

Morning Prayer 14th March 2021

Palm Sunday

Morning Worship with Christine Ghinn



Personal preparation before the service begins.

Please take time to remember where you are,
and why you are here.
Give thanks and become still
in the presence of God

Prelude

All glory, praise and honour

Refrain

*All glory, praise and honour
to you, redeemer, king,
to whom the lips of children
made sweet hosannas ring.*

1. You are the King of Israel
and David's royal son,
now in the Lord's name coming,
the king and blessed one.

*All glory, praise and honour
to you, redeemer, king,
to whom the lips of children
made sweet hosannas ring.*

3. The people of the Hebrews
with palms before you went:
our praise and prayer and anthems
before you we present.

*All glory, praise and honour
to you, redeemer, king,
to whom the lips of children
made sweet hosannas ring.*

5. Their praises you accepted:
accept the prayers we bring,
who in all good take pleasure,
our good and gracious king.

*All glory, praise and honour
to you, redeemer, king,
to whom the lips of children
made sweet hosannas ring.*

CCLI Song # 29509
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Gathering / Call to Worship

As to a stable
eager to glimpse the light
that made princes of shepherds
and servants of kings,
we come.

As on a hillside
craving crumbs of comfort,
stomachs empty,
hearts fit to burst,
we come.

Caught in the clamour
of a chaotic palm parade
heralding the entrance
of a prophet's promise,
we come.

Lured by the paradox
of the Saviour of the world
upon a common beast,
amid the fanfare of a fickle few,
we come.

Unable to resist
the call of the carpenter
creating commotion as carefully

as he did tables and chairs,
we come.

Amen.

Let us pray with words from Psalm 118

Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; *
his mercy endures for ever.

Let Israel now proclaim, *

"His mercy endures for ever." ...

Open for me the gates of righteousness; *

I will enter them;

I will offer thanks to the Lord.

"This is the gate of the Lord; *

he who is righteous may enter."

I will give thanks to you, for you answered me *

and have become my salvation.

The same stone which the builders rejected *

has become the chief cornerstone.

This is the Lord's doing, *

and it is marvelous in our eyes.

On this day the Lord has acted; *

we will rejoice and be glad in it.

Hosannah, Lord, hosannah! *

Lord, send us now success.

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

we bless you from the house of the Lord.

God is the Lord; he has shined upon us; *

**form a procession with branches up to the horns of
the altar.**

"You are my God, and I will thank you; *

you are my God, and I will exalt you."

Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; *

his mercy endures for ever.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son,
and to the Holy Spirit,

**As it was in the beginning,
is now and shall be for ever.**

The Collect for today, Palm Sunday

True and humble king,
hailed by the crowd as Messiah:
grant us the faith to know you and love you,
that we may be found beside you
on the way of the cross,
which is the path of glory.
Amen.

The reading is taken from Philippians 2:5-11

Let us prepare ourselves for the word of God
Our hearts and our minds are open

Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus,
who, though he was in the form of God,
did not regard equality with God
as something to be exploited,
but emptied himself,
taking the form of a slave,
being born in human likeness.
And being found in human form,
he humbled himself
and became obedient to the point of death--
even death on a cross.
Therefore God also highly exalted him
and gave him the name
that is above every name,
so that at the name of Jesus
every knee should bend,
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,
and every tongue should confess
that Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father.

This is the word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

Song: Sanna, sannanina

Sanna, sannanina, sanna, sanna, sanna. (2x)

Sanna, sanna, sanna, sannanina, sanna, sanna, sanna. (2x)

Words | Music: traditional South African

The reading is taken from John 12:12-16

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to John

Glory to you, O Lord

The next day the great crowd that had come to the festival heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem. So they took branches of palm trees and went out to meet him, shouting, "Hosanna! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord—the King of Israel!" Jesus found a young donkey and sat on it; as it is written: "Do not be afraid, daughter of Zion. Look, your king is coming, sitting on a donkey's colt!" His disciples did not understand these things at first; but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things had been written of him and had been done to him.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

Homily

The Kindest Giant in Town

I would like to introduce to you a good old family friend of ours. His name is George and my children and I have often spent a lovely time with him. George is the kind of person that doesn't make much of a fuss about himself. I like to think that he is a true follower of Christ, the way described by Paul in his letter to the Philippians. I'm not sure if George ever read the bible passage we heard earlier, but he manages to embody the heart of it in his day-to-day living.

George is an above-average friend - in the truest sense of the word - because he is an actual real giant! He is the hero of Julia Donaldson's book *The Smartest Giant in Town*. The state of our copy of the book speaks volumes to how well-loved George is in our house: the corners are bent, the spine taped up and the pages stained.

The story (maybe one could say: the parable) of George starts off with him doing some shopping...

"... One day, George noticed a new shop.

It was full of smart clothes.

So he bought:

a smart shirt,

a smart pair of trousers,

a smart belt,

a smart stripy tie,

some smart socks with diamonds up the sides,

and a pair of smart shiny shoes.

"Now I'm the smartest giant in town," he said proudly.

He was about to go home when he heard a sound. On the pavement stood a giraffe who was sniffing sadly.

