



the good news is..

inspiring us to act

Palm Sunday

March 29, 2026

Welcome to

First Presbyterian Church



Welcome to this sanctuary.
Welcome to this time of worship and wonder.
Welcome to this family of faith.

We're glad you're here today and pray that your experience
with us in worship is both challenging and uplifting!

Our ushers are available to assist you as needed.

For more information about First Presbyterian Church, we invite you
to visit our website. There you will find out the ways to keep in touch,
how we live our faith, our different partnerships and so much more.

Our website address is: www.firstpresracine.org

If you're interested in receiving news about the church,
please call 262.632.1686 or email: shelley@firstpresracine.org

Rev. Darren Utley—Church Pastor
pastordarren@firstpresracine.org

TODAY'S SERVICE

PASTOR—*Rev. Darren Utley*

LITURGIST—*Kathi Wilson*

POETRY READING—*Deb Yale*

MUSICIANS—*Alejandro Alumbrosos, Mark Paffrath, Pat Badger,
Dave Titus, Alan Galle*

MEDIA TECH SPECIALIST—*Steve Comeau*

*Please stand as you are able.

[**Bold type**] indicates text to be spoken by the congregation.

[***Bold italic type***] indicates song to be sung by the congregation.



WE GATHER TO WORSHIP

(As a courtesy to everyone, please mute your mobile device.)

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Kathi Wilson

Welcome! May you find God's love, peace, grace, and joy as we worship today.

POEM

For the Sake of Tiny Resurrections | *Sarah A. Speed*

Deb Yale

We took the kids to the beach,
a herd of children lathered in sunscreen.
We spent most of the day building sandcastles,
swimming in the shallows,
wiping sand off their eyelashes and noses.
Things changed
when a small fish washed up on shore.
The children saw it first—
a little body gasping to survive.
They cried out—
Quick! We have to save it!
We grabbed our buckets.
We sprinted to the waterline.
We scooped up the dying fish
and returned it to the waves.
The kids sagged with relief as the fish jolted to life,
a tiny resurrection in front of our very eyes.
Full of pride, I said to them—
You did something good.
Today, you saved a life.

A seven-year-old with sun-kissed cheeks
took the bucket from my hands and said,
I'd like to save some more.
He spent the afternoon patrolling the waves,
hoping to dole out mercy to any shore-washed fish.
He carried his bucket around all day, because
love inspires love.
Love will make you want to
patrol the shoreline,
sing *Hosanna*,
witness a resurrection,
save some more—
one bucket of water at a time.

PRELUDE

Palm Sunday Prelude | *Melchior Teschner, arr. Lindsay Lafford*
Alejandro Alumbros

*CALL TO WORSHIP

Will you follow?
Will you lay down your coat?
Will you lay down something important?
Will you shout “Hosanna”?
Will you join the parade?
Will you sing, even if your throat is hoarse?
Will you cut down a palm branch?
Will you wave it in the air?
Will you follow the one riding on a donkey?
Will you let this good news inspire you to act?
We will. We will sing. We will pay close attention.
We will worship. We will follow.
Hosanna in the highest!
Hosanna in the highest.

*OPENING HYMN

Hosanna, Loud Hosanna

[GtG Hymn #197]

Alejandro Alumbremos, Mark Paffrath, Pat Badger, Dave Titus, Alan Galle

CALL TO CONFESSION

The very first Palm Sunday was a day of action. It was a day of movement, of crowded city streets, and cries of "Hosanna!" It was a day of peaceful protest and dreams for a better world. The first Palm Sunday was a day of peaceful, hopeful action.

So friends, on this Palm Sunday, let us join the saints before us in an act of faith. Let us begin with an act of prayer, an act of honesty, an act of transformation. Let us begin by drawing close to God and sharing the truth of our lives.

Let us begin with confession.

Join me in prayer:

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Jesus of Nazareth,

we know that you spent your days teaching and healing.

You marched through the streets and walked on water.

