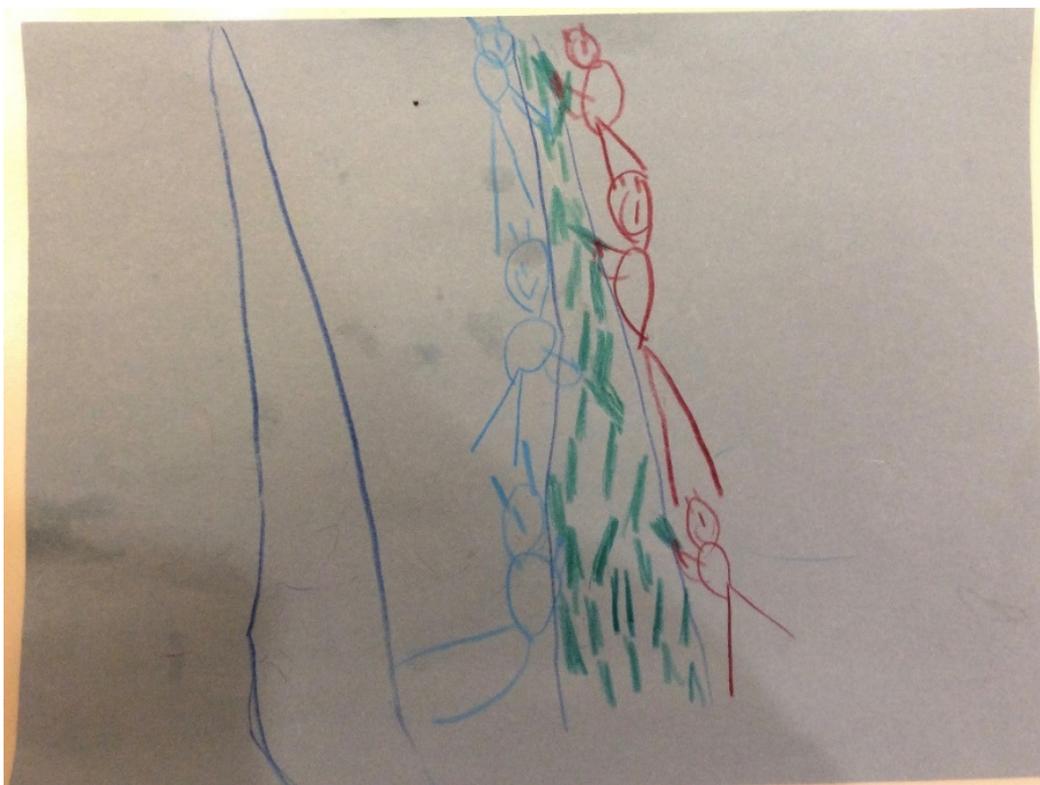
Because of Jesus’ gift of love, God

highly exalted him  
and gave him the name  
that is above every name,  
so that at the name of Jesus  
every knee should bend,  
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,  
and every tongue (and as Julia reminds us, even whales!) should confess  
that Jesus Christ is Lord,  
to the glory of God the Father.

Whatever you used as a palm branch today, let it be for you both a souvenir and a street sign, pointing to way of the Cross. It may not be the parade you thought you were headed to today, but it is the parade that leads to life. To walk in the way of the Cross is to remember that God has given Jesus the Name above every other name. To walk in the way of the Cross is to remember that Jesus poured out his life for us, and that he calls us to the willing service of others. To walk in the way of the Cross is to acknowledge that what the world tells us about success isn’t really true, because the ground is level at the foot of the Cross, and we are all sisters and brothers.

Let us pray...

Lord Jesus,  
On the first Palm Sunday  
You entered the unruly city  
Where you were to die.  
Enter our hearts, we pray,  
And subdue them to yourself.  
And as your disciples blessed your coming  
And spread garments and branches in your way,  
Make us ready to lay at your feet  
All that we have and are,  
That we too may bless your coming  
In the name of the Lord. Amen.<sup>1</sup>



*The People Greet Jesus with Palms – Michael C.*

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<sup>1</sup> *Common Order*, page 664.

## The Prayers

Confident that Jesus Christ hears our prayers, let us offer our petitions with open hearts.

For our Bishops, and all church leaders: May they continue to boldly lead, offering prophetic witness to the Gospel.

In the Diocesan Cycle of Prayer, we pray for:

St. Andrew's, Kent; Emmanuel, Killingworth; Trinity, Lime Rock; St. Michael's, Litchfield.

Collaborative ministries and all Ministry Networks; Joining Jesus in the New Missional Age, ECCT Regions and Region Missionaries.

