

# THE HOPE JOURNAL

LEARNING TO LOVE, TOGETHER

April 2, 2023

## PALMS

*tradition, attachment, and meaning*

by Drew Downs

The palms we receive this Sunday are among our most recognizable symbols. And one we are deeply attached to.

In the gospel accounts of Jesus's entry into Jerusalem, they make reference to branches laid at Jesus's feet. We associate these branches with the branches of palm trees. Which were native to the region and represented majesty. For us, the proximate image may be a California Redwood.

And what we receive is like a leaf. A piece off the branch.

What I find most remarkable is how deeply attached we are to this symbol and how literal we are in honoring it.

Its meaning is established by its context. They work for us, then, in translation. As a reminder, not just of Jesus's majesty, but of actions that took place in another part of the world.

# HOLY WEEK

2023

## WHAT'S GOING ON

*"You know we've got to find a way  
To bring some loving here today".*

-Marvin Gaye

Disciples, Apostles, and Saints!

### Holy Week

The final week of Lent is known as Holy Week. The week begins on Sunday with Palm Sunday and culminates in a tradition called the Triduum: a three-part service which begins in the evening of Thursday, resumes on Friday at noon, and concludes on Saturday night with the Great Vigil of Easter.

If you'd like to mark these services with us, our service times are as follows:

**Palm Sunday** – 4/2 @ 8 & 10 am (livestream at 10)

#### **Triduum:**

Maundy Thursday – 4/6 @ 6 pm, church (livestream)

Good Friday – 4/7 @ noon, church (livestream)

Great Vigil – 4/8 @ 8 pm, starting in the chapel (incense will be used)

**Easter** – 4/9 @ 8 & 10 am (livestream at 10)

As Holy Week is the culmination of Lent, we continue our practices of self-examination, self-denial, and study. I suggest reading through a gospel in one sitting at the beginning of the week or follow along with the events of each day in the gospel. This lectionary cycle features Matthew, which means reading parts of Matthew 21-27 each day.

With love,  
Drew

# HOLY WEEK

2023

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## FOR SUNDAY

*Palm Sunday*

April 2, 2023

### **Collect**

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.**

### **Reading**

Matthew 21:1-11 (excerpt from it below)  
& Matthew 26:14- 27:66 (the Passion)

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."

# LENT

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## Reflection

Palm Sunday is probably the hardest-working Sunday in the church calendar. We ask it to encapsulate the entire Holy Week experience in one service. And even that is boiled down to two elements: the triumphal entry on Palm Sunday and the Passion on Good Friday.

For many of us, we arrive on Palm Sunday after a five-week Lenten journey of self-reflection, self-denial, and study. We have given a little more time to our faith, offered a little more reflection on our behavior, and abstained from some of our regular indulgences.

We claim a palm frond and prepare for the celebration of Jesus's arrival in Jerusalem with trepidation. The gospel for the day is celebratory. But less so when we realize it is the Passion which follows.

Between these two moments is most of the week.

Notably absent from this summary is what happens *after* Jesus arrives in Jerusalem. IN Matthew's gospel (and Mark and Luke's), he heads to the Temple and makes a big scene. Then he comes back the next day and teaches there. His teaching is popular with the crowds and hated by the leadership.

Then he is anointed, they gather for the Last Supper, and Jesus prepares for his Passion.

This is a familiar story, but one we only really focus on in part. Perhaps this week, read and meditate on the whole thing: reading Matthew from chapter 21 through 27. Take your time. And bear witness.

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