You laid hands on the sick and broke bread at crowded dinner tables.

Your good news was not confined to conversation.

It was not confined to the Temple.

Your good news was an act of love, alive in the world.

Holy God, we long for a faith like that.

Forgive us for the times when we confine our faith

to something we think about, as opposed to something we act upon.

Inspire us to love as you loved.

Inspire us to act.

With hope for tomorrow we pray, amen.

Root us in mercy, justice, and love.

WORDS OF FORGIVENESS

Church family,
whether or not you wave your palm branch,
whether or not you live out your faith,
whether or not you allow this good news
to inspire your actions,
God will never stop loving you.
Jesus will never stop marching for you.
The Spirit will never stop listening to you.
We are claimed, loved, and held in grace.
What good, good news. Amen!

*ACT OF PRAISE

Filled with Excitement
[GtG Hymn #199, refrain]

*PASSING THE PEACE

As Christ welcomed everyone,
no matter what their background or social standing;
as Christ welcomed enemies & friends,
outcasts & leaders, foreigners & neighbors,
let us open our hearts and homes and lives.
Let us be like Christ to everyone we meet.
Peace be with you.
And also with you.

PROCLAIMING THE WORD

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

Holy One,
if we've heard this story before,
the story of Jesus entering Jerusalem riding on a donkey,
then help us to hear it again.

And if we've never heard this story before,
if we've never heard the story of Palm Sunday or the cries of "Hosanna,"
then give us the wisdom to follow along.
Give us the wisdom to hear these words.
Give us the wisdom to take them into our hearts.
Give us the wisdom to act on their truth.
We are listening.
Amen.

SCRIPTURE

Mark 11:1-11

[NT 47]

SERMON

the good news is.....inspiring us to act
Rev. Darren Utley

RESPONDING TO THE WORD

MUSIC FOR REFLECTION

Palm Sunday | *Irish Folk Tune, arr. P. F. Tillen*

*SONG OF RESPONSE

Seek Ye First
[GtG Hymn #175]

*AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

I believe in the good news of Jesus Christ.
It sounds like welcome
and feels like home.
It sounds like laughter
and feels like mercy.
It sounds like love
and feels like a seat at the table,
so I believe in the good news of Jesus Christ.
I have seen it alive in the world.
And even when my heart aches,

even when wars rage,
even when mercy feels out of reach,
I remember the one who
welcomed the children
and led with nonviolence.
I remember the one who
cared for the vulnerable
and inspired those around him.
I remember that the good news really is good news,
for I have seen it alive in the world.
Thanks be to God! Amen.

OFFERTORY

Hosanna, Loud Hosanna

*DOXOLOGY

*Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;
Praise Him, all creatures here below;
Praise Him above, ye heavenly host.
Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost.
Amen*

PRAYER OF THE PEOPLE/THE LORD'S PRAYER

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 debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever.
Amen.

GOING FORTH TO MINISTER

*CLOSING HYMN

O Save Us, Lord! Hosanna!
[Bulletin, p. 10]

*BENEDICTION

*SUNG BLESSING

My Song Is Love Unknown

[GtG Hymn #209, v. 5]

POSTLUDE

Postlude | *Wilhelm Volekmar*

LITURGY & POEM BY REV. SARAH A. SPEED | A SANCTIFIED ART LLC | SANCTIFIEDART.ORG

What's happening this week?

Sun., Mar. 29 th	9:30 ^{AM} 10:40 ^{AM}	Palm Sunday Worship Fellowship
Mon., Mar. 30 th	9:00 ^{AM}	Staff Meeting via Zoom
Wed., Apr. 1 th	4:00 ^{PM} 7:00 ^{PM}	Food Pantry Chancel Choir Rehearsal
Thurs., Apr. 2 nd	5:30 ^{PM}	Maundy Thursday Service and Light Supper (<i>Ihrman Hall</i>)
Sun., Apr. 5 th	9:30 ^{AM} 10:40 ^{AM}	Easter Sunday Worship Fellowship

O Save Us, Lord! Hosanna!



