

St. Vincent United Church of Christ

Palm Sunday – April 13th, 2025

Including Distribution & Blessing of Palms

Pastor – Rev. Susan Hanson

Church Musician – Deb Rick



Musical Interlude
Ringling of the Bell

Welcome & Announcements:
Prelude Music

*** Call To Worship:**

Pastor: We gather this day to worship our God and experience once again his triumphal entry into Jerusalem. Let us join in the celebration. Hosanna!

People: Hosanna in the Highest! Praise be to God!

Pastor: Please join me in our prayer to welcome God into our midst on this day of celebration ...

ALL: We praise you, O God, and give thanks to you for the gift of your love and care – especially on this special day of celebration. As the people on that first Palm Sunday welcomed Jesus into Jerusalem with joy and excitement, help us to open our hearts and welcome you into our lives so that we might become more like the Savior whom we long to follow more closely. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.

Now, let us sing together our first hymn.

*** Hymn: # 213 “Hosanna, Loud Hosanna”**

(during hymn, palm branches will be brought to the altar for blessing)

*** The Blessing of the Palms:**

Pastor: In the time of Jesus, palm branches were considered sacred. They symbolized peace and plenty and victory for his people. On the first Palm Sunday, the people waved palms in praise of God breaking into their world in the form of Jesus riding into Jerusalem on the back of a donkey.

Today, they serve as symbols for us, as well – that peace and hope abound, and eternal life is ours because God sent his Son to live among us and show us his ways of love and compassion. Let us celebrate that God continues to break into our world through what we faithful followers say and do in his name. Let us, then, join our voices in our prayer of blessing for the palms:

All: O God, we gather this day and join with all creation in praising your name! We welcome Jesus into our hearts more fully and seek to follow his ways in joyful service to the people you love. Bless our palms this day, so that they might serve as a reminder to us of our journey with Christ. We pray this in his name. Amen.

Pastor: Now, with grateful hearts, let us join our voices together in singing our response ...

Sung Response: # 2119 Where the Spirit (Praise Book)

**“Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is peace;
where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is love.
There is comfort in life's darkest hour;
there is light and life, there is help and power
in the Spirit, in the Spirit of the Lord.**

Scripture Reading:

Liturgist: Kathy Strahan

Liturgist: We now turn our hearts and minds to the reading of God's Holy Scripture. Today's story takes us back to that first Palm Sunday when Jesus entered the city of Jerusalem and began the final week of his earthly life. Let us pause now to pray as we join him on this journey in the midst of our scripture reading.

Prayer: Loving God, we celebrate the joy of Palm Sunday and welcome your spirit among us. Help us to celebrate how Jesus works in us and through us to make the world a better place. We pray this in his name. Amen.

Reading:

Jesus was walking along with his disciples and as they approached Jerusalem, they paused near Bethany just outside the city. Jesus sent two of his disciples into the village and said to them, "Go on ahead of us, and you will soon find there a colt tied up secure which has never been ridden. Untie it and bring it back to me. If anyone says to you, 'Why are you doing this?' just say this, 'The Lord needs it and will send it back when his need is completed.'"

The two disciples went away and found the colt tied near a door, outside in the street. As they were untying it, some of the bystanders said to them, 'What are you doing, untying the colt?' They told them what Jesus had said; and they allowed them to take it. Then they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their cloaks on it; and he sat on it, ready now to enter Jerusalem.

This took place to fulfill what had been spoken many years before this day through the prophet, Zechariah, when he said, "Tell the people, look, your king is coming to you, humble, and mounted on a colt, the foal of a donkey."

As they went, word of his arrival spread. A very large crowd gathered and they spread their cloaks on the road as if welcoming a king into their midst. Some of the people cut branches from nearby palm trees and spread them on the road as well. Others waved the branches in the air to show honor and tribute to Jesus as he entered the gates of the great city.

The people cheered and shouted, "Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest heaven!" And they spread the word to everyone who came to see what the commotion was all about. They told them, "This is the prophet Jesus from Nazareth in Galilee."

Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to him, "Teacher, order your disciples to stop." But he answered them, "I tell you this – even if they were silent, the very stones would shout out." The people continued to celebrate his arrival, even after he stopped at the temple and went inside. He looked around at everything and as it was already late, he went back to the village of Bethany with his disciples to return the colt and rest for the night.

Liturgist: Here ends the read of God's Holy Scripture. May God bless us with understanding, and may we show our understanding in the way we live our lives. Amen.

Hymn Intro: Now, let us remain seated as we sing our hymn.

Hymn: # 215, "Ride On! Ride On in Majesty" (vs. 1, 2, 3)

Message: "Into Jerusalem"

Sung Response: # 2226, "Bind Us Together"

Pastoral Prayer & Lord's Prayer

Offering Invitation: On that first Palm Sunday, the people rejoiced – they expected something good was about to happen. May that be true for us as well as we now present with joy our morning offering to God.

Offertory / * Sung Response: # 780 “The Doxology”

**Praise God from whom all blessings flow;
Praise God, all creatures here below;
Praise God above, you heavenly host;
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.**

*** Prayer of Dedication:** Gracious God, accept these offerings, given out of the blessings we first received from you. We dedicate them to your use in the name of Jesus. Amen.

*** Hymn: # 216, “All Glory, Laud, and Honor”**

*** Pastor’s Benediction:** Today, we rejoice that God has blessed us with good things – especially with our Savior. Let us go forth, waving our palms in honor of him. Go in peace and serve the Lord. Amen.

*** Sung Response: # 249, “Peace I Leave With You” (refrain)**

**Peace I leave with you, my friends. Shalom, my peace in all you do.
Peace I leave with you, my friends. I give to you so you can give to others too.**

*** Postlude Music**