



*Welcome to our joint online service for*

## **Palm Sunday**

*with: Claremont United Church*

*Claremont Church office: 905 649 1363*

*Fairbank United Church*

*Fairbank's Pastor: Steven Loweth*

*Goodwood United Church*

*Goodwood Church office: 905 868 5507*

**Sunday April 5, 11:00 am**

**Leading worship today:** Rev. Lionel Ketola, and Pastor Steven Loweth

**Words of Welcome** Welcome to this joint online service through Zoom with members of Claremont United Church, Fairbank United Church, and Goodwood United Churches! We are glad you've joined us either online or by reading this devotion.

The online service will include **the sacrament of Holy Communion**. Given the extraordinary times in which we are living, we will be celebrating communion together 'online'. Whether you are watching this service online, or reading it at home without internet access, we encourage you to have the following ready, in advance:

- ❖ **Elements for Communion:** Have bread and juice (or wine) wine ready so you can participate as fully as possible in our service of communion.
- ❖ **Home-made Palm Branches:** If you are feeling creative, we also encourage you to create a home-made paper "palm branch" that you can wave during our opening hymn.

### **Announcements (See the last page of this bulletin)**

#### **Blessing of the Palms**

We praise you, O God, for your redemption of the world through Jesus Christ.

Today Jesus entered the holy city of Jerusalem in triumph

and was proclaimed Messiah and King

by those who spread garments and branches along his way.

Bless these branches;

may they be signs of Jesus' victory over the brokenness of our world.

May we who carry them follow Jesus in the way of his cross,

that, dying and rising with him, we may enter into your kingdom.

We ask this in Jesus name. Amen.

He came riding on a donkey,  
    he came riding into town;  
slow and easy kind of lowly  
    he came riding with the dawn.  
His disciples walked beside him,  
    staying close, a little shy;  
not to sure where he would guide them,  
    on to live or on to die.  
But all the morning sang his praises;  
    waking birds and dancing wind;  
here he is, the Son of David;  
    riding on to take his throne.

Then the children gathered, singing  
    shouts of laughter, bursting cheer;  
in the streets their song was ringing,  
    “hosannas” filled the morning air.  
Timid adults strained to see him,  
    caught the Sprit, joined the song;  
spread their cloaks along before him,  
    branches flashing in the sun.  
So all the city sang his praises;  
    waking streets and dancing crowd;  
here he is, the Son of David;  
    our Messiah, Son of God.

In our fasting, and our feasting,  
    called to follow in his way;  
called to walk his road to Easter,  
    called to live his cross today.  
Hosanna to the Son of David,  
    hosanna to the heavens above;  
blessed is he who comes to save us,  
    blessed is he who brings his love.  
Let us join to sing his praises;  
    open hearts and souls to God;  
he is with us, Son of David;  
    God’s Messiah, Christ the Lord.

## **Call to Worship**

We raise our voices and wave with joyful hope  
the palms of deliverance of God's people.

***Hosanna! Hosanna to the Son of David!***

Our hearts are filled with expectation as we welcome the coming king.

***Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!***

We receive into the crowded streets of our lives the one who is Savior,  
not only of us, but of all the earth.

**Hosanna! Hosanna in the highest heaven!**

## **Prayer of the Day**

**Lord, your love is broken open  
among cheering crowds and traitor's coins,  
deserting friends and hands washed clean,  
the mockery of power and the baying mob.  
As we follow your way of passion,  
give us faith  
to bring our weak and divided hearts  
to the foot of the cross  
and the door of the guarded tomb  
that they might be opened, astonished and healed;  
through Jesus Christ,  
who carries the weight of the world. Amen.**

## **The Holy Gospel according to Matthew (21:1-11)**

When they had come near Jerusalem and had reached Bethphage, at the Mount of Olives,  
Jesus sent two disciples,<sup>2</sup> saying to them, "Go into the village ahead of you, and immediately  
you will find a donkey tied, and a colt with her; untie them and bring them to me.<sup>3</sup> If anyone  
says anything to you, just say this, 'The Lord needs them.' And he will send them immediately."

<sup>4</sup> This took place to fulfill what had been spoken through the prophet, saying,<sup>5</sup> "Tell the  
daughter of Zion, Look, your king is coming to you, humble, and mounted on a donkey, and on  
a colt, the foal of a donkey."

<sup>6</sup> The disciples went and did as Jesus had directed them; <sup>7</sup> they brought the donkey and the colt,  
and put their cloaks on them, and he sat on them.

<sup>8</sup> A very large crowd spread their cloaks on the road, and others cut branches from the trees  
and spread them on the road.<sup>9</sup> 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?”<sup>11</sup> The crowds were saying, “This is the prophet Jesus from Nazareth in Galilee.”

### **A Brief Reflection:**     *By Rev. Lionel*

*(The written reflection below is offered for those with no internet access, to read at home.)*

Today, as we celebrate Palm Sunday, I’m struck by Jesus’ words in today’s Gospel:

***“Go into the village ahead of you, and immediately you will find a donkey tied, and a colt with her; untie them and bring them to me. If anyone says anything to you, just say this, ‘The Lord needs them.’ And he will send them immediately.”***

Despite the growing religious and political opposition to his ministry, Jesus made the firm decision to keep “living out loud” which meant carrying on with his ministry as usual. So Jesus makes the risky decision to travel to Jerusalem with his disciples so they could celebrate the Passover festival there together – in the religious centre of the Jewish world.