1. "O save us, Lord! Ho - san - na!" the peo - ple cried and
 2. They fol - lowed down the moun - tain, a cheer - ing, chant - ing
 3. From Sen - e - ca to Stone - wall, from Sel - ma till to -
 4. "O save us, Lord! Ho - san - na!" we hear our chil - dren



sang; through pil - lared court and tem - ple, their ur - gent an - them
 crowd, their palms raised high in pro - test, their voic - es clear and
 day, in chants of "¡Sí, se pue - de!"* in voic - es bold and
 sing. From school, and street, and side - walk, we hear their voic - es



rang. To Je - sus who stood by them, the One who heard their
 loud. They sang no songs to Cae - sar; they gave the king no
 brave, when peo - ple cry for jus - tice, for rights, or for re -
 ring. And there in ev - 'ry pro - test, till weap - ons kill no



plea, the peo - ple sang their long - ing, their hun - ger to be free.
 laud. In - stead the don - key rid - er they hailed as blessed of God.
 lease, still ech - o those "Ho - san - nas!" still rides the Prince of Peace.
 more, still rides de - fi - ant Je - sus, just as he rode be - fore.

*Translation: Yes, we can!

Text: Chris Shelton, b.1978 © 2018 GIA Publications, Inc.
 Music: ELLACOMBE; *Gesangbuch der HerzogI, Wirttemberg, 1784*

Prayer Matters

Heartfelt thoughts & prayers for all who have recently experienced the loss of a friend or family member. May they know peace and comfort during these difficult times.

Prayers of comfort & healing for Steve Simpson, Evelyn Vanderheyden, Sheila Lawrence, Don Tobias, Peggy Taylor, Vi Shufelt, Peggy Wagner, Ed Lehmann, Austin Moulds, Mac & Marilyn MacCaughey, Ellen Easley, Sandra Hopkins, Kay Mahl, Mary Johnson, Leah Fisher, Barb Stevenson, and an unspoken prayer for a church member.

As they deal with physical, emotional and/or spiritual issues, please pray for Sue Ann—mother of Mary Bernstein; Dan—father of Shelley Maurer; John—husband of Sandy Hawley; Johan—brother of Cecilia Andersson; Chad—son of Sheila Lawrence; David—brother and Lynn—sister-in-law of Ed Lehmann; Mark—son of Sharon Campbell; Mary Ann—mother of Cheryl Nitz; Jack Flynn and Mary—sister of Gretchen Hermann; the paternal grandfather of Autumn Eifert; Amy—daughter of Jim & Bonnie Eastman and sister of Jenny Eastman; Elena & Ezequiel Romero—parents of Deb Utley; Masako—mother of Fumi Nakayama; Nancy—mother of Gloria Zember; John—son of Mac & Marilyn MacCaughey; Chuck—husband of Sue Pehlivanian; Ramona, Steve, Susan, Sandra, John, Liz and Gabby—friends & family of the Galles; Meyer Schaal; Scott Mohn—friends of the Paffrath family.

Prayers for those in the service — Evan Humphreys, Col. Jay Brooke, Jared Smith, Jordan Smith, Nicholas Hansen.

Thank you for your continued prayers for everyone. They are powerful!





Palm / Passion Sunday

the good news is...

inspiring us to act

Mark 11:1-11 (*Triumphal entry into Jerusalem*)

Roman triumph usually occurred during the week of Passover as a show of Rome's might. The governor would have been surrounded by the wealthiest and most powerful citizens. In contrast, Jesus' march is for the people—all the people: the hungry, the poor, the afraid. As Jesus enters Jerusalem, the crowd responds to Jesus' authenticity and humility. Perhaps they can see past the pageantry of the Roman parade; in contrast, the goodness of Jesus' leadership shines through, mobilizing the crowds to take action by throwing cloaks in the street and waving palm branches in the air. The energy is infectious, a climactic moment in the grassroots movement of Jesus' ministry. This week's subtheme intentionally places us in the crowd, inviting us to shout "Hosanna!," to throw our coats down, and to wave branches. What will the good news inspire us to do? How will the gospel move us? As we head into Holy Week, how will we put Jesus' teachings into practice?

