

Welcome to First Congregational Church

An Open and Affirming Congregation of the United Church of Christ

March 28, 2021—Palm Sunday

WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS

FIRST PEOPLES LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We would like to acknowledge that the land on which we worship, live, work, and commune is the original homelands of the Wabanaki Confederacy, the Abenaki people and the Pennacook people. We acknowledge the painful history of genocide and forced removal from this territory, and we honor and respect the many diverse Indigenous peoples still connected to this land on which we gather.

Prelude Wish Upon a Star (Adele)

SETTING OUR INTENTIONS FOR WORSHIP

CALL TO WORSHIP: (from J. Philip Newell "Celtic Benediction")

In the morning light, O God, may we glimpse again your image deep within us; the threads of eternal glory woven into the fabric of every human being.

May we catch sight of the mystery of the human soul fashioned in your likeness, deeper than knowing, and more enduring than time.

In glimpsing these threads of light amidst the weakness and distortions of our lives, let us recall the strength and beauty deep in our souls.

Let us be reminded of the strength and beauty of your image in every living soul.

Bringing Ourselves into God's Presence: (from Workingpreacher.org)

**Hosanna, King! Blessed are you, our king, who comes in the name of the Lord!
Peace in heaven, and glory in the highest heaven! Even if our voices were silenced,
creation itself would rise up to praise you! Hosanna in the Highest! Amen.**

SONG: #213

Hosanna, Loud Hosanna

1 Hosanna, loud hosanna
the little children sang;
through pillared court and temple
the lovely anthem rang.
To Jesus, who had blessed them,
close folded to his breast,
the children sang their praises,
the simplest and the best.

2 From Olivet they followed
amid a cheering crowd,
the victory palm branch waving,
and chanting clear and loud.
The one whom angels worship
rode on in lowly state,
and glad to see the children
slowed down the donkey's gait.

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3 "Hosanna in the highest!"
That ancient song is ours,
we hail our great Redeemer,
and sing with all our powers.
"Hosanna, Christ, we praise you
with heart and life and voice.
Hosanna! In your presence
forever we'll rejoice.

GOSPEL LESSON

Luke 19:29-44 (The Message)

Rev. Rebecca Maccini

28-31 After saying these things, Jesus headed straight up to Jerusalem. When he got near Bethphage and Bethany at the mountain called Olives, he sent off two of the disciples with instructions: "Go to the village across from you. As soon as you enter, you'll find a colt tethered, one that has never been ridden. Untie it and bring it. If anyone says anything, asks, 'What are you doing?' say, 'His Master needs him.'"

32-33 The two left and found it just as he said. As they were untying the colt, its owners said, "What are you doing untying the colt?"

34 They said, "His Master needs him."

35-36 They brought the colt to Jesus. Then, throwing their coats on its back, they helped Jesus get on. As he rode, the people gave him a grand welcome, throwing their coats on the street.

37-38 Right at the crest, where Mount Olives begins its descent, the whole crowd of disciples burst into enthusiastic praise over all the mighty works they had witnessed:

Blessed is he who comes,
the king in God's name!
All's well in heaven!
Glory in the high places!

39 Some Pharisees from the crowd told him, "Teacher, get your disciples under control!"

40 But he said, "If they kept quiet, the stones would do it for them, shouting praise."

41-44 When the city came into view, he wept over it. "If you had only recognized this day, and everything that was good for you! But now it's too late. In the days ahead your enemies are going to bring up their heavy artillery and surround you, pressing in from every side. They'll smash you and your babies on the pavement. Not one stone will be left intact. All this because you didn't recognize and welcome God's personal visit."

O give thanks to the Lord, for he is good;

his steadfast love endures forever!

Let Israel say,

"His steadfast love endures forever."

Let the house of Aaron say,

"His steadfast love endures forever."

Let those who fear the Lord say,

"His steadfast love endures forever."

Out of my distress I called on the Lord;

the Lord answered me and set me in a broad place.

With the Lord on my side I do not fear.

What can mortals do to me?

The Lord is on my side to help me;

I shall look in triumph on those who hate me.

It is better to take refuge in the Lord

than to put confidence in mortals.

It is better to take refuge in the Lord

than to put confidence in princes.

All nations surrounded me;

in the name of the Lord I cut them off!

They surrounded me, surrounded me on every side;

in the name of the Lord I cut them off!

They surrounded me like bees;

they blazed like a fire of thorns;

in the name of the Lord I cut them off!