But Jerusalem was also the epicentre of the political and religious opposition to Jesus’ ministry, and Jesus was considered a politically and spiritually subversive leader to the Jewish and Roman authorities. So Jesus’ decision was putting his physical safety at risk. But that doesn’t stop him. His ministry remains his focus.

What’s your experience of situations when you need to reach out to others to ask for help? Jesus seems to have no problem sending the disciples off ahead of him to the next village to help prepare for the next leg of his journey into Jerusalem. Jesus’ tone seems pretty casual as he tells the disciples to simply say: ***“The Lord needs them”*** if anyone asks why they are heading off with two donkeys from the village. What nerve!

Jesus’ boldness leaves me wondering: Does Jesus’ “asking” end there? ***What else*** is God asking of us so that we can courageously “live out loud” the same way that Jesus did? What is God asking of us, so that we can keep walking forward – like Jesus – and bearing witness to God’s unconditional love during this time when so much fear and uncertainty abound? The cheering crowds laid down their cloaks on the ground. What offerings, what gifts and abilities are we being called to ‘lay down’ before Jesus for the cause of God’s reign of love and compassion? What gifts can we ‘release’ out into our world, so that others can experience God’s healing presence in this challenging time? May we keep “living out loud” and walking forward with love and compassion - with Jesus!

**Prayers of the People**     Led by Pastor Steven Loweth

Prayer response:   One: God of healing

**All:   Hear our prayer**

**Hymn to prepare us for Communion: “Taste and See”** (Psalm 34: 8)     *(online video)*

Sung Refrain:   Taste and see, taste and see, the goodness of the Lord

## Holy Communion

May God be with you

**And also with you**

Lift up your hearts

**We lift them up to God**

Let us give thanks to our Creator

**Even in times of struggle, we give thanks to our God.**

Blessed are you, Journeying God,

for you walk beside us through all of our lives.

When Israel felt alone and isolated in the desert

**You were there, with them.**

When your people Israel struggled to discern your will

**You were there, through the prophets, to challenge and guide them.**

When your people struggled under Roman occupation

**you were there, through Jesus, your Compassion-made-flesh**

**to heal the sick,**

**comfort the grieving,**

**encourage the weary,**

**and free the oppressed.**

You are with us now

**Through health care workers and grocery store clerks;**

**Through neighbours and friends and family;**

**Through stories and tears, encouragement and hope**

**that we are learning to share with one another in new ways.**

And so with all who have known your healing and sustaining presence,

we join in their song of praise:

*(Lyrics will be displayed on the Youtube video: "Sanctus", from: koinemusic.com)*

**Holy, Holy, Lord, God of heavenly hosts**

**Heaven and earth are full of your glory.**

**Hosanna, hosanna, hosanna in the highest,**

**Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.**

Blessed is our brother Jesus, who embodied your great love for all creation.

On the night that Jesus was betrayed, he took bread, gave thanks and blessed it, and broke it and gave it to his disciples saying: Take and eat; this is my body, given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, Jesus took the cup, blessed it and gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink saying: This cup is the cup of the new covenant relationship with God, poured out for all people for the forgiveness of sins and for abundant life. Do this in remembrance of me.

Send now your life-giving Spirit upon us,  
and upon these gifts of bread and cup,  
**so we may be the bread of compassion and the cup of hope  
for all who hunger and thirst for your presence.**

Presider: The gifts of God for the people of God

**All: Thanks be to God!**

*We share the bread with words such as: “**The body of Christ, broken for you**”.*  
*We share the cup with words such as: “**The blood of Christ, poured out for you**”.*

*Take a moment to commune yourself with the bread and cup.*

*A time of Silent prayer follows communion*

Prayer after communion

**We give you thanks, tender God,  
that you have refreshed us through the healing power of this gift of life.  
Strengthen us through this gift  
in faith toward you  
and fervent love toward one another;  
through Christ, our healing companion. Amen.**

Closing Song: Jesus Keep me Near the Cross (Video, during Zoom service)

**Jesus keep me near the cross, there’s a precious fountain,  
free to all, a healing stream, flows from Calvary’s mountain.  
In the cross, in the cross, be my glory ever,  
till my raptured soul shall find rest beyond the river.**

**Blessing:** May the God who shakes heaven and earth,  
whom death could not contain,  
who lives to heal and transform us,  
fill us with courage and compassion,  
so we can be God’s hands and heart  
for a world that is aching God’s healing embrace. Amen.

# ANNOUNCEMENTS

**Goodwood United Church: New time for Zoom Bible Study:** Tuesdays at noon.  
Email Rev. Lionel for an invitation if you'd like to join in.

**Claremont United Church:** A new **Zoom drop in meeting has been set up, each Wednesday at noon.** All members have been emailed the online link to join this Zoom meeting, along with the phone number to dial in by your landline phone if you don't have internet service.



## Find us online! Check out our websites!

Check out our church websites for updates during this time, including Sunday devotions, and also information about coping with stress during the COVID-19 pandemic.

[www.claremontunitedchurch.com](http://www.claremontunitedchurch.com)

[www.goodwoodunitedchurch.com](http://www.goodwoodunitedchurch.com)



## Find us on Facebook!

Check out our facebook pages for both congregations:

<https://www.facebook.com/goodwoodunited>

<https://www.facebook.com/claremontunited>

## Continued Support for our Congregations

During these weeks when our churches are not meeting for public worship, we ask you to please prayerfully consider how you are able to continue supporting our congregation with its continued financial obligations. Offerings can be mailed to the church address itself, or you can mail your offering to your church's treasurer. PAR forms are also available if you would like to use one for direct debit givings. Thank you for your continued support of our congregation's ministry.