"What's the matter?" asked George. "It's my neck," said the giraffe.

"It's so very long and so very cold." "Cheer up!" said George, and he took off his stripy tie.

"It didn't match my socks anyway," he said, as he wound it round and round the giraffe's neck. It made a wonderful scarf. "Thank you!" said the giraffe.

As George strode towards home, he sung to himself,

"My tie is a scarf for a cold giraffe, but look me up and down: I'm the smartest giant in town.

..."

As the story unfolds, George meets many other animals that are having problems in one way or another. The giant doesn't think twice: each time helps out his fellow-creatures. His shirt ends up as a sail for a boat, one of his shoes becomes a house for a mouse and her little ones, a fox who lost his sleeping bag can cuddle up nice and warm in one of George's socks and the smart belt is re-purposed as a walking path. When George ends up shivering and sad, wearing barely

more than his underwear, I wonder, if thought of Paul's words from today's reading:

"In your life together, think the way Christ Jesus thought. He was like God in every way, but he did not think that his being equal with God was something to use for his own benefit. Instead, he gave up everything, even his place with God. He accepted the role of a servant, appearing in human form. During his life as a man, he humbled himself by being fully obedient to God, even when that caused his death—death on a cross."

Today is Palm Sunday

and we remember Jesus riding on a donkey into Jerusalem, cheered on by waving crowds at the side of the road.

Honestly, I don't quite know what to think of all those people there that day. Did they just get carried away by sensationalism? Were they the same people that shouted "Crucify him!" only a few days later? Or was the crowd under the impression, that the long awaited revolution against Rome was about to start, led by this guy here? Maybe they understood Jesus' procession as brave satire, a parody of the Roman governor's military parade into the city, which happened every year before the Passover?

Did the crowd actually know who Jesus was?

(Well, I doubt it, as even the disciples didn't really get it that day.) Could the shouts of "Hosanna! Save us!" have been heartfelt, or is it more likely that they were exclaimed in a mocking way or thoughtlessly repeated in a parrot-like manner?

If that was the case, then the crowd is in good company: further on in John's account of Jesus' passion we can find a few instances where people outside Jesus' inner circle stated deep truths without knowing it. Think of the high priest Caiphas' words, "It is better for you that one man dies for the people than that the whole nation perishes." or the governor's sign on Jesus' cross that read "King of the Jews".

However, no matter how much Jesus' contemporaries understand or not, Jesus rides on a donkey and has his own agenda. He does what to him is the right thing to do, despite his fear. The deep love for humanity is what keeps him going, even if everyone around him got the wrong end of the stick. And, even if we too sometimes get the wrong end of the stick, to this very day. It is deep love that makes him accept the chaotic shouts of the Palm Sunday crowd, the ill-considered comment from the high priest and a mocking sign from Pilate. And it is the same love that makes him accept even my own, at times chaotic, words to him and my funny ideas about him.

This brings us back to the reading from Philippians. In preparation for this Sunday I realised for the first time how warm-hearted and affectionate Paul's letter to his friends in Philippy actually is. He really cherishes those people and cares deeply about them forming a loving community. His recipe for success is "In your life together, think the way Christ Jesus thought." My guess is, he would recommend the same to us here in Freiburg today.

Paul hints at what this may look like and mentions selflessness, humility, serving others and 'doing the right thing'. In practice, 'thinking the way Christ did' will take different forms, some of which Jesus models for us throughout this coming week. May we be inspired by Jesus' words, actions and attitude of love within the small and big challenges of our own lives & relationships.

There are and will be Good-Friday-moments for all of us.

There even was for my friend George, the giant. Yet, if you'd ask him, he would tell you to hang in there, because a brighter day will be dawning, just as it did for him. With a beaming face, George would describe to you the moment when he was surrounded by a true 'community of grace', one that Paul would have made very happy indeed. George would blush slightly when talking about how all the animals he had helped gathered around him with a card and a home-made

A sign of peace

God is love
And those who live in love live in God
And God lives in them.
We meet in the name of Christ and share his peace.



Benediction / Sending

The time is not yet,
but the darkness is gathering.

The time is not yet,
but the main players
are taking their positions.

Dither not,
but come back tomorrow
and wait with the Son of God,
for his friends are few
in this world of hatred.

The time is not yet,
but our time is now;
to be here
and trust a love
that will see this thing through.

Go,
but be back
for Jesus needs his friends.
Amen.

The Conclusion

The Lord bless us, and preserve us from all evil,
and keep us in eternal life.
Amen.

Let us bless the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

Postlude

Ride on, ride on in majesty

1. Ride on, ride on in majesty!
Hark, all the tribes hosanna cry:
thy humble beast pursues his road
with palms and scattered garments strowed

2. Ride on, ride on in majesty!
In lowly pomp ride on to die;
O Christ, thy triumphs now begin
o'er captive death and conquered sin.

5. Ride on ride on in majesty!
In lowly pomp ride on to die;
bow thy meek head to mortal pain,
then take, O God, thy pow'r, and reign.

CCLI Song # 2725907

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