

Watch this week's service on YouTube by clicking: [Palm Sunday Worship Service Video](#)

Good Friday Service will be posted and emailed to you Thursday, April 1

Easter Service will be posted and emailed to you Thursday, April 1

- Join the **HeBrews eCafé on Zoom** Sunday at 10am for an hour of informal fellowship.  
Link: <https://zoom.us/j/98193600858?pwd=K0IIOWM0ZWdsRmhUTkNWcmFvbkM5Zz09>  
Phone in: 1 204 272 7920  
Meeting ID: 981 9360 0858  
Passcode: 438120
- **Lenten Study - Faith On The Move** – Last Session this Thursday at 7:00.  
Join Zoom Meeting <https://zoom.us/j/96227374307?pwd=Q0xkRFpkemdtVDBZdHZlVWFwODU4QT09>  
Meeting ID: 962 2737 4307  
Passcode: 677320  
Phone in option: 204 272 7920
- Youth Group Zoom is being planned for this Thursday, April 1 at 6:30 (no April Fooling). To join contact the church office for link information.

Dear Friends

Welcome to worship for Sunday, March 28, 2021.

With a little fear that I may be showing my age I wonder if you know the tune and can sing along with the following lyrics:

*Into the city I'd follow, the children's band,  
Waving a branch of the palm tree high in my hand  
One of his heralds, yes I would sing,  
Loudest Hosannas, Jesus is King*

No apologies necessary if you don't recognize it but some will know it as the third verse of the children's hymn "Tell Me the Stories of Jesus" which has been in United Church hymn books ever since there was a United Church. It is a verse that places children in the events of Palm Sunday even though there is no mention of a "children's band" in scripture. It is an exercise in imagination, imagine you were there.

I think this verse may also be partly responsible for turning Palm Sunday into something it really isn't, a day of joyful celebration. The idea of Jesus entering Jerusalem while riding on a donkey with people lining the road and waving branches and shouting Hosanna is very evocative. It sounds like a parade. It reads like jubilation.

To some extent it was. Mark, Matthew, and Luke are very careful in the writing of their Gospels not to locate Jesus in Jerusalem until this very moment (the Gospel of John has Jesus come and go from Jerusalem several times). The only exception in the first three Gospels is the appearance of Jesus at the Temple as a child in Luke 3.

For the most part, the synoptics (a word used to describe Matthew, Mark, and Luke and their many similarities) all employ a narrative where the ministry of Jesus is established in the north country around Galilee, ventures into some gentile territory, and then turns in the direction of Jerusalem. As this journey unfolds the popularity of Jesus is always growing and the crowds are always increasing. By the time he gets to Jerusalem his reputation has preceded him and indeed, there is tremendous excitement.

This is the part of the story we teach children in story and song. Palm parades are one of the easiest ways to re-create the stories of the Bible and in so doing we impress upon children that Jesus was a highly significant figure in his own day. We join the parade. We welcome him in. We share the excitement.

Lost in our children's interpretation is that this is a dramatic and dangerous moment. 'Hosanna' is a Hebrew word that means 'save us'. The excitement for Jesus is that he is going to miraculously save the city from its Roman overlords. The image of a ruler riding a donkey may be an enactment of a prophetic oracle in Zechariah 9:9. Some scholars have suggested it is a profoundly subversive act, that when Caesar or his agent would enter Jerusalem, he would do so in a parade of chariots through the western gate. Here Jesus enters the same city humbly on a colt from the east, in direct contrast to Pilate.

Regardless of the intention of the theatrical entrance, we know what happens after he arrives. The Gospels tell us that one of his first acts in Jerusalem is to turn over the tables of the moneychangers in the Temple. Attention is now focussed. Opposition mounts. Betrayal is pondered. Arrest is made. Suffering is endured. Crucifixion is but five days away. And the crowds who lined the roads and waved palm branches and shouted 'Hosanna' are nowhere to be found.

I like Palm Sunday very much. I did as a child and I have always loved sharing it with the children of the church. It's fun to sing and march and wave. But I also find it profound, melancholy, layered, shadowed, and deeply, deeply meaningful. It is the sort of observance you crave to do with other people. I wish we were together.

Grace and peace,

Michael

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Thank you for your generous support.
- Read the scripture lesson for today by clicking here: [Mark 11:1-11](#)
- Please enjoy our online worship and feel free to share with others. The link for sharing is:  
<https://youtu.be/CNzyfdtX0CQ>