

Palm Sunday  
April 5, 2020



First Congregational Church  
Waterville United Church of Christ  
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**WATERVILLE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST**  
**WATERVILLE, MAINE**  
**Palm Sunday**  
**April 5, 2020**  
**9:30 a.m.**

Seeking to walk in the Way of Jesus, we are an Open and Affirming church, faithfully using who we are and what we have to serve those on the margins of our community. No matter who you are or where you are on life's journey, you are welcome here.

Prelude                      David Dean, Piano

Words of Greeting and Announcements

Call to Worship    From Psalm 118, from *Psalms for Praying*  
by Nan C. Merrill, adapted

We give thanks to You, O Beloved, for You are kind;  
**Your steadfast Love endures forever!**

Let every nation proclaim,  
**Your steadfast Love endures forever!**

Let all the people cry,  
**Your steadfast Love endures forever!**

Let those who reverence You sing,  
**Your steadfast Love endures forever!**

Out of my distress I called upon You;  
**You answered me, setting me on a new path.**

With You beside me, I do not fear.  
**What can others do to me?**

You live within me and answer my prayer as I face the fears that well up from within.

**It is better to abandon yourself to the Beloved than to trust in yourself alone.**

It is better to surrender to Love's will  
**than to seek the riches of the world.**

When all my fears surrounded me,  
**I acknowledged Your presence within me!**

Though they arose like an army,  
**You stood firm beside me.**

You are my strength and my song;  
**You are my Counselor and my Friend.**

Harken to songs of victory, to the music of my soul:  
**You, O Loving Presence, have been my strength,  
You have stood beside me in the darkness,  
You have walked with me into the light!**

I shall not give in to fear,  
**but I shall live in peace and give witness to your saving grace.**

You opened to me the gates of truth and justice that I may enter through them.  
**Praise be to You, O Merciful One!**

This is the Door to Life;  
**those who know Love shall enter through it.**

I give thanks to You, O Beloved, who answers our prayers and invite us to new Life.

**The stone which the builders rejected has become the foundation of our lives.**

This, O Eternal Listener, is your Work; it is marvelous in our eyes.  
**This is the day which You have made; let us rejoice and be glad in it!**

\* Hymn                      *All Glory, Laud, and Honor*                      Bulletin Insert

\* Prayer Of Invocation (unison) RCL Prayers  
**Sovereign God, you have established your rule over the human heart, not by force but by the servant example of Jesus Christ. Move us by your Spirit to join the joyful procession of those who confess Christ Jesus with their tongues and praise him with their lives. Amen.**

Storytime                      *King Mouse*                      Fagan/Seiferling

***PRAYERS***

Pastoral Prayer

Prayers from our Prayer Book

Prayers of the People - Response: "**This is our prayer.**"

Silent Prayers

Prayer of our Savior (say the one that is in your heart)

***A Traditional Version***

**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 trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.**

### ***A Contemporary Version***

**Our Creator in heaven, holy is your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. Do not lead us into temptation; but deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen.**

Dedication of Offerings

Scripture Lesson                      Mark 11:1-11

Message                                 *Save Us Now*

Eucharist, or, The Great Thanksgiving      Liturgy by Maren Tirabassi

Call to Reconciliation

Confession

*A time of silent confession is observed . . .*

Assurance of Pardon

### **Invitation**

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**

Leader: 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  
hand lightly upon these elements which we set aside today to be a  
sacrament. Let us ask God's blessing upon them.

**Unison: 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 you.**

### **Words of Remembering**

Leader: 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**

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

**Unison: We are one in Christ in the bread we share.**

*At this time, please eat whatever you are using for bread in this moment.*

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

**Unison: We are one in Christ in the cup we share.**

*At this time, please drink whatever you are using for the cup in this moment.*

### **Prayer of Thanksgiving**

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

**Unison:**

**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. Amen.**

\* Hymn

*The Palms*

Bulletin Insert

Benediction

Postlude

**Notes on the Text: Mark 11:1-11**

There is so much more going on here than us tickling each other with our palms, though that is kinda fun, too!

Ironically, we don't actually read (in the Lectionary texts) what happens between now - "Palm Sunday" - and when Judas begins his betrayal of Jesus in Mark 14. If we did, you would see what Jesus was really passionate about, and what got him killed. To separate Jesus's passions - for justice and against the unjust powers of Empire, the Temple authorities that colluded with it, and their religious hypocrisy which legitimized it - from the events of what is called "The Passion," paints a one-dimensional picture of the story, at best. You owe it to yourselves, therefore, to read Mark 11:12 - 13:37 between now and our Maundy Thursday service, this Thursday at 7 p.m. at the Winslow church (streamed on Facebook and Zoom). The reading will take you all of 5 minutes.

