

CAMPBELLTOWN UNITING CHURCH
24 MARCH 2024
PALM/PASSION SUNDAY

CALL TO WORSHIP

We come to prepare for the holiest of weeks.

*We will journey through praise, with joy on our lips;
we will travel through betrayal and death,
cradling hope deep in our hearts.*

Jesus leads us through this week, and we will follow,
for he is the life we long for,
he is the Word who sustains us.

*We wave palm branches in anticipation;
we lay our love before him, to cushion his walk.*

Setting aside all power, glory, and might, he comes:
modelling humility and obedience for all of us.

Hosanna! Hosanna!

Blessed is the One who brings us the kingdom of God.

WELCOME & INTRODUCTION

Welcome to worship at Campbelltown this morning.

My name is Rebecca Purling,
and the worship leaders are Maddie Pipicella, Rob Curnow,
Zoe Peck, Max Peck and Sophie Polkinghorne.

At the conclusion of the service
please join us in the hall for morning tea.

Today we celebrate Palm/Passion Sunday, which marks the beginning of Holy Week.
We begin this important week remembering Jesus' entry into Jerusalem on a donkey.

His disciples and followers, pilgrims in the holy city for the Passover Festival, waved branches and lay down their cloaks to form a path. Many people were excited to welcome Jesus, and they cheered him on!

But not everyone was pleased with Jesus' very public spectacle and the response from the crowd. Opposition to Jesus, his ministry and message had been growing and will soon come to a head. So, in our worship we will move from the celebrations to remember some of the events of the last week of Jesus' life.

We will remember his Last Supper with friends, his anguish in the garden, where he was arrested, then his trial, death and burial.

Today we begin Holy Week, and so we will end and leave our service in silence, we will leave remembering and reflecting on the last week of Jesus' life and what his challenge to the powers of this world means for us...

You are invited to continue the journey through Holy Week on Thursday night at 8:00pm for a Maundy Thursday Service, Good Friday at 9:30am, Easter Day at dawn and at our normal time.

On Saturday afternoon we are hosting a Presbytery Youth Easter Event, where we will explore Holy Week in four parts with activities and food along the way.

SING TIS 242 'Lord of the dance'

PALM SUNDAY PRAYER

God of the foolish cross,
tottering down the streets of Jerusalem on a donkey,
You are not the saviour we expect.

Your power doesn't look like the power we want our God to demonstrate.
Your wisdom makes no sense to us.

We are happy to join the crowd, waving branches,
But not so sure we want to follow you
into the temple courts
into the upper room
into the Garden of Gethsemane
to the foot of the cross.

Forgive our false assumptions.
Clarify our clouded vision.

Let us relax into the foolishness of your love, your grace.
Hosanna, hosanna.
Save us, we beseech you!

SING 'Blessed be your name'

TRAVELLING JESUS - PALM SUNDAY

Before you begin, explain to kids that every time they hear the word "celebrate" or "celebration" they are to cheer and shake their pom poms.

I really enjoy a great celebration (demonstrate), don't you?
What are some things that people like to celebrate? (demonstrate)
A birthday party...a holiday...or a sporting event? How do they celebrate? (demonstrate),
Well, one way people celebrate (demonstrate) is by making a lot of noise.

This morning let's have a celebration (demonstrate).
Let's celebrate (demonstrate) that we are here today to worship and praise Jesus.
Travelling Jesus is going to join us, and we are going to wave our pom poms.

Today is Palm Sunday. It's a day when we remember how people celebrated (demonstrate) when Jesus entered into Jerusalem on a Sunday around two thousand years ago.

Jesus was walking with His disciples toward Jerusalem. As they came near to the city, Jesus told two of his disciples to go on ahead into the town. He told them that they would see a young donkey tied there that had never been ridden. "Untie the donkey and bring it to me. If anyone asks you what you are doing, tell them, 'The Lord needs it. He will send it back to you soon.' "

The disciples did what Jesus told them to do, and it happened just as He had told them. They found the young donkey, untied it, and started to lead it away. Some men were standing nearby, and they said to the disciples, "Where are you taking that young donkey?" They told them what Jesus had said, and the men let them take the donkey.