Holy Week good news mantra ...
Like Jesus, I will choose mercy



PALM SUNDAY

Question:

*As Jesus processes into Jerusalem, the people cry “Hosanna!”
which means “ Save us!”*

Who is crying out to be saved now? How can you act with mercy?

Prayer:

*Merciful God, whether I’m shouting in the streets or whispering from my bedside,
I know you hear my cries of “Hosanna!” Help me to hear the cries of others, too.
Give me ears to listen for the voices of those crying out to be saved from a world
hell-bent on violence, oppression, domination, and destruction. Let me join my
“Hosannas!” with theirs. Let me act mercifully, justly, and compassionately until
the world comes back into harmony again. In hope I pray, amen.*

MONDAY

Questions:

Who inspires you to take action?

What do they inspire you to do?

Prayer:

*God of inspiration, when I look around, there are so many people modeling a better
way. The leaders working to care for their people, even when it’s less profitable.
The children speaking out in halls of power to advocate for a brighter future. The
everyday people bringing truckloads of donations after a disaster. God, let me be
part of this crowd. Let their light ignite my own actions so I might be a light for
others, too. With conviction I pray, amen.*

TUESDAY

Questions:

When is it easy to follow Jesus?

When is it hard?

Prayer:

Jesus of Nazareth, your disciples followed you into Jerusalem, to the Temple, to the Upper Room, and to the garden. But they didn't all follow you to the cross. When the journey gets difficult this week, when I'm tempted to turn away, give me the strength to keep going. Let me follow you all the way, even when it's hard. Amen.

WEDNESDAY

Question:

Jesus invites all his disciples to his final meal, even those who will sell him out. How can you extend hospitality even to people you find hard to love or trust?

Prayer:

Hospitable Christ, you didn't have to invite Judas or Peter. I don't think I would have made the same choice. But you invited all your disciples, no matter how much or little they deserved it. So I have to believe that's what you want for us too. Show me the way of mercy and unconditional hospitality. I want to be part of a love like that. Amen.

MAUNDY THURSDAY

Questions:

What is your biggest regret?

Have you forgiven yourself?

Prayer:

Merciful Jesus, you invited Judas to the table. You washed his feet knowing what he would do. You decided that even Judas is deserving of love and forgiveness. In our "cancel culture" world that defines each person by their worst moment, that

kind of love feels radical. But your Word tells us that nothing can separate us from your love. Give me a merciful heart like that. Let me see myself as you must see me: a beloved child of God, worthy of bearing your name. Humbly I pray, amen.

GOOD FRIDAY

Questions:

*When you feel threatened, how do you respond?
Are you more likely to retreat or fight back?*

Prayer:

Prince of Peace, the journey to the cross is difficult to follow. How much harder it must have been for you to walk it. There, in the eye of the storm, you stood firm—not running from your fate, not fighting back, not even blaming those who betrayed and abandoned you. I want that kind of strength to remain firm in my convictions without ever resorting to violence. Give me the courage to embody peace in a violent world. Amen.

HOLY SATURDAY

Questions:

*Jesus offers his crucifiers forgiveness, even as he is dying on the cross.
Who feels hardest to forgive? What would forgiveness look like?*

Prayer:

Holy God, in this world, it feels like forgiveness is synonymous with excusing bad behavior. In this world, mercy is seen as weakness. But you managed to forgive Judas, Peter, even total strangers who nailed you to a cross. Show me the ways of your mercy. Show me how to call in rather than call out. Show me how to be more like you. Amen.





Palm Sunday Was a Protest | Nicolette Faison

Acrylic, marker, paper on canvas