Bethphage, Bethany and the Mount of Olives are just east of Jerusalem. (See the map) "Beth" means "house of" in Hebrew: Bethel is "house of God", Bethlehem is "house of bread", and so on. Bethphage, the location of which is still uncertain, but most likely on the road to Jerusalem between Bethany and Jerusalem, means the "house of unripe figs" and is home to a curious variety of figs which appear unripe even when they are ripe. Bethany means "house of the poor". This is where Jesus stays with his friends: Martha, her sister Mary, and their brother, Lazarus. Bethany was about 2 miles from Jerusalem. Note that Jesus doesn't ride victorious into Jerusalem in Mark's telling of what we call Palm Sunday; he rides down the Mount of Olives into the Kidron Valley, up again to the east gate of the Temple . . . and enters by himself. The crowds sing a

Passover hymn as Jesus enters, from Psalm 118, including the word "Hosanna", which is an imperative meaning "save us!" as in the Psalm: "Save us, we beseech you, O Lord!" If it has been a while since you've considered the events of Holy Week in light of the Passover story (hint: freedom from oppression, slavery, injustice), maybe it is time to do that again. Note that Mark, in telling this story, spends about half of the verses on the colt, giving the reader time to have the prophecy from Zechariah 9:9-12 click:

<sup>9</sup> Rejoice greatly, O daughter Zion!  
Shout aloud, O daughter Jerusalem!

Lo, your king comes to you;  
triumphant and victorious is he,  
humble and riding on a donkey,  
on a colt, the foal of a donkey.

<sup>10</sup> He will cut off the chariot from Ephraim  
and the warhorse from Jerusalem;  
and the battle-bow shall be cut off,  
and he shall command peace to the nations;  
his dominion shall be from sea to sea,  
and from the River to the ends of the earth.

<sup>11</sup> As for you also, because of the blood of my covenant with you,  
I will set your prisoners free from the waterless pit.

<sup>12</sup> Return to your stronghold, O prisoners of hope;  
today I declare that I will restore to you double.

Mark would have been well aware that Zechariah also (14:2-4) named the Mount of Olives as the place where the final battle against the enemies of Israel would take place.

In 1 Kings 1:38, Solomon also rides into town on David's mule when he is made king.

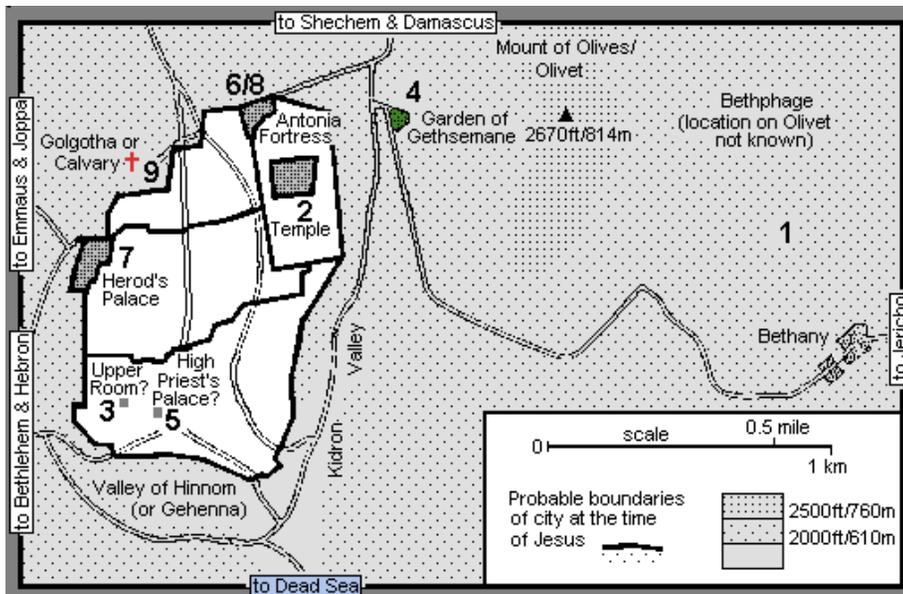
The people "spread their cloaks on the road" just like when Elisha anointed Jehu to lead a rebellion against an oppressive regime (2 King 9:1-13). The "leafy branches" (no palms in Mark's Palm Sunday) call to

mind the moment when Jerusalem regained its independence, told in 1 Maccabees 13:51.