I was pushed hard, so that I was falling,

but the Lord helped me.

The Lord is my strength and my might;

he has become my salvation.

There are glad songs of victory in the tents of the righteous:

"The right hand of the Lord does valiantly;

the right hand of the Lord is exalted;

the right hand of the Lord does valiantly."

I shall not die, but I shall live,

and recount the deeds of the Lord.

The Lord has punished me severely,
but he did not give me over to death.

Open to me the gates of righteousness,
**that I may enter through them
and give thanks to the Lord.**

This is the gate of the Lord;
the righteous shall enter through it.

I thank you that you have answered me
and have become my salvation.

The stone that the builders rejected
has become the chief cornerstone.

This is the Lord's doing;
it is marvelous in our eyes.

This is the day that the Lord has made;
let us rejoice and be glad in it.

Save us, we beseech you, O Lord!
O Lord, we beseech you, give us success!

Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord.
We bless you from the house of the Lord.

The Lord is God,
and he has given us light.

Bind the festal procession with branches,
up to the horns of the altar.

You are my God, and I will give thanks to you;
you are my God, I will extol you.

O give thanks to the Lord, for he is good,
for his steadfast love endures forever.

MODERN LESSON "But Later..." a poem by Thom M. Shuman

SERMON Time for a Rebranding - "Coat Sunday" Rev. Emilia Halstead

All glory, laud, and honor
To you, O Christ we sing,
To whom the lips of children
Made sweet hosannas ring!
The people of the Hebrews
With palms adorned your way:
Our praise and prayer and anthems
We offer you this day

O Promised One of Israel,
Of David's royal line,
The one called "God's beloved,"
Of flesh and yet divine,
To you, before your passion,
They sang their hymns of praise;
To you, now high exalted,
Our melody we raise.

As you received their praises,
Receive our prayers today,
Whose justice and whose mercy
And sovereignty hold sway.
All glory, laud, and honor
To you, O Christ, we sing,
To whom the lips of children
Made sweet hosannas ring!

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

PASTORAL PRAYER [Adapted from a prayer written by John van de Laar]

LORD'S PRAYER:

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 forever. Amen.

INVITATION TO THE OFFERTORY [written by Joanna Harader]

GRATITUDE MUSIC "Ride On King Jesus" trad. arr. by Larry Fleming
(Sung by the Oasis Reunion Chorale)

Text: "Ride on, King Jesus! No one can hinder you.
Ride on, King Jesus, ride on. Ride to me.

When I look around me to find
Someone who is gentle and kind,
Someone who'll show me the way,
I look to Jesus, and I pray.

When I need someone to hear,
To help me conquer my fear,
When I can't find the way,
I look to Jesus, and I pray."

PRAYER OF DEDICATION:

Loving God, as Hosannas fade to cries of heartache may these gifts be used for peacemaking that settles strife and justice-seeking that creates all good hope. Amen.

LENTEN CANDLE RITUAL
PALM SUNDAY

OPENING OUR HEARTS, SOULS, AND MINDS TO GOD (5min of silent reflection)

EXTINGUISHING THE CANDLE

As we extinguish this light, we acknowledge the darkness and pain of illness and disease in the world. [Extinguish the first Candle]

Loving God, there are so many choices before us every day. Choices offered by our friends, our families, our culture, our own past. Some of them encourage the well-being of the earth, ourselves and our neighbors; others are destructive. Help us to distinguish between them. May we learn from the choices of Jesus and embody compassion, justice, and inclusion in all we say and do. Amen.

SONG: #215

Ride On! Ride On in Majesty

Ride on, ride on in majesty!
O Christ, with brave humility
On lowly colt, your road pursue,
As palms and cloaks are spread for you.

Ride on, ride on, in majesty!
Ride on in humble dignity;
Behold the ones you came to save
From senseless life and endless grave.

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Ride on, ride on, in majesty!
For you have set your people free
And we, remembering all your pain,
Now meet again to hail your reign.

SETTING OUR INTENTIONS FOR THE WEEK

BENEDICTION & SENDING (from J. Philip Newell "Celtic Benediction")

For the gift of life unfolding through those who have gone before us,

Glory be to you, O God.

For your life planted within each of our souls and in every soul coming into the world,

Glory be to you, O God.

For the grace of new beginnings placed before us in every moment and in every encounter of life,

Glory be to you, O God.

For the grace of new beginnings in every moment of life,

Glory be to you, O God. Hosanna! Amen.

POSTLUDE

Ballad of Our Time

(Adele)