The disciples brought the young donkey to Jesus, and they put their coats on it to make a soft place for Jesus to sit. As they made their way into the city of Jerusalem, people went ahead of Jesus shouting, "Hosanna! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!" Others followed behind, and they were also shouting, "Hosanna to the Son of David! Hosanna in the highest!" All the while, people lined the streets cheering and waving palm branches. It was a wonderful celebration (demonstrate), as people cheered loudly for Jesus.

Just as those people celebrated (demonstrate) two thousand years ago, we have come here today to celebrate (demonstrate) Jesus. What better day to do that than on Palm Sunday? The Bible says, "This is the day the LORD has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it." (*Psalms 118:24*)

Dear God, we celebrate today just as those people celebrated in Jerusalem two thousand years ago. This is the day that You have made; we will rejoice and be glad in it! In Jesus' name, amen.

SING TIS 348 'Ride on, ride on in majesty'

OFFERING

Almighty and everlasting God, as we bring our gifts and lay them at your altar, we remember the crowds in Jerusalem who laid their cloaks on the road, shouting "Hosanna" as Jesus passed. Search our hearts that we might be confident that the Messiah for whom we long is the one you know we need – Jesus Christ, your anointed one, in whose name we pray. Amen.

COMMUNITY CONCERNS

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Living God, there are many places around the world
which long for the strong glad entry of justice and love.
Come into the streets of our cities and towns, we pray.
Ride along them towards all who would oppress.
Gather as you go all who cannot believe that they could be loved,
who have never been able to stand near to kindness and acceptance
or see it travel past, surrounded by applause.
We bring before you our special concerns now...

Time of silence

Give us the strength to face all
who would destroy your dream for creation, O God.
Make pathways of your courage for our feet,
lay carpets of green for our greater growing in hope
and sound cheering voices in our ears
as we dare to venture forth in your name.

THE 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.
Save us from the time of trial
and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours
now and forever. Amen.

SING ‘What the Lord has done for me’

INTRODUCING THE LITURGY OF THE PASSION

We go into this Holy Week lifting high the good man Jesus,
who taught us about radical love, showed us how to pray,
and who gives us hope that a new world and a new way,
where all people are of equal worth and value is possible if we choose to join him.

Liturgy of the Passion

Storyteller #1 carries a jar of water with fragrant oil;
Storyteller #2 carries bread and wine/juice;
Storyteller #3 carries a rope and purple cloth;
Storyteller #4 white cloth.

STORYTELLER #1 - A Kind Woman: Based on Mark 14:3–8

Jesus had many friends in Jerusalem.

His friend Simon asked him to come for dinner.

Simon also invited many others.

While they were eating, a woman came into the house. She had heard about Jesus and wanted to do something to show how much she loved him. She bought some very expensive perfume and poured it on Jesus' head. It smelled wonderful. It made the whole house smell nice.

But some of the people who were eating with Jesus got angry. “That perfume cost a lot of money. She shouldn't waste money like that. She should give that money to poor people.”

“Leave her alone!” said Jesus. “She has done a beautiful thing. Yes, we should help poor people whenever we can. But this kind woman wanted to do something special. Think of it this way. I am probably going to die soon. This woman has made my body ready for when I am buried.”

Judas, one of Jesus' best friends, had an angry look on his face. He was thinking to himself, “Jesus is doing such stupid things. Letting that woman pour expensive perfume on his head – well that's it! I won't be Jesus' friend anymore.”

Storyteller #1 lavishly pours the container of fragrant water into a bowl.

SING TIS 730 'Jesus Remember Me' (Taizé)

STORYTELLER #2 - The Last Supper: Based on Mark 14:12–25

There were many people in Jerusalem, because it was the time of year when they gathered to eat a very special meal together. It was called Passover. This meal helped the Jewish people remember how God rescued them from slavery in Egypt and led them through the desert to a new land.

Jesus and his friends found a place where they could all be together to eat their Passover meal.

Open the bread and wine and place on your designated space for the story installation.

They had just started eating when Jesus said to them, “One of you does not want to be my friend anymore. One of you will try to hurt me. One of you will betray me.”