Make no mistake, folks: what we call Palm Sunday was a planned political demonstration, it was guerrilla street theater. In the 60's, they would have called it "a happening." And it was all in service to a gesture reminding the people of past uprisings, perhaps in the hopes that one would happen now.

Here is what Marcus J. Borg and John Dominic Crossan say about it in *The Last Week* (New York: HarperOne, 2006) . . .

*Jesus's procession deliberately countered what was happening on the other side of the city. Pilate's procession embodied the power, glory, and violence of the empire that rule the world. Jesus's procession embodied an alternative vision, the kingdom of God. This contrast - between the kingdom of God and the kingdom of Caesar - is central not only to the Gospel of Mark, but to the story of Jesus and early Christianity. - pp. 4-5*



## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**If you are joining us via Facebook or Zoom today**, and do not have communion elements to partake of, find something in your house before worship that will do: a cracker and some juice, an English muffin or bagel and a cup of tea or coffee. Use your imagination, because it is all blessed! Be ready when the time comes to eat and drink, together.

**We are holding a daily prayer/check in time at 10:00 a.m.** This will be done on the video conference platform Zoom. If you have a reading, or prayer, or poem to share, or just want to be together as a church, please do consider coming. Click here to join: <https://zoom.us/j/914158897> You will use this same link every day to join this prayer group. Hope you can make it!

**Holy Week is upon us. This is how things are going to go . . .**

**Maundy Thursday, 7 p.m.** A Maundy Thursday Tenebrae Service will be live streamed from the Winslow Congregational church via Zoom and on our church's Facebook page. This service will be led by Rev. Kim Shrader and Rev. Mark Wilson. Click here:

<https://zoom.us/j/688434293> Or phone in by calling 1 929 205

6099 and entering in the Meeting ID 688 434 293 followed by the pound (#) sign

**Good Friday Ecumenical Service, 2:00 p.m.**

Click here: <https://zoom.us/j/491324739>

Or call in by dialing 1 929 205 6099 and then enter the Meeting

ID: 491 324 739 followed by the pound (#) sign.

**Good Friday, 7 p.m.** A "First Supper" service will be live streamed/broadcast from our Chapel on Zoom and Facebook.

Click here: <https://zoom.us/j/152769240>

Or call in by dialing 1 929 205 6099 and then enter the Meeting ID: 152 769 240 followed by the pound (#) sign.

**Easter Sunrise.** There will be no Easter Sunrise Service this year. It has been cancelled due to crowd precautions.

**Easter Sunday, April 12, 9:30 a.m.** A live stream of our worship service will be broadcast on Zoom and Facebook.

Click here: <https://zoom.us/j/360970974> Or dial in by calling 1 929 205 6099 and then enter the Meeting ID: 360 970 974 followed by the pound (#) sign.

**The church keeps operating** even if we aren't here to worship. Please mail your donations to us at 7 Eustis Parkway, Waterville, 04901 or take advantage of our convenient online giving by starting here: <https://www.watervilleucc.org/donate>

CHURCH STAFF and OFFICERS

Rev. Mark D. Wilson – Pastor and Teacher

Rev. Maureen Ausbrook – Minister of Visitation

Sally Melcher-McKeagney, R.N. - Faith Community Nurse

David Dean – Organist/Pianist

Nancy Flynn – Administrative Assistant

Sarah Mills- Sunday School Teacher

Bill Lee – Diaconate Chair

Carl Daiker – Treasurer      Jackie Dalton – Assistant Treasurer

Mike Seavey – Financial Secretary      Mike Muir – Moderator

Mary Lou Ogden – Clerk      Bill Flynn – Custodian

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Our Church Life: This Coming Week  
April 5, 2020

Today, April	5	9:30 a.m. Worship Service broadcast on the church's Facebook page and by Zoom 10:30 a.m. Special Congregational Meeting
Monday	6	10:00 a.m. Daily prayer/check-in time on Zoom
Tuesday	7	10:00 a.m. Daily prayer/check-in time on Zoom
Wednesday	8	10:00 a.m. Daily prayer/check-in time on Zoom 11:30 a.m. Study Group – online 6:00 p.m. Study - online
Thursday	9	10:00 a.m. Daily prayer/check-in time on Zoom 7:00 p.m. Maundy Thursday Service from Winslow Congregational Church on Facebook and Zoom
Friday	10	10:00 a.m. Daily prayer/check-in time on Zoom 2:00 p.m. Recorded reflections on Facebook and Zoom 7:00 p.m. “First Supper” service from our Chapel on Facebook and Zoom
Saturday	11	10:00 a.m. Daily prayer/check-in time on Zoom
Sunday	12	9:30 Easter Service on Facebook Live and Zoom