In the Anglican Cycle of Prayer, we pray for:

The Church of the Province of the Indian Ocean.

For all people in positions of leadership: May they work tirelessly for peace and justice to ensure the common good for all.

For all families and communities, especially those longing for intimacy and communion: May they know the tenderness of compassion and joy of inclusion.

In our Parish Cycle of prayer, we pray for:

Sarah Grace Capozzi.

For our own needs this day: *Prayers may be offered aloud.*

For all who have died: May they rest and rise in Christ.

Gathering these prayers together, as well as those we hold in the silence of our hearts, we pray in the words that Jesus taught us (*feel free to use whichever version you prefer*):

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 for ever. Amen.

## **The Collect of the Day**

Almighty and everliving God, in your tender love for the human race you sent your Son our Savior Jesus Christ to take upon him our nature, and to suffer death upon the cross, giving us the example of his great humility: Mercifully grant that we may walk in the way of his suffering, and also share in his resurrection; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

## **Benediction**

*Leader:* Let us bless the Lord.

*People:* **Thanks be to God.**

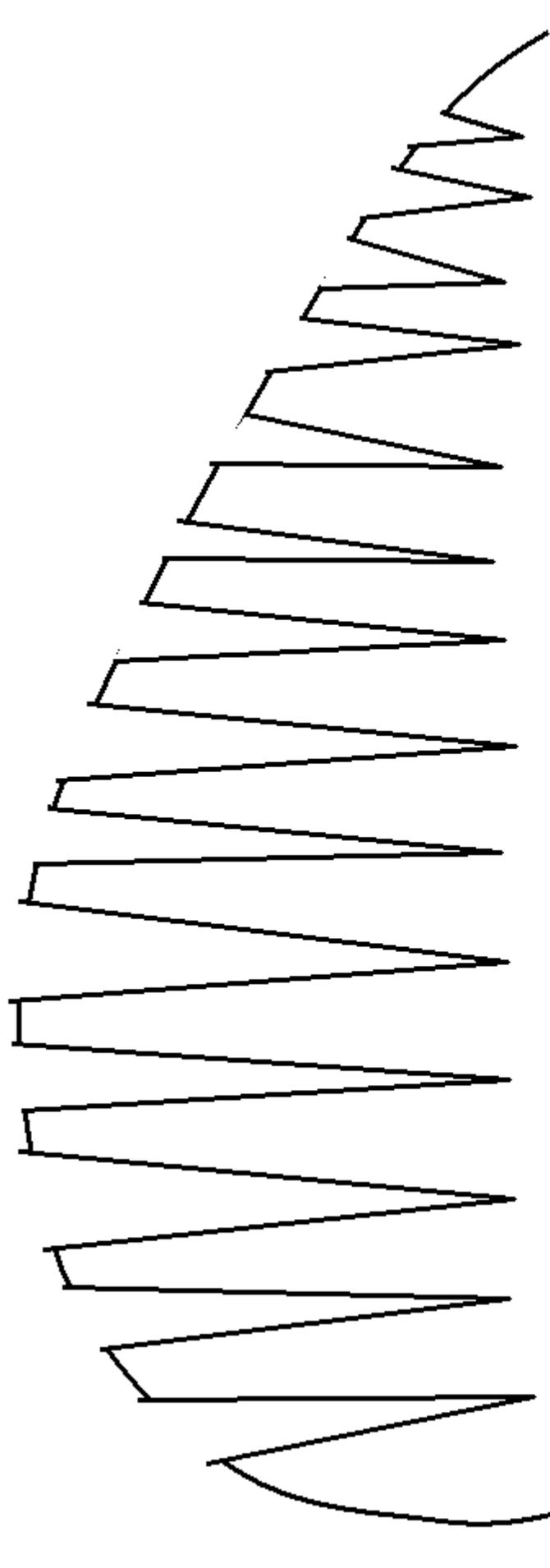
*Leader:* The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with us all evermore. **Amen.** *2 Corinthians 13:14*

*All are invited to share a sign of Christ's peace.*

Original artwork by the Capozzi children. Thank you!

Written materials are drawn from both the 1989 *Book of Common Prayer*,  
and *Holy Week at Home*, published by The Liturgical Press, Collegeville, MN.

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## Paper Palm Leaf

Cut this template along the dotted line.

Fold a piece of green construction paper in half and paper clip the template so the dotted line is along the fold.

Cut through the template and both layers of construction paper along the black lines.

Discard the template (unless you want to make more leaves).

Unfold the construction paper to see your finished palm leaf.

Optional: Tape a green pipe cleaner or thin rolled tube of construction paper to the center as a stem.