“But who would do this?” Andrew asked.

For a long time, Jesus didn’t say anything. All the disciples waited. Jesus took some bread and dipped it into a bowl of wine.

Jesus looked around at his friends. There were tears in his eyes. He could hardly talk. “It is one of you,” he said. “One who is dipping bread into the bowl with me.”

Then Jesus took a loaf of bread. “This bread is like my body,” he said.

Then he tore the loaf into pieces and passed the bread to all his friends.

“Whenever you eat bread, remember that my body was broken, just like this loaf of bread.”

Jesus took a cup of wine. He passed the cup around to his friends, and all of them took a drink.

“This wine will help you remember. When you drink it, remember that God has promised to love you forever.”

SING TIS 730 'Jesus Remember Me' (Taizé)

STORYTELLER #3 - Jesus Is Arrested: Based on Mark 14:32–51, 15:1–3, 16–37

Late that night, Jesus and his friends were in a garden. Jesus wanted a quiet place where he could pray. He knew something terrible was going to happen soon, and he was afraid.

“Please, Dad,” he prayed. Jesus felt that God was just like his own father, and so he sometimes called God “Dad.”

“Please, Dad. Do I have to do this awful thing? Do I really have to?” Jesus was quiet for a long time. He was listening to God. Finally, he whispered very quietly. “If that is what you want me to do, then I will do it.”

Sound a bell.

Later that night, some soldiers came. They tied Jesus' hands with a rope. They put him in a dark prison and kept him there all night.

Sound a bell.

In the morning, they brought Jesus to Pilate. Pilate was the ruler of the whole country. Like a king, except they called him the governor.

Pilate said to Jesus, "They tell me you think you are the king of this whole country. Is that true?" "If you say so," said Jesus.

Then the soldiers took Jesus into the yard of Pilate's house. They started to tease him and say mean things to him. They hit him hard, many times. Then they put a purple cloth around his shoulders and yelled, "There, now you look like a real king!" And they laughed and laughed. Jesus didn't say anything. It was still early in the morning. The soldiers made Jesus carry a heavy wooden cross. They went to a place called Golgotha, which was the place people threw all their garbage.

There they nailed Jesus' hands to the cross. They nailed his feet to the cross.

Then they lifted up the cross so Jesus hung there. It hurt terribly.

Sound a bell.

Add rope and purple cloth to the story installation.

The soldiers and others standing around started to tease Jesus again. "If you are a king – if you really are God's chosen one – then show us! Jump down off that cross!"

Jesus hung on that cross for hours. Finally, he lifted his head and yelled, "O God! O God! Why have you left me here all alone?"

Sound a bell.

Then Jesus died.

Sound a bell.

SING TIS 333 'All glory praise and honour'

STORYTELLER #4 - Jesus Is Buried: Based on Mark 15:40–47

Most of Jesus' friends had run away.

They were afraid the soldiers would come and catch them, too.

But Mary of Magdala was there at the cross. So was Jesus' mother, whose name was also Mary. James and Salome and several women were there. They were some of the friends who had helped Jesus in Galilee, when he was telling stories about God and helping people feel strong again. They were afraid, too, but they didn't run away.

Later, a rich man named Joseph, who came from Arimathea, talked to Pilate. "Please let me take Jesus' dead body. Let me put it in a grave. Jesus is dead, and we want to take care of his body in a kind and gentle way."

Joseph took a nice white cloth to wrap Jesus' dead body in. Then he and the two Marys put Jesus into the grave, which was a cave in the hillside. They did it slowly, and gently.

Then Joseph rolled a big, heavy stone across the opening, to close up the grave. The three of them stood there for a long time just looking at the place where Jesus lay dead.

Sound a bell.

Add white cloth to the story installation.

Then slowly, the three of them walked away. "It's so sad," said Joseph. "Jesus was such a kind, gentle person. I really thought he was God's chosen one."

Mary of Magdala nodded. Tears filled her eyes. "I guess the story of Jesus is over. It's all over!"

But Mary was wrong.

The story of Jesus was just beginning.

Sound a bell.

Invite the people to leave in silence, when they are ready.